



West Virginia
Higher Education
Policy Commission

**Higher Education
News Clippings**

Week of September 13, 2009



September 15, 2009

HEPC seeks funding change

Chancellor says higher-ed needs a new formula

BY DAVID BEARD The Dominion Post

CHARLESTON — The Higher Education Policy Commission would like to change the way higher education is funded. HEPC Chancellor Dr. Brian Noland offered a first look at his vision during the legislative interims Monday.

The state currently funds higher ed on a “base-plus” system, he said after the the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability meeting. That means funding is built on last year’s level, adjusted for inflation, and may include money for such things as raises.

The problem, he said, is “how much you had last year wasn’t developed based on any type of formal policy. So it doesn’t reflect the types of students you have, the types of courses they’re enrolled in.”

It also doesn’t recognize institutions whose enrollments increased or decreased, he said. For instance, WVU grew from 22,000 students to 29,000 in a decade, while some others declined.

And the state has problems to address: its graduation rate is below the national average and it’s only “fair to middling” in attracting and serving nontraditional students — students beyond the typical college age of 18-22.

West Virginia, he said, needs to get more adults going to college, improve graduation rates and improve the quality of graduates in specific program areas — for example teacher education.

His goal, he told the commission, is to “develop a policy to align resources with outcomes.”

For the past two years, he said, the HEPC has been working on a new weighted-funding formula. It would account for enrollment, but also take into consideration factors such as the courses students are enrolled in. It would also offer performance incentives for schools, and take into account “peer equity” — the level of funding at peer institutions in other states.

The state, in theory, adopted peer equity years ago, but never actually employed it, he said.

Noland presented a report that showed 36 states use some kind of funding formula. Weighted formulas will take into account the level of instruction of the course and its field of discipline.

They often weigh four levels of instruction: Lower-division undergrad (first two years). Upper-division undergrad (last two years). Masters or first professional degree. Doctoral study. Courses in classroom settings with large groups typically get lower funding than high-level science classes with lab work, for example.

Delegate John Doyle, D-Jefferson, said he was pleased with the report, but expressed some skepticism. He told Noland there have been four funding formulas in place since 1992, and the state has never followed them. "Is this just another one? ... At some point I think we've got to decide on a formula and start using it."

Sen. Robert Plymale, D-Wayne, said the state needs a funding formula that works over the long run, and needs to do a better job training teachers. He likes the idea of incentives for schools that do well.

Noland said the Legislature doesn't have to approve the HEPC plan. State law simply requires the HEPC to have a finance policy that provides equitable distribution of revenues across institutions.

"My hope is to work with this committee to show them what other states are doing," including their "best practices" and what West Virginia needs to accomplish, he said

Noland said his goal is to present more information at each interim this year, and have a formula in place this academic year to frame discussions for the next budgetary cycle.

Planning has already begun for the Fiscal Year 2011 budget. The Legislature will approve a budget after the regular session, which begins in mid-January and runs 60 days.



September 17, 2009

Wright State dean is right fit for WVU University selects Wheatly as provost

BY CASSIE SHANER The Dominion Post

Wright State University Dean Michele G. Wheatly was named WVU's newest provost Wednesday.

Wheatly, a native of London, England, will take over Jan. 1. She will earn an annual salary of \$295,000.

Wheatly will replace interim WVU Provost E. Jane Martin, who took over for Gerald Lang in July 2008. Lang stepped down after an investigative panel concluded that WVU had retroactively awarded an unearned executive MBA degree to Heather Bresch, the daughter of Gov. Joe Manchin and chief executive officer of Mylan Inc.

WVU President James Clements announced Wheatly's hiring to a crowded Betty Boyd Lounge at Elizabeth Moore Hall on Wednesday.

As WVU's chief academic officer, he said Wheatly will be responsible for more than 400,000 employees and a \$500 million budget. But she's excited about the job, and Clements said he's confident in her ability to do it.

"She's a perfect fit for us," Clements said. "I think she's going to do a wonderful job as our next provost."

Clements noted that research expenditures for Wright State's College of Science and Mathematics increased from nearly \$7 million to \$15 million and graduate enrollment increased by 68 percent under Wheatly's leadership.

However, Wheatly said she's not just a good fit for WVU because of her accomplishments, but because of who she is. She said she's already learned that West Virginians have a sense of pride that's tempered by humility.

"I consider myself to be a down-to-earth, back-to-basics, ordinary human being," Wheatly said. "This is a good match because of who I am. This is a great place where I could feel comfortable."

Wheatly was also impressed by WVU's collaborative leader-Michele Wheatly's family (above, from left)

twins Mari and Reva; son, Skip; husband, Stan; and Wheatly, sit with WVU President James Clements before she is introduced to a full house in the Betty Boyd lounge at Elizabeth Moore Hall. Wheatly (left photo) gives a big smile after receiving a WVU golf hat from Clements.

ship approach. After she accepted the job, she pledged not to disappoint Clements, and she was surprised when he made the same promise to her.

“It’s not about us,” Wheatly said. “It’s about you. We’re here to serve you and make good decisions so that this institution can actually move ahead and do great things for West Virginians.”

Wheatly is the second member of WVU’s senior leadership team appointed since the semester began. Dr. Christopher Colenda was hired as WVU’s new health sciences chancellor in August. He starts Oct. 30.

One of Wheatly’s first tasks will be to meet with WVU’s new chief information officer. WVU hired someone for the job earlier this year, but he backed out due to personal reasons, and the university relaunched the search.

At a Faculty Senate meeting earlier this week, Clements said he’s picked someone for the job, but he wants that person to meet with the new provost before an announcement is made.

The chief information officer oversees WVU’s Office of Information Technology and reports to the provost. Martin has said the person who is hired will likely start work in October.

After Wednesday’s announcement, Wheatly said her biggest challenge will be crafting WVU’s 2020 strategic plan. She plans to work with Clements and Colenda to boost research and reduce the the university’s student-faculty ratio, among other initiatives.

“You have to know where you’re going in order to figure out how you’re going to get there,” Wheatly said. “It’s going to be a great time of transition. There’s a lot of energy here now.”

Derrick Walls, a 23-year-old WVU senior majoring in agribusiness management and rural development, said it seems like Wheatly will add to that energy.

“She’s very qualified,” Walls said. “She’ll represent the university well, I believe.”

Wheatly was one of three candidates for the job invited to campus earlier this semester for forums and interviews. The other finalists were James S. Coleman, vice provost for research at Rice University in Houston, and Dr. Jeffrey D. Armstrong, dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University.

Ken Colvin, an assistant registrar for WVU, attended all the forums. He said Wheatly was his top choice for the job.

“I’m very happy we’ve chosen her,” Colvin said. “She sounds like she’s going to be a very good provost. She’s very enthusiastic.”

Clements thanked everyone who participated in the forums, as well as the 14-member provost search committee, on Wednesday. He said he read every comment submitted about the candidates and called tons of people to ask about Wheatly.

She was described as “a tremendous talent,” “a wonderful collaborator,” and “absolutely ready to be a provost,” among other things.

Michele G. Wheatly

AGE: 53

CURRENT POSITION: Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics and professor of biological sciences, Wright State University

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in biological sciences and doctorate of comparative physiology, Birmingham University; postdoctoral fellow-

ship, University of Calgary; executive training, Harvard University

WORK EXPERIENCE: Chairwoman of biological sciences, Wright State University; professor of zoology, University of Florida

FAMILY: Husband, Stan; son, Skip, 18; and twin daughters, Reva and Mari, 15



September 12, 2009

Ohio family gives \$1M to WVU for energy research Trust fund donation largest one to date

BY CASSIE SHANER The Dominion Post

WVU officials announced a \$1 million donation for energy research Friday — the university's single largest West Virginia Research Trust Fund contribution to date.

The state will provide a dollar-for-dollar match, bringing the total gift to \$2 million. Robert and Brenda Murray, of Cleveland, made the donation.

Robert Murray is the president of Murray Energy Corp., the nation's largest privately owned coal mining company. Though he graduated from Ohio State University, his three sons graduated from WVU with degrees in mining engineering and geology.

Murray said he was humbled by the reaction to his gift and the number of people who showed up at Friday's announcement to show their support. He said he should be thanking them for what they've meant to him and his family, not the other way around.

"All I wanted to do was give back to the people and the institution that have helped me and my family," Murray said. "I'm just giving back a little bit of what you've given me."

Gene Cilento, dean of the College of Engineering and Mineral Resources, said the money will support "all aspects of coal research," from extraction to utilization.

"The funds will promote efficient, safe and environmentally friendly ways to use this vital natural resource, not only for energy production, but as the very valuable carbon source America needs to remain competitive in a global environment," Cilento said.

In honor of Murray's gift, WVU established the Robert E. Murray Chairmanship in Mining Engineering, for which a plaque was unveiled during Friday's announcement.

But Chris Bise, chairman of WVU's mining engineering department, said the Murrays' gift does more than add a line to someone's business card. It serves as a reminder of WVU's commitment to mining and mineral resources, and it also reinforces the university's dedication to students.

"It is all about the students," Bise said. "Because Bob and Brenda are WVU parents, this gift demonstrates to parents around the world that WVU is a place where parents should send their children to achieve their goals."

Sumanth Gundagatti, a 25-year-old civil engineering student from India, was one of several students who attended Friday's announcement in the atrium at the Engineering Sciences Building addition. He said he appreciates gifts like Murray's.

“It’s good for the university,” Gundagatti said. “It’s a great achievement. People should come forward like this and help for the betterment of the university.”

The West Virginia Research Trust Fund, commonly called Bucks for Brains, is a state endowment program that’s designed to maximize the impact of gifts like the Murrays.

It could generate a trust fund worth up to \$70 million at WVU for research in energy, biotechnology, environmental science and other key areas.

The program was created by the state Legislature in 2008 to boost research funding at Marshall University and WVU.

It requires the state to match the contributions of donors dollar for dollar — up to \$35 million for WVU and \$15 million for Marshall. Each school has five years to raise its portion of the money.

The WVU Board of Governors approved a request for \$1.149 million in additional matching funds from the trust fund on Friday. According to a press release, the university has about \$6.5 million in gifts, pledges and state matching funds to date.



September 12, 2009

Foundation endowment value drops King tells WVU BOG of capital campaign

BY CASSIE SHANER The Dominion Post

The value of the WVU Foundation's endowed investments dropped by about \$102 million last year, but officials are moving forward with plans for a capital campaign.

Foundation President R. Wayne King provided an update on finances and plans for the WVU Board of Governors on Friday. The Foundation received \$54.7 million in cash gifts for the fiscal year ending June 30 — about \$200,000 more than the previous year's total of \$54.5 million.

But the value of the foundation's endowed investment pool dropped by 29.1 percent for the year ending June 30 — from \$417 million in 2008 to \$315 million in 2009. The value of its endowed investment assets declined by 25 percent during the same period — from \$534 million in 2008 to \$408 million in 2009.

King said 96 percent of the loss is unrealized. University foundations nationwide have been affected by the volatility of the stock market in the past year, he said.

"We are hopeful the gains the market has experienced in recent months will continue," King said, adding that the Foundation's investment policy is "very long-term focused."

Officials have previously said that fees associated with the endowment contribute to the Foundation's revenue. The Foundation was forced to cut pay by 4.6 percent for 65 full-time employees and reduce other costs to save \$1.3 million during fiscal year 2010.

BOG member Jo Morrow, who represents WVU's Staff Council, asked how the Foundation has maintained an upbeat work environment following the cutbacks.

King said the Foundation has made an effort to make everyone feel like part of the team and communicate successes.

"It's a difficult environment, but it's not one that we along are sharing," King said. "Foundations all across the country are having similar challenges."

Regardless of the market challenges, King said the Foundation has hired Jerold Panas, Linzy & Partners — a Chicago-based consulting firm — to evaluate the Foundation's fundraising programs and assess its revenues for a major capital campaign. The results should be available by November, he said.

King plans to present a formal recommendation to move ahead with a comprehensive capital campaign to the Foundation's Board of Directors in June.

The recommendation would include timeline and campaign financing details. It would be followed by an external feasibility study conducted by Jerold Panas, Linzy & Partners to determine the campaign's goal based on priorities established by WVU.

"Our mission is not in recession," King said. "We continue to move ahead with purpose and with vision."

King said the Foundation has already raised some money through a "quiet campaign" that began in July 2007, but he isn't sure how much has been raised to date.

The foundation's most recent capital campaign — themed "Building Greatness" — ended Dec. 31, 2003. It lasted more than five years and brought in about \$336 million — \$86 million more than the university's \$250 million goal.

BOG member Ray Lane said the time frame for the campaign isn't as important as the goal, which generates the excitement associated with a capital campaign. He also said it's a good idea to start a capital campaign during a recession.

"It puts the staff on offense," Lane said. "You feel momentum. You're busy, and you're probably doing more recruiting."

Other business

Also at Friday's meeting, the board:

Received its annual report from the faculty representatives.

Robert Griffith said the average salary for a full professor at WVU was \$102,400 in 2007-'08 — about 11.35 percent less than the national average of \$115,509 for similar public institutions. Though WVU faculty received a 7.37 percent salary increase in 2008, he said WVU salaries still lag behind the national average.

Griffith also noted that the number of faculty at WVU has remained fairly steady over the past 10 years, while student enrollment increased dramatically.

"The faculty-student ratio is important because it's reflective of the faculty workload," Griffith said.

Nigel Clark highlighted the rigorous research and scholarship requirements for WVU faculty members to obtain tenure, and noted that "the capacity for research and scholarly activity is diminished by the faculty-student ratio."

WVU President James Clements said he's aware of WVU's faculty-student ratio and its impact on research.

"That is something we will work on in the future," Clements said. "That is a priority."

Received its first report from Clements, who replaced interim WVU President C. Peter Magrath on June 30. Clements highlighted recent developments in enrollment, facilities, hiring and other areas.

Clements said he plans to announce WVU's new provost next week, and a new chief information officer will likely be identified after the provost arrives.

Clements also said he expects to interview candidates for general counsel and vice president of legal affairs in the next few weeks. WVU has received about 55 applications, and the board authorized Clements to hire someone for the job as part of its consent agenda.

Adopted amendments to the board's operating procedures related to recent changes in state law.

A bill approved earlier this year added an additional faculty member to the board and required that board members undergo six hours of training on ethics, board duties, higher education priorities and other subjects every two years.

Had seven members sworn in by interim general counsel and vice president of legal affairs Mary Roberta Brandt. Four new members joined the board July 1, and three were re-appointed by Gov. Joe Manchin.

Agreed to change the name of the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Resources to the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design.

Approved a new online graduate certificate program in digital marketing communications and new master's degree programs in landscape architecture and biomedical sciences.

Approved a \$30.3 million renovation project at White Hall. The board also approved financing and reimbursement resolutions for a basketball practice facility and the White Hall renovations.

The basketball practice facility will be funded on an interim basis from the university's general fund, but the money will later be reimbursed.

According to a WVU press release, about \$14 million has been identified, donated or pledged toward the basketball practice facility so far. The project is expected to cost up to \$26 million.

About \$22.5 million in funding for the White Hall project will come from bonds sold by the state Economic Development Authority. That money will be used to reimburse the university's general fund for costs incurred before the bonds are sold.



September 16, 2009

New dean offers ideas for growth at College of Health Professions

By Whitney Hunter

Dr. Gretchen Oley, new dean of the College of Health Professions, has an optimistic outlook for the future of the school because she loves her profession and has ideas for growth.

Oley, wife and mother of two, recently retired from her extensive career of teaching and practicing internal medicine.

"Even though I was in love with my work, it was time to change," Oley said. "That was my joy and my passion, and I loved my job the 22 years I did it."

Oley said she was called back by President Stephen J. Kopp and prior dean of the College of Health Professions Shortie McKinney. She is only the third dean to serve in the 10 year operation of the College of Health Professions. The first dean was a nurse, the second a dietitian, and Oley, an internal medicine doctor.

"I've grown up in the administration of a medical school and physician's training, so I bring a little bit different background and perspective to the job," Oley said. "And I was really interested to see how I could help out."

Oley received her bachelor's degree from Penn State and her master's degree in political science from Marshall. During her career she worked beside nurses, dietitians, physicians, and social workers, and understands their practice.

She also taught in the classroom for the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine, but more on the floors of the hospital as critical practicum for the students.

The college has some new developments and Oley has ideas and goals she wants to pursue as dean. The first thing she wants is to raise student numbers and increase majors and student interest.

"I don't have to worry too much about substance of curriculum," Oley said. "Our pass rates are very high, and the work of our faculty and the curriculum are pretty well established."

The college always wants to offer new and different programs and Oley said they are attempting to receive funding for bridge programs, because there is a shortage of nurses and lab technicians in the state. Bridge programs would allow students to receive a degree in half the time it would take for a bachelor's degree.

"We may need to rethink our curriculum and how we approach it and put more online," Oley said. "We would start by taking traditional students and putting them into bridge programs to get them trained faster and into the work force."

"I think that would be a great idea for students," said Heather Meadows, junior dietetics major from Wheeling, W.Va. "We would still get the knowledge we need, but in less time. In today's economy we need all the time we can get working."

Meadows also said she is glad Oley is taking the programs into consideration and hopes they can be passed for approval while Oley is in office.

Oley has accomplished so many things during her career, and she attributes her success to several people.

"My biggest cheerleader in anything I do is obviously my spouse," Oley said. "He has just been my rock. We will have been married for four years in October and he has been so supportive in every single thing I've done."

Her desire for a career in internal medicine came from something only she could realize.

"I came to an inner sense of what I wanted to do," Oley said. "It was a happy combination of circumstances. I got a little older and I had done a lot of different things and had a broad education. I tried a lot of different things at that point, and what motivated me was the fact that I liked, but not loved, what I was doing.

Toward age 30 she got to thinking, "What is it that you want to do, and how do you need to train yourself to do it?"

Oley said her decision to become a doctor was a combination of introspection and the fact that the medical school at Marshall had just started.

She and her husband were living in Huntington, and she said the opportunity was fate. Oley attributes most of her success to the colleagues and patients she has worked with.

"I worked with a lot of folks at the medical school who have been inspirations, but the biggest inspiration has been my patients," Oley said. "That's what kept me going every day and made me feel satisfied in my job and made me want to do better."

Balancing a family life and full-time career was not an easy task, but Oley kept the balance while making an impact on so many people's lives.

"It's the love of service, love of seeing the good you do of teaching others to be doctors, and modeling the role model you think should be modeled," Oley said. "As physicians, that's how we learn to take care of people."

International business and modern language degree now available

By Deanna Bailey

The Lewis College of Business and the College of Liberal Arts have joined together to create an international business and modern language dual degree program.

The curriculum of the program exposes students to fundamental principles of business management as well as more specific aspects of international business management. At the same time, students will begin to develop basic language skills in French, German, Japanese or Spanish. Students will be able to speak and write in a second language.

The language courses, along with a series of international studies courses, will help students better understand international affairs. Students have the opportunity to study abroad in internship programs that will further enhance their language and business skills

"The planning for the new major began several years ago as a result of collaborative interests of the faculty in the Lewis College of Business and the faculty in the Department of Modern Languages," said David Pittenger, dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

Pittenger, along with Chong Kim, dean of the school of business, thought the creation of a dual degree was a great idea.

"It's a good marriage," Kim said. "I think it's a win-win situation. With some dual degrees it takes longer than four years to complete, but this is specifically designed to be completed in four years."

With the differences between the modern language and international business program, it took effort to come up with ideas so classes could be counted for both majors.

"It does take time to develop a new program, especially one as innovative as this," Pittenger said. "Clearly the faculty from the two programs needed to identify a course of study that best prepares students for this line of work."

Kim said business students benefit as well as modern language students.

"The modern language students are benefiting from the program as well because they are able to use a second language in a business aspect," Kim said. "International business students will benefit from learning a different language because with the increase of globalized trading and market, people will be able to speak the native language of the country they are trading with. It is like killing two birds with one stone."

The deans of both colleges were not the only ones to see the value of the dual degree program.

"The Marshall University Board of Governors needed to approve the program," Pittenger said. "Fortunately, everyone saw the value in created the dual degree and it was quickly approved."

The program is now in the process of recruiting students for next school year.

"We are hoping that this program can increase enrollment for Marshall," Kim said. "We are going to high schools and telling them about this great new program Marshall is offering."

Rahall Applauds Passage of Higher Education Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act

Washington, DC (HNN) – U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall, D-WV supported the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA), which passed the House of Representatives on Sept. 17, to help students and their families pay for college at no cost to taxpayers by expanding access to affordable college education, transforming early education opportunities, and building a world-class community college system.

“This is a crucial step toward rebuilding the American economy, making sure our young people have the ability to attend college or get career training, and ensures our work force remains the most highly skilled, innovative and effective in the world,” said Rahall.

SAFRA provides for an historic investment in higher education to make college affordable and help more West Virginia students graduate. Over the next ten years, this bill will invest more than \$285 million in West Virginia, with \$88.9 million in southern West Virginia alone. The bill will increase funding for the College Access Challenge Grant program, resulting in at least \$960,000 a year for the next five years in West Virginia.

West Virginia will also receive nearly \$9.2 million to help finance projects at community college facilities, and more than \$24.1 million over the next two years for local school districts to invest in school modernization, renovation, and repair projects to create healthier, safer, and more energy-efficient teaching and learning environments.

“Tuition costs at both public and private colleges have been on the rise as our families struggle through a difficult economy. This is commonsense reform that is long overdue to expand critical opportunities for higher education in this country,” Rahall said. “Allowing our students to graduate with a better education and less debt is the best way to insure that American workers remain competitive long into the future.”

In 2008, students in West Virginia borrowed a total of 59,625 subsidized student loans. SAFRA will keep interest rates low on need-based or subsidized federal student loans by making the interest rates on these loans variable beginning in 2012. Currently, these interest rates are set to jump from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent in 2012.

In the academic year 2010-2011, there will be 17,189 students in southern West Virginia eligible for a Pell Grant award. SAFRA will increase Pell Grants to \$6,900 by 2019 from \$5,550 in 2010. It also keeps interest rates low on government-subsidized loans, makes substantial investments in early childhood education, expands the Perkins low-cost loan program to include all U.S. colleges and simplifies the process of applying for student financial aid.

SAFRA will reform the system of federal student loans to save taxpayers \$87 billion and will direct \$10 billion back to the Treasury to help pay down the deficit. SAFRA revises student loan system functions by originating new loans through the government's Direct

Loan program, while maintaining competition among private lenders and non-profits for student borrowers. This simple change will make college loans more reliable for students and families -- and ensure that loans operate in the best interests of borrowers by reducing many of the potential conflicts of interest that exist in the current loan system.

“Pearl S. Buck once said, ‘If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all.’ As a father, a grandfather, and a West Virginian heeding the words of Pearl Buck, I cast my vote so that America will not fail our children,” said Rahall.