



West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Higher Education
News Clippings

Week of October 4, 2009

Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

October 5, 2009

Web site helps with college selection, financial aid One stop-resource is free for W.Va. residents

by Zack Harold, Daily Mail staff

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- The college application process can sometimes be more difficult and frustrating than college itself, but one West Virginia organization is hoping to change that.

The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission recently launched a new Web site - www.cfww.com, the College Foundation of West Virginia - to help students and parents with their college and financial aid hunt.

"The hope of the commission is really that we provide information in this one Web site to streamline the process," said Ashley Schumaker, executive assistant to the chancellor.

Schumaker said previously applying for college meant lots of paperwork and lots of different Web sites.

"Our agency alone, we were kind of directing them to at least six different resources we were maintaining," she said.

Now, there's a one-stop-shop for higher education needs, Schumaker says. The Web site is a free resource for all West Virginia residents - students, teachers, school counselors, even adults already in the work force looking to further their education.

Schumaker says it will especially make counselors' lives easier.

"We're well aware that counselors have a lot of responsibilities and teachers as well, and we hope this is a tool as well for them when they talk with students," she said.

Schumaker says the Web site is to be an interactive tool for counselors, enabling them to track what scholarships and schools students are interested in and where those students are in the application process.

The site's "College Planning" section has online applications for hundreds of colleges and universities, both public and private, across the United States that can be tracked from a student's profile once submitted.

Schumaker says the online process makes applying easier, as it keeps students from having to fill out the same information over and over.

There's even a practice application for college search newbies.

For undecided students cfwv.com offers a "college matching assistant," allowing them to search for state universities by size, location, available majors, tuition and several other parameters.

If users don't know what they'd like to study, the site offers help with that, too. A career-matching quiz determines students' areas of interest, identifies which occupations would fit those interests, lists education requirements for those occupations and schools that offer those programs.

The foundation's site also offers help with scholarship hunting and financial aid.

Users can fill out information about their background, education level, and hobbies, and the Web site will sift through thousands of national and state scholarships and grants to find ones that match.

Students can apply for some West Virginia financial aid programs - the PROMISE Scholarship, the West Virginia Higher Education Grant, the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship and several others - online.

The site's financial aid calculators allow users to determine how much they could and should save for college, how much families will have to contribute to college costs, and how student loan payments compare to students' chosen career paths.

Once students graduate from college, the site's "Career Planning" section offers resume, cover letter and thank-you note builders. The section also features a job interview practice quiz, with commonly asked interview questions.

The Web site officially launched Sunday, though Schumaker says the foundation will wait until after the first of the year to begin actively marketing cfwv.com. She said this "soft launch" would allow users to test the site and make recommendations to the foundation.

Anyone with an e-mail address can set up an account on cfwv.com and users of wvapply.com and wvmentor.com, both shut down for the new site, can use their existing login information.



October 4, 2009

FBI taps WVU for evidence collection

Submitted to The Dominion Post

WVU's growing expertise in biometrics research has drawn more attention from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the form of nearly \$1 million worth of grants to further develop important evidence collection technologies and associated interactive training tools for FBI personnel.

The FBI has awarded \$414,184 to Arun Ross, associate professor in the WVU College of Engineering and Mineral Resources' Lane Department of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering, to research ways to improve fingerprint analysis under a federal initiative known as the Friction Ridge Support Services Project.

A second FBI grant of \$426,772 was awarded to Tina Moroosse, teaching assistant professor in the Forensic and Investigative Science Program in the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences, to research improvements in the way investigators collect human scent evidence.

Generally, biometrics refers to methods of recognizing humans based upon one or more physical or behavioral traits. WVU has developed extensive credentials in the biometrics research area.

LaRue Williams, WVU's director of homeland security programs and Keith Morris, assistant director of Forensic and Investigative Science in the Eberly College are co-investigators on both projects.

"Changing needs in law enforcement and an increased need for public service solutions throughout the entire federal government have created a demand for collaborations and cooperation with federal partners," Williams said. "Our FBI partnership allows West Virginia to pursue that research and help transition it into real world application. We are honored to be part of these exciting projects."

Williams said her unit, in addition to managing both grant projects as the main FBI point of contact for WVU, will also design and develop an interactive learning tool for the FBI to use in training its personnel on fingerprint innovations.

Ross explained the WVU role in the "friction ridge" fingerprint project.

"The goal of this project is to improve our understanding of the features that can contribute to the distinctiveness of fingerprints across individuals from a statistical perspective," he said. "This work will benefit the forensics and biometrics communities even as we seek to further the science of fingerprints."

"Friction ridge impressions" is a term used to denote palmprints and fingerprints and the work of Ross, Morris and Williams will help experts better understand the role of

individual fingerprint features in establishing the identity of an individual.

The fingerprint project will define the quality and quantity of information in a friction ridge impression during analysis; expand on procedures to map, record and recognize fingerprint features; and assist in the development of standards for fingerprint images.

Moroose's work will center on refining methods for capturing trace human epithelial cells for use in scent evidence collection. She explained that even the most meticulous criminals leave behind invisible trace scent evidence that is unique. Recent improved techniques have catapulted the use of the scent evidence to the forefront of major criminal investigations.

WVU has become a focal point for national biometric work. For example, WVU's comprehensive, integrative research and education programs in biometrics are known worldwide. The university is the academic arm of the FBI's Biometric Center of Excellence, provides biometrics research support to the FBI and its law enforcement and national security partners and serves as the FBI liaison to the academic community of biometric researchers nationwide. Additionally, WVU is the founder and lead site for a National Science Foundation-supported center known as CITeR — an initiative that focuses on biometrics and related identification technology and systems.



October 4, 2009

WVU's 2 new leaders granted tenure Chancellor, provost earn more than their predecessors

BY CASSIE SHANER The Dominion Post

WVU's new provost and chancellor for health sciences were granted tenure after a review of their credentials by officials at the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Medicine, according to a WVU spokeswoman.

Both administrators will earn more than their predecessors, but WVU spokesman Dan Kim said their salaries are based on compensation at similar schools.

Michele Wheatly, dean of the College of Science and Mathematics at Wright State University, was hired as WVU's provost in September. She will begin work Jan. 1.

Dr. Christopher Colenda, dean of medicine and vice president for clinical affairs at Texas A&M Health Science Center, was hired as chancellor in August. He will begin work Oct. 30.

In addition to their administrative assignments, Wheatly and Colenda will serve as tenured faculty members in the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Medicine, respectively. Tenure — which provides job security — was included in their contracts, but it wasn't for WVU President James P. Clements.

E-mails obtained by The Dominion Post earlier this year indicated that faculty members questioned whether Clements would be able to obtain tenure based on his academic credentials. WVU Board of Governors chairwoman Carolyn Long said Clements could seek tenure, but the board could not include it in his contract without faculty approval first.

Clements can still serve as an adjunct faculty member, though he can't receive additional compensation for teaching.

WVU spokeswoman Becky Lofstead said Wheatly and Colenda were not automatically granted tenure, either. Their credentials were reviewed by the promotion and tenure committees within their respective schools, whose recommendations were forwarded to Clements.

If Clements decides to pursue tenure, Lofstead said he will have to follow the same procedure.

"He was clear from the beginning of his presidency that his first priority was to be WVU's president," Lofstead said. "That was his goal. It doesn't mean that he won't pursue tenure down the road."

Other contract provisions

According to their contracts, Wheatly and Colenda will be employed by WVU through June 30, 2011, unless they are fired first.

Wheatly will earn \$295,000 a year — about \$60,700 more than interim Provost E. Jane Martin's annual salary of \$234,300.

Colenda will earn \$435,000 a year — about \$117,263 more than Dr. Fred Butcher's \$314,737 annual salary as interim vice president for health sciences.

Kim said WVU determined their pay by comparing salaries at peer institutions, including the University of Florida, the University of Kentucky and Michigan State University.

"The university looked at its mission peers — universities with similar missions as public, land grant, research institutions with comprehensive health science centers," Kim said in an e-mail to The Dominion Post. "The focus was to ensure that the compensation was fair and competitive with peer institutions."

WVU will reimburse Wheatly and Colenda for moving expenses, but the amount varies. Colenda will be reimbursed for up to \$15,000 in moving expenses, and Wheatly will be reimbursed for up to \$20,000.

Kim said the reimbursement amount is based on family size, home size and other individual differences.

WVU will also cover the cost of annual membership dues to professional organizations required for Wheatly and Colenda's jobs. Kim listed the Association of Academic Health Centers and the Association of Public Land Grant Universities as examples, but he did not provide the cost of annual dues.

Colenda's contract indicates that he will work with WVU's president to establish the chancellor's Discovery and Development Fund. It will help pay for recruiting, strategic planning, staffing the chancellor's office and investments in research, commercialization and education.

WVU officials have not figured out where the funding will come from yet, but Kim indicated that clinical revenue will help.

"The primary sources of funding for faculty physician recruitment are clinical — from [University Health Associates] and WVU Hospitals," Kim said. "Recruitment of nonphysician faculty is also funded primarily by clinical dollars, but may also involve some state and foundation funding."

Wheatly's contract indicates that she must provide documentation of her eligibility to work in the U.S., while Colenda's does not. Wheatly is a native of London, but Kim said she is a U.S. citizen.

The documentation requirement is a standard contract provision that was omitted from Colenda's contract, Kim said.

Long said there was nothing unusual or unique about either Wheatly's or Colenda's contract.

“They’re very straightforward, just like we’ve tried to be all along with everything,”
Long said.

October 4, 2009

Marshall provost 'satisfied' about Perdue case

By Paul J. Nyden, Staff writer

Marshall University Provost Gayle L. Ormiston says he is satisfied with the process used to award two grades to Emily Perdue.

Two confidential internal memos were released last month by an unknown source, triggering a controversy about the university's handling of "incomplete grades. Last spring, Perdue received incomplete grades in two independent study courses. When she completed her work in those courses during the summer, Perdue received two grades of A.

Some criticized Marshall's policy of giving students incompletes.

"A student may receive an incomplete for any number of reasons," Ormiston said. "Generally, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to assure the reasons are within the bounds of the incomplete policy at the institution."

Grades of incomplete are quite common at most colleges and universities.

For many years, Marshall had a "very open-minded" policy about giving students incompletes, as long as the student was in good standing, Ormiston explained.

"The reason for an incomplete had to be documented. Students had a one-year period to complete the course, unless the student and instructor agreed to a shorter period of time.

"At Marshall, an incomplete turns into an F after one year. At other institutions, incompletes often stayed on a student's academic record forever."

Last year, a Marshall committee reviewed the university's policy and came up with a "little more restraining incomplete policy," he added.

Perdue's case fell under the older policy.

Reasons for allowing a student to get an incomplete include that student becoming ill, family problems or a relative's death. There is flexibility for any number of issues acceptable to a faculty member, Ormiston said.

Perdue said she arranged to get two incompletes after she withdrew from two independent study courses taught by Laura Wyant, a professor of adult and technical education at Marshall.

Perdue said she reached an agreement in May that Rosalyn Templeton, a Marshall College of Education and Human Services dean, would give her grades to replace the incompletes after she finished the required course work.

It has recently been reported there were tensions between Templeton and Wyant, who has denied giving the internal memos about Perdue to the media.

Releasing internal memos or grades violates the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

FERPA allows students to look at their academic records at any time. But it prohibits educational institutions from releasing any information to the public without permission from that student, Ormiston explained.

Perdue had problems finishing all her course work when she changed majors from business education to business management.

"Last year, I had 15 hours of independent study during one semester. I wasn't happy and wanted to get out of the program," she told The Charleston Gazette last week.

Ormiston said, "We received a letter from the faculty member [Wyant] indicating grade changes had been processed without her approval, or at least being submitted to her.

"She was listed as the instructor of record. But these are independent studies.

"In many institutions, the department chair is listed as the instructor for an independent study course," Ormiston said. "Activities such as advising students on writing theses or dissertations are also variations of independent study."

Ormiston said the controversy triggered him to "to see if the instructor of record [for Perdue] had been changed. It had not been. It was an omission from the record."

"From our perspective, we are satisfied with what we found out. Changing an incomplete to a letter grade is a normal process.

"We want students to complete their work. We want them to complete their grades. That is an important piece of information for everyone to keep in mind," Ormiston said.

E-mails track MU's handling of Perdue case

BILL ROSENBERGER, The Herald-Dispatch

HUNTINGTON -- A trail of e-mails between Marshall officials suggests they knew of the potential for a political situation after the state treasurer's daughter was given a summer extension to complete two independent studies.

This summer, Emily Perdue completed two independent studies with Rosalyn Templeton, dean of the College of Education and Human Services, after receiving two incompletes with professor Laura Wyant during the spring semester.

Wyant called for a Faculty Senate investigation Sept. 24, after the student's grades were changed and she was still listed as the instructor of record, though it was Templeton who finished the independent studies per an earlier agreement. Wyant also said she plans to file a grievance about the matter.

The Herald-Dispatch requested all correspondence regarding the matter from Marshall University under the Freedom of Information Act. The university produced nearly two dozen e-mails. The name of the student was blacked out in the e-mails, but the Perdue family, in an interview with The Herald-Dispatch on Sept. 28, acknowledged their daughter was the student in question.

The Herald-Dispatch made repeated attempts to interview Wyant and Templeton about the e-mails, but neither have responded.

The e-mails, which start in late April, showed that Templeton knew the situation could become political and even told Marshall officials that information may have been leaked to the media.

In the first e-mail correspondence April 23, Templeton told Wyant that West Virginia Treasurer John Perdue and his daughter met with her and Darlene Daneker, associate dean of students for the College of Education and Human Services. She told Wyant the family was concerned the student would not gain admittance into the Lewis College of Business without finishing the courses.

Wyant told Templeton that the student had not completed assignments on time and had not attended scheduled meetings.

"I have tried to set up several appointments with (her) and she has not come to see me," Wyant wrote. "(She) knew of the class meetings and had not attended a meeting. I will be glad to work with (her), Rosalyn, but (she) will need to complete the assignments and to date, (she) has not completed any. I think it will be very hard for (her) to do all the work (she) needs to do."

Templeton, about an hour later, sent an e-mail to Daneker, telling her about Wyant's e-mail that the student had not done the work or attended meetings.

Templeton also recognized to Daneker that the student's family name and positions could make it difficult. John Perdue's wife, Robin Perdue, is the director of the state's Public Employees Grievance Board.

"I know this situation is political; however we cannot give a student grades for two classes when (she) has not made an attempt to learn the material and earn the grades," Templeton writes.

She continued by telling Daneker that, "We should set up an accelerated learning experience for (her).

"We could work with (her) and once (she) completes the required assignments for each course, we could change the Incompletes to a letter grade," the e-mail stated.

At 9:37 p.m. April 23, Templeton e-mailed Wyant to ask how many assignments were required for each course and if the student would be able to complete it over the summer.

In Wyant's reply on April 24, she told Templeton that "It is something she can complete over the summer."

In e-mails dated May 5, Wyant asked Templeton to confirm that student would be completing the independent study with Templeton and that she was taking responsibility for the student's progress and grade.

"Please give (her) an 'I' for both courses, and I will do the grade changes, after (she) has earned them," Templeton replied.

John and Robin Perdue also confirmed with The Herald-Dispatch the meeting with Wyant and Templeton and recalled an agreement that Templeton would take over as instructor.

In the next correspondence June 17, Templeton told Provost Gayle Ormiston and Chief of Staff Bill Bissett about the change in instructor of record. Templeton also told them that Wyant told her information may have been leaked to the media about the student's situation.

"(Professor) Laura (Wyant) shared ... that she has heard an article is coming out in the Charleston paper showing how (Emily Perdue) was given grades without earning them, and comparing the situation to WVU and Heather (Bresch). Currently, (Emily) is registered under Laura's name with an (incomplete) and at the end of each course, I was going to complete the grade change.

"I offered to complete the two independent studies with (the student) and we have been meeting weekly since intersession," Templeton writes. "This was an agreed upon arrangement in a meeting with Laura, (the student) and (her) parents."

Wyant was the instructor of record for Ms. Perdue's two independent studies in the spring semester before Templeton took over in the summer. Ms. Perdue completed the work and was awarded two A's by Templeton.

In the June 17 e-mail, Templeton also told Ormiston and Bissett that she has stopped all independent studies with Wyant.

"At the end of the meeting and privately, I told Laura she was to shut down the old business and marketing programs and not accept any more students as independent studies."

There were no e-mails turned over to The Herald-Dispatch regarding this matter from July and August.

On Sept. 3, Daneker sent Templeton an e-mail informing her that the student's grades had been changed.

Then, on Sept. 8, Wyant e-mailed the registrar to say that she, not Templeton, received the grade change request form in the campus mail. She said she had not seen the work and could not change the grades. She also said that it was her understanding that Templeton would be responsible for finishing the course.

Wyant also sent e-mails to President Stephen Kopp and Ormiston to the same effect. Ormiston told her he would fully investigate the matter. He later told The Herald-Dispatch that he completed the review and found the work to be complete.

Wyant also e-mailed Faculty Senate Chair Cam Brammer on Sept. 24 to say that the grades were changed without signature or consent.

While Templeton has refused interviews, Bissett said the confusion over the grade change came from a clerical error. Templeton, he said, forgot to fill out a portion of the paperwork that would have listed her as changing the grades.

According to Marshall's Registrar, Roberta Ferguson, changing the instructor from professor to dean does not change the official instructor of record. That is why Wyant was still listed, she said.

"In the student information system, the grade sheet reveals the original grades awarded by the instructor of record," Ferguson said. "The instructor responsible for assigning the grades remains as the instructor of record for the class. This is standard procedure and maintains the historical accuracy of the database.

"(But) in situations where a dean is assigned to assume responsibility for completion of an 'Incomplete' grade, the Registrar's Office does not change the instructor of record in the database to maintain the integrity of the original assignment of grades. Therefore, the instructor of record on the grade change form may be different than the instructor in the database. This maintains the historical accuracy of the database and the original grade assignment."

Bissett said there have been 25 instances in the past year-and-a-half where a dean has taken over for a professor to see to the completion of a student's course.

Case is unusual, records reveal

BILL ROSENBERGER, The Herald-Dispatch

HUNTINGTON -- There are several different reasons a grade-change form would need a dean's signature at Marshall University.

But in only two instances since the spring of 2008 has a dean taken over the role as instructor, and both involved Dean Rosalyn Templeton.

One of the instances involved the recent controversy involving the daughter of West Virginia State Treasurer John Perdue. Templeton, the dean of the College of Education and Human Services, also took over as the instructor and finished out the course with another student in 2008.

This summer, Emily Perdue completed two independent studies with Templeton after receiving two incompletes from Professor Laura Wyant during the spring semester.

Wyant called for a Faculty Senate investigation Sept. 24, after the student's grades were changed and she was still listed as the instructor of record, though it was Templeton who finished supervising the independent studies under an earlier agreement. Wyant also has said she planned to file a grievance about the matter.

University officials and the Perdue family have maintained the situation was handled properly, and the student did not receive any preferential treatment.

The Herald-Dispatch, through the Freedom of Information Act, recently requested all correspondence from Wyant to Registrar Roberta Ferguson, President Stephen Kopp and Faculty Senate Chair Cam Brammer; all grievances filed against the College of Education and Human Services in the past five years; all correspondence involving Emily Perdue's grades in independent study courses; and enrollment in the college and entire university during the past five years. That information was supplied by Marshall officials.

The university did not comply with another request, which sought the number of times deans have been listed as the instructor of record for independent study courses over the past five years, with a breakdown of deans and the number of times Templeton has been listed.

Ferguson, the registrar who is in charge of that area, said computer records list the section and course number and grade given. A third column will list a new grade if a grade request form was completed.

But the only way to find out which students had grade request forms, which deans were involved and the reason was to go through stacks of student files from each semester. This week, Ferguson did provide a total of 36 grade change request forms filed since early 2008.

One of them was filed by Wyant, who while she was the chairwoman of the college's Division of Human Development and Allied Technology took over as instructor of a course for a student in a research methods class.

Five of the 36 grade change request forms were filed because the instructor made an error entering the student's grade. Six were filed because students completed internships but had not registered for academic credit. In those instances, deans or department chairs reviewed the materials to deem the grade change accurate.

A few forms were filed in response to grade appeals. Two were for withdrawals rather than failing grades because of medical reasons. And another student's grade was changed from a D to C because medical excuses were provided.

The School of Medicine had eight forms, most of which were incompletes changed to P's (pass).

The other 10 came from the College of Education. Nine were signed by Associate Dean Stan Maynard, giving credit for participation in the Teacher Academy or completing a practicum. The other was changed from an incomplete to an F because the student had not completed the work within one academic year.

Templeton signed another form as department chair, but only to confirm that a student's failing grade was changed to a withdrawal when a backdated withdrawal form was received.

The reasons for all the changes are listed in a box on each of the forms. That box was left blank by Templeton when it was turned into the registrar's office sometime after Emily Perdue completed her last session with Templeton on Aug. 11.

Ferguson said when that happens, staff is to look at the course and section number to determine who the original instructor of record is. She said that is done because not all signatures in the box for the new instructor to sign are legible.

In this summer's case, Wyant was the original instructor, and that's why she received the grade change request form in the mail and was asked to resubmit it.

"(Templeton) left the reason for making grade change blank, so it was sent back to the instructor of record," Ferguson said. "So (Wyant) sent a memo about it."

Templeton's office also was made aware of the mistake, and a new, complete form was hand-delivered. The grade change became official Sept. 3.

According to e-mails regarding the matter sent to The Herald-Dispatch under the Freedom of Information Act, Wyant sent a letter to Ferguson on Friday, Sept. 11, about the forms she received in her campus mail.

"The grade change forms are requesting grade changes for (the student) who was in two independent studies with me in the Spring 2009. I issued a grade of (incomplete) for each course for (the student) at the appropriate time at the conclusion of the Spring Semester. I have not seen any work completed by (the student) for either course. Therefore I cannot change the grade.

"It was my understanding that Rosalyn Templeton would be responsible for (her) courses and as such would assign a grade."

Ferguson said not long after she received Wyant's memo, she had to leave the office to tend to a family issue. But it kept her out of work the following Monday and Tuesday, and by the time she was able to get to the memo a week later, Wyant had already written to Provost Gayle Ormiston and President Stephen Kopp.

"I never had an opportunity to communicate with Wyant and explain why she got the forms back," Ferguson said. "When I came back, I was still thinking, 'I'll straighten this out with her.' But it was already above me."

Ferguson characterized grade change forms signed off by deans as "common," and students receiving incompletes even more so. She said the situation involving the state treasurer's daughter resulted from a clerical mistake that got blown out of proportion.

"I would have written Laura Wyant a response and explain to her what happened, and I really believe she would have been satisfied," she said.

October 4, 2009

Concord adds program for teacher

By Courtney D. Clark, Register-Herald Reporter

Concord University is working to build a better understanding and appreciation of American history with 90 West Virginia teachers and their students.

Dr. William O'Brien, project director of Concord's Beckley Center and off-campus programs, made the announcement Friday at the Tamarack Conference Center.

O'Brien unveiled plans for the kickoff to Prism-WV and America's Founders, a five-year, grant-funded professional development program. He says the program will be geared toward American history teachers in McDowell, Wyoming, Mercer, Monroe, Raleigh, Summers, Greenbrier, Fayette and Nicholas counties.

"We tried three times before finally being funded," O'Brien said, "but we have now created a consortium for the study of America's founding, and we're going to look at the Founding Fathers and the principles on which the nation was built.

"Prism came from the idea that we appreciate that young people come to our school and classrooms with a whole set of values, attitudes, beliefs and principles that constitute what growing up in West Virginia is about," he explained.

"We don't want to repress that as we move in American history. We want to value, treasure and embrace it. So the Prism is based on the idea of taking what our kids bring to us and using that as a teaching strategy to understand the flow and expanse of American history that will happen around them."

O'Brien said he believes teachers can build an appreciation for American history and learning if they can effectively connect what all the studies show children have trouble learning to what they know and believe in.

According to O'Brien, Prism-WV and America's Founders has already received funding in excess of \$1.6 million for its first three years.

The program will bring teachers and scholars together each summer for residential academy experiences, and then teachers will take one graduate class each year.

"Concord University is going to be designing these programs specifically for the teachers in this program," O'Brien said, "and what we're looking to do is enhance the visibility of American history and basically refocus on not only the founders in terms of the content, but also turn our teachers and students into historians."

Concord president emeritus Jerry Beasley added, "I think this really is a wonderful opportunity for teachers, but particularly for students. We've lost sight in many ways of how American history ought to be taught. I think this provides an opportunity for history

teachers not only to renew their knowledge but to find new and better ways of teaching. It's exciting to be a part of this."

O'Brien said Prism-WV and America's Founders will enroll 40 teachers in its first year, beginning next summer, adding another 50 the second year.

"We want to bring them together and build a sense of a team," O'Brien said. "We want these teachers to get to know each other, learn from each other, trust each other and like each other. Then we want them to relive the history they are teaching as much as possible because with that will come not only an understanding but an appreciation."

The director said he is asking for a five-year, serious commitment from the 90 teachers involved because the road they need to travel is a long one.

"The first thing we are going to do after today is send out an application and encourage American history teachers to apply for admission," he said. "We have a long way to go, but I believe very, very firmly that this program is going to take us that far.

"I think we can get people excited not just about American history but about learning in general. The ability is there for all of us to really turn things around. So if I sound like an optimist, it's because I am."