

11-7-2013

## Council of Chairs Meeting, November 7, 2013

Marshall University

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### Recommended Citation

Marshall University, "Council of Chairs Meeting, November 7, 2013" (2013). *Council of Chairs Minutes*. Paper 24.  
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COUNCIL OF CHAIRS, 2013-14  
Minutes of the Meeting on November 7, 2013, 3:30 p.m.  
Drinko 349; GC 134; CEB 102

1. Attendance:

23 Chairs/Division Heads: Mike Castellani (CHM), Harlan Smith (FIN/ECN/IB), Dan Holbrook (HST), Marty Laubach (SOC/ANT), Josh Hagen (GEO), Allyson Goodman (MC), Richard Kravchak (Music & Theatre), Steve Mewaldt (Psych), Sandra Stroebel (School Psych), John Schloss (SOP), Jane Hill (ENG), Margie McInerney (MGT/MKT/MIS), Rex McClure (incoming – Spring 2014 – MGT/MKT/MIS), George Davis (incoming – Spring 2014 – PSC), Allen Stern (AST), Asad Salem (ENGR), Penny Kroll (PT), Marybeth Beller (PSC), Maribea Barnes (Art & Design), Burnis Morris (SOJMC), Venkat Gudivada (CS), Kim Broedel-Zaugg (SOP), Monika Sawhney (PH)

Guest: Gayle Ormiston (Provost, AA)

2. Mike Castellani called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. and introduced Gayle Ormiston.

3. Gayle provided the attendees with a set of handouts: (1) The Agenda for the 11/6/13 Deans Meeting, which in particular highlights the two action items from the October 11th retreat on which deans and chairs will have significant input—the Academic Portfolio Review and the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); (2) Four pages of HEPC Compact data charts. The first page is the summary chart from the Compact 5-year reporting period that ended with the 2012-13 academic year. The next three pages are performance targets submitted to the HEPC for the next five-year Compact reporting period, covering three broad areas: Student Access, Student Success, and Impact, respectively. Included are the targets for the 2017-2018 academic year that have been suggested by the HEPC, along with the targets formally adopted by Marshall; (3) Two pages that contain broad ranging notes developed by Gayle to start the discussion on the academic portfolio review. These notes are not intended to determine the course of the discussion, but rather to get the discussion started. The deans and chairs face a January 14, 2014 deadline for an "approach" document, which will lay out exactly how academic units will complete the academic portfolio review.

Mike Castellani sent these materials to the Council prior to today's meeting; another copy will be attached to the Minutes when they get circulated to Council members after today's meeting.

4. Gayle began the discussion by reviewing the 2007-12 Compact Reports, as a lead-in to the targets MU will focus on during the new 5-Year Compact Period [2013/14 – 2017/18]. On the Student Access page, he highlighted a new access indicator: "Fall Low-Income Student Headcount," which includes all Pell Grant-eligible students. The number of such students has been rising since 2008-09, and as of Fall 2012 stood at 4,446. MU's formal 2017/18 target for this number is 4,000. Gayle then noted that as of Fall 2013 72% of the entire MU student body is defined as "financially needy." This includes the Pell Grant-eligible students and all those whose families do not meet the official expected family income contribution to their educational expenses.

5. We then turned to the Student Success page, and talked about "Developmental Education Outcomes." HEPC would like MU to reach the following target by 2017/18: 60% of those students requiring developmental math upon entry will pass this course and move into a regular credit-bearing MTH course. Given that we currently have a 48% success rate at the moment, our adopted target is 45%. Discussion turned to the

“remediation” options that have been and are being considered. At a very general level, the two basic options are (1) remediation work could be taken out of Marshall’s hands, and (2) Marshall could be held responsible for all remediation. Throughout the discussion on this topic that’s taking place at the HEPC level, there has been no effort to date to discuss linkages between the HS curriculum and the Marshall curriculum. We also need to make clear, to the HEPC and the State Legislature, the linkages that exist between the cost of instruction, the cost to Marshall, and the level of student preparation in HS.

6. We then turned to the Retention data on the Student Success page. Gayle highlighted a new reporting criterion identified on the page as “Full-Time First-Time Freshmen.” Our 2017/18 target, which matches the HEPC recommendation, is 77%. If we reach our target, then 77% of the students who start MU in the fall of 2017 are retained into Year Two anywhere within the WV Higher Education System – including both public and private institutions. In other words, we want 77% of our incoming full-time freshmen to still be in school, somewhere within WV, at the start of each cohort’s Year Two. This criterion matches up with the Promise Scholarship, which is good at any public or private institution of higher education within WV.

7. Still under Retention, we turned to the “Progress Toward Degree” data and targets. We noted an interesting correlation in the data: students who complete 30+ hours as Frosh are much more likely to graduate than students who do not. The realities our students face when it comes to work, family, and finances—and how these factors interact with freshman-year credit-hour completion—received extensive discussion. Gayle noted that we need to keep these realities in front of those in the State Legislature who focus solely on graduation rates. He also highlighted our Four-Year and Six-Year Graduation Rate targets: 25% for the 2014 cohort and 46% for the 2012 cohort, respectively. 25% is on the face of it a very low number, but the data for 2004-2009 show lower four-year graduation rates and hence that 25% is a reasonable target for the 2014 cohort. These statistics led into yet more discussion of the complications our students face while pursuing their education at Marshall. During the course of this discussion, Gayle noted that of all groups of students we bring in, the Metro students are the worst performers.

8. We then turned to the Impact page. The two indicators Gayle wanted to highlight were “Peer Reviewed Publications” (under Research & Development) and the Federal Student Loan Default Rate. The former indicator is new, and focuses right now only on research in STEM fields (Science, Technology Engineering, Math & Medicine). The latter criterion is one we all have to pay close attention to. Our three-year cohort default rate has been rising since 2011, and now stands at 13.5%. Our Target Default Rate for the 2015 cohort (over the three-year period following graduation) is 15%. This puts us in dangerous territory, however: if this default rate rises above 15% we lose financial aid privileges under Title 4. This is a statistic MU is going to have to watch continuously and study carefully.

9. In wrapping up this discussion, Gayle made three key points. (1) The HEPC Compact Targets are for MU as a whole, and are not broken down across colleges. Whether we meet these targets or not, in and of themselves these targets have no implications for the internal reallocation of resources. (2) There have been no consequences, to date, of not meeting Compact Targets. (3) We should think of the 2017/18 Targets, nevertheless, as a “prelude to Performance-Based Funding.” No concrete proposals are currently under consideration by the Legislature, and last year’s proposal never made it out of committee. As of now we don’t know what a Performance-Based Funding plan will look like, but we should expect that proposals for a Performance-Based Funding model will be developed going forward—and could possibly be tied to our 2017/18 Compact Targets.

9. We then turned to the Academic Portfolio Review. Gayle emphasized that we face a January 14, 2014 deadline for developing and approving a plan to conduct the Review. The Review itself is not to be done between now and January 14; our goal by January 14 is to have a specific, explicit plan of action that each academic unit will then work through in order to complete its Review.

10. Gayle then took us through his two-page Deans Discussion notes on the Review. What he has laid out here are his initial thoughts on how to develop the plan, which he hopes will serve as a catalyst for further discussion. What are the goals of this Review? On the one hand, money is important: There may well be a cost-cutting element to the process. On the other hand, “academic value” is just as important—maybe more so. This Review can give us a better understanding of how our programs benefit students in the long run, and enable us to connect our programs’ academic value to the money we need to run our programs.

Our first main topic of discussion involved identifying what’s already in place that would help us doing this Review, and how we might make use of these items. The 5-Year Program Review exercise is an obvious place to start. Are there ways to re-do, re-shape, or re-invent this exercise to make it more useful for units, colleges, and the university? What do current HEPC guidelines have to say about how we can conduct these Program Reviews?

As we worked through the list of what’s already in place, much discussion swirled around the Gen Ed Requirements. Participants noted the disconnect that seems to exist, in our students’ minds, between the Gen Ed curriculum and their majors. We need to develop our students’ understanding of the connections that do exist between Gen Ed and the upper-level major-based curriculum. As several participants noted, to do this we’ll have to get our students to think of a Marshall Education in broader terms than simply what it means for their first jobs after graduation. As long as our students think of their education in vocational entry-level job terms, getting them to understand and appreciate the relationship between Gen Ed outcomes and what they learn in their majors will be difficult indeed. One participant asked Gayle how, specifically, the Council could help in this regard. His response was that through the Academic Portfolio Review we’ll be able to identify important common elements across programs—which may then make the connections with Gen Ed more explicit, and explainable, to our students.

One question that Gayle reported is important to the deans is this: Are the degree programs we deliver programs of and for the future? Or are they of and for the past? As we engage in the Academic Portfolio Review exercise, we need to ask if we are indeed offering the key courses our students need to get them ready for the future.

In terms of departmental-level Portfolio Reviews, two issues Gayle emphasized were course duplication and program overlap. There do appear to be some instances of these problems across campus, and whenever it appears that duplication or overlap may be present what we are offering and why should be carefully studied.

Another aspect of the Academic Portfolio Review that will be important involves taking a Course Inventory. At the least we need to clean out the Catalog, to make sure the Catalog lists only those courses we expect to offer. We’ll need to examine course-sequencing within the major, and within colleges. Do our programs support our departmental and institutional Learning Outcomes? Are they student-centered? How do departments identify the key courses that make up a program, regardless of individual faculty interest? To what extent do programs have a “canon” that should be followed, according to their respective professions? These are all questions that could, or maybe should, be addressed in the Review exercise.

Faculty recruitment and hiring practices should also be part and parcel of our Academic Portfolio Review. During 2012/13 Gayle reported that 54 searches were conducted across campus, with 39 hires made. The other 15 searches have been continued into this year. With the budget cuts we are facing, can we continue to operate our searches as we have in recent years? Are we going to have to economize on our search efforts and target specific program-level needs very carefully in every hire we make? The chairs, of course, understand the need to hire for specific program needs; the only real issue going forward will be how to prioritize those needs at the program and college levels, and how to adjust recruitment-ad job descriptions accordingly.

Gayle concluded this discussion by making three points. (1) The Academic Portfolio Review is very much part of Marshall's HLC re-accreditation process. (2) In doing this Review, we want to identify the role every department plays in the Mission of the university. Each department, therefore, will have to prepare some sort of "niche statement" identifying where and how its programs contribute to the pursuit of the university's Mission. (3) The chairs are welcome to attend any of the Deans' Meetings listed on the handout (from November 13 through January 13), to participate in the Academic Portfolio Review discussion taking place at this series of meetings.

11. Richard Kravchak delivered a short report on what he's learned at this semester's AD meetings. Among other things, Richard noted that work being done on a developmental pilot project, which involves the possibility of creating 4-hour 100-level "stretch" courses that would include remediation. This is because HEPC is looking to reduce or eliminate separate remediation courses at 4-year institutions. The AD's are also discussing modifications to the Student Orientation program.

12. Mike Castellani gave a short report on the activity that's developed within the administration in the wake of our Campus Ethos Document – the document we prepared for President Kopp highlighting the day-to-day operational dysfunction we and the students must cope with. Mike, Jane Hill, and Harlan Smith met with President Kopp to discuss this document, and President Kopp in turn met with the VP's. The VP's were worried that we wanted immediate action, so Mike and Jeff Archambault met with the VP's to discuss the document, and our concerns, further. As a result of all this, we have gotten the attention of the upper-level administration. They realize that we are not angry with individuals but rather are very frustrated by a system. The VP's know, too, that we aren't looking for quick fixes but instead want a careful review of processes and procedures in order to improve the operational environment on campus.

At the HR level, PeopleAdmin is going live in January, and people are being trained to use it right now. In Finance, people are working on Travel and the p-card system. CFO Mary Ellen Heuton has requested a meeting with the Council to discuss what her unit is working on. And we've scheduled her in for our February 6, 2014 meeting (our first of the new year). The VP's as a group want to know what kind of "return document" we want. Mike and Jeff suggested that each VP could put together a "focus group" of deans and chairs to identify what can be improved and how. From our point of view, we're happy with the activity and thought that has been generated in the wake of our document, and look forward to helping develop improvements that can be implemented throughout the rest of this academic year.

13. Mike Castellani concluded his report by noting that he and Cam Brammer, via multiple meetings with the President over the past few months, can see that he's developing a long-term vision for Marshall in terms of what makes Marshall distinctive. In the context of the current Long-Term Strategic Planning process now

underway, the Council can play a role in helping to develop this long-term vision. Now's the time for us to embrace the process, jump into it, and take ownership when we're given the opportunity.