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Staff Council Minutes

Staff Council

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4-16-2020

## **The Minutes of the Marshall University Staff Council Meeting, April 2020**

Marshall University Staff Council

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## Marshall University Classified Staff Council Minutes

April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**Members Present:** Nina Barrett, Amber Bentley, Lacie Bittinger, Karena Burriss, Patty Carman, Samantha Fox, Carol Hurula, Dena Laton, Becky Lusher, Lisa Maynard, Mitzi Meade, Teresa Meddings, Missy Morrison, Denise Parks, Rodney Sanders, Marcos Serrat, Crystal Stewart, Justin Tyler, Eric Wallace, Tony Waugh

**Members Absent:** David Childers, Timothy Cline,

**Members Absent (Excused):**

**Guests:** Dr. Gilbert, Jaime Taylor, Bruce Felder, Lacy Ward, Brandi Jacobs-Jones, Mark Robinson

Interim Chair Tony Waugh called the meeting to order. Parliamentarian Becky Lusher verified there was a quorum.

### Dr. Gilbert – University President

Dr. Gilbert started by answering some questions that were sent to him ahead of the meeting:

*Have we decided on the location of the College of Business building?* – We tentatively have a location where the parking lot on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. is located, but it isn't fully confirmed yet. We have a P3 underway – a private public partnership where we are asking two firms to make proposals to use the Marshall Plaza land as a resource to generate some income as well as the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the College of Business Building. This would all be to help finance the cost of the building.

- We have around \$20-25 million donated from Brad Smith and we are hoping to build a building around the rate of \$45-50 million.
- We refinanced some bonds this week at a lower rate and will be saving around \$1 million a year for the next 10 years. We also extended the life of the bonds for another 10 years in order to take cash out. We took \$27.95 million dollars of cash out of that refinancing, which was restricted to be used for capital projects including the College of Business building and others approved by the Board of Governors. There was also a stipulation saying that the cash taken out must be used for a project within 3 years.
- The presentations from the P3 partners were delayed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and we hope to get that back on track in the next month or so to finalize and start planning for the building.

*Where are we doing as a University in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic?* – Dr. Gilbert proceeded to give the following outline of what has taken place:

Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> – Moved to online instruction for part of the remaining semester.

Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> – Marshall announced that the rest of the Spring Semester would be completed online, and postponed commencement. The students were told that they could come remove their belongings from the residence halls.

Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> – The WV Governor issued a stay-at-home order to go into effect at 8pm.

Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> – Campus started to shift to telework and suspended students from going into the residence halls to remove belongings.

Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup> – The Provost made an announcement that the Summer Intersession and Summer I courses would be all online.

Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> – The Provost made an announcement that courses could optionally be Credit/Non-Credit for the Spring Semester.

Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup> – Dr. Gilbert made an announcement to the students about the unused portion of their meals, housing, parking and rec fees. Calculating 6 out of the 16 weeks (5 weeks after Spring Break plus the week of cancelled courses before Spring Break) equates to a 37.5% refund. That amounts to almost \$4.5 million that we will be giving back to the students.

Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> – The Provost sent out a message announcing that all of summer school would be online.

- There are about 100 students still in the residence halls, either located in Freshman South or Twin Towers East and West.
- When the CARES Act was passed, there was a provision to give money to institutions of higher learning. Marshall is going to get \$9 million dollars from that. At least half of that amount has to go directly to students. The other half *could* go to students but should be used on items related to disruption of University operations due to the pandemic. We have to tally our cost associated with it. The federal government has put a strong emphasis on money going back to students. The amount going to the students will be over \$4.6 million, and closer to \$6 million. The rest may be used towards things associated with costs that Marshall has had to absorb due to changes in our operations because of the pandemic.
- Dr. Gilbert listed the following goals he has during this period of time:
  - To keep as many people employed for as long as possible and is financially feasible. Right now we are fine, but the longer this goes on the more likely we won't be.
    - We are also trying to give student workers the funds they would have received had they been working in the form of a grant.
    - Mark Robinson added that they will treat it kind of like unemployment for students who have been negatively affected by the pandemic.
  - To look at expenses critically and keep Marshall afloat financially.
  - To push enrollment and retention as hard as possible to try to get as many students to Marshall as possible next year.
    - This is where we could have trouble if we can't get students to return. About \$60 million of our revenue is from student tuition and fees.
    - National polls are expecting a 10-15% decrease in fall enrollment, especially as rising freshmen are considering taking a year off before starting. This would mean about a \$12-15 million dollar cut to our budget. They are looking at ways to economize, save and prepare just in case that happens.

- If we have to go all online in the fall, then it would mean no students paying for the residence halls and meal plans. That would cost us roughly another \$10 million.
- We will cut where we can but also strengthen central programs and stabilize our base.
- We are trying to give student workers the funds they would have received had they been working in the form of a grant, as well as pay the work study students.
  - Mark Robinson added that they will treat it kind of like unemployment for students who have been negatively affected by the pandemic.

*Do you have any information on what the outlook is for returning students? – Crystal Stewart* – We may see a 5-10% decrease, but they expect many to come back and finish.

*As you make plans for possible further budget cuts have you looked any at who could get cut first, or will that be based upon departments and need? – Crystal Stewart* – Dr. Gilbert said they have not looked at that yet, as they are trying to look at non-personnel things first. They have looked at furloughs for the entire campus for 4-6 days to see how much savings it could capture. That could be a less painful way of generating some money, but they will try to look at other options that would inflict the least amount of pain first.

*The planned location for the new College of Business building is a current staff parking lot. Are there any plans to give faculty and staff a different lot to park on? – Crystal Stewart* – Dr. Gilbert stated that there is another piece of property close by that could possibly be turned into a parking lot, but they haven't gotten that far into the planning yet. They will also look at the utilization of the other parking lots and how occupied they are on a regular basis.

*How will the \$4.5 million be distributed back to the students? – Lacie Bittinger* – We are going to look at the student accounts, and if they have a zero balance then the money will be put into their account and they can take the money straight out. If they have a balance then we will write them a check so that it isn't applied towards their outstanding balance. This is for students who are currently enrolled. Whatever is leftover will be distributed among the Pell Grant eligible students. One of the desires of the federal government was to give it to the neediest students. We will also create a hardship fund for students who are negatively impacted.

*Has there been any savings from campus being closed? – Lacie Bittinger* – There has been a little, but at this point the power and heat/cooling has remained on.

*Have there been any plans made for going all online in the fall? – Dr. Gilbert* said they are making contingency plans to do so just in case, but we are also planning and hoping for face-to-face classes to resume.

#### **Dr. Taylor – University Provost**

- We've looked at doing some student surveys to find out their plans, and Hanover Research has offered to survey our students at no charge. They would look at what students' plans are in the fall. This might be something we decide to do.
- Dr. Taylor thanked everyone involved in the changes that have had to take place.

- There is an email that students can send questions to regarding what is going on, and there are around 30 people on the list to receive those emails. At times we have been receiving over 100 emails a day.
- We are doing everything we can regarding recruitment and financial aid to make sure our enrollment stays where it is.
  - They are doing live virtual tours of campus.
  - The Financial Aid Office is working on developing 1-on-1 interactions with incoming students to help them get through their FAFSA packets.
- Dr. Taylor stressed the difficulty in making decisions as things have changed so rapidly. He added that they have also been looking to other institutions to see what they are doing.
- We are currently trying not to make decisions more than a month in advance, and as of right now we're planning for various options for fall including face-to-face, all online, and a combination of the two.
- We will possibly have a virtual Green and White Day in May, and Dr. Gilbert has recorded a greeting for that. He also plans to do a virtual bike tour of campus the following week.
- The Deans are doing some things to reach out to current students to encourage them to come back.

*The recruiters are still working for fall, so do we still look at what the numbers are in terms of applications and deposits?* – Carol Hurula – We're a little later this year in getting mailings sent out, so that affects the numbers. Currently we are down around 10% in deposits and overall we're down around 6-7% from last year.

*Have there been any decisions made on Orientation?* – Lacie Bittinger – It isn't final, but they are preparing to do a virtual orientation this summer.

*Will the Uni 101 classes be able to be virtual in the fall?* – Teresa Meddings – Dr. Taylor said he would have to talk to a few people to find out what their ideas are, but it should be able to be held online.

#### **Mark Robinson – CFO**

- Mark stated that the budget office has a form that needs to be submitted weekly to the financial managers to help understand the cost impact that the pandemic has had on the University. This will help us take advantage of any State or Federal assistance.
- Jim Terry is still working on finding out any actions taken as a result of the 20/20 Parking Survey that Staff Council had previously inquired about.
- Miriah hasn't been able to complete a report on the transparency on parking fees, but it's something they will eventually be able to do. Jim Terry did say that what parking fees *can* be used for is in State Code, if anyone would like to look that up.

#### **Bruce Felder – Human Resources**

- Here is the University COVID-19 resource page where employees can go to find assistance and help: <https://www.marshall.edu/human-resources/covid-19-resources/>

- Open enrollment for benefits is ongoing through May 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - Changes can be made online, or you can call them to request a paper form be mailed.
  - Packets should have also been mailed to employees already.
  - There are no forms or requirements for the Healthy Tomorrow's aspect of PEIA.
- Employees who are still reporting to campus are encouraged to be vigilant, sanitize spaces before and after use, etc. There has been an average of 100-115 employees still on campus.
- If an employee could have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus they are encouraged to communicate that to the COVID-19 team.

*Are there any plans for when employees will begin coming back to campus in force? – Katie Counts – We will have a coordinated effort with State and local governments on the best way to reopen things back up, and it will be a slow and phased process once we do.*

*One of the concerns with getting back into our offices is whether anyone from the public can walk in. This was a problem before we closed, we weren't worried about being in our own spaces, but rather whether other people were going to come in where we were. – Lacie Bittinger – Bruce said that he would relay that concern.*

## **Minutes**

February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Minutes approved as written.

## **Carol Hurula – BOG**

*\*Disclaimer: This is my interpretation of each meeting and presentation and are not verbatim conversations. Any questions or clarification, please notify me.*

### **BOG "special" Meeting on March 4, 2020**

- Approved BS major Aviation Program
- Approved special fee for "Intensive English Program" – in place of INTO fees
- Approved Bond refunding of Series 2010A and 2011 bonds
- Approved issuing Series 2020 and 2021 revenue bonds

Meeting adjourned 11:00am

## **Committee Reports**

**Election Committee – Nina Barrett** – The election has been postponed and will be rescheduled once staff are all on campus. For now Tony Waugh will continue to be the acting Chair.

**Legislative Committee – Carol Hurula** – No report.

**Personnel/Finance Committee – Lacie Bittinger** – No report.

**Physical Environment Committee – Crystal Stewart** – Crystal had asked for a follow-up to the parking issues discussed previously, which currently are still unanswered. They would like to see a replacement parking lot for staff if the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. parking lot is used for the College of Business building, as well as see our existing parking lots better maintained.

**Service/Staff Development Committee – Missy Morrison** – No report.

### **Announcements**

Teresa Meddings, ACCE Representative, forwarded the following information from the ACCE Chair regarding furloughs: Some schools have been talking about furloughs. I just wanted to make sure you all know that schools cannot furlough. There is no authority for it. So if you hear that-- tell them to check with HEPC attorney. The legislature had bills in both houses in 2017 to change that but it never passed either house.

Carol Hurula, Board of Governor's Representative, added that WV Code 18B-7-3 says the following regarding reducing workforce:

- "In the case of elimination of some but not all of the positions of the same job title, consideration shall be given to an employee's documented quality of work performance as demonstrated in performance evaluations of record (including, but not limited to, disciplinary records), skills, seniority as measured by years of service, or other factors, as determined by the board."
- Carol added that to her knowledge the University does not have a Board policy for this.

Minutes taken and prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Katie M. Counts, Program Assistant, Classified Staff Council

Minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tony Waugh, Interim Chair, Classified Staff Council

Minutes read by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Jerry Gilbert, University President