

Marshall University

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Staff Council Minutes

Staff Council

5-21-2020

The Minutes of the Marshall University Staff Council Meeting, May 2020

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Marshall University Classified Staff Council Minutes

May 21st, 2020, Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

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

Members Absent: Teresa Meddings,

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

- The back-to-work process of bringing employees back on campus will start the Tuesday after Memorial Day.
- Enrollment for Fall
 - They have been looking at the enrollments and deposits.
 - Deposits are running about 8% less than last year.
 - Returning students are down about 2%.
 - A recent poll asked students if they will return in the fall, and that indicated 5-10% of those polled may not return.
- Are furloughs likely at this point?
 - Furloughs for a *short* duration are possible.
- The budget workgroup is looking at different ways to come up with savings of about \$15-25 million for us for next year.
 - They have looked at short-term furloughs that would only impact people who make \$50,000 or more.
 - They have also looked at pay cut options that could affect people who make more than \$50,000. It would probably be a progressive amount as salary increases, meaning the larger the salary the larger the potential cut.
 - Looking at having a travel freeze and not allowing State funds to be used for travel for the next year.
 - Looking at position freezes and reductions in events on campus for the next year.
 - These considerations have all been discussed but have not come to the President to move forward with yet.
- There has been \$3000 given by an anonymous donor to establish the Bob Hayes Staff Awards.
 - This would be 6 awards of \$500 each.
 - President Gilbert asks Staff Council to come up with a way of awarding these.

- Football players can come back to campus to start voluntary workouts starting June 1st.
 - The NCAA has loosened the requirements previously stating student athletes couldn't be on campus.
 - There will be about 30 football players in the residence halls.
 - Players will come back and self-isolate for a week before being tested for COVID-19, and then they will be allowed to work out and train.
 - This is in preparation of a *potential* fall football season.
- Summer school enrollment is the same as it was last summer, even though it is all online.
- Campus buildings will remain closed to the general public until the Fall Semester starts. Card readers will be put on any buildings that didn't already have one.

Dr. Taylor – University Provost

- Academic Calendar
 - After speaking with other provosts across the State, Marshall plans to adopt the process that many other schools are also adopting. We will be modifying a face-to-face schedule that will begin at the regular time in the fall. Then students won't return to campus after Thanksgiving break, and finish the remainder of the semester online.
 - In the spring, WVU plans to start the semester a week late, and have no Spring Break. Dr. Taylor asked SGA how the students would feel about doing this at Marshall, and the students were strongly in support of it, especially as they are willing to make sacrifices to ensure they can return to face-to-face instruction.
 - Marshall plans to still keep the Labor Day break that creates a 3 day weekend, as well as the Friday of Spring Break, also for a 3 day weekend.
- Fall Semester Preparations
 - Classroom capacity will be cut down to half in all classes with movable furniture.
 - Classes with fixed seating has a potential to be cut by about a third.
 - We will have to come up with methods for teaching classes in which there are more students than there are seats.
 - Among the possibilities for achieving this, one prominent option will be to use Blackboard collaborate where you have half of the students in class one day while the other half is participating through Blackboard. Then the next class will alternate who is in-class and who is virtual.
 - There are three different workgroups that have been working on how to achieve different techniques for managing the reduced campus capacity:
 - A group that worked on lecture courses.
 - A group that worked on labs.
 - A group that worked on courses with a lot of student and faculty interaction and discussion.
 - We will be working a lot with Travis Bailey and Physical Plant on how to manage traffic between classrooms.
 - We will probably try to create a lot of one-way traffic and stairwells as well as entrance only and exit only doors.

- Close to making a decision on whether students will be required to wear a face mask in class.
 - There's a big difference between saying it's a requirement versus a recommendation. If it's a requirement then we have to have a process in place for what to do when they don't wear one.
- Once we've established what we expect for faculty, staff, and students then we will put it in the Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook, course syllabi, etc.

Mark Robinson – CFO

- Regarding reducing spending, we are currently spending less but we're focused more on what we have to do for next year.
- We don't know how many students will show up in the fall, and therefore we don't know what our resources are.
- The budget workgroup recommendations will go to the President that evening, and furloughs were not something they wanted to do since that puts a lot of burden on individual employees.
- There are some different proposals for salary reductions that increases the higher a salary is above \$50,000.
- Finance is trying to redo the budget right now.
 - Many individual units have already made some reductions and gotten rid of contracts and leases, etc.
 - At some point we will have to make a call on what we think we'll have for a budget so it can be approved by the Board.
 - Any salary reductions will hopefully be announced in early June.
 - They will be meeting with Financial Managers soon to figure out a critical path of expenditures for July, August and September until we know what resources we have.
- While Marshall is financially healthy on a balance sheet, we also had about a \$5-6 million structural deficit going into the pandemic.

Bruce Felder – Human Resources

- Are there any lists of who is included in the phases of returning to campus?
 - Each department has been submitting return-to-work plans to the Office of Health and Safety and HR, which have included names and percentages to align with the University's larger return to workplace plan.
 - In addition to each department continuing to track and report their own on-site numbers each day, those numbers are also being converted into percentages that are shared back with the divisional vice presidents on a weekly basis.
- The University return-to-work plan has been released and is on the COVID-19 website as well as having been emailed to all employees via University Communications.

- One of the pressing things in the return-to-work plan is a travel registry, which is another proactive attempt by the University to ensure everyone's safety. The following perimeters are reasons an individual would be required to complete the travel registry form:
 - If you will be travelling by plane, train, bus, other large forms of transportation, etc.
 - Attending events greater than 50 participants while on vacation.
 - Anticipate being in an area in which social distancing protocols are difficult to maintain.Once an individual fills out the form, they will then be given a recommended number of days to telecommute upon their return. The number of days could vary, up to 14 days depending on which reason above had been selected.
- The first return-to-work phase will begin the Tuesday after Memorial Day. Departments are encouraged to try and get up to 25% of employees back, but not more at that stage.
 - Every two weeks thereafter we will increase the number of employees returning by about 25% until we are nearly at 100% close to the 4th of July.

Some physical plant employees have asked if employees who have worked on campus through the pandemic will receive any sort of additional funds for their efforts like other places have done?

Apparently the Governor had given city workers a one-time bonus for it. – Justin Tyler – Mark stated he was unaware of any additional funds to be used for that purpose and would leave it up to HR as to whether or not it should be done. Bruce Felder added that he didn't want to take anything away from what our employees have done to come on site and perform essential functions. However, higher education is a different industry than some of the others who have done that.

Are there any plans for employees to telecommute for a few weeks after Thanksgiving Break after they have travelled for their holiday plans? – Lacie Bittinger – We haven't planned that far in advanced. Bruce stated that if there is some significant safety benefit that we can get out of that then we should leave the option on the table.

Minutes

April 16th, 2020 Minutes approved as written.

Committee Reports

Election Committee – Nina Barrett – No report.

Legislative Committee – Carol Hurula – No report.

Personnel/Finance Committee – Lacie Bittinger – No report.

Physical Environment Committee – Crystal Stewart – No report.

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

Announcements

Staff Council discussed the potential salary reductions, which would be intended to last for one year, as well as return-to-work plans.

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