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## COMMENTS ON EXECUTIVE BULLETIN NO. 1

The objective of Executive Bulletin No. 1 has merit. Marshall University has always placed great emphasis on working with students and providing quality education. The Faculty Senate is quite willing to assist with the draft and ultimately with the implementation of an amended proposal, but before the Senate can support this proposal several implications in the draft must be addressed.

All references to "release time" need to be changed to "reassigned time." Faculty are not released; they are reassigned to other duties. To suggest otherwise is to contribute to the erroneous perceptions held by some that the faculty does not work as diligently or as much as some other groups.

The underlying assumption of the entire document seems to be that only the time spent in the classroom is teaching time. Academic professionals have long understood that research and creative activities are not solely related to teaching; they are an essential component of quality teaching. Despite language in the proposal that states that it will "indicate the university's strong commitment to research and faculty development", the proposal seeks to limit those critical activities and the ability of Deans and Chairs creatively to foster research and creative activities.

The proposal also suffers from a general rigidity that fails to consider the diversity on this campus. For example, paragraph I. is not clear concerning how it pertains to the School of Medicine or programs whose teaching loads and research production are related to accreditation decisions. The inflexible position on reassigned time fails to acknowledge that a significant portion of it is directly related to students' education. Research and creative activities are in reality teaching in a nonclassroom setting.

### Recommendations and Issues Raised by Specific Sections:

#### Section I.

This paragraph lacks definition and flexibility. While most faculty currently teach twelve hours, the suggestion in the draft is that henceforth "all" will teach twelve hours. This fails to recognize that virtually everything that faculty members do is classroom related and that most reassigned time is also classroom related. The proposal shows no appreciation for specific needs of colleges or programs, e. g., the School of Medicine, the College of Business, the Ed. D. program, and graduate programs in general.

The role of the departments and the Deans in determining who teaches in their departments and colleges has been completely ignored. The department and the Dean should have a major role in the decision of whether an administrator is competent and prepared to teach. The use of administrators in the classroom will affect established university policies. For example, if a Dean or a President teaches a course in which a student appeals a grade, the appeal process would need to be modified to allow students a fair hearing.

It is more than curious that, while other portions of this proposal and numerous administrative statements strongly denounce the utilization of faculty in administrative positions, the proposal mandates that administrators do faculty work. It would seem that we are to assume that the administration believes anyone can teach, but that being an administrator requires a special talent and ability. Or the point may be that administrators are more competent and efficient than faculty.

Little apparent effort has been expended to determine the cost/benefit of having administrators teach. It may not be efficient from a cost/benefit perspective to have the Vice President for Institutional Advancement spending ten to twenty hours per week teaching rather than fund raising.

In addition, "administrator" needs to be adequately defined.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The following Section I. should be replace the original Section I.:

Faculty members are expected to devote their energies and time to providing quality education in a manner consistent with the mission of Marshall University. Administrators are encouraged to teach whenever feasible and of benefit to the institution. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, upon the recommendation of the appropriate Dean and department, will certify administrators as qualified to teach, but only the department and the Dean will determine if an administrator will teach a specific course in a specific department.

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## Section II.

The reason for the first sentence is unclear. At present perhaps the only person to whom it pertains is the Faculty Senate President and a small number of Department Chairs. The result of this sentence would be to have these individuals declared non-faculty. No rationale has been presented to support this action.

The second sentence attacks a problem that is far more apparent than real. Only infrequently have faculty at Marshall become full-time administrators and later returned to full-time teaching thus "creating" a new position in their department. Adopting this section would create havoc in departments whose faculty become administrators. Conducting annual searches for one year appointments is a unconscionable waste of time and money. The result of this paragraph could be to discourage Marshall faculty from seeking administrative positions at Marshall.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Rewrite the Section II. to read:

If Marshall University faculty members become full-time administrators at Marshall University, are replaced in their departments by full-time, tenure track faculty, and then wish to return to their department, all involved parties need to understand that the department may lose a position the next time a vacancy occurs.

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Section III.

The policy makes no provision for a department of two FTE. In determining the appropriate reassigned time and stipend for department Chairs, consideration needs to be made for factors other than merely number of faculty. These factors could include number of undergraduate majors, number of service courses and students taught, number and complexity of graduate programs, number of graduate students, and related activities of the department such as clinics.

This section clearly assumes that chairing a department is administrative work that should be done by faculty (which is inconsistent with the assumption in paragraph II that faculty can only teach). That is perfectly logical assumption. Since the Chair represents the faculty, it is also logical that Chairs should be democratically selected.

This policy draft makes no effort to explain why chairing a department is about the only administrative activity in which faculty should be involved. Being the advisor and coach for forensics can be as time consuming as being a Chair. Chairing a department is related to teaching, but supervising WMUL provides educational benefits to students. The proposal additionally makes no provision for program directors, many of whom have responsibilities at least as time consuming as some Chairs.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Section III. A. needs to be amended to read "Chairs of departments with two or fewer full-time equivalent (FTE) . . . ."

Add Section III. E. "College Deans may grant more or less reassigned time than suggested by the formula by considering such factors as number of undergraduate majors, number of graduate programs and students, related activities of department such as clinics."

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#### Section IV.

Although the language and intent of this paragraph are not clear, the concern is that support for research and creative activities is being undermined. The paragraph is too rigid. It does not allow Chairs or Deans to grant reassigned time if they can creatively do so without jeopardizing the mission of the department, college, or university.

Recognition needs to be made that research generates grant money and grant overhead is important and will become more important to the institution's budget. It must also be recognized that basic research may not generate grants, yet basic research is a fundamental component of the university.

The second paragraph suggests that if the university provides a faculty development grant to allow a faculty member to be reassigned a portion of his/her responsibilities, that that faculty member has no control over the remainder of his/her time. If a faculty member is reassigned from one-quarter of his/her teaching load, the university has no right to dictate what a faculty member does with his/her time other than to require that the faculty member devote approximately ten hours per week to the assigned activity and produce the results that the faculty member indicated he/she would in the proposal for the assistance.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Replace the first paragraph of Section IV. with:

Recognizing the centrality of research and creative activity to quality teaching and the role of a university in expanding the boundaries of knowledge, Marshall University is dedicated to enhancing the quality of the faculty by providing as much funding as possible for these activities. Faculty members are encouraged to secure external funding for these activities, and the university will provide technical support to faculty seeking external funding. Faculty reassigned time can be funded internally, externally, or through creative arrangements that support the mission of the university.

Delete the second paragraph of Section IV.

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## Section V.

With no attempt at justification, this proposal suggests cuts in Faculty Senate leadership that will cripple the functioning of the Senate. Dr. Gould's study of faculty senates in this area is inconclusive in that it does not indicate the true amount of investment other institutions make in their senates. It also does not include Ohio University where, like Marshall and WVU, the Senate President currently teaches one class.

The real question here is not what others do, but what is best for this faculty and this institution. No case has been made that cuts in the reassigned time are necessary. The current practice seems to be working to the satisfaction of the faculty. The university has publicly announced that it has dealt with our budget problems. There is no rationale for attacking the governance system, particularly on the basis of cost. One constant and largely unjustified complaint about the Senate system is that it moves too slowly. It will surely move even more deliberately if the Senate President does not have adequate time to perform his/her tasks.

Consequences of proposed cut in reassigned time are:

If the Senate President has a one-quarter reassignment for Senate work, that person would devote one-quarter of his/her time to that activity. In other words, the President would devote approximately two hours per day or about 45 hours per month to Senate activity. Based on the experiences of five years, that amount of time would be consumed by:

- a. Planning, conducting, and completing work created by monthly Executive Committee meeting - 6 to 8 hours per month.
- b. Planning, conducting, and completing work created by monthly Senate meeting - 10 hours per month.
- c. Dealing with phone calls from faculty who have questions, concerns, ideas, suggestions and/or complaints - 25 hours per month. These calls and return calls average at least twenty per day and require at least one hour per day. Faculty members have the right to think of the Senate President as their advocate and the one to whom to direct suggestions about university matters. Often these suggestions prove extremely valuable in the development or execution of university policy, and at times keep the university from stumbling into problems. This communication is essential to the welfare of the faculty and the university.

The remaining 2 - 4 hours per month must thus be used for all other activities, such as:

- d. Dealing with requests for committee action, appointments to various committees and task forces, assigning tasks to committees, responding to the mail, and other "housekeeping" items. These activities require at least one hour per day. Squeezing them into 2 to 4 hours per month would result in Senate activities that would necessarily be slowed.
- e. University policy currently mandates that faculty appointments to university-wide committees and task forces are the responsibility of the Senate President and the Executive Committee. Without adequate time to oversee that process, it is quite conceivable that appointments would be delayed with either of two results. The work of the group would be delayed, or administrators would make faculty appointments to the groups. Either way the faculty and the university would be poorly served. Committees would be informed of tasks as quickly as possible, but only as time allowed. Time to coordinate committee activity would be severely limited with the result that matters would take longer to reach the Senate and the decision making process would take longer.
- f. Training committee officers would be impossible with the result that committees would not be as aware of Senate procedures and deadlines as necessary. The result would be delays and unnecessary expense. These are not activities that could or should be handled by an administrative aide; these are academic decisions, and academic decisions reside with the faculty. If movement of work through the Senate were necessarily slowed, some might be tempted to ignore the governance system and the Faculty Constitution and implement and execute policies without faculty input.
- g. The Senate President currently sits on the President's Cabinet, the Dean's Council, the Multicultural Commission, the Salary Task Force, ad hoc committees as needed (such as the Hiring Freeze and Budget Advisory Committees last fall), at which the primary responsibilities are to present faculty input and to learn about issues being considered. There would be no time for any of these assignments without jeopardizing the quality of classroom instruction. In addition, the Senate President meets either regularly or occasionally with many administrators, who almost routinely expect the Senate President to be available whenever needed. That would be impossible under the current proposal. In short, the elected representative of the faculty would be unable to serve the faculty in these key

roles. The faculty voice through its elected leaders would be virtually silenced. The responsibility of observing, reporting and responding to major issues that affect the entire faculty is the Senate President's most crucial task. It could not be accomplished unless the decision were made to be unavailable for meetings with individual faculty members.

- h. Faculty involvement and coordination in searches for top level administrators would be severely restricted. This would not only be a problem for faculty, but it would also poorly serve the university. For example, during the presidential search last year the Faculty Senate and its President, not the highly paid consultant, uncovered several glaring problems with one candidate. The university would have been embarrassed had that individual been selected.
- i. The acknowledged rationale for cutting the reassigned time is financial/budgetary. However, the reality is that the true dollar savings for the university in cutting this reassigned time from nine to three hours per semester is \$3600-4000 per academic year. Such marginal savings cannot justify the intentional dismantling of the system of shared governance that has been built at Marshall University.

The Senate will accept Section V. B., but notes that no mention is made of reassigned time for the Advisory Council of Faculty representative. This is a particularly sensitive issue currently because the chair position of the ACF and the resulting seat on the BOT will be vacant on July 1. Marshall has an enormous interest in those positions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Amend V. A. to read:

Faculty Senate President: Nine hours reassigned time per semester plus six hours reassigned time during the summer.

Add V. C. Advisory Council of Faculty Representative: three hours reassigned per semester and, if elected to chair the Council and a seat on the Board of Trustees, more to be negotiated with the university President.

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## Section VI.

This paragraph involves two top-level administrators in micro-management. The university President and the Vice President for Academic Affairs have more important matters to consider than the scheduling of individual faculty and

classes. Deans, Chairs, program heads and others who have responsibility for offices or programs must have control over matters related to reassigned time as it pertains to their areas.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Revise the Section VI. to read:

All academic administrators may grant exceptions to this policy in order to create greater flexibility and to utilize better the talents and expertise of the faculty of Marshall University, providing that the decision maker's immediate superior approves of the decision and that the decision enhances and promotes the mission of Marshall University.