



Shepherd University Assembly Minutes

Monday, September 13, 2021

Erma Ora Byrd and Electronic Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81149338020>

- I. **Call to Order** Call to Order at 4:19 p.m. (with 91+ attending via Zoom and 20+ in EOB) – Moderating was **Parliamentarian Lovelace** in lieu of Professor Benefiel, with Moderator/Parliamentarian Lovelace asking for a change in the agenda to move the Best and Kendig/Broomall updates before Summary Assembly Reports (see below).
- II. **Approval of Minutes of the Spring Assembly Meeting** – See Minutes at <https://www.shepherd.edu/assembly/assembly-minutes>. Approved without change.
- II. **President’s Report – Dr. Mary J.C. Hendrix**

- **President Mary J.C. Hendrix** welcomed all and proceeded to deliver her report stressing the significance of this fall semester as a “new beginning” (PowerPoint available as Assembly website). Dr. Hendrix welcomed the new faculty at Shepherd: **Assistant Professor of Chemistry Dr. Haley Albright, Visiting Assistant Professor of Computer Information Systems Dr. Tai Cleveland, Assistant Professor of Art & Graphic Design Mr. Andrew Dolan, Lecturers of Mathematics Dr. Robert Monahan and Ms. Nafiseh Jahnanbakht, and Assistant Professor of Biology Dr. Sara Reynolds**. New senior staff include Executive Director of University **Communications Dana Costa and Director of Marketing and Digital Strategy Heidi Schlag**. Dr. Hendrix noted that the Student Health Center and the entrance to Ikenberry Hall had been renovated, as had the Rams Den. These needed costs were paid for by donors or Aramark pledged investment commitment to the University. Dr. Hanrahan was thanked for progress made on the Provost position search, moving forward toward completion. Karen Green was likewise thanked for her service as University Ombudsperson, and Dr. Hendrix welcomed Dr. Jeri Crawley-Woods who would assume this task. The President noted that HLC preparation had moved forward, and she expressed appreciation to Dr. Jason Best, Sara Maeny, and others involved in the preparation and co-authorship of this important document (see update below).

- **Dr. Kelly Hart, Vice-President for Enrollment Management**, talked about enrollment numbers and the new “face-to-face” recruitment. Dr. Hart also complimented the marketing team that underpins recruitment. Dr. Hart shared the 2020 and 2021 fall enrollment numbers, with Graduate School numbers continuing to provide some enrollment increase for Shepherd to counter the impact of Covid on undergraduate numbers (see the President’s PowerPoint for specifics). Spring 2022 projections bode well for boosting enrollment numbers. Dr. Hart noted that the Visionpoint contract has been cancelled; though we gleaned some tangible resources from what they were able to provide, the fit for Shepherd was not appropriate. A new marketing team, 3Enrollment Marketing, providing better market analysis,

assessment, and more “savvy” in the realm of the digital landscape, would instead be used to market the institution. Their approach would be a multi-focus strategy targeting individual students.

- **Pam Stevens, Vice-President of Finance/Administration** presented the budget overview. Stevens noted that that CARES will offer support that will help us get through low enrollment numbers. Operating expenses have been affected by Covid but are stable. The focus on energy savings has contributed to this stability, with Shepherd’s cash on hand likewise sound for continued operation of the institution. The outlook for 2022 bodes some improvement (see the Stevens’ report detailing phone savings, position freeze, LED light replacement, etc. in the President’s PowerPoint).

- **Holly Morgan-Frye, Campus Health Task Force Chair**, reported on the Covid situation for the campus, with a 62% student vaccination rate and an 80% employee vaccination rate for Shepherd, while West Virginia Covid statistics are increasingly dismal right now. Likewise, the indoor mask mandate which the University has instituted should offer protection for both students and staff. Frye noted that testing is available and ongoing, as will be vaccine boosters when approved by the State. The Covid-19 Dashboard numbers are hopeful that Shepherd’s strategy is working.

- **Dr. Hendrix** closed her report by updating the Assembly on East Campus Loop Development which is currently on hold due to national rise in the cost of materials and construction costs. While the project is on hold, new financial models are being reviewed. Dr. Hendrix noted a number of projects have been submitted at Senators Manchin’s and Capito’s invitation. Many Shepherd staff and faculty worked hard toward this end, with proposals involving campus security and safety infrastructure, historic preservation, dual enrollment initiatives. Finally, President Hendrix left us with the **Honoring the Past and Transforming the Future** initiative of this propitious year of Shepherd’s 150th Celebration.

III. Update on HLC – Dr. Best

Dr. Best updated the university on HLC by addressing a series of questions that have been recently submitted. Suffice it to say, preparation has involved 5 areas: assurance of mission, integrity, teaching and learning, resources, and planning. Best noted there were 5 writing teams working on this effort. At this point some 667 pieces of evidence are in place, and we are within the word compliance on all reports. In terms of federal compliance, the writing team for this component has a 250-page limit. Thus HLC is on track in preparation for the site visit. In terms of surveying students, last Tuesday marked the opening of the HLC student survey, with results coming in mid-October. A 5-person HLC team will be on campus November 15-16, composed of faculty, deans, directors and VPs—some individuals coming from institutions similar to ours. In all, Dr. Best is positive and asks each of us to engage in this significant effort for the University.

IV. Update on Strategic Plan – Drs. Kendig and Broomall

Dr. Kendig presented, as Dr. Broomall is on sabbatical. This strategic plan is based on measures, metrics, and outcomes assessment. Those spearheading the four areas of focus are Dr. Kelly Hart and Dana Costa for Shepherd’s Image; Dr. Hanrahan and Holly Frye for the Student Experience; Alan Perdue and Marie DeWalt for Employee Experience; and Jack Shaw and Shelley Schaffer for the Campus Experience. Dr. Howard-Bostic has contributed to the inclusiveness and diversity component, while Sarah Maene has been heroic providing the numbers necessary for the **Strategic Plan: Transforming the Future**.

V. Summary Reports to the Assembly with Questions – See written reports below.

A. Advisory Council of Faculty—Dr. Guirguis

“The Advisory Council of Faculty (ACF) held its annual July retreat over Zoom. There were two main items on the agenda: the global initiative proposal and the ACF's legislative issues for the 2021-22 academic year. As previously reported, the ACF wants to advocate for a **globalization bill** that would, among other things, assist higher education institutions in their recruitment and retention of international students. Special guests Clark Egnor, the HEPC's Coordinator of International Programs, and Matt Turner, the HEPC's Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration, joined the retreat to participate in the further discussion of this matter. It was suggested and agreed that the proposal should be presented to legislators as a "global talent initiative" rather than a "globalization bill," consistent with the fact that it aims not only to attract international students to West Virginia, but also to keep talented young people in the state after graduation, especially in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields. The demographic downturn in West Virginia and the cumulative effects of COVID-19 on university finances and enrollment rates are factors that add to the importance of this initiative.

In addition, the ACF developed the following **legislative goals, which were endorsed by the Faculty Senate on August 30, 2021:**

1. Ensure that higher education is funded to develop the educated workforce needed to grow the state economy.
2. Support an initiative to recruit and retain global talent in West Virginia.
3. Ensure that the changing employee healthcare needs are effectively and continually met.
4. Ensure transparent and fair employment practices by strengthening due process protections, enhancing shared governance, and preserving tenure and academic freedom.
5. Support the improvement of the state's broadband coverage.
6. Ensure institutions of higher education are able to regulate the safety and security of their campuses.”

B. Faculty Senate –Dr. Heidi Hanrahan

“Senate Report for Fall Assembly

- 1) The Senate had its first meeting of the semester on Monday, August 30.
- 2) We elected officers, chairs, and committee representatives. A full list of those positions can be found on the Senate website. <https://www.shepherd.edu/senate>
- 3) Our agenda for the upcoming year looks to be focused on work ranging from student evaluations to sponsorship of faculty from other countries to, of course, the continuing response to COVID.
- 4) At the August 30 meeting, the Senate voted to meet via Zoom for the rest of the year, but we will revisit the topic at the semester's end.
- 5) Dr. Hanrahan will send out highlights after each email and approved minutes are posted on the website. As always, contact your senators for more information.”

C. Advisory Council of Classified Employees—Mary Beth Meyers

“Annual Retreat was held in Canaan Valley July 19-20 with representatives from 17 institutions present. It involved intense training including grievance procedures, higher education finance, serving in multiple staff leadership roles, administrative exemption review, and higher education legislation history and recent updates.

A very important topic to the ACCE - how can we best represent all **none executive** staff employees.

Elections were held for officers. The new officers are as follows:

Jenna Derrico, Chair-WV Northern Community College

Amy Pitzer, Vice Chair-Concord University

J. Christopher Gray, Secretary-Southern WV Community and Technical College

Goals for the ACCE Include:

1. Working with state policy makers at the district level and in Charleston to increase funding to higher education.
2. Promote a stable revenue source for PEIA without loss of benefits.
3. Educate staff councils on how to develop strong on-campus leadership for the betterment of the institution's shared governance."

D. Classified Employees Council – Cecelia Mason

"The Classified Employees Council (CEC) has met every month since April 2020 via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions. CEC has decided for the time being to continue meeting via Zoom. One positive side effect of hosting virtual meetings is that many more employees, including classified, non-classified, and faculty, have been able to attend and participate without leaving their offices.

1. The CEC had elections in April. The newly elected chair left the University for another job, so a new election had to be run in late July/early August. **Current CEC officers are Cecelia Mason, Chair; Jayne Angle, Vice Chair; Sharon Carpenter and Theresa Smith, Secretaries; Mary Beth Myers, Representative to the West Virginia Advisory Council of Classified Employees; and Ramona Kissel, Representative to the Board of Governors.**
2. The most recent count shows there are 254 total full and part time staff employees—130 are classified and 124 are non-classified. There is ongoing concern that the number of classified employees continues to erode, making it more difficult to engage people in CEC while creating a growing group of employees who aren't able to participate in or benefit from CEC programs and the representation CEC provides through the structure of shared governance. CEC has continued to offer meetings open to all employees, both staff and faculty, and thanks to participation by Dr. Hendrix, Holly Morgan Frye, Pam Stevens, and others, the meetings have served as information and discussion sessions that have helped keep the campus community up to date on issues such as COVID-19 policies, enrollment news, and budget issues.
3. The CEC is updated its bylaws (constitution) to reflect changes in the way elections and meeting are being held. Elections are now done electronically and meetings have been virtual for more than a year.
4. CEC awarded three scholarships totaling \$3,500 to three students who are children of current classified employees. Two students received \$1,000 each and the third student received \$1,500 each. Scholarship amounts are determined by need.
5. The Staff Development Committee received wonderful news from Dr. Hendrix and Pam Stevens after the August meeting when a discussion took place about how much the staff development fund has dwindled in recent years as budgets have been cut. Dr. Hendrix has infused the fund with additional money that will allow CEC to help more staff who are enrolled in classes with reimbursements for educational materials such as textbooks and class fees. More than half the

budget is earmarked for classified employees who are not currently enrolled in university classes so they can be reimbursed for expenses for professional development opportunities such as seminars, workshops, and certifications. CEC encourages all classified staff who are interested in taking part in continuing education, training, and college classes, to visit the [Classified Staff Development webpage](#) to learn more.”

E. Student Life Council – Rachael Meads No Report until Spring.

V. Adjournment – Dr. Lovelace

Respectfully Submitted: Dr. S. Bailey Shurbutt, Assembly Secretary