

Classified Employee Council Minutes

11.9.21

Council Members Present:

Cecelia Mason, Jayne Angle, Sharon Carpenter, Ramona Kissel, Rachael Meads, Alex Stevens, Theresa Smith, Melody Gillespie, Jenny Lind, Mary Beth Myers

Council Members Absent: Teresa Newcome, Sharika Abdul-Muhaimin, Katherine Gillis

Guests: Ken Harbaugh, Kylee McMillan, Lori Moy, Sarah Speck, Pamela Stevens, Shelley Shaffer, Richard Crea, Heidi Hanrahan, Valerie Wright, Missy Welsh, Ann Hoover, Holly Morgan Frye, Faith Rice, Heather Barnes, Brian Hammond, Emily Christian, Marie DeWalt, Jacquelyn Flucker, Eric Lewis

Guest Speaker: Eric Lewis, Chair, Board of Governors (BOG)

CEC Chair calls the meeting to order.

CEC Chair introduces the guest speaker, Mr. Eric Lewis, Chair of the Board of Governors.

Eric Lewis:

Thanks everyone on behalf of the Board of Governors for the hard work getting the university through the ongoing COVID crisis.

According to Shepherd University's COVID dashboard, cases on campus are limited to only one employee and one student at this time.

There has been a nationwide trend of decreasing enrollments in higher education for several years now.

The BOG instituted a task force to look at every aspect of the university to determine where money can be saved and/or raised. One of the Task Force committees identified over one million dollars-worth of non-personnel cost-savings on things like the garbage contract. Everyone pulled together and last fiscal year, for the first time since 2014, the university was cash-flow positive. A lot of that had to do with the CARES money that came in and also the cost savings.

The marketing crew under the management of Dr. Kelly Hart, VP for Enrollment Management has succeeded in getting applications up over 80%. The BOG has allocated additional funds for the marketing initiative.

New members added to the Board of Governors are...

- Dr. Timothy Nixon, faculty representative
- Governor appointed Jonathan (Jay) Mason, '08 former Shepherd quarterback and Captain of the football team 1992-94. Commercial realtor and president of the Frederick County, MD Board of Education. He brings experience to us from the K-12 side.
- Susan Mentzer-Blair, '72, is a retired high school guidance counsellor from Frederick County, MD. Brings a lot of experience with recruiting students.
- Karl Wolf, '70, who has dedicated his life to Shepherd. Great addition to the Board.

It is a very active Board and we are excited about the future of the university.

Question from CEC member- Is there any more talk about contracting out Facilities?

Answer from Eric Lewis: There has been no further discussion since two years ago when the proposition was analyzed.

Question from CEC member- Is the Board working with local legislatures?

Answer from Eric Lewis: The Board works closely and constantly with several legislators. At the state level, we are lucky to have Shepherd Alum, Eric Householder from Berkeley County on the State Finance Committee; Paul Espinosa, Majority Whip, from Jefferson County is a big Shepherd supporter; we have Patricia Rucker on the Senate side, chair of the Senate Education Committee; Delegate John Hardy who grew up in Shepherdstown; Senate President, Craig Blair from Berkeley County; Chair of the Senate Judicial Committee, Charles Trump, is from Berkeley Springs, Morgan County. They are all very pro-Shepherd and that is very helpful as we fight for our legislative dollars, as we look at programs coming down the pike. They are always asking the BOG what we think.

WV shows a budget surplus. It helps that natural gas prices are very high. We shouldn't have to fight off budget cuts like we have in the last couple of years.

Question from a guest: Do you know about the future funding formulas?

Answer from Eric Lewis: We do not know about the funding formulas. We have been working on trying to get a more fair and equitable funding formula for the last few years. COVID derailed a lot of things. We will check back in on Senator Rucker and others on whether or not they will pick back up on a formula. Shepherd picked up more funding in the last two or three years relative to the other schools, which made it more equitable. Senator Manchin and Senator Capito listed seven of our projects for earmark funding, which are funds specifically for governmental or non-profit organizations. Federal dollars would help with projects that we don't have the funds to do ourselves. The legislators really do care about Shepherd and know the economic impact Shepherd has on the Eastern Panhandle and on the state, so they want to do what they can to help us.

Question: Are you concerned about the university's employee turnover rate?

Answer from Eric Lewis: The high turnover rate is not just in higher education, it's everywhere and due in part to labor shortage caused by a variety of reasons. The Board seeks a good relationship where the university's employees feel valued. We have to work within the constraints of our budget.

Question: Are university salaries keeping up with the market?

Answer from Eric Lewis: The Board regularly reviews salary levels and the hourly rate levels versus the market and higher education peer groups. It comes down to running a university that gives a top notch education in a way that we can sustain ourselves cash-flow positive. Universities all over the country are struggling with this. In Pennsylvania four schools in the PSAC will essentially consolidate their entire administrative functions to try and save money. If we can get enrollment headed in a positive direction, it will lead to a positive cash flow which we can then invest in our employees.

The Board of Governors will meet again in mid-December.

Question: Do you look at the reasons why employees leave Shepherd? Does the BOG visit the campus to fully understand what the campus does on a day-to-day basis?

Answer from Eric Lewis: To the first part of the question, as part of the Human Resources process, exit interviews are conducted to determine why someone is leaving. The Board challenges the leadership team and the president on why employees leave. They monitor and report to the BOG. Everyone has different reasons for leaving.

To the second question, I live in Shepherdstown. I'm on campus all the time. Several Board members are involved in different aspects of the university. We are lucky to have a Board that lives close to the university and participates.

The Board's role is not to run the university on a day-to-day basis, but rather to set policy, provide the university with the resources it needs to thrive, and to listen.

Mr. Lewis says his door is always open and he wants to hear from people. He encourages people to speak out to the Board and make suggestions. He wants people to point out things the Board may not know. He offered for people to contact him directly by phone or email. He is happy to discuss issues, listen, and provide insights.

The Chair thanks Mr. Lewis for taking the time to talk to the Council.

NEW BUSINESS

Pam Stevens, VP for Finance/Admin, said the employee appreciation award is being funded partly by the Cares Act and is a show of appreciation to all half and full-time employees. Dr. Hendrix's intention is to show appreciation for employees who were on the payroll on June 1, 2021. These employees helped the university get through COVID. The monetary award will be added to the December 31, 2021 paycheck and is subject to taxes. It is a one-time award for faculty and staff.

FOR CLARIFICATION, AN EMAIL SENT BY MARIE DEWALT, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES STATES THE FOLLOWING:

As a follow-up to the message that President Hendrix sent earlier today about the one-time "boost" to paychecks, I want to share the analysis provided by the Finance Office of how the pandemic salary supplement amount will be established for Non-Classified and Classified staff recipients.

The pandemic salary supplement is established for Non-Classified and Classified staff who are .5 FTE or above, at one of these levels.

- *Those employed by May 31, 2021 are designated to receive \$1,000.*
- *Those employed on or after June 1, 2021 are designated to receive \$500.*

The Interim Provost has communicated separately with faculty to describe the parameters for their payments.

Question: Why can merit pay not be a one-time award instead of adding it to a person's base salary?

Chair interjects: Another question is from someone asking why the pay raise is also going to those not working during COVID. Could you (Pam) combine an answer to both questions.

Answer by Pam Stevens: The money is not a pay-raise, it is an employee appreciation award. Some people carried meals to COVID-positive students and were not paid for their time. I.T. worked around the clock to make sure classrooms were ready. People have sanitized rooms and taken COVID-positive students from one room to another. The appreciation award is not specifically COVID related, but Dr. Hendrix has asked the Board of Governors every year for the past three years if a pay raise can be given to employees, but the BOG said there was no money for raises. COVID hit around the time Shepherd's financial situation began to improve and had a huge financial impact on Shepherd and every school throughout the state.

As for merit pay, it probably would have happened if we hadn't had COVID because HR was working on an employee evaluation program that would guide the process.

The Board of Governors said several years ago that they would like to see merit raises, not just across the board raises. We didn't have the funds to do it. Dr. Hendrix is doing everything she can to get us to that place.

Shepherd is trying to get the revenue up. The revenue is enrollment. Enrollment drives the housing, room and board, auxiliaries. Everything starts with enrollment. Cannot rely just on appropriation to do pay increases.

In answer to another question, Pamela Stevens stated that Aramark employees will not receive the one-time appreciation award because they are an independent business.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve given by Rachael Meads, seconded by Jenny Lind.

Council voted to pass the Consent Agenda.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ACCE Rep., Mary Beth Myers said there will be an ACCE meeting on November 15th in Glenville, WV. She gave a presentation at the last meeting to the HEPC.

ACCE Chair Jenna Derrico gave a presentation at the October meeting of the Higher Education Policy Commission.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Suggestions for speakers. Chair is working on the list and other suggestions can still be made.

Motion to adjourn by Jayne Angle, seconded by Jenny Lind.

Council voted to adjourn the meeting.

The next CEC meeting is set for December 14, 2021 at 1:00PM on Zoom.