

**West Virginia State University
Advisory Council of Faculty Report
Faculty Senate Report**

**Friday, October 9, 2009
Dr. Sean A. Collins
ACF Representative**

The Advisory Council of Faculty met on September 17 at the HEPC headquarters in Charleston.

Bruce Flack discussed a new initiative enhancing the Regents Bachelor of Arts degree. The initiative is called "RBA Today" and its goals are to incorporate areas of interest, expand course offerings (including online offerings), offer different time frames (e.g., 6 week courses, 8 week courses). To seed this initiative, the HEPC is offering 2 grant initiatives to build upon this plan: up to for \$50K multi-institution grants for building programs in Organizational Leadership. There are also grants for up to \$25K for developing individual courses that can contribute to the beefed up regents degree program. The request for proposals is posted on the HEPC website (<http://wvhepcnew.wvnet.edu/>).

Separate from the RBA initiative, Mr. Flack also discussed various study abroad programs, most notably for study in Turkey and Quebec, and regarding grant opportunities available for developing study abroad programs and collaborations.

Chancellors Noland (Baccalaureate) and Skidmore (CTC) also were in attendance.

Chancellor Skidmore spoke of the difficulties involved with the separations of CTC's and Baccalaureate institutions- most significantly with regard to the transfer of credits. Additionally, he has expressed an interest in reinforcing the differences in the missions and goals of 2-year and 4-year institutions. He was very concerned about the contentious breakups of some-sister institutions (sound familiar?- its not just us) and expressed the need for collegial relations between 2-year and 4-year institutions in the very foreseeable future in light of the budget shortfalls that are right around the corner.

As an effort to get more non-traditional students, West Liberty has instituted a program called "TRY College", whereby interested members of the community can occupy seats in classes that are available (i.e., classes not fully registered) for no credit as a way to "try" college and get a feel for the experience of being a student while not being fully invested financially (the hope being that they will be more willing to register for classes once that initial intimidation or fear of being in a college classroom is overcome).

Chancellor Noland spoke primarily of the current budget shortfalls and how they will affect salaries for faculty. Most significantly, he told us that the probability of a salary increase for the upcoming year (or 2 if you count really well) is next to nil. According to the Chancellor, the only aspect of state government not affected by the budget is education (because of the stimulus backloading our budgetary cuts)- but as we are well aware, this will only be for the next 2 years. In year 3, we will experience cuts on the order of at least 8% and all at once. Other government

agencies will have felt cuts in each of the three years – his thinking is that there may be a backlash from other agencies if education employees (faculty) received raises while others did not. He expressed a need for budget planning to prepare for the big cut in year 3. He gave no real hard suggestions; only that planning will be necessary and hopes that by that time there will be contingencies in place to insure that it is a one-time cut that may be able to be buffered.

Jim Richards, the information security officer for the State spoke to us about a webinar on computer security to be held on October 19. October is National Information and Cyber Security Month and from 9:45AM – 3:00PM there will be an online workshop/webinar covering various aspects of computer and data security. Governor Manchin, Ira Winkler, Patrick Gray, Perry Carpenter and others will be speaking- the actual workshop will be held at the Capital Complex, but anyone can view it either in real-time or afterwards electronically. If watching in real-time, one will need to register in advance at the following website address (www.wv.gov/services/pages/infosec.conference.aspx). From 10/20 on, the program can be viewed from the above website without registering. It was strongly advised that a room with a projector be set up so that many people could watch the program at once.

Following Chancellor Noland's discussion (he had to leave early), possible solutions/alternatives to raises were suggested, including one-time bonuses (as opposed to a true salary increase). Certain institutions (Shepherd, most notably) were very concerned about their capacity for retaining faculty if no salary increases were provided.

Another issue was the question of the institutional contributions to retirement, and if an alteration to that could be provided as an alternative to a salary increase in that it would increase an individual's take-home pay while not increasing his/her salary. It was noted in either case (raise or contribution change), that a school's Board of Governors has the power to instruct the institution to provide a pay raise or to change the institution's contributions to the retirement plan.

Finally, the ACF is asking that the faculty senates for each of our member institutions vote in support of our legislative agenda for this upcoming academic year. Note that this does not represent the totality of issues we will bring to the legislature, only those major ones that we will be focusing on. They are listed on the next page. Thank you.

*ACF Legislative/HEPC/CTCC
Issues for 2010*

◆ Increase Legislative State Funding to the Regional Average in Order to Achieve the Goals of the CTCC's "Target 2010" and the HEPC's Master Plan "Charting the Future, 2007-2012":

•Economic Growth - higher education increases earning potential and provides a higher rate of investment return than any other economic stimulus;

•Access and Affordability – increasing state funding (scholarships, research, capital improvements, etc.) reduces the burden on students and facilitates access.

•Learning and Accountability - retention of nationally qualified faculty and maintenance of quality programs are key to quality student learning;

•Innovation - appreciative and enthusiastic legislative support is essential for improved efficiency and innovation in education.

◆ Fulfill Legislative Mandate from §18B-6-2 that requires Higher Education Faculty to Advise the HEPC and CTCC Councils:

•Include non-voting Faculty and Staff representation on the Councils

•Increase communication and participation of the ACF with the Councils and Chancellors.

◆ Provide Relief from Rising PEIA Premiums

◆ Seek a amendment to the WV Constitution that would allow Higher Education employees the right to serve in the legislature

From: Paul Peck <Paul.Peck@GLENVILLE.EDU>
Subject: **Fw: PEIA Alert**
Date: September 30, 2009 2:13:11 PM EDT
To: HEPC-ACF@LISTSERV.WVNET.EDU
Reply-To: Advisory Council of Faculty <HEPC-ACF@LISTSERV.WVNET.EDU>

The timeliness of our legislative agenda point on PEIA premiums is supported by the information in the following AFT PEIA alert.

-----Original Message-----

From: "AFT-WV" <info@aftwv.org>
Sent 9/30/2009 8:44:37 AM
To: "Paul Peck" <paul.peck@glennville.edu>
Subject: PEIA Alert



AFT-West Virginia

Dear Paul Peck,

PEIA recipients face premium increases, benefit cuts

"For us to send out any increase in premiums, or any reduction in benefits, after what we have done is appalling to me," said public education representative Josh Sword, referring to the board's vote in July??We have taken it on the chin," said Sword, a lobbyist with the West Virginia Federation of Teachers. "We took it on the chin last month when a \$500 bonus was promised to public employees, and then snatched away from them. ... Morale is at an all-time low." - Josh Sword, PEIA Finance Board member and AFT-WV lobbyist. -As reported by the Charleston Gazette, 9/24/2009

The PEIA Finance Board met on Thursday, September 24th and adopted a preliminary plan (effective July 1, 2010). The proposal will be presented at the soon to be scheduled public hearings and includes the following:

- A 4% increase in premiums for both employees and employers;
- An increase in deductibles:
 - Either \$25.00 or \$50.00 for active employees;
 - \$25.00 for retirees;
- A change in the prescription drug formulary;
- Some brand name drugs in the top tier will be removed;
- An increase in the maximum out-of-pocket costs for family plans - the amount will be equal to double the rate for a single plan. Your out-of-pocket maximum depends on your employment status, salary, where you receive your services, whether your provider is in network and whether you have prior approval.
- The creation of a new WV plan (this will be optional) that will limit employees to receiving care in West Virginia. If there is a need for specialty care, plan participants will have access to limited care and services at the Cleveland Clinic and Duke University.

The only good news is that the lifetime cap on benefits is increased from \$1 million to \$1.5 million.

These are only proposals and they will be the subject of the public hearings. Just as soon as we learn the dates of the hearings we will communicate the dates as well as talking points to you.

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