**WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**ACADEMIC & STUDENT SUPPORT STAFF MEETING**

**MINUTES FROM MEETING OF JANUARY 9, 2012**

 Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. R. Charles Byers called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. in Ferrell Auditorium by welcoming the group to the staff meeting primarily to keep all of the University personnel knowledgeable about current and upcoming events.

Politics as it impacts higher education: Many times the large pie has to be split among the various entities and it doesn’t always come out as we would wish. This is not atypical to WV. Dr. Byers said he met that morning with a group that will interact with the Legislature; he plans next year to let them see the impact of our students, employees, etc.

Negative press and fairness of it: Many have read several of the articles printed in the newspapers; the media often spin what they hear to entice other readers, listeners, etc. We can become our own worst enemies when we air the negative things about this institution, Dr. Byers said. We are making it difficult for the Chancellor and the Governor to assist us when the news doesn’t publish the positive things our students and faculty are doing.

Reaffirmation of our accreditation by North Central: We are concerned about 2014-15 when North Central comes and they hear and see all this negative publicity about WVSU. They are asking their contacts to keep them abreast about what is being published about WVSU. It is going to be hard enough for us to gain reaffirmation anyway, Dr. Byers said; they are focusing on different items than they have previously because the federal government is tightening down on its expectations. We know our positive things and from this point forward we need to prepare this institution for reaffirmation, which is key to its survival. If we are to remain independent, have our own Board of Governors, and be self-determining, we have to remain strong.

Dr. Byers commended the support staff and said he was very proud of what they are doing in their offices and units. “All of you represent a support unit for our academic efforts and our students,” he said. Therefore he said it is up to them to make sure more positive than negative things happen. Dr. Byers said one of his jobs is to make sure this institution is ready for that reaffirmation. He introduced Dr. Barbara Ladner who will lead the self-study process but will need the help of each area. The first step in the process will be to try to determine the deficiencies of this institution; we will then investigate them, make recommendations, and begin improving.

Dr. Byers summarized one of the main things he has done in his first acts as Provost is communication among the personnel. He monthly sends out information about what is happening or upcoming in Academic Affairs. The Vice Presidents & Dr. McMeans began meeting weekly to discuss upcoming events in each of the areas for that week, discuss problems and issues in each of the respective areas, and then discuss internal and external special topics impacting the institution. They also have daily e-mail communication. The Administrative staff realized early there were two problematic areas: communication and technology.

Computer Services is now called University Information Technology and all such efforts are combined under the direction of Robert Huston. In Communication, the Administrative Staff is talking with various groups to learn about the areas, the challenges they have, etc. They will be meeting with several other areas in future weeks to obtain an overall view of the University. Dr. Byers emphasized the Administrative Staff needs to know the importance of the jobs each staff member does in order to know what is needed to make this institution operate.

Each of our respective offices has an order in how we do things. One thing the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) will look at is how we document what we do, will the next person know what to do in the operation of the work. In all areas you will be asked to write down what you do and how you do it in the form of Guidelines & Procedures. They will be placed in LiveText so HLC can access them and see what we do.

Each administrative area will be required to have external Advisory Groups to take an objective look at what we do and make recommendations to us.

We are also looking into phased retirement for not only faculty but also for staff to help us budget-wise but also to retain some of the institutional knowledge you have and won’t have a turnover all at once.

Academic Affairs in the Deans Council will be discussing transfer students and how many major-specific credit hours must the student complete at WVSU to receive one of our baccalaureate degrees. Departments have begun phasing our required hours for graduation down to 120 hours. We will look at our general education as well as the majors to see what can be revised.

Beginning this semester, Dr. Byers said, we will have a new class time schedule. Formerly we have primarily used a MWF and a TR class schedule; currently most classes will be either MW or TR.

Vice President for Student Affairs Bryce Casto thanked the group for the outstanding team represented. As we go through this semester, be part of the solution – ask if you have questions, he said.

There is an Enrollment Management Plan update 2012-2015 which is much more detailed than formerly; it is in the form of the strategic plan. It has been out for comment and will be sent to the Board of Governors this year.

We have received feedback on Housing Demand Study and the conclusion is that we need new housing on campus. We will bring that to the Board of Governors at their January 26 meeting; the goal is to have them approve it and send it on to the HEPC. Our hope is to have new housing up by 2013 but that is a very tight schedule, he said.

Residence Life offices are moving to the 3rd floor of Sullivan Hall. The Health, Human Performance, and Leisure Studies academic department offices are moving from Fleming to Prillerman Hall (while Fleming is being renovated). Veterans Affairs is being moved to the Student Affairs area and will report to VP Casto; they will also be located in Prillerman.

At the WV Conference Basketball tournament in March there will be the 25th anniversary recognition of the WVSU basketball team and their performance in 1987 in championship games. Mr. Joe Oden was a member of that team!

Mr. Casto introduced Mrs. Sally Berger to talk about an important change required for documenting income for financial aid. About 70% of our students receive financial aid, she said, and they want students to file their FAFSA soon. Effective for 2012-13 the Federal government is requiring students to document income. Students selected for verification (documentation) must go to the IRS and request a tax transcript via the Internet or telephone. She asked the group to encourage students to file their taxes early, then 2 weeks after that they can use the IRS retrieval system to assist in filing FAFSA.

Interim Vice President for Business & Finance Melvin Jones shared three announcements with the group:

1) A portion of the Public Safety Office is moving from Wallace Hall to Ferrell Hall beside the Cashier’s Office (into the old Payroll Office); they will accept payment for tickets, issue IDs, etc.

 2) Acceptance of payments on-line has been instituted for nearly all payments to the University.

3) Coming this or next month, some retirement seminars for people who are retirement age will be instituted. This is voluntary and one will not be forced to retire. Investment people (TIAA-CREF or Retirement Board) will be here to share information with the potential retirees.

Mr. Jones said they are continuing to work on next year’s budget when the University will have a $1.6 million shortfall with the CTC moving out. They are trying to fill the hole with other state funds and trying to avoid layoffs. All things being equal, we should not need to have a forced staff reduction, he said. If we do not receive additional funds, there will be other measures necessary.

Dr. Byers concluded the meeting by asking the group to be responsive to student needs. He asked the group not to send them on a run around but to call ahead and try to get answers.

Corporate partners provide opportunities to give a few door prizes; they were awarded to three people whose ticket numbers were drawn.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.