Dr. Jack Magan

December 3, 2012

Tim:  Here is an item about which the faculty should be alarmed, and I think the Senate is a vehicle for such consciousness-raising.  I had heard from L. Rowe and R. Ford about a proposal to reduce appropriations to all the colleges and use the money to provide bonuses to those which have high retention and graduation rates.  Such a program would be counterproductive for the goal of getting more students in WV to become college graduates because it would tend to make the colleges much less willing to admit students whose level of preparation for college is borderline or risky, thus decreasing the pool of possible students.  If we want to increase the educational level of our state’s population, we need to take more chances on students, not less.     I ran into Paul Hill of the HEPC staff at the ACLU dinner on Saturday evening, and talked with him about this matter, and he says the HEPC agrees with me that this is a counterproductive proposal, but that it is coming from the legislature.  WVSU is in an excellent position to mobilize faculty to lobby legislators on an issue like this.  The Senate could raise the issue, alert the legislative affairs committee, set up a small ad hoc committee to  write a list of talking points or a whitepaper, and be ready to get people moving when the new semester opens.  Jack Magan

Brian Hemphill reply, December 3, 2012

WVSU Faculty Senate:

In response to Dr. Magan’s e-mail regarding the State Legislature’s proposal to implement an outcomes-based funding model for higher education, I applaud his commitment and dedication to West Virginia State University.

The bill that is being drafted would authorize the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) to design a funding model for possible action during the 2014 regular legislative session. If the bill is adopted, the HEPC would look to all West Virginia universities and colleges to define the metrics that will be used to distribute a percentage (2-5 percent) of the aggregate funds provided to higher education. The percentage of funds distributed, would be based on that university’s performance, in relation to the established metrics. West Virginia university and college presidents are working hard to ensure that the metrics being reviewed take into consideration the independent characteristics of each university or college, before standardized metrics are established.

I have been actively involved with the discussions related to the outcomes-based funding model, attending several meetings with the HEPC and members of the West Virginia Legislature. I will be participating in additional conversations on this important issue again this week with the HEPC. In addition to these important meetings, I have attended two of the Select Committee on Outcomes-Based Funding Models in Higher Education meetings during this year’s legislative interim meetings.

The movement to implement outcomes-based funding models within higher education is a national movement and not isolated to West Virginia, with several states already having enacted various versions of funding models. It is extremely important that West Virginia State University has a voice when it comes to matters of such importance. I am diligently working with our oversight commission, as well as State leaders, to ensure our issues are taken into consideration and reviewed by all entities and persons involved.

I very much want to hear your voices on these issues, and look forward to robust conversations regarding this and other legislative matters at the Faculty Senate meetings. I do ask, however, that as your President, you allow me to take forward a unified message from our campus. I will keep each of you informed on this issue as it progresses, as well as any other legislative matters that affect our University. Should you have questions or require any further information on this or any other matter that is important to you, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

BOH