

West Virginia University at Parkersburg
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2021

SENATORS PRESENT: Aaron Crites (Chair), Matthew Graves (Secretary), Joel Farkas (ACF Representative), Rose Beebe (BOG Representative), Kathy Wince (Staff Council Liaison), Gary Thompson, Holly Dexter, Andrew Rochus, Melanie Matheny, Jamie Casenelli, Rebecca Tucker, Missy Spivy, Bobbi Marshall, Holly Dexter, Lauri Reidmiller, Holly Martin, Andrew Rocus, ,
Quorum Present

Guests Present: Amy Strong, Billy Stone, Rob Anderson

President Gilmer present at request of Senate.

Chair called meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Old Business:

Shell is being updated to prevent confusion and streamline communication between faculty and senators to keep conversations and issues within senate. Shell may go offline for a few to fix minor issues.

Tenure issue needs to be re-addressed at a future meeting and must consider the State Code in formulating that policy.

BOG Update

Approved a couple resolutions from President Gilmer. No other updates. Plan is for BOG to meet in person in June.

ACF Update

ACF agenda presented. Motion made to accept proposal. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

New Business:

Unpaid Summer work raised and tabled until next meeting to permit time to address current situation at college.

Supplemental contracts are being prepared this week and will be available in coming weeks for faculty work during covid-19.

President addressed issues with Covid-19 and direction of school during these times.

President addressed Faculty member Dr. Billy Stone's position on mandatory vaccinations. President indicated that BOG gave him authority to make decisions on

mandatory vaccination policies. President shared details of institutions requiring mandatory vaccinations. The statistics indicate that approximately 1/5 to 1/4 have implemented mandatory vaccination policies. In WV there are two institutions that require vaccinations, and both are private institutions.

President indicated there is fear of great pushback on mandatory vaccinations and enrollment would decline as a result.

Have gone beyond CDC guidelines to require vaccinated individuals to quarantine in an effort to protect the college community.

President explained position on mandatory vaccines from a personal level in addition to personal level and expressed it would be immoral to force mandatory vaccinations.

President opened floor for any questions or comments from members present during senate meeting.

Questions asked/issues addressed:

What is the measure used to determine when to bring everyone back to face-to-face? Response—There is not hard and fast measure. It will be made on a quantitative and qualitative factor. Decision will be made in consultation with BOG and other interested parties.

How does the BOG feel about mandated vaccination? Response—Protocols indicate the President is in communication with chair of BOG. Chair of BOG has asked that President speak with Chair of BOG and immediate outgoing chair of BOG and they are in support of what has and has not been mandated. BOG will be receptive of input from Senate.

Do you have any idea of how Governor is leaning beyond press reporting? Response—President has not special insight as to what Governor is going to do.

Is there a concrete update on actual number of students in quarantine? Response—Last update was eight students quarantining and much more exposure.

Many students have already dropped classes and seem dejected by decision, have stated only enrolled because we were going to be face-to-face, why were steps not taken to work to reduce traffic on campus before going to an online teaching method such as half and half attendance or option to attend in person or online? Response—President has received a lot of feedback concerning decision. Feedback has been approximately 50/50 in support and in opposition to the decision to go fully online. If we took partial steps, it would take time, and if they succeeded it would be great, but if failed, it would expose more people. Therefore, decision was made to implement quickest option that would protect the most people.

Can we empower small classes to make their own choice with regard to attendance in person? Response—The job of the president is to protect all faculty, students, and interested parties, regardless of their concern or worry. However, protocols permit faculty to argue why their class should still be able to meet in person.

Can we have a single source of information pertaining to Covid-19? Response—We would like to have a single source, but it is very difficult to control other's input and contributions. The administration needs to take responsibility to clean up communication and make sure communication is consistent.

For situations where we must be in close contact, would it fall within moral spectrum, to require testing, if not vaccination? Response—The president has no problem with testing. If any shared-governance body puts forth a resolution, then it will be strongly considered and kept in mind even if personally disagrees.

Can we have a system that notifies professors when students are required to quarantine? Response—That seems reasonable and should be able to comply with that request.

Are you amenable to vaccinations as an exception to certain policies? Response—No. I am open to requiring students to be subject to testing to attend face-to-face courses. If there is a requirement for testing, proof of vaccination would not exclude students from requiring proof of negative testing.

Can we have a system that notifies faculty of positive testing of Covid-19 of students and faculty? Response—HIPAA may prevent disclosure of a positive test. Additionally, president is not sure if he would approve of the disclosure on the principal of privacy.

Dr. Billy Stone stated that his suggestions were intended to only be sent to his representatives, not to the entire faculty. Dr. Stone reasserted his position that he desires that senators strongly consider discussion of his position on the two action items: 1) in the event of presidential vacancy, a faculty vote/referendum be made for the BOG to hire an internal candidate for interim president; 2) a vote for a mandate for vaccinations for students and faculty for Covid-19. Discussion ensued.

Motion made to table two action items of Dr. Stone until next meeting to permit appropriate time to discuss the action items.

President addressed Dr. Billy Stone's position on developing a presidential succession plan. President clarified that his email about David Creel's resignation had no impact on a potential

resignation of the president. President feels it is reasonable, should Senate determine that a succession plan is needed, that faculty input is entirely appropriate.

Other News/Announcements:

The meeting adjourned at 3:51 p.m.