

**Marshall University Faculty Senate
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 20, 2025, 4:00 PM
Don Morris Room (Microsoft Teams Streaming Only)**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nathaniel Ramsey, Leah Turley, Sandy York, Heather Stark, Sarah McDermott, Tanvir Chowdhury, Simon Shim, Ross Salary, Jamey Halleck, Kevin Levine, Amanda Thompson-Abbott, Mike Huesmann, Tim Melvin, Conrae Lucas-Adkins, Alysha Nichols, Jodi Cottrell, Suzanne Konz, Shikeal Harris, Megan Marshall, Puspa Damai, Shoshannah Diehl, Boniface Noyongoyo, Daniel O'Malley, Anthony Viola, Clinton Brown, Raid Al-Aqtash, Kelly Beatty, Rick Gage, Phillipe Georgel, Sean McBride, Kyle Palmquist, Devon Wright, Stephen Young, Nitin Puri, Jessica Buerck, Jinju Wang, Tiffany Davis, Mindy Varney, Larry Sheret, Kelli Johnson.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ed Bingham (sabbatical substitute for Henning Vauth), Ammar Alzarrad, Tom Hisiro, Margie Phillips, Uyi Lawani, Jerry Dooley, Feon Smith, Lisa Muto, Angela Graham, Zach Garrett, Marybeth Beller, Marianna Linz, Shawn Schulenberg, Jana Tigchelaar, Eva Patton-Tackett, Usha Murughiyan, Ji Bihl, Ruhul Amin, Michael Hambuchen, Jen Sparks, Mary Platz.

EX-OFFICIO, VOTING/NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Amine Oudghiri-Otmani, Brea Belville, Richard Egleton

EX-OFFICIO, VOTING/NON-VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:

PARLIAMENTARIAN (substitute): Andrew Morelock

SENATE STAFF: Hailey Bibbee

GUESTS: In person – Brad Smith, Geoff Sheils, Mary Beth Reynolds, Avi Mukherjee, Karen McComas, Brandi Jacobs-Jones, Brian Morgan, Ginny Painter, Ben Eng, Doohee Lee, JE Terry, Marcie Simms, Lisa Martin, Jim Denvir, Dan Hollis, Eryn Roles, Vicki Stroeher, Jerry Ross, Kateryna Schray, Wesley Stites, Jodie Penrod, RB Bookwalter.

Virtual: Monica Brooks, Sonja Cantrell-Johnson, Chris Risher, Billy Gardner, Jr., Teresa Eagle, Eric Blough, Julia Spears, Kelli Prejean, Michelle Biggs, John Maher, Cara Bailey, Matt Tidd, Jaylene Barrien, Maria Gindhart, Dave Dampier, Leah Payne, Lindsey Harper, Glen Midkiff, Marybeth Beller, Tom Hisiro, Margie Phillips, Marianna Linz.

The meeting was convened at 4:00pm by Vice-Chair Mindy Varney. Vice-Chair Varney reviewed meeting procedures and expectations.

1. Approval of Proposed Agenda – approved as amended

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2. Approval of Minutes of January 23, 2025 – approved

3. Announcements – Chair

1. The President has signed the following documents:
 - a. November 11 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
 - b. November 21 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
 - c. All Senate Recommendations/Resolutions, except for program reviews (07, 08, and 09), which always come later in the year.
2. Physical Plant finalized a new home for our Faculty Award plaques immediately outside of the Senate Office in Old Main 310. As you may remember, Kelli Johnson informed me in the fall that we had these plaques located on the 4th Floor of Drinko Library, and they had not been updated since 2016. Hailey Bibbee has been working hard to update all plaques, including adding a new one for the Rucker Award.
3. The Board of Governors met two weeks ago and approved the Shared Governance Charter. The Senate is now tasked to elect its representative to the Shared Governance Review Committee. The Senate office sent out a call for nominations this morning and we hold an election at our March 27 meeting.
4. Since we last met, new administrations have been inaugurated in both Charleston and Washington DC, and both have issued numerous executive orders possibly cutting both our research funding and implementing restrictions on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Regarding federal grant funding, the Trump administration proposed a broad federal freeze that was paused in the courts before the order was rescinded. Another proposal that would restrict NIH indirect cost funding, which covers things like equipment, operations, maintenance, accounting and personnel, to just 15 percent was scheduled to go into effect on February 10 before it was frozen by the courts. In addition to these funding changes, both the federal government and the state have implemented new executive orders on diversity, equity, and inclusion, but the EOs are very vaguely worded. As our administration reviews these changes, my own personal advice to faculty and chairs is this: do not proactively make any changes at the university in anticipatory compliance, especially in the areas of teaching and research, until we have more guidance from university administration.
5. Marshall Day at the WV State Capitol is scheduled for March 4. Please put it on your calendar and attend if possible. The format this year will focus on the six pillars, and we should hear more information about that soon.

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6. Upcoming Meetings/Events

- a. The Spring General Faculty meeting is scheduled for April 10th, 2025, at 4:00 PM in the Joan C. Edwards Playhouse. Agenda items include honoring retiring faculty and the recognition of award-winning faculty.
- b. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for March 10 for items to be taken up at the March 27 Faculty Senate meeting. All recommendations and resolutions for those meetings are due at senate@marshall.edu by February 28.

4. Guest Speaker: Geoffrey Sheils (MU Board of Governors)

Mr. Sheils thanked FS for the invitation to speak and shared the Board's appreciation for FS.

He expressed his admiration for Robin Riner, BOG rep, and stated that she does a great job.

The Shared Governance Charter has been formally approved. MU is an exemplar in this area.

The BOG has completed President Smith's third-year evaluation and is very happy with his work.

The Save to Service initiatives are working well.

The overall status of Marshall University is "amazing"!

5. Recommendations/Resolutions

- a. **SR 24-25-18 LAC** Recommends that the West Virginia State Legislature preserve and protect the seven Governor's Schools by ensuring that funding needs for each school are met. - approved
- b. **SR 24-25-19 CC** Recommends approval of the listed UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM ADDITION, DELETION, CHANGE in the following college and/or schools/programs: Community Health; Social Work in Healthcare; BA Biological Sciences Degree; BA Biological Sciences Major; Music Education PreK-Adult; BA Criminal Justice; Corrections; Law Enforcement; Legal Studies; BS Pharmaceutical Sciences. - approved

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c. **SR 24-25-20 CC** Recommends approval of the listed UNDERGRADUATE COURSE ADDITION, DELETION, CHANGE in the following college and/or schools/programs: BUSN 280; ESS 450; SCLA 101H; SCLA 150; ANT 362; GEO 101; GEO 223; HST 428; PSC 200; PSC 304; PSC 499; CJ 322. – approved

Moved into executive session at 4:22 pm. Returned to regular session at 4:34 pm.

d. **SR 24-25-21 EC** Confidential Recommendation for Spring Commencement Speaker. - approved

e. **SR 24-25-22 EC** Confidential Recommendation for Spring Honorary Degree Recipient(s). -approved

6. Regular Reports

i. President – Brad Smith (15 minutes) – President’s notes presented in their entirety

President’s Update: February 2025
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- “Welcome back my friends to the show that never ends, we’re so glad you could attend, come inside ... come inside.”
- For those younger than me ... which is most, if not all of this room
 - Those are the opening lyrics of a popular song in the early 1970’s by Emerson, Lake and Palmer – a rock anthem that described a time that felt like never-ending chaos.
- That song could have easily been written for today ...
 - 2025 has arrived with a dizzying array of events that have felt chaotic and disquieting ...
 - Fires, floods, snow, a polar vortex, aviation tragedies, executive orders, research funding resets, students injured by speeding vehicles ... and the list goes on.
- Every day it feels like another challenge emerges ...
 - In times like these, I am reminded of a quote by Winston Churchill- “If you’re going through Hell, keep going”!

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- So how do you keep on going in the midst of the chaos?
 - For me, I find solace in our shared focus on Marshall For All ... from our Mission & Creed... the work we do matters.
 - I find harmony in our campus community, embracing one another, creating a zone of safety as we move together as one ...
 - And I am inspired by our ability to transform obstacles into opportunity delivering for those we serve and improving our collective performance ...
 - As you heard from Chairman Sheils report and will hear more from Avi in a moment.
- It is tough sledding, but we are getting through it together.
- With that context, I want to provide an update on three key areas:
 - First, our continuing efforts to deliver a debt-free education at Marshall University.
 - Second, our outlook on potential state funding and the implications for our FY'26 budget.
 - And finally, our status in complying with executive orders that have direct implications on our campus community – namely DEI and the proposed 15% cap on NIH F&A.
- **Let me begin with our recent advances to deliver a debt-free education in service to our commitment to have every Marshall student graduate with a job and no student loan debt by 2037.**
 - Last week, we announced the newest element of our “Marshall For All” promise ... introducing the “Tuition-Free WV” offer.
 - This program provides tuition-free admission to Marshall University for residents of West Virginia with a household income below \$65,000 (the same qualifications for Marshall For All, equating to Pell-eligibility).
 - The result is broader access and affordability to qualified West Virginia residents, leveraging existing federal, state and private scholarship dollars that are already available to fund the program.
 - The “Tuition-Free WV” promise is the newest element of the Marshall For All program, providing additional access to those who qualify for Marshall For All, but haven’t been randomly selected to participate in the next cohort of M4A.

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- For context, our Fall 2024 class of 1,837 students included 597 West Virginia residents who were first-time freshmen with a family income of <\$65,000.
- 100 of those students were randomly selected to participate in the M4A program ... leaving 497 families who would have qualified out as we engage in our comprehensive fundraising campaign to fully fund all students over the next 10 years.
- This didn't feel satisfying, so our team went to work and found a scenario where we can offer these qualifying students the Tuition-Free WV offer.
 - In the most conservative scenario, it requires additional \$150 per student/per semester ... and that isn't assuming any upside from enrollment growth positively impacting our performance-based funding formula, increased retention rates, or the ability to tap into private scholarship funds available.
 - The other way to look at it is we only need to add an incremental 17 students to break-even.
- On top of that announcement, we will soon be announcing a commitment from my prior employer, Intuit, who has committed to building a Prosperity Hub in our downtown Innovation District ...
 - These Hub will employee 200 people in the next year, and they are beginning with offering 50 of our students paid internships to serve as Customer Advocates ...
 - Starting at \$16.00 an hour and working around their class schedules...
 - This will not only assist our students with graduating debt-free, but it will also provide valuable work and life skills that will lead them to full employment upon graduation.
- So in the midst of chaos and uncertainty, we are staying focused on our shared purpose - expanding our Marshall For All participation through (a) expanding greater access to hundreds more through the "Tuition-Free WV" offering and (b) providing more experiential learning and earning opportunities to our students.
- Together, we are advancing our mission as a Prosperity Platform and accelerating our commitment to a debt-free education.
- **Which takes me to my second topic**, our outlook on potential state funding and the implications for our FY'26 budget.
 - As you may have seen in last week's State of the State address, Governor Morrisey has put forth a vision to accelerate economic growth by positioning West Virginia

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as a Power Tech Center –

- Serving as the apex for where energy meets emerging technologies - in a world increasingly defined by energy, automated manufacturing and AI.
- In pursuit of this vision, the Governor has enlisted Marshall University, WVU, Shepard University and Blue Ridge CTC to work with his administration to chart the path forward,
 - Our Cybersecurity and Advanced Manufacturing efforts playing a central role in this effort.
- At the same time, the Governor also proposed immediate cost-reduction actions to reduce the forecasted \$400M structural deficit his team has projected the state will experience over the next several years.
- While his budget contains various puts and takes, there are several important elements to call out as it stands today:
 - First, it does not include any state funding for pay increases for state employees.
 - Second, it does include the reality of the recently announced PEIA premium increases of roughly 14%.
 - Third, there were several line items that were not funded in our university's proposed budget, leading to a year-over-year decrease in state appropriations of roughly \$158,000.
- While the budget has yet to be vetted and approved by the Legislature, we have been preparing for this scenario as you know, with our Budget Advisory Group being tasked to help identify a range of options that could withstand a 2% to a 4% reduction.
- But the greatest counterbalance has been that we've been executing on our strategic roadmap and controlling our controllables ...
 - Growing enrollment, improving student success and retention and executing on Save-to-Serve to reduce spending in supplies and other services.
- While our FY'26 budget remains a work-in-process, I wanted to be clear where things stand at the moment:
 - We remain committed to growing our way out ...
 - As evidenced by doubling down on Marshall For All's "Tuition-Free WV" announcement and the exciting support our program

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is receiving from outside parties, including Intuit's announcement.

- And we remain committed to investing in our team ...
 - While a pay increase for all will not occur this year, we seek ways to fund targeted pay increases for a subset of employees who are furthest away from market this year ...
 - And we remain committed to our FY'27 goal to have all employees paid at or above the 80% of midpoint for their position
- So, in the midst of the discord, we are creating our own harmony by leaning into trust, caring for team members who need it most, and moving together as one ...
- **Which takes me to my third and final topic - our status in complying with the executive orders that have direct implications for our campus community.**
 - Over the past few weeks, several executive orders have been issued at both the federal and state levels that impact higher education.
 - I fully understand and appreciate there are many unanswered questions.
 - What isn't in question is our unwavering commitment to foster an environment where all students, faculty, and staff have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.
 - We remain steadfast in our commitment to merit-based hiring, equal pay for equal work, and compliance with all federal and state laws.
 - With regards to Governor Morrissey's Executive Order addressing DEI ...
 - We convened the heads of the five families, working alongside me and our Legal team ...
 - We reviewed the Executive Order, President Trump's U.S. Executive Order addressing DEI, and West Virginia State Senate Bill 870 (Introduced 2024) and reintroduced last week, as well as studied other states.
 - This review process provided context and informed us of our perspective on the Executive Order.
 - We submitted a list of all activities to the Governor's Office on February 6th, with our interpretation being the following categories are not prohibited by the state's Executive Order:

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- **Accreditation Requirements:** Until changes are made at the federal level, we are obligated to keep items that are mandated or essential for maintaining accreditation standards. Accreditation is required for federal financial aid, student aid and Pell Grants.
 - **Academic Content:** Programs or courses that fall within the university's academic curriculum and meet the educational standards for degree programs.
 - **Grants or Research Contracts:** Items linked to research funding, grants, or contracts. We will continue to meet our grant and contract obligations at a private, state, and federal level. As any changes are implemented on the state and federal level, we will adjust accordingly to ensure compliance.
 - **Donor-Designated Scholarships:** Programs or scholarships that have been donor-designated with specific criteria, and do not involve any state funding.
 - **Health Services:** Mental or physical health services provided by licensed professionals.
 - **Federal Observances:** Federal or national government-recognized "days," "months," and other observances i.e. African American History Month, Pride Month, National Women's History Month, and MLK Day.
- We've acknowledged areas that appear to be non-compliant and require action. Those areas include:
 - **DEI-Related Names or Programs:** Programs, activities, or training specifically related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, including those with titles or descriptions that reflect DEI principles. (e.g., "Diversity Training", "Equity Programs")
 - **Activities Offering Special Benefits to Specific Groups:** Any activities, services or programs that provide special benefits or privileges based on race, color, sex, ethnicity, or national origin.
 - **Training Content Focused on DEI:** Training content that promotes a specific DEI agenda or training offered to only a certain group.
 - We received initial feedback that these "carve-outs" are consistent with proposed legislation once again emerging in the Legislature ...
 - And as a result, we've been asked to resubmit our list to only include areas that may be open to question as being non-compliant ...

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- We resubmitted that list Tuesday evening and are awaiting feedback from the Governor's Office regarding whether our interpretation is correct.
- Once we hear back, we will have 90 days to remedy those areas of conflict.
- The takeaway here is we are at the table, engaging in discussion and helping shape the ultimate policy or legislation where possible.
- Which takes me to the recent the NIH announcement placing a restriction on Facilities & Administrative (F&A) cost reimbursement for all grants, capped at 15%.
 - This represents a significant reduction from Marshall's current federally approved indirect cost rate of 48% for any NIH grants ...
 - If it goes through, it will negatively impact us by ~\$1.8M today, with the potential to spread to other grant funding agencies as well.
 - While the change has been challenged in court, resulting in a temporary restraining order, we have engaged with our Congressional leaders in Washington, our State AG and our peers in higher education as well.
 - As we navigate this period of uncertainty, we are forming an Action Learning Group to prepare for all potential outcomes.
 - In the meantime, I want to reiterate our deep appreciation for the work of our NIH-funded researchers and all those contributing to Marshall's research mission.
 - Your efforts have a profound impact on our university, the state, and the nation ...
- Whew (deep breath ...)
- So welcome back my friends, to the show that never ends ... we're so glad you could attend, come inside, come inside ...
- In closing, I'll wrap up with another Winston Churchill quote which second speaks to us ...
 - "To each, there comes in their lifetime a special moment...
 - when they are figuratively tapped on the shoulder and offered the chance to do a very special thing ...
 - Unique to them and their talents.
 - What a tragedy if that moment finds them unprepared or unqualified for that which could have been their finest hour."
- We are prepared ...

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- We are qualified ...
- And we will rise to this occasion ... and make this our finest hour.
- Because We Are Marshall!

ii. Provost – Avinandan Mukherjee (15 minutes)

Good news for enrollment: retention is up. graduate applications are up, distance student enrollment is up, WV resident applications are up, non-payment withdrawal is down

MU will retain its R2 status

iii. Board of Governors – Robin Riner (5 minutes) _ Dr. Riner's notes presented in their entirety

BOG Meeting held February 5, 2025

Athletics committee:

- new football coach, Tony Gibson; 62 new student athletes on the team
- Title IX compliance: we are not meeting ideal ratio of women to men athletes; working to reach that ratio; beach volleyball and acrobatics identified as potential new sports (will be improved with new roster limits coming from NCAA)
- GPA average 3.36 for all student athletes

Academic committee:

- action item: shared governance charter – approved
- therapy and counseling programs being offered to online students

Full board meeting:

- action items:
 1. autism training center new board members – approved
 2. shared governance charter – approved
 3. changes in housing rates (summer meal plans and Landing rent increasing) – approved
 4. construction of Shewey deck at football stadium (financed solely by donor and club membership sales – no university investment required). – approved
- 3 dean searches will be complete by April
- deficit improved by \$4M
- community cares week will be May 20-23

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Next BOG meeting will be April 9

iv. Advisory Council of Faculty – Amine Oudghiri-Otmani (5 minutes)

WVER discussion by Dr. Monica Brooks; HB4654 discussion removing immunity from obscenity for libraires (affects dual credit); discussion of DEI review at state level; NCAA policy changes discussed; last day to introduce new legislation is 3/18; WVUP request that faculty pay scale be updated yearly; Dr. Corley Dennison, HEPC, discussed 60+60 and dual enrollment, next meeting is 2/21.

v. Graduate Council – Richard Egleton (5 minutes)

Next meeting 2/28; shared governance charter signed; suggested to faculty that they write letters of support for their international students to carry in case they get approached by ICE agents

vi. Student Government Association – Brea Belville (5 minutes)

Participating in MU Day at the Capitol; Spring Fountain Ceremony 4/12; collecting food and hygiene items for individuals in areas experiencing floods (link on SGA page)

7. Standing Committee Liaison Reports

i. Legislative Affairs Committee – Marybeth Beller (4 minutes)

The Legislative Affairs Committee met February 4th.

Our recommendation for the Faculty Senate to recognize the value of the governor's 7 state schools for high school students and to ask the legislature to provide funding for these important academies is on the agenda for the Faculty Senate February.

We are monitoring the anti-vaccine bills that will allow parents to opt out of child vaccinations on religious grounds and that will allow all private schools to exempt vaccination requirements. We have reached out to our members in the School of Pharmacy and School of Medicine to ask if they are also following these bills and have language that they wish to include in recommendations for the Faculty Senate.

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There are two anti-DEI bills currently under consideration: HB 2574 and SB 424. Both will affect higher education as they ban state funding from using those funds or state property to employ staff in any DEI positions or to require DEI training. Both also exempt academic courses and research projects, meaning that, if these bills pass, university offices and projects (including student organization projects funded through the school) will not be allowed to have content involving diversity, equity or inclusion, but classroom curricula and student and faculty research can continue to have DEI elements.

HB 2697 will prohibit higher education institutions from charging for transcripts. Currently MU charges \$12.00 for each electronic transcript and \$10.00 for each transcript sent through US mail. If this bill passes it will cost the university thousands of dollars per year. I have asked the Registrar's office to provide us with the number of transcript requests it receives each year so that we can have numbers on the approximate amount of money that will be lost if this bill passes.

The Legislative Affairs Committee will meet again on March 4th.

ii. University Curriculum Committee – Tim Melvin (4 minutes)

All items before committee were approved; next meeting on 2/21.

iii. Faculty Personnel Committee – Clinton Brown (4 minutes)

The committee held an all faculty forum on Promotion and Tenure.

iv. Research Committee – Philippe Georgel (4 minutes)

Have not met; scheduling next meeting with plans to discuss securing more funding for grants.

v. Student Conduct & Welfare Committee – Anthony Viola (4 minutes) - provided via email

The minutes of the November 12, 2024 meeting were approved; Regarding the development of a procedure for students afraid of other students, Bethany McFann reported back that students can use Advocate to submit a report on another student; Concerning an excused absence policy for online, asynchronous courses, Michael Borsuk reached out to Kat Smith from Student Advocacy and

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Accountability, as well as Jessica Rhodes from the Title IX office. Currently, there is no defined policy, and any extensions on course work are made at the discretion of the professor. The only exceptions to this are extensions granted by Title IX or accommodations made by the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations. Michael Borsuk reported back that a subsection is being developed for the attendance policy that would provide extensions for students in online, asynchronous courses when necessary; Concerning AEDs in the dorms, Michael Borsuk suggested adding more signage and including emergency numbers.

vi. Faculty Technology Committee – Nitin Puri (4 minutes)

New password procedure forthcoming; shared governance charter signed; Dr. Penrod has shared the IT budget

vii. Research Space Allocation Committee – Philippe Georgel

The committee met twice over the last month (on January 27 and February 7) to address various aspects of the space allocations status and procedures.

Activities in Progress: As a result of the meeting, a collaboration between the office of Academic Affairs, led by Brian Morgan and MURC has been asked to generate an up-to-date document describing the current use of research space, as well as the stewardship of the various rooms. The process will take into consideration, as key elements, the room's square footage as well as grant-generated revenues for the university's academic and research units.

Future Plans: The committee plans to meet monthly to continuously review and update the research space allocation. Future goals include ensuring that the allocation remains current and follows all established procedures.

7. Campus Safety – Jim Denvir (15 minutes)

8. Pedestrian safety

I asked to speak to Faculty Senate after my step-daughter, a student here at Marshall, witnessed an accident on February 4th in which a pedestrian was struck

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by a vehicle at the intersection of 3rd Avenue and 18th street. This intersection is a very high pedestrian traffic location, being the location of both a parking garage used by students, faculty and staff, and a bus stop. It is also the intersection where Maribeth Cox, then a student at Marshall, was struck and killed by a vehicle while crossing 3rd Avenue on November 4th, 2021. I was present when that accident occurred and was one of the first on the scene. Simply witnessing this was a traumatic experience which I will never forget.

After the recent accident on February 4th, I received a letter from Maribeth Cox' parents, which I would like to read to Faculty Senate.

[THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS READ OUT LOUD]

Letter from Cox Family

February 5, 2025

To whom it may concern:

My name is William Cox. I, along with my wife Kari, endured the greatest tragedy of our lives on November 4th, 2021. It started out like any other day, but by its conclusion, our very existence was changed forever. Our oldest daughter, Maribeth Cox, lost her life while exiting a TTA bus and attempting to use a crosswalk to cross 3rd. Avenue. On that day, she was struck by a Toyota Rav 4. The speed of the vehicle and the force of the impact hurled her a great distance and knocked both of her shoes off her feet. It was a needless death that robbed her of her future and any chance of life and happiness. It is something that her mother and I will never get over.

I bring this up to point out that 3rd avenue in Huntington, where it runs through the Marshall campus, has had many instances over the years where pedestrians have been hit by vehicles. The most recent accident occurred yesterday when a car struck a young woman. Her injuries were significant but non life threatening. Most of these incidents have dealt some sort of injury to the victim but, so far, my daughter has been the only one to suffer a fatality. Unfortunately, it is my firm belief, and that of many others, that it is only a matter of time before another pedestrian is killed like Maribeth.

In the wake of Maribeth's death, a 25 MPH speed limit was imposed on 3rd avenue, but it has done almost nothing to curtail these accidents. It is not rigorously enforced, and many people (including myself and my wife) have

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witnessed people continuing to drive fast down the avenue, far in excess of the speed limit now in place.

Quite simply, nothing of any real consequence has been done or is being done to address this very real problem, one that is occurring with frightening regularity. I would even go so far as to say that the city and the university have been negligent. This is the inescapable conclusion. Solutions have been suggested from different quarters, from flashing lights to pedestrian tunnels to walkways over the street and more. These are, of course, all very expensive proposals, but something obviously needs to be done. The expense of an effective solution put into place is worth the cost of preventing more people from being hurt and possibly killed.

West Virginia University considered pedestrian safety such a priority that, in 2019, they took action and installed signage and rumble strips at three key intersections that were identified as needing safety improvements. More needs to be done in the city of Huntington on 3rd avenue, with rumble strips and speed bumps being logical choices to address this.

In short, more needs to be done, or this awful trend will only continue to happen on Marshall's campus. I thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

William L. Cox Kari E. Cox

[END OF LETTER]

I would like to add some of my own thoughts. Like Mr. and Mrs. Cox, I have regularly seen cars on both 3rd and 5th Avenues travelling far in excess of the speed limit. I also regularly see vehicles running the red lights at the intersections and at the pedestrian crossing light by the Engineering building, and failing to yield to pedestrians at the new crosswalk on 20th Street.

Both 3rd and 5th Avenues are four-lane, one-way, straight, flat roads. At points on these roads drivers can see in excess of a mile in front of them. These streets look and feel like highways and their design is the kind of road design used to encourage vehicles to travel at high speed. It is a road design inconsistent with roads going through high pedestrian traffic areas. It is actually quite difficult to drive at a speed that is appropriate around a college campus. I am not going to go into the specifics of road and traffic engineering, but no number of signs posted with the speed limit

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are going to be effective when every other visual cue that drivers receive is telling them to drive at a higher speed.

That having been acknowledged, our students, faculty, and staff need to have a safe way to get around campus, including crossing both 3rd and 5th Avenues. While campaigns of pedestrian awareness are welcome, we cannot ask more of pedestrians than to use available crossings, be aware, and to observe traffic signals. In some of the recent accidents, it appears pedestrians were doing all of these things. When pedestrians are still not safe when they are doing this, as is the case when vehicles speed, fail to observe red lights or yield to pedestrians when turning, we, by which I mean both Marshall University and the City of Huntington, need to do more to ensure safety. Simply reiterating that pedestrians need to take more care is not sufficient, and in some cases is tantamount to blaming innocent victims for the actions of others. What is needed is holding drivers responsible, as well as making design decisions which make it easier for both drivers and pedestrians to behave in a safe manner.

Ultimately, the long-term solution is to reengineer these roads to make them appropriate for their location. Some preliminary plans and ideas for this have been posted on social media, but implementing these will take a lot of money, and a lot of time.

In the meantime, I have some very simple, low-cost suggestions that I believe will have a significant positive impact on pedestrian safety. I will share just one here, and can provide others to the appropriate university or cities entities.

At all traffic lights around campus, the pedestrian walk signals are active when traffic parallel to the crossing pedestrians has a green light. This means that pedestrians are sharing the same piece of road, and phase of the traffic lights, with traffic that is turning. For a contrast, at the intersection of 5th Avenue and 8th Street, by the courthouse, the traffic lights are programmed so that pedestrians have walk signals in all directions when traffic in all directions has a red light. This makes crossing at that intersection far safer than at the intersections around campus. It is my opinion that reprogramming the traffic lights around campus in this way – a relatively simple, low-cost solution – would have prevented at least two of the collisions between vehicles and pedestrians in recent years.

While some improvements have been made, the number of accidents since their implementation shows that these have had limited effectiveness. I do not want to have to experience the trauma of witnessing another fatality around our campus, and more importantly I do not want our campus community and their families and

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friends to experience the trauma of losing a loved one in such avoidable circumstances. I am asking the University administration to commit to working with the city to improve pedestrian safety around campus.

9. Other Requests to Speak - none

The meeting was adjourned 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Kelli Johnson

Dr. Kelli Johnson, Recording Secretary, Faculty Senate


MINUTES APPROVED BY FACULTY SENATE:



Dr. Shawn Schulenberg, Chair
Faculty Senate

March 27, 2025
Date Signed

MINUTES READ:



Brad Smith, President
Marshall University

4/4/2025
Date Signed