

Minutes
March 14, 2025
BridgeValley Community & Technical College (and Zoom)

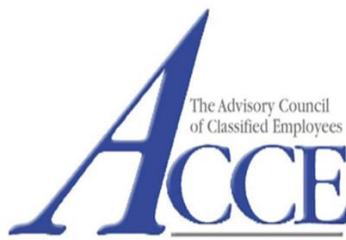
MEMBERS PRESENT

Rebekah Hatch	Bluefield State University
Jane Fouty	BridgeValley Community and Technical College
Jenny Boggs	Glennville State University
Heather Smith	Marshall University
Dee Preston	Mountwest Community and Technical College
Chip Hawkins	Pierpont Community and Technical College
Yulia Friman	Shepherd University
Shelly Stewart	Southern WV Community and Technical College
Verne Britton	WVNET
Jenna Derrico	West Virginia Northern Community College
Julie Cepec	West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine
Michael Casey	West Virginia State University
Jodi Vincent	West Virginia University

MEMBERS ABSENT (Excused)

Amy Pitzer	Concord University
Justine Bohon	Fairmont State University
Marcella Snyder	West Liberty University
Erin Trump	New River Community and Technical College
Vacant	Community and Technical College System of WV
Vacant	Eastern WV Community and Technical College
Vacant	West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
Vacant	West Virginia University Institute of Technology
Vacant	West Virginia University Potomac State College
Vacant	Blue Ridge Community and Technical College
Vacant	West Virginia University Parkersburg

MEMBERS ABSENT (Unexcused)



GUESTS

Bob Long	ACCE Emeritus
Ken Harbaugh	ACCE Emeritus
Dr. Casey Sacks	President, BridgeValley Community and Technical College
Chris Grady	SGA President, BridgeValley Community and Technical College

ACCE Emeritus Bob Long attended the legislative session on March 13 and asked HEPC's Matt Turner, who was also in attendance, whether he could or could he get someone to update ACCE at our meeting on the 14th. Matt and he stated he was too busy but would see what he could do. ACCE has been trying to obtain an update from either Matt, Trish, or Taran at HEPC since July 2024 without success. Although ACCE has had one response in December, via email, stating there were no updates to provide.

This is information the ACCE Emeritus received from the session on March 13:

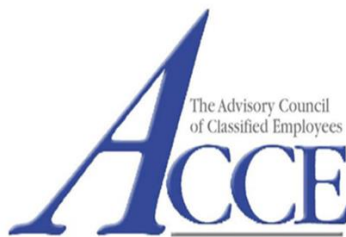
HB3279 – Requirements for BOG at WVU and WVSU

On this day, legislators only referred to these two institutions regarding this legislation. One legislator stated the removal of voting rights for faculty, staff, and students should be added back into the bill, but it was not amended to keep that in the bill. This bill was recommended to go to the full House Education Committee, and from there they also recommended that it go to the full legislature for approval. This bill would increase the number of BOG seats from 12 to 15, add an Agricultural and Forestry representative to the BOG, and shorten the terms and remove voting rights of faculty, staff, and student representatives to the BOG. Also, the BOG Chair shall be a person from the state of West Virginia.

Much was stated about the ACCE, school faculty, staff, and students contacting the legislature in support of dropping the non-voting and shortening terms of faculty, staff and students from HB3279.

HB2564 – Public Area Liability Protection Act

The Public Area Liability Protection Act is different than the campus Self Defense Act of last year. This bill states that if you are an employee, you should be able to take your gun everywhere on campus without restrictions of any kind. At this time, it has been introduced to the House Judiciary committee.



HB2697-Prohibits colleges from charging students for transcripts.

Not addressed.

HB2737-Established a Higher Education Health and Aid Grant program.

Not Addressed.

HB2879 – Creation of the West Virginia Math & Science Teacher Scholarship Program

This would be for certified math & science teachers and up to \$2000 in debt relief if they teach for a certain number of years.

HB2527 – Creating financial aid for corrections officers to cover tuition costs

This would create a tuition reimbursement program for corrections officers. There was also another bill introduced for some form of financial aid that would cover or reimburse corrections officers.

HB2610 – Waiving tuition for disabled military and dependents

A bill introduced related to disabled military and disabled military dependents regarding schools having to waive the tuition and fees in an undergraduate, graduate or professional program as long as they obtain a 2.5 GPA to continue in the program. This would be an unfunded mandate on schools, and the funding issue on this bill was not addressed.

HB2958 – Trespassing on higher education property

There were several questions and scenarios from committee members under which to determine what constitutes trespassing or not trespassing. There was a change in the original wording that instead of “trespassing on student resident premises or student facility” to “trespass on premises of an institution of Higher Education.” The only answer provided referred to two places in code which were in COVID legislation which didn’t seem to answer the committee members’ questions. A person once convicted under this law can be barred from an institution.

HB2623 – Abolishing PEIA

This is not expected to go any further, but it is regarding the elimination of PEIA. Everyone should continue to follow this bill. To pass it, they would have to wipe out all of 5-16 -- WV Public Employee Insurance Act.



Legislative Discussion

Discussion on the bills regarding the bonds at WVU and Marshall. Discussion on the bills repealing 19B9-5a, which is the restriction on duties of job classification committee. This code now dictates that the commission and council may not delegate any of the following duties to compensation planning and review committee or the JCC. ACCE members discussed how getting rid of the CPRC will effectively do away with approvals of classification and compensation rules and job approval of the annual classified salary schedule. HEPC has not brought any resources to bear whether it's within their own staffing or they have not met the requirements of the job set out for by CPRC.

In discussion about this year's Senate bills, there seemed to be a strong sense of backing in the Senate for many of the HB bills except for HB3279. Although, the Senate has introduced bills that mirror House bills such as the Hunger Free Campus Act and exempting military veterans and dependents from tuition.

Work Session

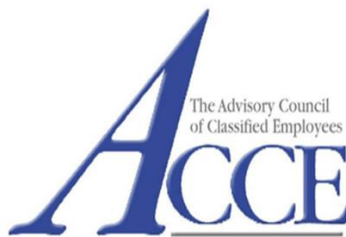
ACCE members split into two groups to 1) write an email to Staff Councils of the colleges and universities who are not represented on ACCE and encourage them to obtain representation and 2) to go over HB2773 to make sure there is nothing regarding staff which is being deleted.

ACCE Election and Vacancy Outreach Plan

We came up with a plan which included an email to institutions which ACCE has a vacancy. Four of us divided up the schools to send the emails.

Fraudulent Applications

We discussed the fraudulent applications which have been increasing on campuses. Some ACCE reps were asking if any school had noticed any patterns to these applications. Common ways to check identification are the watermarks on licensing, European dates, and information that has been covered with white-out. Schools are beginning to receive fake FAFSA's with fake college and high school transcripts. One school mentioned they have begun using the Element 451 service to help weed out these false applications and have also teamed up with the DMV to help verify identification, using encrypted transmission. This does not mean the application is shut down, but another step needs to be taken to secure FAFSA monies or entrance to an institution. Is this something for



the Homeland Security Fusion Security Center in each state? Also, there is something called the West Virginia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (<https://www.wvasfaa.org>), which may be the place to run everything through. Is there a way for schools to share fraudulent data to prevent other schools from falling behind? Is there a way to have an Application Communication system? Can HEPC do something about this? WV Association of Financial Aid Administrators? More talk at the institution level is required at this point.

Retreat Committee

The retreat meeting is confirmed at Blackwater Falls State Park. They are providing us a \$119 room rate. Tax exempt. The park is holding a block of 20 rooms with a release date of June 20. Our retreat meeting is on July 21-22. Make sure to bring anywhere between \$5 - \$10 cash to be used for the conference room fee and receipts will be provided for this out-of-pocket expense.

Other Concerns

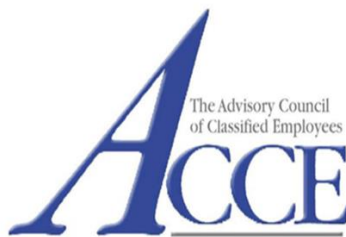
Discussion about how WV higher education colleges and universities have lost confidence that the legislature will follow the Higher Education funding formula which was supposed to become more predictable. We have heard that Higher Ed will take cuts because of the law of supply and demand when enrollment is dropping. Rapid movement and changes in the legislature super majorities will not provide protection that we thought.

Guest Speakers

Dr. Casey Sacks, president of BridgeValley CTC

Dr. Casey Sacks met with the group, welcomed ACCE, and spoke of BridgeValley's current enrollment and premier programs such as Health Sciences, Nursing, Manufacturing and IT fields. They work very closely with industry and local businesses, where 9 out of 10 students who graduate receive employment here in the valley.

We asked, are there any bills introduced that might influence on BridgeValley? Sacks said they were concerned about the bill related to charging for transcripts and were asked to speak with legislators to provide testimony on their policy. BridgeValley does charge, but they do not hold the transcript if students do not pay. Sacks said they didn't want a transcript fee to be a barrier preventing a student from completing a degree or



from getting a job, which would in turn create a better chance for the student to obtain the funds to pay. They still send students to collections if necessary.

Chair Jenna Derrico asked about inclinations for funding for higher education this year; Sacks felt the performance-based funding model would not be something the legislators would honor or utilize. History has shown it hasn't been used up until this point, and she doesn't think this will change this year either. The governor's proposed bill is offering a small increase, but it's not enough to see a change with the PEIA increases.

When asked about her impression regarding the federal changes with the Department of Education, Casey mentioned that she used to work for the Department of Education in D.C., so she has a good understanding of how it works. There are no indications that federal aid would go away but instead may move under a different branch of government such as the U.S. Treasury.

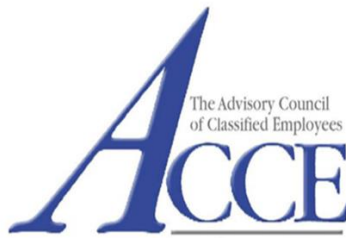
Dr. Sacks said BridgeValley is also experiencing fraudulent admission applications and has been blocking all international traffic to their website and application portal. They mainly focus on a four-county region, allowing only regional IP addresses. BridgeValley experienced a cyber-attack 3 years ago, and they've noticed an increase of cyber-crime around the holidays when monitoring is decreased. They now require two-factor confirmation for account authorization.

Chris Grady, SGA President

Chris Grady met with the group and discussed his role and recent campus activities. Chris reported he was able to testify to the legislators about the Higher Ed Health and Aid grant to help students get personal care products and food (started as Hunger Free Campus Act). This will give around 20k to every state higher ed institution to help create or fund a food pantry. The funds were supposed to come from HEPC grants, but now HEPC has agreed to solicit donations instead.

Regarding HB 3279, Chris said the legislators asked if the students were fine with the language of the bill, and he told them absolutely not. One legislator made the comment that you don't want the employees running the business over the owner of the business, but Chris emphasized the importance of faculty, staff and students needing to have a voice on the board.

Regarding the Advisory Council of Students' statewide survey for student concerns, he reported the survey did not receive enough participation from all the schools to complete the study.



A local survey was conducted a few times at BridgeValley where they received 129 responses in the first round, 184 responses in the second round, and 260 responses in the third round. From these suggestions, they were able to obtain a new vendor for the bookstore and went from a physical store to an all-online store. The surveys indicated students felt it was taking too long to get books and sometimes they were even doing the wrong books for the class. Students had also asked for convenience items or snack foods, so they were able to get a small store for campus instead of just having vending machines. Additionally, students wanted more outdoor seating to be able to enjoy nice weather, so they installed more benches and a picnic table outside. Finally, the students pushed for and acquired better signage around the campus buildings for better communication for students and visitors.

Finally, Chris mentioned he is currently trying to rebuild the Alumni Association for BridgeValley and has received administrative support to move forward. He discussed the importance of having alumni support the institution and discussed his family business and their support for the school.

Conclusion

Thank you, BridgeValley Community & Technical College and Jane Fouty for providing ACCE with a location to meet and for the food provided during our meeting.

Motion to adjourn made by Rebekah. Seconded by Heather. Unanimous to affirm.

Minutes submitted by:

Jodi Vincent
ACCE Secretary