

Minutes
April 11, 2025
Marshall University South Charleston Campus (and Zoom)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rebekah Hatch	Bluefield State University
Jane Fouty	BridgeValley Community and Technical College
Justine Bohon	Fairmont State University
Jenny Boggs	Glenville 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
Amy Pitzer	Concord University

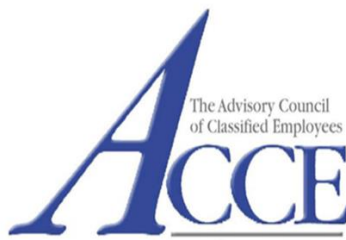
MEMBERS ABSENT (Excused)

Marcella Snyder	West Liberty University
Jill Farrington	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



- 1) The Chair will determine that a quorum is present.
Quorum present and meeting called to order.

- 2) Legislative Discussion

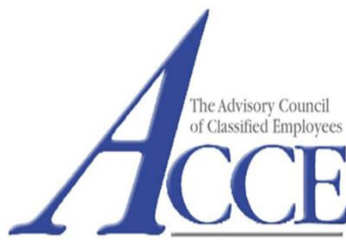
Senate passed the bill which suspends the Civil Service Protections for new hires and/or transfers to a new job. The House and Senate concurred on HB2008 and HB 2009 and both bills will be sent to governor. HB2013 is completed and passed. Transferred some employees to the classified exempt system shall be exempt from the grievance system. Also subsection B – none of this applies to any position appointed by the governor.

This discussion revolves around concerns over proposed legislation that could significantly alter employee protections in certain state departments and agencies. The discussion underscores fears that these bills could lead to a major rollback in employee rights, making advocacy efforts crucial in the final days of the legislative session.

A bill, HB 3279, particularly its potential impact on governance boards, though its precise effects remain unclear. Some participants expressed skepticism that the governor will veto the bill due to the governor's stance on employee protection. Despite this, there is a push to contact the governor's office to advocate against the bill. Some ACCE members proposed drafting an official statement from ACCE to formally oppose the legislation and advocate for continued protections for employees and to ensure that opposition to HB 3279 is effectively communicated. A motion introduced by Verne to authorize the chair of ACCE to draft a formal statement opposing HB 3279 and send it to the governor and relevant legislators. This motion was seconded by Chip. A formal discussion about whom should receive this statement led to a motion to amend the initial motion was made by Verne to send it to the Governor only. Chip once again seconded the motion. A vote was then held and the amended motion passed.

Additionally, the group briefly considered whether to address other bills (HB 2008, HB 2009, HB 2013), but hesitation arose over whether these bills directly impact their higher education concerns. The discussion continued with the group's focus on legislation affecting employee rights and higher education governance. Participants express concerns that ignoring certain laws for long enough often leads to their eventual repeal, a pattern reportedly observed multiple times in the past decade. Many members worry about the future of governance boards, fearing that they may be restructured to align more closely with the administration's agenda, rather than seeking multiple perspectives that are representative of campus communities in decision-making.

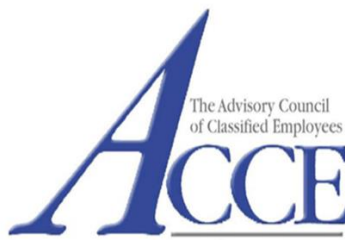
A broader concern arose over political forces seeking unchecked control, which could minimize opposition and stifle meaningful discussions in governance



decisions. ACCE took a deep dive into HB 2773, analyzing its impact on the Job Classification Committee (JCC) and Compensation Planning and Review Committee (CPRC). Efforts were made to locate specific provisions within the bill that modify committee structures and repeal human resources-related legislative rules from 2019. The need to identify the exact provisions repealed is emphasized to help assess their implications for higher education employees. Additionally, a side concern emerged regarding the reauthorization of the performance-based funding model, which some argued has been reapproved despite not being actively utilized. Several ACCE members expressed a preference to focus on HB 3279 rather than including concerns about other bills in their advocacy efforts. The discussion then shifted back to HB 2773, with members who expressed skepticism over how performance-based funding is handled, noting that legislators seemed to reauthorize it without actively using it. Concerns also arose about the bill's potential impact on Job Classification Committee which raised further questions about the implications for employee protection. This conversation underscored ongoing efforts to advocate for employee rights, respond to legislative changes, and ensure transparent governance practices in state institutions.

The conversation then shifts to further concerns over legislative changes affecting higher education employee protections. Participants express frustration over the Higher Education Policy Commission's lack of communication during legislative discussions. Bills affecting classified employee protections, particularly HB 3192, remain a key focus. HB 3192 repeals several provisions related to personnel and compensation planning in higher education, prompting concerns about its potential impact. The recognition that HB 3192 was passed unanimously in both the House and Senate and signed by the governor leads many to conclude that advocacy efforts on this bill are largely moot. Despite this, participants remain wary of broader efforts to reshape governance structures, which could consolidate, control, and limit diverse perspectives on higher education oversight.

The conversation also covers concerns about governance changes, employee classifications, and institutional representation. A growing fear exists that advisory councils and staff councils could be targeted next, further dismantling shared governance protections. Some worry that making employees non-classified will lead to claims that staff councils are unnecessary. Advisory Council of Faculty members expressed concerns over voting rights but were indifferent to reduced term limits, believing it could bring fresh perspectives. The debate over term limits continued, with some arguing that the best candidates should be allowed to serve continuously if elected, while others believe forced rotation will address stagnation. Frustration mounts over governance board shifts toward political appointees, which may consolidate administrative power and restrict institutional independence. In response, calls are made to review Board of Governors bylaws to strengthen protections for representatives before legislative changes take effect.



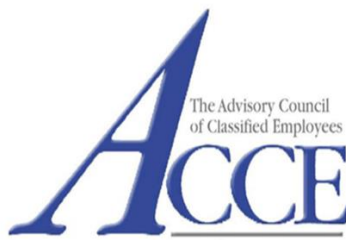
Advocacy efforts to encourage election participation are particularly vital within the Higher Education Policy Commission, where staff council engagement has reportedly lapsed. Reports that WVU Parkersburg is preparing to nominate a representative for ACCE indicate some institutional participation efforts. This underscores the push for proactive governance adjustments, concerns over legislative shifts, and efforts to maintain meaningful institutional representation. Additionally, participants feel that leadership is becoming increasingly detached from employee concerns, viewing governance decisions through a rigid, top-down lens without considering the well-being of staff. Fears emerge that recent legislative changes are designed to strip employees of voting rights and influence, consolidating decision-making under administrative leadership. Challenges in election participation persist, with some institutions struggling to find individuals able to participate in shared governance, often due to workplace pressures or lack of interest. Concerns arose over institutions' lack of staff elections as well as representatives prevented from assuming positions.

Meanwhile, the temporary salary schedule released in 2024 lacks follow-up updates, leaving employees uncertain about future compensation planning. The HEPC also made the decision to eliminate the Compensation Planning and Review Committee without consulting stakeholders, resulting in duties previously assigned to the CPRC now being unaccounted for, raising concerns about the maintenance of classification and salary structures. Participants express frustration over the lack of public opposition to legislative efforts that stripped voting rights from employee BOG representatives and failed to stabilize PEIA (Public Employees Insurance Agency).

Tuition increases at institutions raise concerns, especially given that the legislature has not yet finalized the budget. Higher education budget issues remain a significant challenge, as delays in budget approval create obstacles for institutions that need financial clarity to set tuition rates, plan for the academic year, and ensure incoming students receive accurate financial aid information.

The elimination of the Compensation Planning and Review Committee sparks concerns among participants, who fear this decision will leave classified employees without a structured system for determining fair compensation. Many worry this will widen pay gaps between faculty, classified, and non-classified employees. Similarly, the lack of market equity and updated reporting deficiencies is seen as a major issue, given that salary market studies have not been refreshed in over a decade, making it harder for employees to advocate for fair wages.

Legislative inaction on reporting requirements is another concern, as participants recall that legislators previously asked the HEPC to specify which reporting requirements were needed. However, HEPC failed to respond, leading to continued gaps in employee compensation analysis.



A separate campus discussion on pronouns in email signatures emerges, with some institutions debating whether employees should be allowed to include pronouns in their email signatures. Many schools have yet to take an official stance, opting to wait for guidance from state and federal laws.

Participants highlight the variability in supervisor receptiveness when it comes to workplace flexibility. While some supervisors support innovative changes, others resist new ideas, making uniform policy implementation difficult. If a four-day workweek is introduced campus-wide, a formal institutional policy may be necessary to guarantee equal access regardless of department or supervisor preference. Efforts to modernize work conditions extend beyond flexible scheduling to include job sharing and remote work, aiming to improve employee satisfaction and attract new talent. These discussions highlight ongoing frustrations over workplace policies, salary concerns, and the need for forward-thinking solutions in higher education.

A discussion on DMV fraud check proposals emerges, updating attendees on potential fraud detection measures related to admissions processing.

3) Review of March 2025 Minutes

March minutes were reviewed and amended. Jane moves to accept minutes as amended. Verne seconded. Vote taken unanimously in favor of approval.

4) Updates from the HEPC (if available)

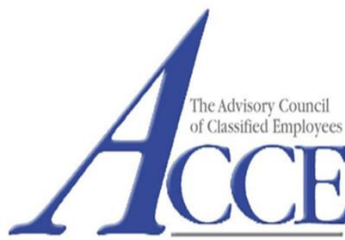
Not available

5) Concerns for the HEPC

ACCE has repeatedly received little communication from the HEPC and there have been no updates on the market study since April 2024. Karen Martin, former Classified Staff Council Chair at HEPC, confirmed that there has been no staff council or staff leadership since before the pandemic. Additionally, the Compensation Planning and Review Committee was eliminated without any discussion with ACCE of how the committee's responsibilities would be handled. The absence of communication and proper maintenance of compensation structures, including salary schedules, has been a persistent issue. ACCE has sought clarification on what reporting requirements HEPC needs to help fulfill their responsibilities, but no clear response has been provided. To address these concerns, a motion was introduced to authorize the ACCE executive team to compile a formal list of issues to present to HEPC. The motion, made by Yulia and seconded by Jenny, was unanimously passed.

6) Old Business

Updating institutional bylaws to ensure representation for both classified and non-classified staff council members is a crucial step toward strengthening shared



governance. ACCE is committed to fulfilling its mission in advocating for both groups, but current HEPC staff council bylaws restrict non-classified individuals from being elected to staff council positions. To address this, an exception would need to be granted, or the bylaws would have to be formally amended. Institutions can consider revising their staff council bylaws to allow inclusion of non-classified staff.

7) New Business

Jenny has stepped up as the backup secretary for taking minutes in May.

Regarding work schedule flexibility, allowances must align with state code and should follow best practices such as those identified on the World at Work website. Michael will be sharing plans for schedule changes at WVSU, and Jenna will share examples of flexible work schedule forms used at WVNCC in prior years.

Conclusion

The ACCE thanked Marshall University and Heather Smith for their hospitality.

Motion to adjourn made by Jenny. Seconded by Heather. Unanimous vote to affirm.

Minutes submitted by:

Jodi Vincent
ACCE Secretary