



Minutes
September 26, 2025
Marshall University (and Zoom)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Amy Pitzer – Concord University
Heather Smith – Marshall University
Verne Britton – WVNET
Abby Haught – Fairmont State University
Michael Casey – West Virginia State University
Melissa Carroll – West Liberty University
Ginger Cottrell – WVU Potomac State
Chip Hawkins – Pierpont Community and Technical College
Jenna Derrico – West Virginia Northern Community College
Elijah Hooker – Southern WV Community and Technical College
Leslie Ward – Glenville State University
Yulia Friman – Shepherd University
Abby Campbell – WVU Parkersburg
Jane Fouty – BridgeValley Community and Technical College
Angela Henderson – West Virginia University
Paul Rutherford – Bluefield State University
Bob Long – Emeritus **(non-voting)**
Ken Harbaugh – Emeritus **(non-voting)**

MEMBERS ABSENT (Excused)

Katie Bentley – Mountwest Community and Technical College
Vacant – Eastern WV Community and Technical College
Vacant – New River Community and Technical College
Vacant – West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
Vacant – West Virginia Institute of Technology
Vacant – Blue Ridge Community and Technical College

GUESTS

Carolyn Penn – WVSOM, proxy for Janet Hinton
Bruce Felder – Marshall University Chief Human Resources Officer
Lacie Bittinger – Marshall Staff Council Chair
Teresa Meddings – Former ACCE Representative

1. Call to Order / Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 9:05am by Chair Amy Pitzer. A quorum was established.

2. Housekeeping Items

Heather Smith shared that the Marshall Staff Council Chair, Lacie Bittinger, would be stopping by around 10:00 a.m. to observe the ACCE meeting.

3. Review of Minutes (from July Retreat)

Jane Fouty stated that the retreat minutes are not yet finalized but will be available for review at the next meeting.

4. Committee Reports

Benefits Committee

Melissa Carroll provided the Benefits Committee report. The committee met in August. Ideas discussed included potential meetings with TIAA-CREF and PEIA representatives to discuss national renewal averages and causes for cost increases. Customer service concerns related to flexible benefits were also discussed. The committee meets every other month and will convene again in October.

Student Advocacy Committee

Michael Casey reported that the committee met in August and reached out to the Advisory Council of Students (ACS) chair to schedule a meeting to discuss upcoming priorities and collaboration opportunities. Michael will schedule the next committee meeting following that discussion.

Special Events Committee

Heather Smith reported on behalf of Jane Fouty that the Special Events Committee has not yet met.

Bylaws Committee

An ad hoc committee has not yet been formally reestablished. Jenna Derrico confirmed this and encouraged members to bring any potential bylaw changes or needs to Chair Amy Pitzer's attention.

Web & Communications Committee

The website has been updated with all new members. Verne Britton will work to

schedule a committee meeting next month and welcomed the new representative from Potomac State.

Legislative Committee

Jenna Derrico reported that while the committee did not meet formally, members discussed ideas for legislative outreach. The committee plans to send a reintroduction letter to all legislators, accompanied by an updated ACCE brochure. Jenna also proposed including a brief legislative code discussion, focused on a specific topic or section of code, at each ACCE meeting to increase new members' familiarity over time. Ken Harbaugh emphasized the importance of professionalism during legislative meetings and encouraged members to review preparatory materials.

5. Guest Presentation – Bruce Felder

Marshall University Chief Human Resources Officer Bruce Felder welcomed ACCE to Marshall. He shared updates on student enrollment trends, retention efforts, and employee benefits initiatives. Highlights included:

- Student enrollment increased 8.5% over the past three years under President Brad Smith, reversing a 14-year decline.
- Retention improved from 72% back to 78%, with a goal of reaching 90–92%.
- Marshall For All, Marshall Forever and Tuition Free WV programs support Pell-eligible students through donor-funded tuition and expanded affordability.
- Employee dependents receive free bachelor's tuition; Marshall aims to expand this benefit to spouses by January.
- Annual employee engagement surveys and Total Rewards Statements are being used to improve workplace satisfaction.
- Marshall adopted a new salary structure aiming for all employees to reach 80% of midpoint by FY27, utilizing multiple data sources (Payscale, CUPA HR, HEPC studies).

Following the presentation, members discussed differences between large and small institutions in resources for salary studies and employee engagement initiatives. There was consensus that smaller institutions lack similar capacity, which can create inequities in pay and data availability.

6. Legislative Brochure

The Legislative Committee discussed plans to refresh and distribute ACCE's legislative brochure. Amy Pitzer encouraged members to consider legislative issues appropriate for ACCE advocacy. Ken Harbaugh noted past successes

coordinating with university presidents and boards to align agendas. Bob Long passed out printed copies of our 2019 brochure, which Jane Fouty will distribute digitally. The Web & Communications Committee will post the document online. Ken suggested including legislative training on the October agenda.

7. Updates from HEPC

Amy Pitzer noted that no HEPC representatives were able to attend. Invitations were sent to Matt Turner, Patricia Humphries, and Taran Wolford. Jenna Derrico added that the annual meeting with the HEPC Chancellor is due, as she was unable to attend the 2025 retreat.

8. ACCE Travel Discussion

Amy Pitzer led a discussion on institutional pushback regarding ACCE-related travel. State Code 18B-6-5 affirms that ACCE travel is to be paid by institutions; however, if an institution cuts all travel, travel may be restricted. Members shared experiences addressing travel budget limitations and strategies for making a compelling case for in-person attendance. Jenna Derrico raised questions about making in-person meetings more valuable, and others discussed liability concerns when traveling without formal approval. Leslie Ward noted that non-classified representatives may have less protection since their positions are not guaranteed by code.

9. ACCE Trainings

Potential training ideas were discussed as part of the Legislative Committee's report and Legislative Brochure discussion. Jenna Derrico proposed identifying a specific section of code for the Legislative Committee to present and discuss each meeting. This will help familiarize new members with various sections of code without overwhelming them.

The group discussed confirmation of upcoming meeting locations. BridgeValley is reserved as a backup location for the February 2026 HEPC meeting. WVU Parkersburg is confirmed for May 2026. Jenna will provide updates on the November 2025 WVNCC meeting following campus flood recovery.

10. Old Business

HB3279

Verne Britton raised questions regarding HB 3279 and changes to code

language affecting Board of Governors staff representation. The group discussed administrative exemptions and plans for the Legislative Committee to conduct further research and present findings at a future meeting.

Impact of VCHR Vacancy

The group discussed the upcoming retirement of WVHEPC Vice Chancellor of Human Resources, Patricia Humphries, at the end of October and the potential implications for future HR and salary study initiatives. The position is currently posted for applications on WVHEPC's careers page:

<https://www.wvhepc.edu/inside-the-commission/career-opportunities/>

11. Campus Concerns or Announcements

Verne Britton invited members to the annual WVSTC Tech Conference, this year being held at Oglebay Park Resort on October 15-16, in celebration of WVNET's 50th anniversary. Additional information can be found at <http://www.wvstc.com>.

Ken Harbaugh announced the upcoming departure of Shepherd's President Mary Hendrix at the end of FY26, expressing appreciation for her service and leadership.

Verne Britton welcomed Ginger Cottrell as the new representative from WVU Potomac State.

Abby Campbell requested clarification on items to share with her Staff Council, including travel concerns, HB 3279 discussion, legislative brochure updates, and upcoming meeting dates. Amy Pitzer and Jenna Derrico confirmed these were appropriate to share.

Amy Pitzer shared that she wants to thank Marshall University for their hospitality and for hosting today, and for Bruce Felder's valuable time and presentation.

12. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Jenna Derrico and seconded by Heather Smith. The meeting was adjourned at 12:49pm.

Minutes prepared by:

**Abby Haught, ACCE Secretary
Fairmont State University**