

WVU Faculty Response to HB 3279

The faculty at West Virginia University (WVU) strongly oppose HB 3279. The proposed changes undermine shared governance and erode the fundamental principles of inclusivity, accountability, and informed decision-making that are essential to the success of a major public, land-grant university.

The Importance of Faculty, Staff, and Student Representation

Faculty, staff, and student representatives provide critical insight into the university's operations, policies, and academic environment. Their voting presence on the Board of Governors (BOG) ensures that decisions are made with input from those who understand the day-to-day realities of education, research, and campus life. Removing these voting voices weakens the governance structure and risks alienating those who contribute most directly to WVU's mission.

A Call for Transparency

We seek clarification on the motivations behind this bill:

- What problem does this legislation seek to solve?
- What benefits are anticipated from this change?
- Was this bill introduced in response to concerns from a particular constituency?
- Is there an underlying assumption that university faculty, staff, and students do not represent a broad range of perspectives?
- How would increased government oversight improve the university's ability to serve its students and fulfill its land-grant mission?

Without clear justification, this bill appears to be an unnecessary and harmful intrusion into the university's governance.

The Risks of Removing Voting Representation

The exclusion of faculty, staff, and students as voting members would have several negative consequences:

- **Decreased Accountability** – A governance structure that excludes key stakeholders fosters decision-making that is disconnected from the realities of campus life. Faculty, staff, and students hold the administration accountable in ways that external members simply cannot.
- **Weakened Institutional Integrity** – Universities function best when decisions are made through shared governance, a principle recognized by leading higher

education organizations. Excluding those who are directly involved in the university's daily operations diminishes institutional credibility.

- **Lower Morale & Recruitment Challenges** – Faculty, staff, and students who feel unheard or undervalued may disengage, making it harder to attract and retain top talent. This legislation risks further damaging morale at a time when WVU is already navigating significant challenges.

A More Effective Path Forward

Instead of diminishing faculty, staff, and student voices, we should be strengthening shared governance to build a more transparent, accountable, and effective decision-making process. Ensuring voting representation for all major stakeholders would align with principles of responsibility, institutional stewardship, and inclusive leadership.

Conclusion

At a time when WVU needs stability, trust, and collaborative leadership, HB 3279 sends the wrong message. It disregards the expertise and lived experiences of those who serve, learn, and work at WVU every day. We urge lawmakers to reconsider this bill and to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the WVU community before making any changes to our governance structure.