

MINUTES
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE
MONDAY, JULY 10, 2023, 3:15 P.M.

Faculty Senate Chair Frankie Tack brought the monthly meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. Members and guests participated via video conference.

Members Present:

Abraham, J.	Dumitrescu, C.	Li, H.	Scally, J.
Adkins, B.	Elliott, E.	Livengood, H.	Sherlock, L.
Angeline, M.	Faber, T.	Lucci, S.	Siekmeier, J.
Armour-Gemmen, M.	Fidelman, E.	Lupo, J.	Sims, J.
Ballard, D.	Floyd, K.	Malarcher, J.	Sizemore, J.
Bardes, J.	Fullen, M.	Martin, J.	Smith, D.
Barghouthi, N.	Galvez, M.	Martucci, A.	Sofka, S.
Battistella, L.	Galvez-Peralta, M.	M'bayo, T.	Sowards, A.
Bogdansky, K.	Gosden Kitchen, S.	McCluskey, C.	Staniscia, S.
Bolyard, J.	Graves, C.	McGinnis, R.	Swager, L.
Bryner, R.	Gross, J.	Milans, K.	Tack, F.
Carr, J.	Hamrick, A.	Miltenerberger, M.	Terry, D.
Casey, R.	Hatipoglu, K.	Moore, M.	Titolo, M.
Celikbas, E.	Hauser, D.	Murphy, E.	Totzkay, D.
Chapman, K.	Hedrick, J.	Murray, A.	Trickett Shockey, A.
Cohen, S.	Hileman, S.	Myers, S.	Valenti, M.
Cook, A.	Huber, S.	Nolan, K.	Vance, B.
Corcoran, K.	Jaynes, M.	Olgers, F.	Waggy, C.
Cottrell, L.	Johnson Jr., L.	Palmer, A.	Watson, K.
Crichlow, S.	Johnson, D.	Pena-Yewtukhiw, E.	Wayne, S.
Dahle, G.	Katz, J.	Phillips, T.	Weislogel, A.
Davis, D.	Kelly, C.	Prinzo, L.	Woloshuk, J.
DeMarco, F.	Kent, A.	Rinehart, L.	Woodberry, K.
Descoteaux, J.	Kidd, K.	Ripley Stueckle, J.	Woods, S.
Di Bartolomeo, L.	Knuckles, T.	Ripley Stueckle, J.	Wuest, T.
Dickman, B.	Labus, A.	Roberts, D.	Zeni, T.
Dilcher, B.	Lastinger, A.	Rota, C.	
Donley, D.	Leary, B.	Ruseski, J.	

Members Excused:

Barnes, E.	Dey, K.	Haddox, C.	Unger, K.
Bhandari, R.	Feaster, K.	Nix, D.	

Members Absent:

Bernardes, E.	Dionne, C.	Kale, U.	Renzelli-Cain, R.
Bianco, C.	Duenas, O.	Kearns, J.	Sakhuja, A.
Bruyaka, O.	Eades, D.	Kerr, P.	Sokos, G.
Burt, A.	Ellis, E.	LaRue, R.	Stephan, K.
Carducci, H.	Elswick, D.	Nguyen, J.	Szklarz, G.
Dietz, P.	Hanif, A.	Pyles, L.	Thomay, A.
Dimachkie, Z.	Hines, S.	Reece, J.	Vaddamani, V.

1. Chair Tack presented the [Minutes](#) of the June 5, 2023, Faculty Senate Meeting for approval.
Motion to approve carried by unanimous consent.

2. Report from Faculty Senate Chair Frankie Tack
 - a. Tack offered a note of appreciation to Scott Wayne, Faculty Senate Past Chair, for his leadership the past year. Tack also welcomed Diana Davis as chair-elect, Dave Hauser for year two of his current term as secretary, and all new faculty senators.
 - b. Many questions have been received, and the engagement is appreciated
 - c. Faculty Senate leadership has been advocating for transparency in the Academic Transformation process, to which Provost Reed and VP Alsop have been very collaborative.
 - d. Senate Leadership has been meeting with Provost to discuss budget issues, metrics for portfolio review, and academic support unit review.
 - e. Leadership has begun meeting with Rob Alsop to discuss non-academic units, public-private partnerships, and debt structure.
 - f. Additionally, leadership has been advocating for severance packages for TAPs and SAPs, seeking regular updates on non-renewals by area/college, participating in the summer workgroup, advocating for mechanisms for faculty input in the upcoming program review, and established a new transformation/budget area on the [Faculty Senate website](#).
 - g. Conversation initiated regarding concerns with the WVU Code of Conduct and a variety of faculty related documents, and pathways to change for those items.

3. For Approval - Resolution on Faculty Input to the Program Self-Study Process – [Annex I](#)
 Motion to approve by Diana Davis. Seconded.
Motion carried with 73 in favor and none opposed.

4. Board of Governors Report - Ashley Martucci
 - a. June 2, 2023, Board meeting
 - b. Topics of conversation included budget, Academic Transformation
 - c. Voted on a tuition and fee increase of slightly less than 3%.
 - d. Endorsed the merger of the College of Creative Arts and the Reed College of Media.
 - e. Duncan Lorimer, Maura McLaughlin conversation regarding their Shaw Award.
 - f. Introduction to upcoming chair of the Board Tanya Willis Miller.
 - g. Frankie Tack and Stan Hileman will be the Board of Governors representatives for AY 2024.

5. Report from President Gordon Gee
 - a. Offered a welcome to Frankie Tack as the new chair, appreciation to Scott Wayne for his time last year, and a word of thanks to Ashley Martucci for her time on the Board of Governors.
 - b. The process of transformation started in 2015-16 upon realization that the state would continue to limit expenditures on higher education.
 - c. Also triggered the Freedom Agenda, providing bureaucratic separation and relief from the state.
 - d. Both academic and non-academic programs are being reviewed by the process and RPK.

- e. Reduction in staff of about 500 employees, decline of nearly 5,000 students, while the number of faculty has remained the same.
- f. Noted that Katie Hagan, RPK consultant member, is in attendance at the meeting.
- g. Acknowledged that this is a difficult and challenging time for the university, but assured that the data show will that the change is necessary.

Gee: I will reserve right to answer any questions as we get into the question period, if that is alright with you.

Tack: We can take questions now if you'd like.

Gee: I'd prefer to wait, if that is okay.

6. Report from Sharon Martin, Vice President for University Relations and Enrollment Management, George Zimmerman, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management, and Joy Carr, Director of University Advising – Recruitment and Retention Updates

[Enrollment Management Slide Deck](#)

Member: How will the upcoming RIF and cuts affect how we market recruit?

Zimmerman: In terms of the programs specifically?

Member: Well, in terms of the publication, and how WVU is being perceived by students.

Zimmerman: That is something our recruitment team has had discussions about. I think there are always positives that we can talk about around the investments in the students and how we will help them with moving forward in the future.

Martin: We will continue to focus our message on the student first and, while we do not know how everything will play out, we will continue to share stories of how the faculty, the programs, and the university are setting up students for success. As Gee had mentioned, today was a pivotal moment when we began to think about what it is that we are going to invest in, and what are we going to be known for as we enter the next recruitment cycle.

7. Report from Provost Maryanne Reed

- a. The Provost team shared the results of the accelerated program portfolio review process at the [Campus Conversation](#) earlier in the day.
 - i. Deans and chairs of those areas identified for formal review have been notified of next steps.
 - ii. Data file has been made available for everyone on the [Transformation website](#).
 - iii. Team will speak briefly on two topics and allow time for Q & A.
 - 1. Lou Slimak will present the process for reviewing the GEF program.
 - 2. Mark Gavin and Katie Hagan (RPK) will provide a recap of the program portfolio review process, but not in so much detail as was given at the Campus Conversation.

Reed yields the floor to Lou Slimak.

- b. The General Education Foundations program will undergo Board of Governors program review per BOG Academics Rule 2.2
 - i. To address concerns with inability to meaningfully assess student learning or evaluate student

success within the GEF program itself.

1. Issues with HLC accreditation expectations noted.
 - ii. Emerging concerns under WVU's new revenue model.
 1. Too many courses and too many small or under-enrolled sections.
 2. Proliferation of redundant courses across units.
 - iii. GEF review goals include increasing marketability, a focus on teaching relevant skills and knowledge, building equity and efficiency, and the inclusion of experiential and service learning.
 - iv. Process will clarify expectations for GEF courses and faculty, clarify roles and responsibilities of Faculty Senate, academic units, and the Provost's Office, and broadly ensure scheduling accessibility at all campuses.
 - v. Considerations will be sent to the Board of Governors in Fall 2023, for implementation during AY2025.
 - vi. Assembled task force will include representation from Faculty Senate, academic departments, University Registrar, and the Provost's Office, along with other key stakeholders.
- Slimak yields floor to Mark Gavin and Katie Hagan
- c. Metrics considered in program portfolio review included:
 - i. Enrollment and enrollment trends, showing student demand and what majors they are interested in.
 - ii. Examination of units at-large and how they manage resources to deliver on its instructional and other missions at a fundamental level.
 - iii. Student credit hour production, faculty FTE trends, and financial performance are used for a holistic consideration about a unit and its portfolio of programs.
 - iv. Noted that it is not a complete picture, and the formal review process is meant to bring context to those metrics. Those metrics don't tell the whole story, but an important part of it.
 - v. Three lenses of examination: R1 Research, state priority programs, and areas of distinction.
 - vi. BOG 2.2 allows for the following outcomes:
 1. Continuance at the current level of activity.
 2. Continuance at the current level with specific action.
 3. Continuance at a reduced level of activity.
 4. Development of a cooperative program.
 5. Discontinuance.
 - vii. Expectation is to see outcomes across this range. The majority of identified programs will not be discontinued.
 - viii. Self-study reports from identified units are due by August 1.
 1. The process requires input from faculty and relevant staff in completing the self-study.
 - ix. Preliminary recommendations will be sent to colleges and units on August 11, with an appeals window opening between August 20 and September 5.
 - x. The Board of Governors will vote on final recommendations on September 15, and all impacted faculty and staff will be notified by October 16.
 - xi. Data table of metrics used in identifying programs is available on the Transformation site.

1. The data will continue to be updated and corrected as needed.

Gavin yields floor to Katie Hagan.

- d. The data table indicates which programs that are specifically identified as being of priority and having implications for the budget model.
- e. Data table is color coded based on metric category.

Member: How will we be fairly reviewing study abroad without funding for international work, student scholarships for international education, and World Languages?

Slimak: I won't speak to any specific outcomes because the review hasn't happened yet, that is the job of the task force. I will say the broad goal is to include more experiential learning and service learning in the GEF category 8. I certainly think that study abroad is something we would want to consider, but until the program review has been performed and the task force has performed its review, I don't know how we will proceed with any particular experience. We will take a look at that in the fall.

Member: What is the specific vision for who WVU will be that the leadership has as a goal or eventual destination? We haven't necessarily been told that. We've been told we are changing, but not the course that is being charted. What are we supposed to be telling people when they ask "Why am I coming to WVU? What is happening?"

Gee: We are going to be an institution that is forging into the forefront, and by that I mean we have three goals. One is that we will be very student centered, and I encourage everyone to focus on their students and to ensure that our incoming students and families understand that. Second is that we will reconfirm ourself as a land grant institution. By that I mean we will be very orientated toward community building. Our land grant status is very important to us. The final thing is what are the areas that distinguish us? What are the reasons why people come here? We know that cyber security, national security, forensics, neuroscience, creative writing, all of these are essential components that differentiate us from other institutions, and that differentiation is what is important. We have 355 majors, we will probably have less than that, but what we will have is a more robust selection of majors. We must be compelling to students if we are to continue to grow. We need to get into micro-credentialing, we need to get into stackable degrees, we need to get into programs that allow our students to gain experiences outside of the institution. The vision for us is to be a clearly focused institution on the things we do well, the things we need to do well, and an opportunity for us to make a very clear difference in winning the hearts and minds of the people of our state. Last example is that we have 24 hospitals, we have created a health system that is considered one of the best in the country in a very short amount of time. I think this is the sort of thing that is immensely important for us to differentiate ourselves.

Member: When we have heard this time of vision going forward, especially the land grant mission and putting students first, I've been hearing from a lot of people that, when they hear this narrative, is the perspective that we have not been student centered and land grant focused?

Gee: No, I think that we have done an excellent job in many ways. What I'm saying is that we need to re-commit to that as a number of different institutions have moved away from that. In particular I am referring to land grant institutions. Three years ago, I wrote a book on the future of the land grant university, we did all sorts of data sets which showed that most land grant institutions have really focused on trying to become like

every other institution. Have we been student centered? When I came here in 2014, we had a few hundred student groups, we have over 500 now. Students have a variety of opportunities. But still, the students are saying that we still need to do a lot more to engage with them personally, and to be engaged with them not for our convenience but for theirs. I hate to use this word, but the students are our customers. I think we have a real culture of caring at our institution, but I say emphasize that again, that is critical to our future and every one of us has a responsibility to that.

Member: I have several questions from faculty, specifically relating to the limited budget for the university library, that I will try to condense. How does WVU plan to successfully educate graduate and medical students if they cannot access the latest books and journals? Have the people responsible for the budget taken into consideration how the lack of access to those education facilities may alter student applications to WVU, or might encourage current students to transfer elsewhere? And will the lack of WVU faculty access to the most recent books and journals affect WVU research standings? Will the person in charge of the budget consider transferring current funds designed for athletic programs to academic programs, such as the library?

Reed: I can't speak to the details of the library budget, although I know they have been reduced. I know that we are working with our dean, Dr. Karen Diaz, to identify ways to provide as many materials as possible to our WVU community, whether through our own holdings or through interlibrary loans. I'm pretty confident that we are going to be able to serve most of the needs of our students and faculty in doing so, but we have a budget challenge, and we have to address that. We've talked about the impacts that this is going to have on our personnel, so we are really looking at every opportunity to be efficient. I believe our libraries are going to be doing a very good job and have communicated how they are going to be providing materials that are needed to our students and faculty.

Gee: That is the reason we are moving so quickly. This, I view, is a temporary issue. We have a budget issue, we will squeeze it out, then we are in the capacity of investing in and growing our budget again. If we didn't do what we are doing now, our deficit would grow and then we would have even less resources. If that was the case, we wouldn't be worrying about library resources because we'd be having to do a variety of other things. We view this as a transition moment for ourselves, then we can start investing in those programs that will grow our students, our numbers, our quality. That is the reason why we are doing what we are doing right now.

Reed: I would suggest that folks reach out to the library directly regarding their needs, as I know that they have a plan.

Member: I am mostly concerned about faculty cuts that may be a result of the program reviews that we are going through. Earlier in Faculty Senate meetings in April and May, there was a discussion about a holistic review of, if folks had to go, we would look at a multitude of criteria. In the last Campus Conversation, there seemed to be a lot of attention on the discontinuation of contracts as they expired, they just wouldn't be renewed. How are we going to look at faculty termination should they occur? What process is it going to be, what criteria are we going to use?

Taylor: For faculty in programs that are subject to the academic program review, we will be evaluating faculty that will be either RIFed (Reduction in Force) or renewed in accordance with the three criteria laid out

in BOG Rule 4.7, which is performance, skills and knowledge, and seniority. We will be looking at documented performance over the past three years, and then ranking then anonymously based on that performance. Then we will layer in special skills. The way Tracy [Morris] explains this is, for example, in world languages if we needed somebody to teach Aramaic and there was only one person that could teach Aramaic, they would rise to the top of the list because they have a special skill or area of expertise that is needed. We will also look at seniority in a favorable way. If you have been here longer, that bodes favorably for you in that manner. Deans in our colleges and schools can choose, I'm talking about teaching or service track faculty, may choose to non-renew any of those faculty whose contracts are ending at any point in time, and that does not have to be subject to a program review. That has happened since term faculty have existed and will continue to do so. So certainly, a dean may make a decision like that separate from the program review process.

Member: Regarding the revenue and expenses data, do scholarships come into play as tuition or expenditure? Also, does foundation money appear in this table or is it calculated in some way, shape, or form.
Gavin: Scholarship money, if backed by real dollars provided by say an externally funded scholarship to the foundation, that would be captured under tuition revenue. What we do, though, is debt out any unfunded scholarship. Scholarships in many forms is not backed in real dollars, but is just forgone revenue from the institutional perspective, so that is netted out from those tuition dollars. We are looking at revenue captured throughout the year, but it is real dollars captured. Foundation money only goes into calculation of revenue to the degree that it is used to recover, again, scholarships or lost tuition revenue. It wouldn't necessarily come to bear on the expense side.

Hagan: That is correct. That's a restricted fund most typically, so it would not be on the expense side.

Member: When the cuts happen for the RIF, in terms of the individual faculty members and staff members, is that determination going to be made by the dean alone, the Provost's Office, or some combination of the two?

Taylor: That will be done in a collaborative effort between the Provost's Office, the dean, and, in relevant areas, the chair of a particular department.

Member: Do we have any information as to when we might have more of a budget for recruitment? As we feel stifled in our ability to recruit for our program given our restraints.

Martin: I can't speak to specifics, but I can speak to partnerships. What I would like to do is work more closely with your recruitment team, think about how we can do recruitment and marketing together, and maybe leverage those assets that we have. I think that everyone across the university is of course struggling with a little bit less to work with, but that doesn't mean we can't achieve our goals, it is just, how do we pull together those resources to have a more united front in our recruitment effort.

Zimmerman: We've worked closely with Statler and Eberly and others in the past with their recruitment teams, both from a digital marketing perspectives with the marketing side, but also opportunities for partnerships. I think there are a lot of ways that we can recruit that – we need to think outside of the box. The days of packing up your things and going to a high school are over. You cannot get into high schools in a lot of areas of the country anymore. So, we need to think about new ways of engaging students. We do a lot of that

already, centrally, and our teams are happy to meet with groups in the colleges and people who are interested to figure out the ways that we can do more to highlight programs and direct students in different ways.

Martin: We have worked on a digital ad campaign with Eberly, so it is not unfamiliar territory.

Member: To what extent has the program review process been conducted on regional campuses? Looking at the documents so far, I haven't seen where Beckley or Potomac State have been sectioned out. For example, English: is that under English in the documents, or is there further review to be done?

Reed: We are not currently reviewing the branch campuses. We are focusing on the main campus and HSC. We have new deans who are trying to wrap their arms around the current budget situation and have already found ways to meet budget reductions, but we want to do that later in the coming year to give them time. We will be going through a similar review process with the branch campuses later this year using the framework provided by RPK to do that process. If you go to the website and see some of materials, they say we are not reviewing those campuses at this time, and those campuses have different missions and different focuses, so we are treating them differently at this time.

Member: Focusing on double majors, what has been said is that second majors are nice, but they don't count, and they are not value added because they don't bring in revenue. The revenue only counts toward the primary major. My concern is that we will be competing with each other to steal students, to manipulate students to declare a certain major as primary, and it isn't a realistic way to look at what college means for students, what students come to college to get, and the value that we all add. We are essentially saying that, this one thing matters, when there are so many things that matter. It seems like a problematic and unrealistic way to determine what counts.

Slimak: We counted all majors in certain places, and we only counted primary majors in others. The headcount enrollment is what you are talking about specifically and I would point everyone to the data definitions on the academic transformation website. For headcount enrollment, we only counted primary majors because, from the institutions budget model, from the state budget model, only primary majors count in terms of generating revenue toward the institution. For revenue generation, when we credit a unit for its revenue generation, we count all students taught, primary, secondary, otherwise. So, you do get credit for those double majors elsewhere. That is the metric we agreed on for this first year. If the program comes under review and wants to say that they have X number of double majors, we think you should consider that, that is part of what they can do in their response, and I'm happy to help them get those numbers.

Reed: How many double majors do we have as an institution? Is it a lot?

Slimak: No, not by percentage at all, we have a very small number of double majors. The programs that would be the most affected aren't in the humanities, they are actually in engineering. There is a dual double major program between mechanical and aerospace engineering. We don't have a policy for determining how a student assigns a primary major, so right now students entering that engineering double major get listed as aerospace for primary because it comes first. One of the effects this review has had is that the policy committee this fall will review and determine a policy to how a student selects their primary major so that it is at least based on the student's interest and if they had to make a choice at some point.

Gavin: We are having conversations on how we can bring that double major data into our data set and

have it available as we evaluate programs.

Member: There hasn't been conversation on transformation and the budget, and its impact on international students both in terms of recruitment and retention. How is WVU going to rebrand itself to continue appealing to international students, given all the financial constraints we are going through?

Zimmerman: The new scholarship strategies specifically support international students, so we have focused on that. The timing when we used to have a large number of sponsored students, particularly those from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, has gone. Those programs don't exist anymore and have been eliminated by the governments in those countries. What we are seeing now are students that are looking to come to the United States for programs, particularly at WVU, that have more financial need. So, we are including them just as we would any other non-resident student in those particular scholarships. From an international recruitment strategy, we have looked at a variety of opportunities, such as 2+2 programs. Chambers is a great example with some of what they have done, to see what complementary programs we could do with schools perhaps in China or Korea. What we see then is that those students can stay on for graduate programs in a lot of cases. In terms of traditional first-time freshmen, we are focusing in India as one of our primary markets, as well as sub-Saharan Africa. China will be going through an enhanced demographic drop from a student and college going perspective, and we have already struggled with ungraduated recruitment in China. With a market that is contracting, it makes more sense to invest in other areas of the globe. We won't ignore China, but we will invest more in specific programs like those 2+2s, or second and third tier city engagements. International travel will be key as we are able to move through this budget crisis and there are opportunities for faculty and staff to travel and engage internationally again. Partnerships with central recruitment and the Office of Global Affairs are encouraged. We can help train faculty members that are going abroad with materials, messaging, who to contact, and the best way to use time from a recruitment perspective.

Gee: The pandemic was a great problem for international student recruitment. The middle east has really limited the number of students they are sending to American universities. One of our largest alumni groups was in Saudi Arabia, as we trained a vast majority of engineers for Aramco. Referring back though, those 2+2s, the stacking degrees, that is how we can appear attractive to international students.

Member: I've received questions about the faculty to student ration metric used in program review. It seems that if there is a high faculty to student ratio, that is preferred, and programs were cited as having a low faculty to student ratio as a reason for their review. Maybe it is just a matter of having that term being defined, as some feel that a lower ratio is better for students.

Gavin: That is one way of looking at efficiency. A way, not the way. We have defined it as looking at efficiency in delivering instruction to your majors or, secondarily, to doctoral students. We noted that, while it can be informative, it is not definitive. We need context around that. We defined a university median at all levels, but whether a program is above or below that, and whether that is an appropriate level, that is a question of context and we need to be aware of that. Those contextual factors need to be taken into account in the review process. The point on the metrics, the efficiency ones, is that they catch our attention but do not automatically say that this defines a problematic program. It is simply a metric that says, we need to better understand this. Is this appropriate and sustainable? I don't want anyone to think that low ratios are inherently bad, they are just

something that need to be looked at more to understand them.

Member: Many were surprised by the number of programs that are under review, which has created some uncertainty. We are pleased by the holistic nature of the review, but considered the kinds of data and the very high number of disparate programs that are being looked at, I was wondering if you could give us some signs as to what metrics seem to be most important. This morning Mark and Lou said that the key things seem to be about revenue and cost, which makes sense given our financial restrictions. Are there any columns that are looked at more closely in this?

Reed: It is a holistic look, there are many types of data we are looking at. Student demand is really a key component, and student demand impacts revenue. It is particularly noteworthy if a program has very low enrollments or has significant declines in enrollment that are greater than the university as whole. That does not mean those other factors are not important, but that is the first flag and is what caught our attention immediately.

Slimak: In the letters that were sent to the units, it was explained that “these are the department metrics that were flagged, these are the individual program metrics that were flagged.” So as units go to respond, they are not responding for every metric, they will be able to respond to the specific questions we have about some of their programs.

Gavin: We wrestled that at the front end, with how we will weight criteria, and we decided that we don’t want to yet, so it is not weighted. But as Provost Reed suggested, you cannot ignore enrollment trends. To be clear, a small enrollment program is not automatically up for cutting, but the questions is: can it be sustained? If there is a program generating a loss, it doesn’t mean it will automatically be cut. There will be a question of, can we do this more efficiently to minimize the loss? There are plenty of things that universities do that generate a net negative revenue and are subsidized. President Gee and Provost Reed have said that, we subsidize a large number of things as an institution, and we are going to have to start making choices about what we subsidize and what we don’t.

Member: We have heard that many international students do not want to come to us because our ranking keeps going down and is not good. What are we going to do to improve our ranking in the US or world?

Gee: You are talking to a guy that doesn’t believe in rankings, I believe in quality. I always point out that US News has been the greatest detriment to the quality of education in this country, and a number of institutions are leaving the ranking business. The truth is that, even under US news, our ranking has risen, and I don’t necessarily take a lot of note in that. There are certain places, China, Middle Eastern countries, where we will need to go, visit with ambassadors, with high-ranking officials in Washington, regarding the very specific programs that we do that are unique, and that is where we will start to recruit to. There has never been a public university in the country that has ever been ranked in the top 20 by US News and World Report. Rankings are not our problem, our problem is making sure we have programs that people demand and want to come toward, and that will be our solution.

Member: I’d like to bring up where we are in terms of budget in that, as I understand it, even if our programs were to all break even, we still would have a structural budget deficit because of the debt we are

carrying and the principal, and that we need to pay the interest to the tune of tens of millions of dollars. We subsidize a large number of things that generate a return on investment that is seen in our communities as we get better health outcomes, better rates of happiness, a stronger tax base, but these things will never show up in the university budget. That part of the budget is the reason I invited Kelly Allen from the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy to speak on the landscape we are facing where we have this debt, a decrease in funding from the state creating a hole, and I feel like that hurdle is going to further leave behind the students that benefit the most from public education and face the most financial hurdles. This is coming from a concern of not wanting to see the returns we give to the state and its communities diminished.

Reed: Can I interrupt for one minute? You raised a question about our debt burden and I'd like to make sure we're clear about that – can we take a moment to ask Rob Alsop to respond to ensure we have accurate information?

Alsop: One of the things that Frankie asked of our team is a fully detailed analysis as it relates to our debt portfolio, which we have been working on and we are almost ready to provide. This information is the list of all our outstanding debt, public debt, private debt, and public bonds, private bonds, and then any private loans that we have as well as their interest rates. As we have to invest in a number of things at our institution, we must take care of our capital infrastructure. When you look at our overall debt ratio compared to our peers, we are pretty competitive and comparable to the ratings that the bond houses have provided us. When you look around our campus, you can see a number of things we have invested in for our faculty, for our staff, for our research capabilities, and that costs money. There were debts issued to renovate buildings and infrastructure for our campus so that we had sufficient facilities moving forward. We will provide that information by project. If you look at the interest rate on that debt, it is over 98% fixed at a low interest rate, and it enables a lot of the activity that goes on at the institution moving forward. It is fair game to talk about our overall budget and our ratios, but we will be providing a lot of information as it relates to those debt issuances and the projects that they funded.

Member: There was no intent to critique the debt, but it is a reality and part of the hole we are trying to dig out of. I'd like to recognize Kelly Allen to speak on the subject.

Allen: We can clearly see that college funding has not kept pace with inflation and we are seeing budget impacts across college and universities statewide, none more visible than here at WVU. When accounting for inflation, state funding for higher education is down 24% since 2013. That is tens of millions of dollars each year at West Virginia University specifically. Had the rate of funding been maintained since 2013, WVU would have roughly an additional \$30 million in state funding. Based on the state of revenue for the state this year, higher education should have seen a restoration in funding levels. If revenue were to go down, it seems scary to think that funding levels could go even lower. It is important that our lawmakers understand both our short- and long-term community values of our institutions that don't show up in these kinds of reports.

Tack: I'd like to point out that there is a contact us form at the Faculty Senate website. Click on that and send us any concerns you may have. You can email me, and we are taking forward every question that we get. You can also, of course, ask questions on your own through the routes you have. We encourage Senators to reach out to their constituencies. A lot of our faculty are off contract, we understand that, but this program/department review is critical, and it is critical that the faculty voice be included in that. I hope that the resolution today might provide some traction. The engagement and responsiveness of faculty in this process is

critical, and you can help that happen.

8. No new business introduced.

9. Motion to adjourn by Diana Davis. Seconded

Chair Tack adjourned the meeting at 5:46 p.m. to reconvene on August 7, 2023.

Corey Hunt

Faculty Senate Office Administrator

Recorded discussion should not be considered verbatim. While efforts have been made to record exact conversation, occasionally paraphrasing is utilized for clarity and conciseness.

*Information on WVU Transformation, including updates, timeline, Campus Conversations, and FAQs can be found [here](#).
The new Faculty Senate Transformation/Budget page can be found [here](#).*