



West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Higher Education
News Clippings

Week of March 25, 2013

March 22, 2013



WV higher education institutions meet about campus safety

By Travis Brinks

Around 150 individuals from public and private higher education institutions from across the state came together Friday to discuss safety on college campuses.

It was part of the West Virginia Higher Education Campus Planning and Response Summit hosted by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

The Summit focused on three critical areas including public health concerns, safety and security issues and weather related events.

During the Summit, West Virginia State University President Dr. Brian O. Hemphill served as a featured speaker and moderator for a panel on safety and security issues.

Hemphill took time to talk about his experience as Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Northern Illinois University, where in February 2008, a student opened fire on campus killing six and injuring twenty four.

Hemphill stressed the importance of every university having a comprehensive, National Incident Management System and an annual exercise that allows campus responders to practice that plan.

West Virginia University, West Virginia State University, Fairmont State University, Glenville State College, Kanawha Valley Community and Technical College and Marshall University were among the institutions that participated in the Summit.

Representatives from the American Red Cross – West Virginia Region, Appalachian Power Company, and the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management for the State of West Virginia were also in attendance.

March 23, 2013



Free tuition info runs you \$65

By Joanne Arbogast

LEWISBURG — Have a child in college or planning to go to college this fall? If so, chances are you recently received an official-looking letter from an organization called the Student Financial Resource Center.

It's a convincing document, down to the Department of Education-like symbol on its logo and its use of terminology: "You can receive financial aid even if you are not a straight-A student or a top athlete. In fact, most students and parents are unaware of the vast number of merit and need-based financial aid programs ... too many students are under the impression they cannot receive financial aid that does not require repayment, so they do not bother applying at all."

The Student Financial Resource Center says it can help find "free" money that is "not student loans and do not have to be repaid later" and can be used for tuition, room and board, fees, books, computers and transportation.

How does the Student Financial Resource Center do this? By "saving you time" — the time it would take you to do yourself, which you can easily do.

The Student Financial Resource Center urges you to fill out a student aid profile form providing personal information and send it back ... along with a refundable processing fee of \$65.

What do you get for \$65?

A "guidebook" with financial aid information, a list of free merit- and need-based financial aid programs and instructions on how to apply to some of them. In other words, you get information you could have gotten for free.

And you will still have to fill out the application forms yourself.

"I have heard of this," Andrea Leithner-Stauffer, director of the financial aid office at Bucknell University, said of the Student Financial Resource Center.

“We always say contact the school where your student is enrolled or thinking of going to and talk with the financial aid office there.”

Sources for financial aid include high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices and state and federal government agencies. The Student Financial Resource Center even acknowledges that on its website. To gain entry to the web site, you need to provide the profile number included in the letter. Or — surprise, surprise — simply call or email them and a profile number will be provided.

Is the Student Financial Resource Center affiliated with any educational institutions or government agencies?

No.

The Student Financial Resource Center admits it, but you have to look hard for that disclaimer — it’s in fine print on the back of the letter and deep in the website: SFRC is an independent organization and is not affiliated with any educational institutions, government agencies, or funding sources.

The Student Financial Resource Center also states it “can’t guarantee results and has no input into the decision to which applicants will be selected to receive financial aid funds.”

So what exactly does the Student Financial Resource Center provide for the \$65 fee that you can’t get yourself? And since the fee is “refundable,” precisely how does one get that money back?

You won’t get answers by calling the Student Financial Resource Center. Answering the phone was a representative named Ray who said he couldn’t answer any questions because he was “just an operator at the message center” and those who could answer questions “were not available.”

Is there a number to call to reach someone who can answer questions?

“The same number you called,” Ray said, but again added that none of those people were available — and he didn’t know when they would be.

“You hear some real horror stories,” Leithner-Stauffer said of people who end up paying a lot of money responding to scams promising financial aid assistance or free scholarships.

The important thing to remember is that students can get information about, and apply for, financial aid and scholarships without spending a dime.

March 23, 2013



WVU sets up Big 12 fellowships

Starting next year, WVU faculty members will have the chance to participate in fellowships — on the Mountaineers' dime — at their fellow Big 12 schools.

WVU Provost's Office recently made the guidelines and application process for the 2013-'14 fellowship available to its faculty. Associate Provost for Academic Personnel C.B. Wilson said WVU modeled it off a similar policy at Kansas State.

Some of the current Big 12 members have continued their fellowship programs with former Big 12 schools, Wilson said. But, WVU will be limited to just the nine other current conference schools.

During each year six fellowships will be available to WVU faculty members, according to the plan. All full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to apply.

WVU will provide reasonable travel, lodging and meal expenses for the faculty member up to \$2,500. It is expected that the trip will be for two weeks, though longer stays can be worked out on a case-by-case basis.

Faculty are expected to use the trip to work on collaborative research, consult with other faculty and students, give lectures, learn a new skill or take advantage of facilities that can't be offered in Morgantown.

Following a trip, the faculty member has to submit a report describing the outcomes and offering suggestion for future trips.

WVU President Jim Clements said the university should be happy the Big 12 does academic initiatives such as fellowship programs and it isn't the case for all athletic conference affiliations.

March 24, 2013

Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

Science centers face threatening budget cuts

By Shay Maunz

Starbase is in danger.

It sounds like something from science fiction, but it's serious.

The science, technology, engineering and math camp, administered by the United States Department of Defense on 76 military bases nationwide, is facing down threats to its federal funding.

That could close two Starbase camps in West Virginia - one in Charleston and another in Martinsburg. The Charleston camp, hosted by the 130th Airlift Wing, has served more than 14,000 Kanawha County school children since it opened in 2001.

Starbase's threats are on a national level, and are on all sides: an amendment to the Department of Defense budget that eliminated the program was eventually left out of the bill, but the current federal budget doesn't include any funding for the program. There's also been some talk of moving the program away from the Department of Defense and shifting it to the Department of Education, which could effectively kill the program as it exists today.

"Since we're on a military base we have things like airplanes and people on airplanes," said Chris Treadway, the director of Charleston's Starbase academy. "It's a great place for kids to see those folks, to see STEM careers in action and having a positive role."

Starbase is open to fifth-graders who come with their classrooms - it's like a mini field trip over a period of time. Classes usually spend five days at Starbase, or 25 instructional hours.

Those 25 hours are a marathon of experiments and projects in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math - what are commonly called the STEM fields in the education community.

STEM has been a trendy topic in education circles over the last several years. The dearth of qualified workers for an increasing number of high-tech jobs has left school and government officials wondering how to better train students in those fields, and how to encourage more kids to seek those jobs.

That's what makes the threat of the funding loss so disconcerting to Treadway and other fans of Starbase. They think students need more things like Starbase, not less.

"When you're an elementary teacher you feel like you're just talking to them, blah, blah, blah," said Kathy Christian, a teacher at Pinch Elementary. "It's not the same as having the technology and the room and the motivation."

Fans of the program have come out en masse to support it, and oppose cuts in its funding. A national Facebook group has more than 1,200 members, and more every day. Teachers from Kenna, Ruthlawn, Montrose, Shoals and Kanawha City elementary schools have all taken to that Facebook page to come out in support of the program.

The activities at Starbase are on a scale that classroom teachers just can't accomplish on their own. Kids build rockets and use air compressors. They design things on computers and then make them with three-dimensional printers.

"And the whole place is set up for this kind of thing," Christian said. "It's something that you can't duplicate in your room."

March 22, 2013

NewsTribune.info

The Rowan Report: Education was the Legislature's main issue this week

By Ruth Rowan

Education, including the 2014 Education budget was the main focus this week at the Capitol.

Dr. Lynn Boyer was present for the portion of the presentation made by State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. James Phares, concerning the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind. As with all other schools in the state their budget was cut. Last year the school received \$13,327,637. In the 2014 budget they are slated to receive \$12,860,163. A reduction of \$467,474. It should be noted that from fiscal year 2012 to 2013 there was an increase of funding by \$253,714. That was by recommendation of the Governor.

On Thursday J.D. Corbin and Kathy Kuykendall from the WVSDB and Scott Staley from Mineral County Schools were here with the Association for Career and Technical Education. Career technical education has been a top priority of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), a board which serves the 16 states in the southeastern region. In the past more importance had been on preparing students for college. Now our students will receive a boarder spectrum to choose from as more options will be given in career technical education. Preparing students for college is still a major focus but so too is preparing our young people for a wider variety of career choices.

Chancellor Paul Hill of the West Virginia Higher Education Commission addressed the Joint Committee on the budget request as it impacts higher education. State financial aid and programs were not reduced. Due to the exemption of state financial aid from the proposed reductions, institutional funding received an 8.94% reduction instead of a 7.5% reduction like other state agencies. What that means, if you are a student at Potomac State College and receiving financial aid, you would not lose your financial aid. The institution however, will be reduced in funding by \$419,427 going from \$4,690,189 to \$4,270,762.

Higher education in our state is really a bargain when compared with the other 15 SREB states. Only Louisiana is cheaper with average tuition costs of \$5,246. West Virginia's average tuition is \$5,536. Big difference when compared with Virginia at \$9,535 and Delaware at \$10,438. The state institution with the highest price tag is West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine at \$20, 950. West Virginia University is the second most expensive at \$6,090. So where do you suppose the best educational bargain in

the state might be? Of the 12 state institutions Potomac State College at \$3,178 was the best.

Meeting with Senator Cookman, Delegate Cowles, and myself to discuss education issues were members of the Hampshire County Board of Education; Gerald Mathias, Jean Shoemaker, and Bonnie Wilcox. Also meeting with me this week was Butch Wahl from the Mineral County Board of Education. Their visit also included an update on SB 359, The Governor's Education Bill.

Among bills being passed this week was HB 2764. This bill was about compulsory school attendance. Counties with more than 4000 students must employ the equivalent of one attendance director. Counties with less than 4000 students should have a half time director. Duties would include ascertaining reasons for inexcusable absences, serving notices, filing complaints for violations, and making home visits. This bill was needed to help curb the problem of frequent absenteeism. A few months ago State Supreme Court Judge Robin Davis visited our area with data on the correlation of absenteeism to dropout rates, and future run-ins with the law.

Paging this week in the House of Delegates: Frankfort Middle, Haley Geiger; Romney Elementary, Austin Mongold, Jacob Whelan, and Hunter Shoemaker; Capon Bridge Elementary, Jacob Lockhart and Faith Solecki.

March 24, 2013

W.Va. planner discusses higher education costs

By The Associated Press

BECKLEY -- For hundreds of graduating seniors, the countdown for heading to college this fall has already begun. Rugs, coordinating curtains, ample supply of Cinnamon Toast Crunch and laundry basket aside, if parents are just now beginning to plan for how they'll pay for college, they may be too late for outside assistance. Loans, work-study programs, weekend and summer employment -- all are self-help options still in play.

According to Shawn Schuyler, director of College Planning with Bill Kinder and Associates, most seniors are getting their financial aid award letters back now from their completed and submitted FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

When affording college is the topic, it's a matter of the early bird getting the worm -- on all fronts -- advice that can certainly help this year's high school juniors and earlier grades with sights set on higher education.

"When filing a FAFSA, parents should start the first day in January of the year their student will attend college. They will be first in line for financial aid decisions from the colleges at that point."

According to Schuyler, the college really makes the bulk of the decision as to who gets what in available aid. "So if you are early in line, there's a much bigger pool of aid available for the financial aid office to distribute."

For current juniors, Schuyler suggests, before parents complete the FAFSA next year, they have time now to consult their child's school guidance counselor for available aid and for performance and field-related scholarships available. Making an appointment to see a financial adviser with experience in doing college planning to discuss strategies concerning parental assets is also a good idea.

"If parents have a sizable CD [certificate of deposit], for instance, it will be counted as money they are expected to spend toward college when their aid calculations are made."

Speaking with a college planner at least a year out will give parents time to review assets, their intentions for the assets and alternative vehicles for keeping them out of the financial aid calculation.

"Funding retirement is really the same problem as funding college -- there's only one pool to reach into for both." Sound financial advice can help couples plan for both retirement and college for the kids. "Planning could be done in such a way as to create money for college and an income stream for you at retirement age."

Not only is there a single pool of money to fund both objectives, but the pool is getting more and more shallow. Funding an education, according to Schuyler, beats the heck out of an increase in the cost of milk, bread and gasoline.

"It's like inflation on steroids. Tuition and fees for public four-year universities have outpaced inflation by approximately 70 percent over the last 20 years. There's nothing else that costs an inflation-adjusted 70 percent more than it did 20 years ago."

And if parents are counting on scholarships and grants to get their children through, that pool is also receding.

"Only 3 percent of aid you don't have to pay back, free aid, comes from private sector scholarships. The rest comes directly from the colleges."

A little known fact is that colleges will compete for good students. Schuyler suggests when romancing several different colleges, even if there's only one a student really wants to go to, he or she shouldn't lay all the cards on the table early.

"It's process-oriented. Don't tell yourself you make too much money to qualify for aid. Yes, financial aid calculations are based on the parents' income and assets, but if you show a college that you have a good student and that they have competition, you may get a bigger slice of the pie."

Schuyler tells the story of a student who had a heart set on an expensive and well-known private university.

"This was an awesome student whose parents were told by an adviser that they made too much money and to not file a FAFSA. The student should have filed anyway and [on the FAFSA] listed at least six other high profile universities of interest, but instead applied under Early Acceptance and accepted the school's offer of zero financial aid on Early Decision.

"By the time the client came to me for help, it was already too late. It's like walking onto a car lot and saying, 'Hey, there's the car I want. Is that the price there on the sticker?'" Tuition, contends Schuyler, is the ultimate sticker price.

Here are a few tips from the trade suggested by Schuyler. For more comprehensive and individualized analysis, seek the help of a financial counselor with experience in college planning.

* Check now with the school guidance counselor on available scholarships and for advice on the academic and social activities necessary to apply to certain colleges and for certain disciplines. Counselors can also help provide resources for filling out the FAFSA.

* Remember, neither colleges nor banks have a keen interest in helping people secure college "discounts." As with retirement planning, financial planners are great primary or secondary sources for exploring options at no upfront cost.

* There's a lot a student can do to position him or herself for more financial aid, like showing a clear, well-defined scholarly interest and doing the right amount of the right extracurricular activities.

* It's never too early to plan, depending on your financial capabilities. "If you have a baby you want to one day go to college, that's an awesome time to start. One way to do it is to look at funding with life insurance."

The policies advertised on television aren't necessarily the best products, says Schuyler, "but life insurance with a cash value that grows when the market is up but does not lose money when the market is down can be a good strategy if it is within your budget and is suitable for your overall financial goals."

529 Plans -- "If you are using a 529 plan to save, you need to be comfortable with the various levels of market risk attached to the product. An experienced financial adviser can discuss all the savings vehicles available for advanced college planning."

There's nothing wrong with relying on a 529 plan as a savings vehicle but, without a crystal ball to predict how the market will perform during the accumulation period of the plan and before it is time for your children to attend college, you should always have a Plan B. "There are no guarantees," says Schuyler.

For more advice on college funding, contact Shawn Schuyler at Bill Kinder and Associates, 304-250-0250.

March 24, 2013



Work to learn

Students scramble to afford college

By Eric Adler and Mara Rose Williams

In its idealized conception, college is an ivory tower where students through quiet contemplation or raucous self-discovery ready themselves for “the real world.”

But as college student Korchi Yang can attest, and as 2 million college applicants awaiting their financial aid packages may soon discover, being a hardworking student these days means precisely that.

Work .

Not just the on-campus work-study variety. This is real-world work: 20 or 30 hours a week or more.

One out of every five college students works full time, 35-plus hours a week, all year long, according to the most recently released census figures. With college bills at record highs, students say it’s not a choice. It’s a must.

Average student debt now sits at \$26,600. The cost to attend a public four-year college, with room and board, on average: \$17,860 per year. Private: \$40,000.

After subtracting grants and scholarships, tuition paid by students at public universities jumped 8.3 percent last year, the biggest increase on record, according to a report released last week by the State Higher Education Executive Officers association.

College bills have become so onerous for some, in fact, that last month The Chronicle of Higher Education reported on a brisk market for students selling parts of their physical selves: Plasma, sperm, eggs, their bodies for medical clinical studies.

“It’s fast, easy money,” said Nikki Hill, a 25-year-old, full-time online student at Missouri Southern State University who previously attended the University of Kansas.

While at KU, Hill said, she sold plasma twice a week while also working at a coffee shop to pay her bills.

“College is expensive. I was making \$60 a week donating my plasma,” said Hill, who said she earned thousands of dollars over three years this way. “All my friends were

doing it, too. I used to round everyone up and drive them all with me to the plasma center.”

For the majority of students who don't go to such lengths, however, the daily working world has become the prime option.

For years, studies have found that holding a job for 10 to 15 hours a week during college can actually help students perform better in the classroom. But students today are going far beyond that limit, experts say.

Too many hours has a price all its own.

“The toll it takes on students is pretty significant,” said Josh Gunn, president-elect of the American College Counseling Association and director of counseling and psychological services at Kennesaw State University. “Students are depleted, exhausted, and something has to suffer.”

March 25, 2013



J-school's IMC marks a decade

This year, the WVU P.I. Reed School of Journalism's online master's program in integrated marketing communications is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

The first online IMC program in the nation, the WVU IMC program has seen significant growth and continued innovation throughout the last 10 years.

The WVU IMC graduate program began in 2001 as a 15-credit hour certificate program. The full 39-credit hour master's degree program officially launched in fall 2003 with 17 students in its first class. Just three years later, the program exceeded 100 students.

Today, the IMC program has 426 students enrolled from 41 states and five foreign countries, as well as almost 500 graduates representing 46 states and countries on five of the seven continents. The program caters to mid-level communications professionals. In its most recent starting class, students averaged 8.3 years of professional experience upon entry.

"The growth of the IMC program is a reflection of the excellent curriculum, faculty and administration," School of Journalism Dean Maryanne Reed said. "We have become a national leader in quality online graduate programming, and our pioneering efforts are a model for competitors in the field."

As other universities launch online programs, WVU IMC is proud of its history and how far it has come since its inaugural class of 17.

"In the online program space, the WVU IMC program is a seasoned veteran," said Chad Mezera, online programs director at the School of Journalism. "The trick to our success is that we don't take that for granted. We're still constantly thinking about what's around the corner, what we can do better and how we can best update, and add to, our curriculum to make sure we're offering the most relevant master's degree for communications professionals."

"The world today being built by the millennial generation is a lot more social, digital, participative and collaborative than the world of previous generations," said Thomas L. Harrison, Chairman of Omnicom's Diversified Agency Services and member of the WVU IMC program's advisory board. "The WVU IMC program understands where the industry is headed and is there to help communications professionals be leaders in that space."

While the growth of student enrollment is certainly a strong benchmark, the IMC program is equally proud of other milestones, including the addition of flexible electives — now totaling 20 — allowing for specialization within the program; the launch of a graduate certificate in digital marketing communications; the recruitment of expert faculty — now totaling 59 — from across the country; the launch of an online professional development series in social media and marketing in the fall of 2012; and the continued growth and success of the program's annual INTEGRATE professional IMC conference.

“We know what we do well is adapt our curriculum and program offerings to current industry trends, as well as listen to our students' needs and make sure that we're putting them first,” Mezera said. “That is what we've done for the last 10 years, and it's exactly what we'll continue to do for the next 10 years.”

Nationwide online education has been on the rise throughout the past decade. According to the 2012 Babson Survey Research Group report “Changing Course: Ten Years of Tracking Online Education in the United States,” approximately 1.6 million students were enrolled in at least one online course in the fall of 2002. By fall of 2011, that number reached 6.7 million.

The IMC program will host a special 10-year anniversary celebration during its annual INTEGRATE conference May 31-June 1. Info about the conference: imc.wvu.edu/integrate.

March 25, 2013



Prof recognized for research

WVU Centennial Professor of Psychology Kennon Andy Lattal has been selected as the 2013 recipient of the American Psychological Association Division for Behavior Analysis Don Hake Translational Research Award. The award recognizes his extensive work in the experimental analysis of behavior.

“Our department is delighted that Dr. Lattal is bringing this particular honor to WVU because the award is named for one of our own faculty members, Don F. Hake, who was the first coordinator of the doctoral program in behavior analysis before his untimely death in 1982,” said Tracy Morris, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Psychology.

Of the many things about psychology that interests Lattal, the work he finds most rewarding is the work he does with students, both graduate and undergraduate. This work includes classroom experiences, research with student collaborators in his laboratory, and, as time and student interest permit, experiences in applied settings with pets.

“Dr. Lattal has an international reputation for experiments based on animal models that shed light on interesting aspects of human behavior,” Morris said. “For example, his research team has been working to explain why ‘lost,’ ‘forgotten,’ or ‘punished’ behavior sometimes comes back — a phenomenon that may hinder the elimination of bad habits, promote criminal recidivism, or cause recovering addicts to relapse.”

Lattal received his doctorate in psychology from the University of Alabama and joined the WVU faculty in 1972. He has authored 140 research articles and chapters on conceptual, experimental, and applied topics in behavior analysis.

He has mentored more than 40 doctoral students and every faculty member of WVU’s behavior analysis program since 1982. In addition to his named professorship, WVU recognized his scholarly work with its Benedum Distinguished Scholar Award. Lattal has also received the American Psychological Association’s Division 25 Distinguished Contributions to Basic Research Award.

In May 2013, Lattal is receiving the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis’s Distinguished Service to Behavior Analysis award.

March 25, 2013



WVU: PEIA withholding requested data

School asking for claims information from insurance firm

By Alex Lang

WVU officials said the state's Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) is dragging its feet and refusing to provide information regarding how much the university pays into and how much is paid out from the agency.

Faculty Senate Chairman Michael Mays said WVU is trying to get data from PEIA on how much the university has paid in and how much in claims were paid to university employees. PEIA provides health insurance coverage for WVU employees and others in the state.

Mays said they requested aggregate data, but PEIA said they couldn't give out the information because of confidentiality. It is his understanding PEIA can't give individual data, but WVU asked for composite information.

The first request was made in October 2008, said Margaret Phillips, WVU's vice president for human resources. They then followed with an official Freedom of Information Act request the next month. That request was denied and PEIA cited releasing the information would violate the federal law regarding health care privacy.

WVU asked PEIA for various information including the dollar value of health claims by active employees and dependents, the top 25 outpatient hospital service providers for employees and public records detailing drug use and spending for WVU employees.

PEIA did provide some information in its response, but WVU wrote back to PEIA and stated that since it provided some information, their policy allows the release of all information.

Department of Administration spokeswoman Diane Holley-Brown wrote in an email that PEIA did provide some generalized information in various categories. She also notes that WVU has some of the information it requested because the university has to submit it to PEIA. However, detailed information couldn't be provided because of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

"HIPAA draws a very defined line between the employer and the health plan, by which PEIA must abide," Holley-Brown wrote.

The Dominion Post has filed a Freedom of Information Act request for the same data from PEIA.

Some of the information provided to WVU includes that the overall medical expenses cost, of both employee and the plan, was more than \$16 million over one fiscal year. The most chronic condition was hypertension followed by back pain. There were also 4,885 employees and 3,128 dependents enrolled in the PEIA plan.

Mays said the issue is whether the coverage university employees are receiving corresponds to how much they are paying into the system.

“If we had the chance to consider other providers, we’d be able to make an informed decision,” Mays said.

WVU is required by state code to be enrolled in PEIA, Mays said. Mays brought up some concerns about PEIA during a recent Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting and many others on the committee were in agreement with Mays.

Currently, WVU employee premiums are based on salaries received from state funds, Mays said. For example a faculty member in the Department of English who makes \$40,000 might pay \$100 a month in premiums. But, there could be a faculty member in the School of Medicine who makes the same amount in state funds, but makes an additional \$60,000 in clinical pay. That School of Medicine faculty member would pay the same premium as the English professor.

There is no change in coverage based on how much a person pays into PEIA, said Bob Griffith, who served on the Executive Committee and is a faculty representative on the Board of Governors.

Griffith said the consensus among WVU’s Board of Governors is that the state’s legislature won’t let WVU opt out of PEIA.

Mays and Griffith have both talked publicly about how PEIA hurts WVU’s recruiting efforts. Griffith said good candidates do their research and find out information about WVU’s plan. He added that West Virginia’s sliding payment scale is something that virtually no other university operates under.

March 27, 2013

THE PARTHENON

MU STEM Center awarded NAEYC accreditation

By Yejin Jenny Han

The College of Education announced that the Marshall University Early Education STEM Center achieved a new five-year term of NAEYC accreditation, which was approved by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

June Harless Center staff members have worked hard to achieve the outcome. The center received the accreditation because the programs have performed well and met the NAEYC early childhood program standards.

NAEYC accreditation represents the mark of quality in early childhood education. This renowned accreditation has the goal of providing an accrediting system that would raise the level of early childhood programs.

By being accredited, the Marshall University Early Education STEM Center can gain the attention of parents and families who are seeking the highest quality program for their child because the accreditation is a mark of quality that families are looking for.

The more people consider the importance of early childhood education, the more families require NAEYC accredited programs. Because early childhood experiences have an enormous impact on children's lifelong learning and positively contribute to their health and development, the Marshall University Early Education STEM Center programs benefit children with greater readiness for success in school.

The NAEYC accreditation will be in effect until May 2018.

March 27, 2013



Personal Growth | Civic Responsibility | Lifelong Discovery

New Program to spur medical research at Marshall University

By Clark Davis

A new grant program at Marshall University aims to help stimulate research that could have medical benefits.

Dr. Paulette Wehner is a Professor of Cardiology and the Senior Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Education.

“We’re looking at levels of certain substances and seeing if we can come up with some relationship with the amount of fat that the patients actually have around their heart with subsequent development of high blood pressure, our PHD colleague Dr. Santanam actually thinks that fat around the heart is different,” Wehner said.

Wehner along with Dr. Nalini Santanam are involved in the study that’s closely examining those in Appalachia. The study is just one of 6 that Marshall Health awarded a \$25,000 grant. It’s all part of the Marshall Health Translational Pilot Grant program created in 2012 which encourages collaborative research between scientists and clinical physicians or doctors. Beth Hammers is the executive director for Marshall Health.

“The goal of the translational pilot grants is ultimately to improve the quality of life for the patients, the goal behind the pilot grants is to stimulate collaborations between the basic scientists and the clinical researchers and allowing them to advance their research by taking it from the bench laboratory to the bedside of our patients,” Hammer said.

Marshall Health is the faculty practice plan for the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine which supports the clinical, educational and research missions of the school. Hammers says the ultimate hope to speed up that process between scientists making discoveries in research, then publishing and then taking the idea to doctors. Now the doctors are involved in the research process which could mean a quicker impact on patients.

“In the past it’s always been a basic scientist doing their research, they do a publication and people read about it and it takes a little to get that idea across and out to the community, this way you bring two people who are working on the initiatives together and working on the same project, it kind of accelerates the research process,” Hammers said.

Under the direction of new Joan C. Edwards Medical School Dean Dr. Joseph Shapiro and Dr. Nader Abraham, vice dean for research, there is a renewed interest in translational research. Hammers said they hope that the \$25,000 grant is enough for each of the studies to continue.

“The oversight committee will actually request progress reports at different times throughout the course of their research and additional funding may be provided if needed from Marshall Health, but the goal is ultimately for the researchers to go external to get additional money from the federal level,” Hammers said.

Dr. Wehner said the new Pilot Grant program can mean a great deal for the projects, and especially the one she’s involved in.

“We hope to gather enough data and obviously publish a few papers along the way, but the big goal is bigger national grants and that’s why this is quote seed money or this is beginning or think of this as beginning funds to develop bigger and better things,” Wehner said.

Wehner said the hope is that the grant will help them get more funding and possibly make a medical difference.

“We will be able to identify specific markers for hypertension, we’ll have a lot of additional insight into the obesity epidemic, by studying this fat that surrounds the heart we are identifying different markers that are in this fat and I think ultimately these substances will help us fight the obesity epidemic,” Wehner said.

Other projects being studied include chemotherapy resistance, nutritional supplementation with Omega-3 fatty acids and prenatal exposure to heavy metals.

March 27, 2013

The Herald-Mail

Shepherd, Moorefield school will offer education degree

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — Shepherd University will partner with Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College in Moorefield, W.Va., to provide a bachelor of arts degree in elementary education, according to a Shepherd University news release.

The joint program, which will begin in 2014, will serve an initial group of 20 students. The program will deliver the first four semesters of the elementary education degree, which consist of 100- and 200-level core courses, introductory professional education classes and specialty studies, at Eastern's Moorefield campus.

Students then would take the fifth, sixth and seventh semesters at Shepherd, then return to the Moorefield area for the final semester of student teaching and an education seminar.

"This collaboration will help provide teachers for the Moorefield region, which is forecast to have a shortage of certified teachers through 2020," Shepherd President Suzanne Shipley said. "Students will have convenient access to the first half of the bachelor of arts in elementary education with the course work offered near their homes."

Shipley and Charles D. Terrell, president of Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College, signed the agreement March 21 in Charleston.

March 27, 2013



Work Continues on New Waco Center at Glenville State College

By Alex Hines

The cool weather may have slowed down some construction projects but it hasn't stopped one local college.

Work on Glenville State's new Waco Center is continuing as planned and the project is still on track for a partial opening in August.

The Waco Center will house the college's land resources program, a new basketball arena, and a health center, available to the public.

"As the college grows, the community will hopefully grow right along with it. We all know that we have to have good medical coverage in the area, not only to take care of our students, but to take care of the community at large," said Tom Ratliff, of Glenville State College.

The nearest medical facilities to Glenville are about 45 minutes away in Weston and Grantsville.

March 27, 2013



WVU purchasing more property

By Jeff Jenkins

West Virginia University is making another large property purchase. The university's Board of Governors approved a resolution Wednesday for a \$15 million purchase in Morgantown's Evansdale community.

The university is planning a second mixed-use development that will include shops and student housing, which is similar to University Place. WVU announced that purchase and project for the Sunnyside area last year.

The BOG approved a resolution Tuesday to complete the purchase and permanent financing for the Evansdale project. Revenue bonds will be sold to pay for it.

WVU is expected to release more information on the project soon.

March 28, 2013



WVU BOARD OF GOVERNORS - WVU gets land buy OK

\$15M allowed for property in Evansdale

By Alex Lang

WVU's Board of Governors has authorized the university to spend up to \$15 million to complete the purchase of property between the Evansdale and Health Sciences campuses that will be used for mixed student housing-commercial development.

The board unanimously approved the resolution during its special meeting Wednesday.

The resolution authorized the university to take the necessary steps to complete the purchase of parcels of property along Oakland Street, Country Club Drive and Harding Avenue. The streets are behind the Evansdale McDonald's and the old Sanders Floor Covering Inc. store. The area is also near the Pierpont Apartments. One property set for purchase is the Travelodge.

WVU spokeswoman Becky Lofstead said the university will have more to say on the projects and its details in the coming days.

She said the area will feature apartment-style housing and commercial development, such as places to eat.

"I know it will be mixed use," Lofstead said.

The development will be a private-public partnership similar to the development in Sunnyside, Lofstead said. She didn't know which company would sell the properties to the university.

In Sunnyside, WVU has partnered with Paradigm to create University Place, a \$70 million commercial-residential development. That project is set to open in 2014.

Lofstead said the Evansdale-area project will likely be on a longer schedule than the University Place development.

While all first-year students are required to live on campus, Lofstead said that more upperclassman and graduate students are seeking housing on and near campus.

According to the resolution, WVU will use general and auxiliary funds for the purchase. The resolution also allows for an alternative method of financing, if it is more advantageous.

The resolution also authorizes WVU to enter into agreements with one or more private companies, including those from which WVU is buying the property, to create the private-public partnership.

March 28, 2013

Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

WVU plans \$90 million Evansdale project

By Candace Nelson

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The landscape of Morgantown continued to see changes Thursday as bulldozers ripped through dilapidated buildings in the Sunnyside neighborhood and WVU officials inked a deal to develop even more land.

West Virginia University is planning a \$90 million multi-purpose development for mixed student housing and commercial development between the Evansdale and Health Sciences campuses, according to a press release issued Thursday afternoon.

The development, "University Park," will replace housing at Fieldcrest Hall and Medical Center Apartments, both of which will be demolished, and Pierpont Apartments, where the lease will not be renewed. It will include 1,100 beds, food service, and retail.

WVU acquired 5.7 acres Thursday for \$12.2 million. A previous acquisition, plus some smaller additional acquisitions, will bring the total property acquisition cost to \$14.7 million. The University's property costs will be covered by proceeds from the development; the developers are responsible for privately financial construction costs.

The project will revert to the University in 40 years, according to the release.

This will be the third and final phase of the current student housing master plan, which the university's board of governs adopted last year.

The BOG unanimously approved a resolution during its special meeting Wednesday authorizing the university to purchase property, which will be located on approximately seven acres just north of University Avenue and along Harding Avenue and Oakland Street, and stretching along Country Club Road behind McDonald's.

The mixed-use development will feature apartment-style housing and will be a private-public partnership similar to the development in Sunnyside, according to WVU officials. The conceptual architectural plans include three buildings with a combination of suite-style rooms and condominiums/apartments.

The site also includes parking and green space.

"Auxiliary retail and office space will be included to create a campus village designed to improve student experience and campus life, as well as redevelop the area in between

the campuses. In addition to providing convenient, quality housing options to undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty and staff, the project will ease connectivity and increase pedestrian activity between the Health Science and Evansdale campuses," according to the release.

WVU is acquiring the property from MJR Evansdale Development LLC and others. Developers began acquiring options in 2011 and over the course of the last two years, worked with 12 property owners to acquire 21 parcels. The land has been acquired by WVU as part of the contractual public-private relationship between the parties. MJR Evansdale Development LLC, the private developer, consists of M&J Property Holdings and RCL Evansdale Holdings, according to the release.

A Travelodge motel currently located on the property will continue to operate until at least December. Other leases will continue to be honored, and site development will not begin until those leases expire.

Narvel Weese, WVU's vice president for administration and finance, said the recent public-private projects do more than provide better housing for WVU students.

They also expand the tax base for the city and county by generating additional B&O taxes, he said, adding, "University Park alone should more than double the net tax revenue to the city from these properties."

The project is expected to be ready for fall 2015.

The announcement comes amid the demolition of the Sunnyside neighborhood. The neighborhood, which has been notorious for dilapidated student housing just steps away from the Downtown Campus, previously housed about 120 students.

In October, university officials announced plans to build a \$70 million residential and retail complex within the boundaries of University Avenue, Grant Avenue, Third Street and Houston Drive.

WVU hired private firm Paradigm Development Group LLC and entered into a long-term lease and development agreement to develop the mixed-use area. The BOG approved the five-plus acre property acquisition for \$14.6 million.

Crews began demolishing houses last week, according to Corey Farris, dean of students and director of housing at WVU. At press time, 17 houses have been demolished, and four remain standing, bringing the total affected houses to 21. However, crews are actively working to remove siding and other materials before bringing the remaining buildings down, Farris said.

Crews had to check the area for hazardous material - like refrigeration equipment - that cannot be deposited in landfills. After that, they demolished the houses and graded the property.

"After that, we'll begin to see the reverse - buildings coming up from the ground," Farris said.

"University Place" will consist of a 297,000 square-foot rental space projected to provide nearly 1,000 beds in 265 units for WVU students in two multi-story buildings on three acres. The units will also have private bedrooms and bathrooms, in-unit kitchens, wireless high speed internet access, air conditioning and laundry. It will also include an additional two acres across the street - facing University Avenue - for parking for residents and retail customers.

An additional 268,000 square feet will be devoted to a complex with a full-service grocery store, a substation for university police, a fitness center and a restaurant. Townhomes are also planned as part of the development, with a pedestrian-only streetscape between them and the main two buildings.

University officials offered compensation for students if they needed to break their leases to move from the area to accommodate a higher rate of rent.

The Sunnyside project is expected to be finished by fall of 2014.

March 28, 2013



WVU to build \$90M development in Evansdale

By Mackenzie Mays

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- West Virginia University officials announced plans Thursday for a \$90 million multipurpose development on the Evansdale Campus. The announcement comes amid demolition of Morgantown's Sunnyside district, where a similar \$70 million residential/retail complex is expected to be finished by the fall of 2014.

The development, slated for fall 2015, will be called University Park, and will include more than 1,000 beds, retail development, WVU food services and other businesses.

The project is the third and final phase of WVU's housing master plan, which was adopted by the Board of Governors last year and aims to accommodate more students, including international and graduate students, as well as families.

"We could not be more pleased," said Narvel Weese, vice president for administration and finance at WVU. "Over 78 percent of our beds now are in spaces over 25 years old. We so desperately need to modernize our facilities. We have little or no capacity to deal with very specialized student housing needs now."

University Park will be centrally located between the Evansdale and Health Sciences campuses on seven acres of land north of University Avenue and along Harding Avenue and Oakland Street. It will stretch across Country Club Road behind the McDonald's restaurant.

The development will replace current housing at Fieldcrest Hall and the Medical Center Apartments, which will be demolished, while the lease at Pierpont Apartments will not be renewed. However, there will be no displacement of students during the transition, Weese said.

"We will not have to empty out those dorms and use that land in order to construct the new facilities. So, we will complete construction and then just populate the new facilities," he said.

Tenants living in the Sunnyside neighborhood, once home to sub-par student housing and often the site of frequent post-game riots, were moved out of the area earlier this year to accommodate construction plans. In that case, WVU absorbed moving fees and made up rent costs if students had to move to a higher-priced area.

Site development will not begin until leases in the area expire, and the Travelodge Motel will continue to operate until at least December. WVU entered a public/private relationship with MJR Evansdale Development LLC for the project. The BOG approved a resolution to acquire about \$15 million in property during a special meeting Wednesday, and property costs will be covered by proceeds from the development, according to officials. The developers are responsible for privately financing the construction costs, and the project will revert to WVU in 40 years.

Weese said the "campus village"-like project, which will contain suite-style rooms, condominiums and apartments, will not only benefit the campus aesthetically in addition to improving the student environment, but also will make a significant financial impact on the area because of business and occupation taxes.

"University Park alone should more than double the net tax revenue to the city from these properties," he said.

Also on Thursday, demolition continued on houses and other buildings in the Sunnyside area while WVU students are away on spring break. Students took to Twitter to bid the neighborhood farewell, posting messages like, "It's a sad day to be a Mountaineer" and "R.I.P. Sunnyside. So many great memories these new kids will never know."

The University Place development in Sunnyside is proceeding on schedule, "with only a handful of the buildings [still] standing, and they should be demolished soon," Weese said.

While students were shocked by the Sunnyside announcement in October, particularly those living in that neighborhood, Weese said it was because of "a lot of misinformation," and now WVU officials are confident students will realize the future benefits this latest development will bring.

The outcry concerning that development was "a lot of noise coming from a small number of students," said WVU spokesman John Bolt.

"By and large, as we talked to students and they found out the details, they were much more amenable to what was going on. So, once the information got out there, they were much more supportive and glad about what was going to happen," he said.

While WVU student government president-elect Ryan Campione calls the new housing project "what students want and need," that disconnect between WVU officials and the student body is something he plans to change. "One of the main things we're focusing on is transparency and how we can better communicate with students and not just have a one-way conversation," he said. "I'm really excited to represent the students more on this issue. At the end of the day, this is going to help benefit students and allow them to live in a more comfortable environment while staying on campus."

March 29, 2013



Neither party has cash for student loan fix

WASHINGTON – Incoming freshmen could end up paying \$5,000 more for the state student loans than their older siblings have if Congress doesn't stop interest rates from doubling.

Sound familiar? The same warnings came last year. But now the presidential election is over and mandatory budget cuts are taking place, making a deal to avert doubling of interest rates much more elusive before a July 1 deadline.

"We're advising our members to tell students that the interest rates are going to double on new student loans, to 6.8 percent," said Justin Draeger, president of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

That rate hike only hits students taking out new subsidized loans. Students with outstanding subsidized loans are not expected to see their loan rates increase unless they take out a new subsidized Stafford loan. Students' non-subsidized loans are not expected to change, nor are loans taken from commercial lenders.

The difference between 3.4 percent and 6.8 percent interest rate is a \$6 billion tab for taxpayers – set against a backdrop of budget negotiations that have pitted the two parties in a standoff. President Barack Obama is expected to release his budget proposal in the coming weeks, adding another perspective to the debate.

Last year, with the presidential and congressional elections looming, students got a one-year reprieve on the doubling of interest rates. That expires July 1. Neither party's budget proposal in Congress has money specifically set aside to keep students loans at their current rate. House Republicans' budget would double the interest rates on newly issued subsidized loans to help balance the federal budget in a decade. Senate Democrats said they want to keep the interest rates at their current levels. The budget they passed last week does not set aside money to keep the rates low.

March 29, 2013



WVU to build \$90M development

Salted to be open in 2015

By Alex Lang

A \$90 million student housing and commercial development will sit on the site where WVU agreed to buy various properties for upwards of \$15 million.

WVU announced plans for the public-private development on Thursday.

On Wednesday, the Board of Governors authorized WVU to complete the purchase of the properties in an area between the Evansdale and Health Sciences campuses.

WVU acquired 5.7 acres Thursday for \$12.2 million. Through a previous acquisition and expected acquisitions, the total price tag will rise to \$14.7 million. The university brought the property from MJR Evansdale Development LLC.

A conceptual drawing shows three building at the 7-acre site are to be called University Park. A total of 21 parcels are part of the project. The site is in an area near the Pierpont Apartments and Evansdale McDonald's. The buildings will sit along Oakland Street, Harding Street, St. Joseph's Street and Country Club Drive.

The buildings will add about 1,140 beds to WVU's total. It will also feature retail options, but WVU spokesman John Bolt said exact details haven't been determined. He added the project is in the early stages compared to Sunnyside's University Place.

"This is very much earlier in the game," Bolt said.

Brian Helmick, with MJR Evansdale Development, said that they too are unsure the exact retail options. He added he expected them to be able to announce more definite plans early this summer.

The partnership will be similar to the public-private agreement WVU has with Paradigm for the \$70-million University Place development, Helmick said. MJR will be responsible for financing and constructing the facility, but it will be considered on-campus housing.

There is a link to the Sunnyside development and the Evansdale one. Ryan Lynch is listed as an organizer with both Paradigm and RCL Evansdale Holding, which is part of MJR. Helmick said that Lynch started to look at the properties that were near campus. The Evansdale and Sunnyside areas immediately jumped out at him.

The developers initially began acquiring options on the Evansdale properties in late 2010/ early 2011.

Bolt said the developers approached the university about the project. University Park is the third phase of the student housing master plan. University Place and the College Park Apartments are the other phases.

As a result of the University Place Project, WVU will demolish Fieldcrest Hall and the Medical Center Apartments, which are near the site. WVU will also not continue to lease with Pierpont Apartments when it expires in 2016. Those three facilities have a combined 869 beds.

University Park is expected to open in fall 2015.

Helmick said he didn't expect to see anything substantial occur at the Evansdale site until the late summer or fall. One distinction between this project and the Sunnyside one is the developer isn't relocating anyone. They will wait for leases to expire before starting on the site. In Sunnyside, developers and the university relocated residents so demolishing could start.

One property WVU purchased is the Travelodge Motel. The motel will remain in operation until at least December.

The Business and Occupation Taxes from the development are expected to more than double the net tax revenue to the city, according to the university, though Bolt didn't have the figures for the expected taxes or current taxes from the property. When WVU purchases property, it no longer has to pay property taxes. For example, the Travelodge property had a net \$4,000 in property tax charges for the first half of 2012.

Morgantown Mayor Jim Manilla said he thinks the University Place development will be beneficial to the Morgantown community. It will also have a domino effect and help spur future development in the surrounding area.

March 29, 2013



WVU, private partner to build new student housing development on Evansdale campus

By The Associated Press

West Virginia University says it's partnering with MJR Evansdale Development LLC to build new student housing on the Evansdale campus.

WVU vice president for administration and finance Narvel Weese said Thursday the \$90 million University Park development on 7 acres is the third and final phase of the university's student housing master plan.

WVU acquired the property from MJR Evansdale Development for \$26.9 million. WVU says the developers will privately finance the construction costs, and the project will revert to the university in 40 years.

Weese says the development includes an 1,100-bed housing complex, WVU and other food services, and retail development.

It will replace student housing at Fieldcrest Hall and the Medical Center and Pierpont apartment complexes.

The development is expected to be ready for occupancy in fall 2015.

March 21, 2013



West Virginia Senate Bill Could Change How Tuition is Charged

By The Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — A bill advanced by the West Virginia Senate Education Committee could change how tuition is calculated at up to six state colleges and universities.

The bill would allow Pierpont Community and Technical College to charge tuition by the credit hour, rather than by the semester.

Pierpont requested the change, but the trial program would be available to two other community colleges and three four-year colleges.

At Pierpont, the change would come with a rollback in tuition and would save full-time students \$244 per semester. Tuition would also drop for part-time students. Tuition would rise by at least \$96 per semester for students taking more than a full course load.

Pierpont's president said that because they charge by the semester, part-time students have been subsidizing the tuition of full-time students.

March 24, 2013



Statehouse Beat: Charging full-time students

By Phil Kabler

A proposed pilot project to charge all state college tuition based on credit hours each student is taking (SB508) may sound innocent enough, but an internal Higher Education Policy Commission memo suggests it could be a major windfall for four-year colleges — and a major hit in the wallet for full-time students.

Currently, full-time students pay per-semester tuition, regardless of if they take 12, 15, 18, or even 21 credit hours.

According to the memo, 76 percent of students at the state's four-year colleges are full-time, ranging from 51 percent of students at Glenville State to 87 percent at West Virginia University.

On average, a student taking 15 hours of classes would pay an additional \$1,422 in tuition per semester under the credit-hour tuition plan, while that additional amount would go up to \$2,843 for a student taking 18 credit hours.

"This is a sizeable increase which will not be covered by state grant dollars," the memorandum notes.

For four-year colleges, however, it would be a sizeable windfall, estimated at \$124.4 million a year for HEPC schools.

Most schools would see revenue increases ranging from \$1.8 million to \$2.7 million a year, while Concord would see an extra \$5.1 million; Shepherd, \$7.6 million; Marshall, \$15.9 million; and WVU, a whopping \$73.8 million. (To their credit, WVU officials have opted out of the proposed pilot project.)

Speaking of, as much as I complained about the lack of any statewide public opinion polling in the 2012 election cycle, kudos to Curtis Wilkerson's Orion Strategies for actually conducting an in-state poll.

One question pertinent to the topic at hand asked those surveyed if they would support converting the Promise Scholarship into a forgivable loan program, with one year of tuition forgiven for each year the scholar remained to work in West Virginia after graduation.

Results: yes, 47 percent; no, 30 percent; undecided, 22 percent.

One provision that seems to be missing from Attorney General Patrick Morrisey's draft policy for hiring outside counsel: There's no "pay for play" prohibition; i.e., no policy to prohibit lawyers who have contributed either to Morrisey's election campaign or to fundraisers to pay down his campaign debts from bidding on state legal work.

I put the question to Morrisey's well-compensated flack, Beth Ryan, who sent this reply: "Given the constitutional concerns and free speech issues raised in the imposition of campaign contribution bans, we believe it is more appropriate to focus on ways to make the outside counsel hiring process more transparent and objective. This draft policy represents a significant step forward for the state in transparency, fairness, and combating the perception of pay to play."

In what had to be the most entertaining debate of the session to date, Sen. Clark Barnes, R-Randolph, took on Sen. Erik Wells, D-Kanawha, for advocating for the repeal of state laws requiring various government records, such as school board's financial reports, be published in local newspapers. Wells suggested that's an antiquated notion in the Internet era.

Barnes took the city slicker to task, noting that a great many rural West Virginians don't have access to high-speed Internet, and many wouldn't use it if they had it, preferring to get their news and information the old-fashioned way.

Now comes the 2013 edition of the West Virginia Press Association's Newspaper Directory, which seems to back up Barnes' assertion, showing that newspapers in the state are holding their own comparatively well, with 21 daily newspapers (including college papers The Daily Athenaeum and The Parthenon) and 58 weeklies still churning along.

The Gazette, of course, has the largest daily circulation, followed in distant second by the Huntington Herald-Dispatch. The Beckley Register-Herald is third, followed by the Parkersburg News and Sentinel, with the Morgantown Dominion-Post rounding out the top five.

Also encouraging, given national trends, is that four of the top five papers have Statehouse reporters at the Capitol this session, with Parkersburg being the exception.

Finally, the death this week of Jae Spears, the first and only woman to serve as Senate majority leader, and chairwoman of the powerful Senate Finance and Government

Organization committees, reminded me how many remarkable women were serving in the Senate during the first session I covered, in 1990.

In addition to Spears, who chaired Government Organization that session, there was Education Chairwoman Sondra Lucht, whose fierce determination made up for her small stature; the legendary Thais Blatnik; Donna Boley, who was minority leader by virtue of being the only Republican in the Senate; Charlotte Pritt, who would become the Democratic nominee for governor six years later; and Martha Wehrle, who as a Vassar and Harvard grad commanded great respect among her colleagues. (I always likened her demeanor to Mrs. Pynchon on "Lou Grant.")

Alas, of those only Sen. Boley continues to serve. She is currently the only woman among the 34 members of the Senate.

March 25, 2013



Bill could lead to higher tuition for many college students

By Shauna Johnson

The Legislature is considering a bill that would create a pilot program and allow participating schools to charge college and university students by the credit hour, as opposed to the current system of a per semester tuition rate.

James Skidmore, West Virginia Chancellor for Community and Technical Education, says the change would make tuition directly reflect classes taken.

“If you’re taking additional hours, then some think a student should pay for those additional hours because they’re actually getting the education,” Skidmore said. He has not yet taken an official stand on the proposal.

Right now in West Virginia, a student is considered a full time college student when he or she takes at least 12 credit hours each semester. State numbers show most students, though, take an average of 15 credit hours each semester to graduate on schedule.

With the pilot program, each credit would come with an individual charge, so a student taking 21 credit hours a semester would pay more for tuition than a student taking 12 credit hours.

According to a higher education report, the change could mean an average tuition increase of \$1,400 per semester for students taking 15 credit hours at four year institutions and an average of \$300 more per semester for those attending community and technical colleges.

Skidmore says the change would potentially generate millions of additional dollars for many of the institutions that have been forced to make budget cuts because of directives from the state this year.

“There are advantages and disadvantages to it,” Skidmore said of the idea on Monday’s MetroNews Talkline. “It allows us to have some flexibility in delivering our programs, but we’re always concerned when students are paying more money.”

The pilot program legislation, which would require participating schools to meet certain criteria, is now being considered on the Senate floor. SB 508 is scheduled to be taken up on second reading, meaning possible amendments, on Tuesday.

March 25, 2013

Bloomberg Businessweek

W.Va. bill would hike full-time students' tuition

By David Gutman

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — As West Virginia colleges and universities try to account for Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's 7.5 percent budget cuts, a bill in the state Senate would let six of them change how they calculate tuition.

The bill would create a pilot program that lets those schools charge tuition by the credit hour rather than by the semester. It would likely result in significant increases in tuition for full-time students, and decreases for part-timers. The Senate expects to vote on the bill on Wednesday.

For financial aid purposes, the federal government classifies someone who takes 12 credit hours per semester (generally four courses) as a full-time student, although 15 credit hours per semester are usually required to graduate on time. In West Virginia, students who take a minimum of 12 credit hours are all charged the same semester rate, even if they are enrolled for 15 or 18 credits.

This bill would let schools recoup the costs of those extra credits by charging for each credit hour above 12.

The bill was requested by Pierpont Community and Technical College, which has pledged to cut planned tuition rates if the bill passes. Pierpont President Doreen Larson said the current tuition system is based on an outdated view of the college experience.

"This model is based on an old style four-year model where you leave home, go to campus, are a full-time student," Larson said. "Our students are no longer like that even in four-year schools."

At Pierpont, just 40 percent of students take more than 12 credit hours per term and would see tuition rise. Across the statewide community college system, that number drops to 30 percent, according to state data. But if other participating colleges did not follow Pierpont's lead and correspondingly cut tuition rates to accompany the change, it would mean substantial tuition increases for full-time students.

Up to two other community colleges and three four-year colleges could participate in the program.

The number of students impacted at four-year colleges would be much greater.

More than 75 percent of the students in West Virginia's four-year colleges and universities take a full course load and would see substantial tuition increases under the pilot project, absent other changes. Students taking 15 credit hours per semester would see their tuition rise by an average of \$1,422 per year. The change would disproportionately affect students on PROMISE Scholarships, who must average 15 credit hours per semester to remain eligible.

The change would seem likely to dissuade students from taking heavier course loads, as those additional credits would no longer be subsidized. Students would then take longer to complete their degrees.

Charging tuition by the credit hour could bring in so much additional revenue that Pierpont will cut planned tuition rates by 9 percent if the bill passes and still bring in enough money to cover most of the 7.5 percent budget cuts. But there's no guarantee that other schools would follow suit. If, hypothetically, all 11 four-year colleges and universities were to charge by the credit hour, it would cover all planned budget cuts and bring in an additional \$100 million in revenue.

Senate Majority Leader John Unger complimented Pierpont for looking for innovative ways to deal with the budget cuts. He said that he hoped that public pressure and market forces would encourage other colleges to cut tuition if they participated in the pilot project.

West Liberty University President Robin Capehart said his school was interested in the pilot project.

"Right now if a student pays tuition they can take as many hours as they want and many times that can create a situation where students are taking excess hours for which the college has to basically provide professors," Capehart said.

But Capehart said that they would prefer to charge only for students who took more than 15 credit hours, as that is the number that is required to graduate on time.

A memorandum from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission warns that students taking heavy course loads may resort to student loans to cover additional costs. This, the memorandum says, "Will contribute to the state's growing student loan debt and potentially default rates."

March 26, 2013

Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

Raising college tuition would hurt everyone

Six community colleges and universities in the state may get permission to charge students by the credit hour instead of a flat tuition fee.

This would be a pilot program - an experiment - restricted to the six institutions.

Currently, full-time students pay the equivalent of 12 credit hours a semester, but can take up to 21 credit hours. Usually, students need to take 15 hours a semester to graduate in four years.

Going to an hourly rate would increase tuition for full-time students by an average of \$1,400 per semester at those institutions, MetroNews reported.

A huge increase in tuition would be dangerous.

West Virginia has a low college-going rate and a low college-graduation rate. In addition, the state has an 11 percent default rate on student loans. The national average is 7.7 percent.

Increasing tuition by hundreds or thousands of dollars a year would further discourage students from entering college, make it harder for them to graduate in six years, and increase the student loan debt for a population that already has a high default rate.

This is not the direction colleges should go.

The argument is that part-time students, who pay by the credit hour, are in effect subsidizing full-time students, who pay a flat fee.

That hardly seems fair. One way colleges could make up the difference is to reduce the hourly charges for part-time students.

Instead, under the proposed legislation, six community and four-year colleges would rake in millions more from full-time students. That is shortsighted.

Tuition increases draw competition. Already, online schools such as the University of Phoenix are peeling students away from brick-and-mortar institutions.

Per-credit hour fees may make sense, but the change should be revenue neutral.

The state hardly needs a drop in college graduates and an increase in student loan defaults.

Raising tuition would produce both.

March 27, 2013



Per-credit tuition plan no longer on fast track

By Phil Kabler

A bill to allow colleges to test setting tuition at per-credit hour rates is off the fast track, after a senator requested that the bill go to Senate Finance Committee to determine the potential financial impact on students.

"In my part of the world, people struggle to send their kids to community college for two years, and work very hard to send them to Marshall or somewhere for two more years to get their degrees," Se. Truman Chafin, D-Mingo, said of concerns the bill could cause tuition for full-time students to soar.

The bill (SB508), which has been touted as a way for two-year community and technical colleges to cut tuition rates for part-time students, would allow up to six colleges to participate in a pilot project to charge tuition based on a per-credit hour basis.

On Friday, Finance Chairman Roman Prezioso, D-Marion, waived the bill's assignment to the committee, on the grounds the program would be revenue-neutral to the state.

Chafin, having read news reports that the plan could significantly raise tuition for full-time students -- who currently pay a flat per-semester tuition, regardless of whether they take 12, 15, or 18 credit hours of classes -- asked Tuesday that the bill go to Finance for further study.

During Tuesday afternoon's Finance Committee meeting, Chafin called on Higher Education Policy Commission research analyst Sarah Tucker to discuss the potential impact on full-time students.

Tucker prepared an internal memorandum for HEPC showing that a student taking 15 credit hours a semester would pay an average of \$1,422 in additional tuition each year under a per-credit hour rate. For students taking 18 credit hours, that amount would increase to \$2,843 a year.

Her memorandum also indicated that per-credit tuition would bring in \$124.44 million of additional tuition revenue for four-year colleges in the state, if all colleges participated.

Tucker said Tuesday the per-credit hour tuition would particularly affect Promise scholars, who must complete 30 credit hours of classes per year to keep their scholarships.

With Promise scholarships capped at \$4,750, the average scholar currently pays about \$938 of tuition and fees out of pocket, Tucker said. Under the proposed legislation, those scholars would have to come up with an additional \$2,360 a year to pay the difference.

"So every person on a Promise scholarship would see an increase in their tuition?" Chafin asked. He also asked how much additional revenue Marshall would collect under a per-credit hour tuition plan.

"If they kept their tuition rates exactly the same as it is now, they would be projected to increase by \$15.9 million a year," Tucker said.

One issue, she said, is that the projections assume that students would continue to take the same class-loads with the higher tuition rates, while the likelihood is that students would scale back credit hours under a per-credit hour tuition plan.

"The concern would be that we would potentially increase -- potentially, because we don't know this -- the time it takes to earn a degree," she said.

A key advocate of the bill, Doreen Larson, president of Pierpont Community and Technical College in Fairmont, last week told the Senate Education Committee, "I would object to the characterization that it is a tuition increase. It is not. It is the termination of a discount."

On Tuesday afternoon, Chafin said he believes the bill needs thorough review.

"I think we've got a long ways to go -- a lot of study and a lot of deliberation," he said.



College tuition change dies in Senate

By Hoppy Kercheval

Sometimes, the West Virginia Legislature is where ideas come to die.

Take, for example, the proposal this session to allow state colleges and universities to charge students tuition based on the number of credit hours they take. Currently, part time students pay per credit hour, but full time students (those with at least 12 hours) pay a set amount.

Thus, a full time student with 18 hours pays the same as a student with 12 hours, even though one student has two more classes than the other. The argument for per credit hour tuition is that what a student pays would be directly tied to the resources they use.

That makes some economic sense. But the debate this session over the bill creating the per credit hour tuition structure got more fouled up than a freshman trying to find his way around campus on the first day of classes.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Roman Prezioso, the sponsor of the bill, says the original intent was to create a per credit hour system only for Pierpont Community and Technical College in Fairmont, which is in his district. But the bill was expanded to a pilot project to include a half dozen colleges and universities.

Then questions arose about the true intent of the bill.

Pierpont President Doreen Larson, the primary advocate for the bill, told lawmakers the per credit hour system better fits the profile of schools that have more non traditional students and that virtually every community college in the country uses that method.

However, opponents wondered aloud if the change would lead to higher tuition, suggesting this was a backdoor approach to making up for Governor Tomblin's 7.5 percent higher education budget cut.

Larson's cause was further hurt by a memorandum from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission that circulated among lawmakers. That analysis said the per credit hour tuition structure "would be associated with a \$1,422 annual tuition increase for students taking 15 credit hours per semester, the average number of credit hours required to ensure timely completion (graduation)."

Senator Truman Chafin picked up the cause, questioning the bill on the floor. That led the legislation to be kicked back into committee, which is where it will die this session because time is growing short.

Larson, naturally, is disappointed. She maintains that without a more efficient per credit hour system, tuition will jump even more. "Many community colleges will be raising tuition in the double-digit areas," she told me in an email.

Well, be careful there. If prices rise too much, enrollment will drop. Also, the community college system should be, by its nature, more economical than four-year institutions.

Ultimately, charging by the credit hour may be a more accurate way to collect payment from students for college, but the concept got off to a rocky start.

The bill failed this session. Maybe next year it will get another look and a more thorough discussion, including a full explanation how it would impact students.

March 28, 2013



SB 508 not for greater good

Hourly rates, instead of flat rate for tuition, will cost full-time students

As pilot programs go, we are usually willing to see where they'll lead.

But there's something about Senate Bill 508 – that creates a per-credit-hour tuition experiment – that fails us.

The bill would allow three community colleges and three four-year colleges to charge students by the credit hour instead of the traditional flat rate for class loads of 12 hours or more.

A key argument for this bill? It would end the notion that part-time students are subsidizing full-time students' costs who pay a flat rate.

Another: This plan will allow schools to make up the costs of those extra credit hours by students who carry heavy loads.

The statewide average of full-time students attending community colleges is about 30 percent.

And some even suggest SB 508 may allow schools to even cut tuition, as one regional community college president has vowed to do if the bill passes.

Though we can understand the concerns of some small schools, where many students are only part time, the fact is, more than 75 percent of students in state four-year schools are full-time.

If this bill would pass, it's estimated many of those students would see their tuition rise about \$1,400 per academic year.

Obviously, that would apply to thousands of PROMISE scholars and many others who are obligated to carry 15 hours or more per semester.

But more importantly, many students would be reluctant to carry more classes, effectively curbing their graduation rates and possibly upping their student debt, or worse, default rates.

As for the promises about cutting rates as result of such changes, though we trust the one college leader who vowed to do so, we are not so sure others would.

Bottom line is this: This bill would more than likely cost far more full-time students than it would lower costs for part-time students.

Obviously, this change would result in increased revenues, possibly evening covering the ongoing 7.5 percent budget cuts to higher education. But at what costs to students, parents and families?

There's also the costs to graduation rates and attendance at four-year state colleges, which are already abysmal.

We applaud innovating ways to confront budget cuts and make tuition rates for part-time students fairer.

One suggestion we would make is that Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin at least halve the 7.5 percent figure cutbacks to community colleges.

Still, this is no time to be raising tuition – especially by the hour. So, what would follow if SB 508 advances?

How shall we put it, going in the wrong direction.

March 24, 2013



EDITORIAL - Already have our answer?

WVU approach to questions about media rights telling

If WVU wanted transparency, it would not handle questions this way.

Almost from the moment WVU announced, in May 2012, it would bid out its media rights, the tips started:

Watch out for apparent conflicts of interest. Keep your eyes open for cronyism. They've already handpicked the winner.

Since then we have learned that those tips were not only credible, but on the money, a lot of money.

But what we did not know is how difficult — think having teeth pulled while in the throes of natural childbirth — it would be to get answers to our questions.

Since January, our newspaper has filed more than 30 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests from WVU.

Fourteen of them are still pending. Four of those requests have been pushed back three times.

But getting the run-around is nothing new to us.

And no one here would deny that some of our requests have been broad in scope and understandably take time and legwork.

However, when almost every single FOIA request linked to our reports on WVU's media rights is met with: Lacks specificity, vague in nature, no search parameters, or just takes advantage of any exemption for extensions, we have to wonder.

What we wonder is: Is WVU using every loophole at its disposal to stonewall us?

Also, in numerous instances our most general questions have been met with no comment, or I don't know, or it's part of the review process.

For instance, how can simple questions about procurement policy ever be subject to change, the review process, or unknown?

Yet, our questions are being dodged, ducked and deflected as if we were throwing stiff punches.

And these are just the general questions.

We have also filed another 30 requests for financial disclosures from the state's Ethics Commission, which are not readily available to the public.

Though the university may be complying with the letter of the law on freedom of information, it has placed a lock on the spirit of this law.

Even a semblance of cooperation would be a welcome change.

Meanwhile, we have not balked at fees — \$1 a page. We have not raised our voices. We have even offered to help pull documents.

Admittedly, we have raised the appearance of impropriety — scandal — in our editorials here on this subject, but our stories have been devoid of opinion.

This isn't the last word on WVU's letter of intent to award its media rights to IMG College.

But the university's approach to this story appears to have already answered a lot of questions.

March 24, 2013



FOIA requests unanswered

WVU wants 2 months to answer some

By Drew Rubenstein

THIS ARTICLE updates readers on The Dominion Post's efforts to obtain information from WVU through the Freedom of Information Act.

The Dominion Post's investigation into WVU's Request for Proposals (RFP) for multimedia rights and athletic sponsorship has resulted in 33 Freedom of Information Act requests for material related to process since late January.

The Dominion Post is waiting for final responses with documents and materials from 14 of those requests.

The university has extended its deadline to respond to four of those requests three times.

WVU has pushed back the deadline to respond to 13 of the 33 requests to April 15 — four of those 13 FOIA requests were initially filed on or before Feb. 17.

The Dominion Post is awaiting an initial response to the 14th FOIA request, which was filed late last week. The university has five days to file a response to an FOIA request.

"Please be advised that the University is continuing its search, review, and processing of this request. Accordingly, additional time is needed to process it," the WVU Office of the General Counsel has written in a number of responses to The Dominion Post in recent weeks.

"We appreciate your patience as we work through an inordinate number of FOIA requests," the General Counsel also wrote.

Of the 33 FOIA requests, seven were second requests for the same material because The Dominion Post was informed its initial requests lacked specificity.

Three WVU responses to FOIA requests were emailed near the end of or after business hours on Fridays, so the documents were not available for pick up until the following Monday. Those responses stated the documents were available for pick up at Stewart Hall for specified amounts due to copying charges.

The Dominion Post has also requested financial disclosure forms from the state Ethic Commission for more than 30 individuals since late January.

WVU and the state Attorney General's Office have declined to answer various questions — some specifically related to aspects of the RFP process and others being technical queries — citing the ongoing internal review as the reason.

Last week, The Dominion Post attempted to ask university and athletic department officials about WVU's decision to contract the Bob Huggins TV Show with West Virginia Media Holdings.

WVU spokesman John Bolt said the university would not answer questions on that matter until the internal review was complete.

When asked if the contracting of the coach's show was part of the review, Bolt said, "I do not know that for sure." He added that anything related to the review is "off the table."

Beth Ryan, spokeswoman for Attorney General Patrick Morrissey, said the office had no comment when asked if the coach's TV show contract was part of the review.

Last week, The Dominion Post asked Bolt a technical procurement question. He responded by saying WVU would not comment, as it was part of the review process.

When asked if Morrissey gave WVU permission not to answer technical procurement questions during the review process, Ryan responded by saying the office had no comment.

After WVU signed a letter of intent regarding its multimedia rights with IMG College in late January, potential conflicts of interest were uncovered. Those potential issues stem from the connections between WVU, IMG and West Virginia Media. The WVU Foundation invested \$8 million in West Virginia Media and sold its stock in the company in 2007.

Bray Cary Jr., president and CEO of West Virginia Media, sat in on IMG's presentation to the university. WVU athletic director Oliver Luck confirmed that Cary was part of "the IMG team." West Virginia Media, which owns WBOY-TV among other instate media properties, was initially involved in WVU's request for proposals regarding the university's multimedia rights. The company was not one of the nine that submitted bids.

WVU Board of Governors Chairman Drew Payne III and member Dave Alvarez are both stockholders in West Virginia Media, which would stand to benefit financially from a deal with IMG.

WVU Foundation member W. Marston Becker is also listed as an executive at West Virginia Media.

Three days after telling The Dominion Post he was not involved in any part of the selection process and was unsure if he would see the contract, Payne told two other newspapers that WVU would net \$5 million more annually through a deal with IMG, should one be finalized, than it now makes by handling the rights in-house. WVU General Counsel and Vice President for Legal Affairs Bill Hutchens later said Payne “realizes he shouldn’t have said that.”

Hutchens said Payne and other BOG members were confidentially informed of the financial parameters of the contract once the letter of intent was signed. WVU has not commented on whether or not it believes Payne has violated the Ethics Act.

ED OWENS, sports reporter, contributed to this report.

JOHN RAESE AND DAVID RAESE co-own the West Virginia Radio Corp. The corporation currently works with the Mountaineer Sports Network to broadcast sporting events. The working agreement is not connected to The Dominion Post newspaper, which is produced by the West Virginia Newspaper Publishing Co., a business co-owned by the Raese brothers, but operated by David Raese.

March 26, 2013



Claims of 'inequitable' radio deal misrepresented

By Allan Taylor

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — It's no secret West Virginia Radio Corp. owns this website, and that the parent company has questioned the ethics of the bidding procedure for WVU athletics selling its third-tier media rights.

The process has grown sticky thanks to conflict-of-interest allegations involving West Virginia Media's dealings with bid-winner IMG College. While the deal is stalled for review — drawing the attention of state attorney general Patrick Morrisey — perceptions of the debate are being shaped, and in some instances, misshaped by media reports attempting to clarify an issue that's surprisingly complex.

Take Mike Casazza's article last week in the Charleston Daily Mail, a piece asserting West Virginia Radio Corp. has benefited from a sweetheart deal with WVU in light of the university receiving no radio rights fees. Casazza writes that the "inequitable terms" of the soon-to-expire, three-year contract could prevent WVU from renewing with West Virginia Radio, and he sought out two industry sources for feedback on whether the deal followed national norms.

The Daily Mail article quotes the manager of a Chicago-based research company, Dan Kozlak, who said rights fees in this case typically should net \$300,000 to \$400,000 and described the most recent contract as a "huge missed revenue opportunity" for WVU. This would be accurate had the university forfeited the radio rights fees with nothing in return. Obviously the school was not so delusional.

Under the current arrangement, West Virginia Radio Corp. pays no rights fees — that much is accurate — but instead it absorbs costs for on-site and studio production, satellite distribution, equipment, engineering, voice talent, etc., as well as providing WVU with free advertising slots on 13 stations statewide.

The company valued the complete package at \$563,985 for the past year. (Unbilled commercial airtime, even when calculated at a less-expensive contract rate, accounted for \$298,000. The Daily Mail article vaguely glossed over this as "a small amount of free advertising.")

As for Kozlak, he initially said West Virginia Radio stations are "likely selling advertising spots surrounding those games, and they are reaping the higher commercial rates and

higher audiences generated by WVU, and not giving any of that share back to the school.”

MetroNews followed up with Kozlak, sharing a more complete financial picture of the revenue WVU nets from the current contract. In corresponding with Kozlak, we also pointed out the university’s Mountaineer Sports Network sells and retains all revenue from sponsored statewide ad slots, which compose about 65 percent of the broadcasts. Local radio affiliates have the chance to sell only the remaining slots.

“We were not aware that the network has been footing the bill for production costs, providing free advertising, or providing local revenue slots for the schools,” Kozlak replied via e-mail. “In lieu of this additional information, all of these assets would add up to the approximate value we placed on the value of radio advertising in the sponsorship portfolio. So it doesn’t seem like there are any additional opportunities missed, but rather a different type of structure than we normally see.”

In defense of the Daily Mail article, it’s common for journalists to seek out expert sources as a means of adding context to local issues. Yet these experts typically make their assessments based on national trends that may or may not be applicable when the issue is scrutinized up-close.

WVU has every right to maximize the revenue from its sports inventory, so long as that’s accomplished in an ethical, and preferably, transparent manner. Obviously, the current bidding controversy raised enough red flags to warrant closer inspection. Once the situation plays out, selling these rights to IMG may wind up being the most profitable path for the university, though there’s a camp that believes the university is costing itself money in the long term by taking IMG’s guarantee and not retaining the rights in-house.

The coming weeks should be interesting as WVU attempts to settle its third-tier situation in advance of the 2013-14 academic year. The media can do its part by fully detailing the bidding process and illuminating what the bid winners will provide in excess of the in-house model. And when confronting the “inequitable terms” of a lapsing contract, it can more accurately represent what those terms actually are.

March 27, 2013



Want to know why it's important?

Continued reporting on media rights deal for WVU still a matter of integrity

Why are we doing this?

That's a question we have asked ourselves more than once since February when we first reported on the apparent conflicts of interest related to WVU signing a letter of intent to award IMG College its media rights.

The primary reason we report on such circumstances as this is that we are journalists. That's what journalists do.

Another reason our reports continue are the result of WVU not taking steps to demonstrate it's in step with both the letter and spirit of the law.

Rather than attempting to dispel perceptions, or realities, of conflicts of interest, we have been met with stonewalling, defensiveness and at times, even hostility.

How that's supposed to assure anyone to trust WVU will to do the right thing is anyone's guess.

But the ultimate reason for this story is that this is West Virginia's university.

This is WVU — the state's flagship university. The alma mater of so many of us, where our family members may work, or our sons and daughters are enrolled. The pinnacle of higher education in West Virginia.

Where our tax dollars are spent.

That's why it must be a shining example to every other school of higher learning, every dean, every professor, every student and to every West Virginian.

Like any organization, there will always be mistakes: Bad hires, wrongheaded policies and ill-timed decisions.

However, we operate under a virtual dictum while publishing a rough draft of history daily that fallibility is the first sign of credibility.

We make our share of mistakes, too. But we correct them, apologize when necessary and move on.

That's journalism, that's academia and that's life.

But when someone relents to “palpable” pressure — created by say, key staff or perks — to go along with suspect decisions that's not life.

That's unethical, inappropriate or even sometimes actionable.

As a result of having to take this long to report this story it not only has tied up the state attorney general's office, cost the university who knows how much — while raising even more suspicions, — but it has also cost the public its right to know.

This story has been troubling to us, too. But at every step of the way we have responsibly reported what we have discovered and been transparent about our newspaper's ownership throughout.

Still, some continue to suggest or ask, “Why is this story so important?”

Abraham Lincoln once said, “I never had a policy; I just tried to do my very best each and every day.”

In 21st-century speak, we still call that integrity.

That's why it's important ... to WVU and to all of us.

March 27, 2013



WVU Media Rights – Payne, IMG linked in 2008

Firm pitched media deal in Charleston

By Ed Owens

The Dominion Post has learned that Drew Payne’s history with IMG predates the company’s pending multimedia rights deal with WVU.

In 2008, Payne served on the WVU Board of Governors (BOG) and on the board at the Charleston Civic Center. It was at that time that Payne helped set up an introduction between the Civic Center’s board and International Sports Properties (ISP), a firm that specialized in marketing and advertising for collegiate sports.

“That is correct,” said Civic Center General Manager John Robertson, when asked if Payne orchestrated the meeting.

“It was in October of 2008, according to my calendar. It was a fact-finding meeting. We wanted to explore and learn a little about what they do, and have them learn a little about what we were doing.”

Robertson said the Civic Center did not pursue a relationship with ISP because it “wasn’t the right fit.”

“My recollection is that [ISP was] typically working for colleges and universities,” Robertson said. “So even though their physical facilities may be similar to ours, the product that they were offering is not like what we do. So it never went anywhere beyond that one meeting.”

Payne is no longer on the Civic Center’s board, but he has since risen to become the chairman of WVU’s BOG. In 2010, media giant IMG Worldwide purchased ISP and rebranded it as IMG College. ISP founder and CEO Ben Sutton stayed on after the merger and is currently the president of IMG College.

IMG College is the same firm that submitted the winning bid for WVU’s multimedia rights this year and, The Dominion Post learned, was in partnership with West Virginia Media Holdings as a potential subcontractor.

Payne is also an investor and board member of West Virginia Media. WVU BOG member Dave Alvarez is also an investor in West Virginia Media and WVU Foundation member W. Marston Becker is also listed as an executive at West Virginia Media. The

WVU Foundation invested at least \$8 million in West Virginia Media about 10 years ago and held an interest in the company until January 2007.

West Virginia Media President and CEO Bray Cary previously served on the Foundation's board and, The Dominion Post learned, sat in on IMG's multimedia rights presentation to WVU.

WVU athletic director Oliver Luck, who was a frequent guest on Cary's "Decision Makers" TV show, later confirmed to The Dominion Post that Cary was part of "the IMG team."

It has been reported that Cary and Sutton are longtime acquaintances.

Luck, who was hired as athletic director in 2010, previously served alongside Payne on WVU's BOG, beginning in 2008. He also formed and sat on the search committee that selected IMG College as the winning bidder for WVU's multimedia and athletic sponsorship rights.

IMG College reached a non-binding agreement with WVU in late January but negotiations were halted shortly after the term sheet was signed. Payne divulged previously confidential financial information pertaining to the agreement to a number of in-state media outlets. WVU officials said the BOG was confidentially informed of the financial parameters of the pending deal but that the board played no part in selecting IMG as a potential multimedia rights partner.

The Dominion Post reported on Payne's knowledge of the bidding process and the connections between West Virginia Media, IMG and WVU last month.

On Feb. 19, WVU announced it was conducting an internal review into the multimedia rights process.

On March 5, West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey's office agreed to assist WVU with its internal review. Neither side has answered any questions or disclosed any findings since then, citing the confidential nature of the review process.

Messages left for Payne on Tuesday were not returned in time for this report.

DREW RUBENSTEIN, sports editor, contributed to this report. JOHN RAESE AND DAVID RAESE co-own the West Virginia Radio Corp. The corporation currently works with the Mountaineer Sports Network to broadcast sporting events. It also filed a bid for WVU's multimedia rights. The working agreement is not connected to The Dominion Post newspaper, which is produced by the West Virginia Newspaper Publishing Co., a business co-owned by the Raese brothers, but operated by David Raese.

March 29, 2013



A.G. wants a meeting with Raese

Will discuss info in submitted letters

By Drew Rubenstein

Attorney General Patrick Morrissey has called for a meeting with Morgantown businessman John Raese.

Robert Gwynne, executive vice president and general counsel for Greer Industries, said the meeting's time and location have not been determined.

Raese has sent three letters to WVU President Jim Clements and two letters to the WVU Board of Governors since early February questioning the integrity of the university's multimedia rights process. Raese also sent copies of his letters to Morrissey and urged the attorney general to look into questions he raises in his correspondence.

The reason for the meeting is "to discuss the issues John raised in his letters," Gwynn said Thursday.

WVU filed a Request for Proposals (RFP) for its multimedia rights and athletic sponsorship in June. The university signed a letter-of-intent with IMG College and started working on a final contract in late January. On Feb. 19, WVU halted talks with IMG and announced it was conducting an internal review into the RFP process. On March 5, the attorney general's office agreed to assist WVU in its review.

Gwynne said several key questions need to be answered by the university. He also said Raese plans to update the public on the discussion he has with Morrissey.

"We have nothing to hide," Gwynn said. "We've been transparent. The issue is everyone needs to be transparent."

When asked about the meeting, Beth Ryan, a spokeswoman for the attorney general, said the office has no comment.

After WVU signed a letter of intent regarding its multimedia rights with IMG College in late January, potential conflicts of interest were uncovered. Those potential issues stem from the connections between WVU, IMG and West Virginia Media.

Bray Carry, Jr., president and CEO of West Virginia Media, sat in on IMG's presentation to the university and WVU athletic director Oliver Luck confirmed that Cary was part of

“the IMG team.” West Virginia Media, which owns WBOY-TV among other in-state media properties, was initially involved in WVU’s request for proposals regarding the university’s multimedia rights. The company was not one of the nine that submitted bids. WVU Board of Governors Chairman Drew Payne said West Virginia Media decided not to bid in hopes of landing a subcontracting agreement with the chosen company.

Payne and fellow BOG member Dave Alvarez are stockholders in West Virginia Media, which would stand to benefit financially from a deal with IMG. Payne also set up a meeting between ISP (now part of IMG) and the Charleston Civic Center in 2008. Payne was on the Civic Center board at that time.

WVU officials have said the Board of Governors played no part in the selection process, but Raese raised questions about Payne’s involvement and knowledge of the process.

Payne disclosed previously confidential financial information regarding the pending deal to state media outlets after the letter of intent was signed. WVU General Counsel and Vice President for Legal Affairs Bill Hutchens later said Payne “realizes he shouldn’t have said that.”

Hutchens also said Payne and other BOG members were confidentially informed of the financial parameters of the contract once the letter of intent was signed.

The WVU Foundation invested \$8 million in West Virginia Media and sold its stock in the company in 2007. WVU Foundation member W. Marston Becker is listed as an executive at West Virginia Media.

ED OWENS, sports reporter, contributed to this report.

JOHN RAESE AND DAVID RAESE co-own the West Virginia Radio Corp. The corporation currently works with the Mountaineer Sports Network to broadcast sporting events. The working agreement is not connected to The Dominion Post newspaper, which is produced by the West Virginia Newspaper Publishing Co., a business co-owned by the Raese brothers, but operated by David Raese. West Virginia Radio Corp. filed a bid for WVU’s multimedia rights.