

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY BOARD
OF GOVERNORS

September 14, 2023

The two hundred twelfth meeting of the West Virginia University Board of Governors was held on September 14, 2023 in Morgantown, WV in person and via webinar. Board members in attendance/participating via zoom included Charles Capito, Bray Cary, Elmer Coppoolse, Kevin Craig, Michael D’Annunzio, Dr. Patrice Harris, J. Thomas Jones, Dr. Stanley Hileman, Alan Larrick, Susan Lavenski, Paul Mattox, Taunja Willis Miller, Richard Pill, Shirley Robinson, Madison Santmyer, Frances E. “Frankie” Tack, and Robert Reynolds.

Note: With this meeting being conducted in person and via webinar, there was no way to ascertain all attendees but the following WVU officers, divisional campus officers, representatives (and others) participated:

President, E. Gordon Gee;
Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, Rob Alsop;
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Maryanne Reed;
General Counsel, Stephanie Taylor;
Vice President for University Relations, Sharon Martin;
Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Meshea Poore;
Vice Provost, Paul Kreider;
Associate Provost for Budget, Facilities and Strategic Initiatives, Mark Gavin;
Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Paula Congelio;
Senior Associate Vice President for Finance, Barbara Weiss;
Associate Vice President for HSC Academic Affairs, Louise Veselicky;
Associate Vice President and Executive Director of the Office of Global Affairs, Amber Brugnoli;
Deputy General Counsel, Gary G. Furbee, II;
Director of Internal Audit, Bryan Shaver;
Assistant Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, Erin Newmeyer;
Associate Provost for Faculty Development and Culture, Melissa Latimer;
Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, Evan Widders;
Associate Provost for Curriculum and Assessment, Louis Slimak;
Director of Communications, Office of the Provost, Kimberly Becker;
Executive Officer and Assistant Board Secretary, Jennifer Fisher;
Director of News Communications, Shauna Johnson;
Executive Director of Communications, University Relations, April Kaul; and,
Special Assistant to the Board of Governors, Valerie Lopez.

Members of the Press also participated.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Taunja Willis-Miller at 10:30 a.m. A roll call was taken to determine who was in attendance and a quorum established.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Willis-Miller requested a motion to move Executive Session, under authority in West Virginia Code §§6-9A- 4(b)(2)(A), (b)(9), and (b)(12) to discuss potential strategic initiatives relating to academic priorities, personnel matters, and other deliberative matters involving commercial competition which, if made public, might adversely affect the financial or other interest of the University

The motion was made by Dr. Stanley Hileman, seconded by Alan Larrick, and passed. Chair Willis-Miller announced that the board will move to another meeting room (The Barnette BOG Room) for Executive Session and will return for the start of the public comments at approximately 11:30 a.m.

Following Executive Session Kevin Craig moved that the board rise from Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Charles Capito and passed. Chair Willis-Miller stated that no actions resulted from today's Executive Session discussions.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chair Willis-Miller stated that the board was ready to begin the public comment section of the meeting and that an opportunity to sign up to make public comments at today's board meeting was provided in advance. Individuals could request to speak via an on-line link, via the public webinar and also today in person.

Chair Willis Miller announced that each person would be give two (2) minutes to speak and further requested that everyone please be respectful of the allotted time and quickly wrap up their remarks when she states that their time is up.

Before the first speaker was called upon the Student Government Association representative on the board, Madison Santmyer, read excerpts from the attached Assembly Resolution Regarding The Academic Transformation and An Assembly Proclamation Against The University Cuts Proposed By The Provost.

Approximately sixty (60) individuals (consisting of WVU faculty, staff and students – along with members of the public) offered comments, with some yielding their time to others, and some given an opportunity to speak more than once.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Willis-Miller thanked everyone for their participation during today's meeting. There being no further business to come before the board, J. Thomas Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Kevin Craig and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Dr. Patrice Harris, Secretary

West Virginia University
The Student Assembly - Student Government Association
Assembly Resolution: AR-2023-08-01
**AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION REGARDING THE ACADEMIC
TRANSFORMATION**

Short Title:	Academic Transformation Recommendations
Author(s):	Matthew Olivero, Senator Garrett Oursler, College Senator (Davis)
Sponsor(s):	Gabrielle Frazier, Senator Joanna Switala, College Senator (Eberly) Peyton Bielinski, College Senator (CAHS) Tayler Pillo, College Senator (Reed) Olivia Scholl, Senator Susie Risk, President Pro Tempore Riley Coulter, College Senator (Statler) Logan Lipkovitch, College Senator (CAHS) Elijah Eastman, Senator Lilly Henson, College Senator (Eberly)
Contributor(s):	Charlie Long, Chief of Staff Anabella Tiano, Outreach Coordinator Karsey Prichard, Executive Secretary Jillian Blair, Policy Coordinator
Committee Endorsement:	Academic Affairs Committee
First Reading Date:	9/6/2023
Second Reading Date:	9/13/2023
Date of Approval:	9/13/2023
Presidential Signature:	<i>Madison Santmyer</i>

Whereas, the West Virginia University mission statement reads, "[we] commit to creating a diverse and inclusive culture that advances education...prosperity for all...and advance high-impact research...by leading transformation in West Virginia and

the world through local, state and global engagement”;¹ and,

Whereas, The West Virginia University Student Government Association’s mission statement reads that “We, the students of West Virginia University, desire to preserve within our University...an atmosphere that helps to foster an open exchange of ideas with civil discussion, inquiry, and self-expression to help ensure that the personal freedoms and general welfare of the students within our University are protected”;² and,

Whereas, WVU SGA is committed to a constructive, consensus-based approach to academic transformation;³ and,

Whereas, WVU SGA conducted town halls on August 31st and September 11th, 2023, and published a survey, for the purpose of ascertaining student sentiment on the subject of the Academic Transformation; and,

Whereas, WVU SGA has written a letter to the Office of the Provost outlining the reasoning for our recommendations;⁴

SECTION I–World Languages

Whereas, West Virginia University is one of the only higher-education institutions in the state that offers instruction in world languages; and,

Whereas, knowledge of human cultures is considered one of the hallmarks of a liberal arts degree; and,

Whereas, if the recommendations are approved, WVU would be one of only two Big XII schools lacking a foreign language requirement for a Bachelor of Arts degree;⁴ and,

SECTION II–Davis College

Whereas, the founding purpose of this University through the Morrill Act was to, “establish a college to teach agriculture and the “mechanic arts” (engineering);”⁵ and,

Whereas, The Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Design is the oldest academic unit at WVU;⁶ and,

¹ [WVU Mission Statement](#)

² <https://sga.wvu.edu/about/our-mission>

³ See [AP-2023-08-01](#), which established our position on this issue.

⁴ See Appendix A.

⁵ <https://www.wvu.edu/faq/what-is-the-history-of-wvu>

⁶ <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/daviscollegeofagriculturenaturalresourcesanddesign/>

Whereas, the WVU Davis College provides countless services for the citizens of the state of West Virginia, including free soil testing, conservation of endangered species, development projects through the Fulcrum Project, the maintenance of thousands of acres of forest and farmland across the state, and the management of the WV small ruminant project; and

Whereas, under the final recommendations two of the college's five divisions will no longer exist within the college; and,

Whereas, under the final recommendations the Division of Design and Community Development will be removed from The Davis College and transferred into the new college resulting from the College of Creative Arts and Reed College of Media merger, which was "an unappealable organizational change;"⁷ and,

Whereas, there is large student sentiment for the faculty and programs offered by the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences and the Division of Design and Community Development;⁸ and,

Whereas, the faculty/divisions of the Davis College are qualified to receive Hatch Funding through The Hatch Act of 1887⁹ from the USDA, this funding provides money for research and faculty salaries; and,

Whereas, all the faculty in the Division of Design and Community Development have 40% of their total salaries funded through Hatch funds, saving the university in faculty expenses; and,

Whereas, if the Division of Design and Community Development were to be moved out of The Davis College, these funds would no longer be applied; and,

SECTION III—Public Administration¹⁰

Whereas, the WVU Masters of Public Administration program is the only accredited MPA program in the state of West Virginia; and,

Whereas, the WVU MPA program recently celebrated 50 years of existence;¹¹ and,

⁷ <https://provost.wvu.edu/files/d/bd94f846-30f8-4216-b336-96b9cbb37d0c/program-review-Appeal-decision-design-and-community-development.pdf>

⁸ See Appendix B.

⁹ [The Hatch Act of 1887 \(Multistate Research Fund\) | National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#)

¹⁰ The authors are especially appreciative of the efforts of College Senator Switala, whose dedication to the MPA program and extensive work on this section should not go unnoticed.

Whereas, outcomes for graduates from the WVU MPA program have historically been very strong, with 0% of 2020-2021 graduates being unemployed;¹² and,

Whereas, alumni of the WVU MPA program have gone on to work in almost all areas of government and public service, bringing in millions of dollars of federal funding to the state of West Virginia;¹³ and,

SECTION IV–Math

Whereas, mathematics are the foundation of almost all science and engineering disciplines; and,

Whereas, small class sizes are vitally important for students' success in math courses; and,

Whereas, the proposed reductions in faculty have the potential to cause class sizes to grow, research opportunities to shrink, and force students to seek out more attractive math programs; and,

Whereas, per the Math Department, roughly 50% of mathematics BA/BS graduates have historically pursued teaching certifications;¹⁴ and,

Whereas, the math PhD program serves as a vital source of state-wide math faculty and an important foundation for those wishing to pursue opportunities in fields like computer science and physics; and,

SECTION V–Ceramics

Whereas, the ceramics program is one of the top 20 graduate art programs in the nation;¹⁵ and

Whereas, the ceramics bachelors program in Fine Arts in Art Design with an AOE in Ceramics is nationally recognized; and,

Whereas, "WVU is one of only a few schools left in the nation with a ceramics production line, bringing student productions to the general public," which "helps further

¹¹ <https://publicadmin.wvu.edu/students/master-of-public-administration/50-years-of-mpa>

¹² <https://publicadmin.wvu.edu/students/master-of-public-administration/careers>

¹³ Per faculty in the MPA program

¹⁴ provost.wvu.edu/files/d/aaf256da-05df-43a5-8dca-89f88d169911/self-study-math.pdf

field study and educational opportunities for students;¹⁵ and,

Whereas, the ceramics program offers a unique partnership with the Pottery Workshop in Jingdezhen China and the Ceramics Technology Global Research Center which provides unique opportunities for students to expand their knowledge in traditional ceramics techniques; and,

Whereas, the ceramics program has the only dedicated industrial production ceramic design program, and 3D digital ceramic printing program in the country; and,

SECTION VI—Student Academic Advisory Board

Whereas, representatives of the student body are not included in the appeals process due to BOG rules;¹⁶ and,

Whereas, there is confusion and anxiety among many students about the future of their programs and their next steps at WVU; and,

Whereas, in December 2022, WVU SGA established the Student Academic Advisory Board, with the purpose of giving students an opportunity to meet with and advise members of the Office of the Provost independently of SGA;¹⁷ and,

SECTION VII—Transparency

Whereas, the bulk of the Campus Conversations surrounding academic transformation, as well as meetings with Deans and Directors, were held during the summer; and,

Whereas, Campus Conversations have not been widely or adequately advertised by the Office of the Provost; and,

Whereas, methodology used in the academic transformation has failed to account for the students partially or secondarily impacted, and has not been transparently distributed or adequately explained by administrators; and,

Whereas, the new budget model used to make these decisions was not adequately explained by administrators; and,

Whereas, communication by the University on academic transformation (especially

¹⁵ <https://artanddesign.wvu.edu/academics/ceramics>

¹⁶ [BOG Academics Rule 2.2 - Program Creation and Review | Policies | West Virginia University](#)

¹⁷ [See AR-2022-08-08](#)

regarding final decisions on the future of academic programs) has failed to meet students where¹⁸ they are and has been muddled in administrative jargon;¹⁹ and,

Therefore, be it resolved by the Student Assembly of West Virginia University:

Section 1: WVU SGA encourages the University to retain the foreign-language requirement for a Bachelor of Arts Degree, as well as the Bachelor of Arts in Chinese Studies, and the Bachelor of Arts in Spanish²⁰;

Section 2: WVU SGA encourages the University to decrease the severity of faculty cuts occurring across the Davis College, and retain the Division of Human and Community Development within the Davis College;

Section 3: WVU SGA encourages the University to retain the Department and Program of Public Administration;

Section 4: WVU SGA encourages the University to retain the Mathematics PhD program and reduce the severity of faculty cuts imposed on that department;

Section 5: WVU SGA encourages the University to retain the AOE and Masters Program in ceramics;

Section 6: WVU SGA requests that the Board of Governors amend Rule 2.2 Section 3.2.4 to include a student representative on the program review appeals committee(s);

Section 7: WVU SGA requests that the Office of the Provost collaboratively works with the WVU SGA to re-establish the Student Academic Advisory Board;

Section 8: WVU SGA requests that the Office of the Provost partner with this board to incorporate student concerns into the transitional period following academic transformation;

Section 9: WVU SGA requests that University administration make a concerted effort toward improved transparency and communication on future transformation initiatives.

Mandates:

Dr. E. Gordon Gee, President

¹⁸ See Appendix D

¹⁹ As an example, the data on the future of academic programs was not readily available, and SGA members were compelled to compile it in a more readable spreadsheet; See Appendix C.

²⁰ WVU SGA holds no preference toward one language over another. This recommendation was made based on University decisions to retain faculty in these programs.

Valerie Lopez, Special Assistant to the Board of Governors
Maryanne Reed, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Evan Widders, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education
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Dr. Tracy Morris, Associate Provost for Academic Personnel
Rob Alsop, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives
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Madison Santmyer, Student Body President
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Dr. Thanh Le, Director, Student Engagement and Leadership (Advisor)
Karsey Prichard, Executive Secretary
Frankie Tack, Faculty Senate Chair
Shirley Robinson, Staff Council Chair
Dr. Autumn Tooms Cyprés, Dean of the College of Applied Human Sciences
Dr. Darrell Donahue, Dean of the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design
Dr. Gregory Dunaway, Dean of the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. Tara Hulse, Dean of the School of Nursing
Dr. Keith Jackson, Dean of the College of Creative Arts
Dr. Pedro J. Mago, Dean of the Benjamin M. Statler College of Engineering and Mineral Resources
Dr. Clay Marsh, Dean of the School of Medicine, and Executive Dean for Health Sciences
Dr. Diana Martinelli, Dean of the Reed College of Media
Dr. Stephen Pachuta, Dean of the School of Dentistry
Dr. Bill Petros, Dean of the School of Pharmacy
Amelia Smith Rinehart, Dean of the College of Law
Daily Athenaeum

West Virginia University
The Student Assembly - Student Government Association
Assembly Proclamation: AP-2023-08-01
**AN ASSEMBLY PROCLAMATION AGAINST THE UNIVERSITY CUTS
PROPOSED BY THE PROVOST**

Short Title:	Students Against Proposed Cuts
Author(s):	Garrett Oursler, College Senator (Davis) Matthew Olivero, Senator
Sponsor(s):	Olivia Scholl, Senator Daniel Madden, College Senator (Chambers) Andrew Indomenico, College Senator (Eberly) Gabrielle Frazier, Senator Susie Risk, President Pro Tempore Lilly Henson, College Senator (Eberly) Carter Leadmon, Senator Olivia Schmieder, College Senator (Davis) Peyton Bielinski, College Senator (CAHS) Joanna Switala, College Senator (Eberly) Riley Coulter, College Senator (Statler) Elijah Eastman, Senator Hyder H Arastu, College Senator (Eberly) Anna Witt, College Senator (CAHS) Tayler Pillo, College Senator (Reed)
Contributor(s):	Anabella Tiano, Outreach Coordinator Charlie Long, Chief of Staff Jillian Blair, Policy Coordinator
Committee Endorsement:	Academic Affairs Committee
First Reading Date:	08/23/2023
Second Reading Date:	N/A - Fast Track

Date of Approval: 08/23/23

Presidential Signature: *Madison Santmeyer*

Whereas, the West Virginia University mission statement reads, "[we] commit to creating a diverse and inclusive culture that advances education...prosperity for all...and advance high-impact research...by leading transformation in West Virginia and the world through local, state and global engagement¹;" and,

Whereas, the West Virginia University Student Government Association's mission statement reads that, "We, the students of West Virginia University, desire to preserve within our University...an atmosphere that helps to foster an open exchange of ideas with civil discussion, inquiry, and self-expression to help ensure that the personal freedoms and general welfare of the students within our University are protected²;" and,

Whereas, the University, as a land-grant institution, was created for the purpose of expanding educational opportunities to underserved communities^{3,4}; and,

Whereas, the proposed changes laid out by the Provost's office call for approximately 169 faculty positions to be terminated⁵, disproportionately impacting some colleges more than others; and,

Whereas, these recommendations include the termination of multiple departments, including the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics; the Department of Public Administration, the Resource and Economic Management Division, and the Design and Community Development Division⁵; and,

Whereas, over 430 current students are expected to be directly impacted by the restructuring proposed by the Provost⁵; and,

¹ <https://www.wvu.edu/about-wvu/mission>

² <https://sga.wvu.edu/about/our-mission>

³ <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/morrill-act>

⁴ <https://landgrantcenter.wvu.edu/about>

⁵ https://www.thedaonline.com/news/university/university-officials-release-preliminary-recommendations-for-program-cuts-faculty-reductions/article_f1fa85b0-3878-11ee-af44-f7e590c2e151.html

Whereas, student feedback, which is generally appreciated and solicited by administrators, has been limited in this process; and,

Whereas, representatives of the student body are not included in the appeals process due to BOG rules⁶; and,

Whereas, these changes could significantly damage the student experience at West Virginia University through the possibility of larger class sizes, fewer research opportunities, and fewer student organizations, due to a strained and reduced faculty⁷; and,

Whereas, the recommended reductions will diminish the educational and developmental opportunities for current and prospective students across the state, undermining the University's land-grant mission.

Therefore, be it proclaimed by the Student Assembly of West Virginia University:

Section 1: The restructuring process undertaken by the University has not adequately addressed student concerns;

Section 2: WVU SGA opposes the cuts proposed by the Provost and urges the University to reconsider that course of action;

Section 3: WVU SGA is currently working on a resolution to make comprehensive recommendations to University leadership on finalized decisions on academic proposals;

Section 4: WVU SGA is currently creating, to the full extent of our ability, a framework for collecting student input through town halls, tabling, surveys, etc.

Mandates:

⁶ <https://policies.wvu.edu/finalized-bog-rules/bog-academics-rule-2-2-program-creation-and-review>

⁷ See Appendix A. As an example, the Mathematics Department is slated to be reduced by 18 faculty members, representing a 38% loss. More severe is the loss by the Plant and Soil Sciences unit of the Davis College, which is slated to be reduced by 52%.

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