



**Faculty and Curriculum Committee
*Agenda***

October 19, 2012
1:00 p.m.
Lansdell Hall, Room 103

Call to Order and Opening PrayerDr. Tom Brewster, Chair
Executive Session.....Trustees and Robert Shippey
IntroductionsTom Brewster and Robert Shippey
Area Overview.....Tom Brewster
Faculty RemarksDr. Bob Boozer
Student RemarksSummer Eggers
Resolutions Bill Winfrey
Strategic Initiatives Discussion.....Robert Shippey, Vice President for Academic Affair

- Overview for 2011-2012
- Upcoming Initiatives
 - Decennial SACSCOC Review
 - BSN application Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation
 - Anticipated launch Edragogy Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment Programs
 - Anticipated launch Edragogy RN-BSN program
 - Special Education Certificate approved and program started
 - Creation of online degree completion major in E-business and Entrepreneurship
 - Substantive Change Application Submitted for Master of Arts in Education
 - Dental School Dean Search update
 - Revisiting General Education Core Courses Established and ACTA Letter
 - Honor Code Rules and Regulations
 - *Vocatio*

Summary of Current Activities Robert Shippey

- Administration
 - Focused Report
 - Change for Master Degree in Education
 - Improvement of classroom furniture

- Employment
 - Faculty Replacement for Languages (Dr. Maria Zalduondo, University of Texas)
 - Faculty Replacement for Music (Dr. Ben Thurborn, Yale University)
 - New Faculty Appointment in Special Education Instructor (April Workman, Virginia Tech)
 - New Faculty Appointment of Information Technology (Mr. Andrew Lawrence M.S. Ashford University)
 - Administrative appointment of Assistant Director of ACE (Ms. Kristen Garrett)

- Faculty Initiatives
 - Online Policies Handbook
 - General Education Core
 - Develop physics curriculum (Dr. Buterakos returning to graduate school)
 - Honor Code Policies
 - MAEd Prospectus
 - QEP: Confident Communicator

General DiscussionCommittee

Executive Session

Prayer Concerns

Closing Prayer

Summary

This past summer has been one which consumed the Academic Affairs office with the task of preparing for the On Site Committee (September 25-27), as well as preparing the Focused Report, which required the College to respond to forty-three recommendations of which five were Core Requirements.

Fall 2012

Total number of full-time faculty (including inSPIRE)	39
Percentage of faculty with Ph.D.	68%
Number of majors/minors in traditional program	17 majors / 24 minors
Majors in inSPIRE program	6
Conversion to all online inspire majors	Associate, BHS, CJO, PS, MLO, RN-BSN*
Inspire Tuition Discount and Netbooks, ebooks	From \$325 to \$335 per credit hour
Retention Rate for all traditional students, Fall 2011 to Fall 2012	61%, down from 67% Fall 2010 to Fall 2011 (Football had 39 Freshmen not return; the 39 represents 25% of the 158 who did not return)
Retention Rate for Fall 2011 Freshmen Cohort	48%, down from 56% for 2010 cohort (Football had 39 Freshmen not return; the 39 represents 49% of the 80 who did not return)
New Fall traditional enrollment 2012	210 (149 of these new freshmen)
Returning students, Fall 2012	252
Non Degree Seeking Students	22
Total Fall enrollment (FT and PT)	488
New inSPIRE enrollment	94
A.S. & AGE0 (FT and PT)	76
Returning inSPIRE enrollment & Readmit (FT and PT)	170
Total Headcount	828

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)



The Bluefield College QEP is distinctive because it incrementally highlights classes with writing focused assignments at freshman, sophomore, junior and senior level in most disciplines, progressing students toward greater precision of expression and comprehensiveness of argument from freshman to senior level. These courses incorporate a pedagogical method which intentionally instructs students in techniques to hone their writing skills so that graduates will be confident communicators.

Nearly all courses at Bluefield College, regardless of subject matter, will include the same learning objective: students will demonstrate proficiency in Confident Communicator skills, a proficiency of increasing complexity from 1000- to 4000-level courses with specific measurable student learning outcomes.

Faculty Teaching Focus

The College has reassigned full-time faculty who normally teach in the traditional program to assume more teaching and academic support for the inSPIRE program. The College has taken steps to also ensure that adequate fulltime teaching and academic support is still provided for the traditional program as well. As a result of the reassignment, a review of the data for the fall semester 2012 notes that 3 fulltime faculty members representing 30% of the teaching assignments will teach in the inSPIRE Criminal Justice; that 4 fulltime faculty members representing 40% of the teaching assignments will teach in the inSPIRE Management and Leadership program; that 3 fulltime faculty members representing 43% of the teaching assignments will teach in the inSPIRE Human Services program; and that 3 faculty representing 43% of the teaching assignments will teach in the inSPIRE RN-BSN program. This coupled with the fact that 4 fulltime faculty are teaching 80% of business courses and 2 fulltime faculty are teaching 67% of Criminal Justice courses in the traditional program indicates that the College does have sufficient resources, with consideration for the number of students enrolled in the inSPIRE program, to provide adequate academic support in both the inSPIRE and traditional programs.

New inSPIRE online major

inSPIRE online programs continue to expand with the creation of the E-business and Entrepreneurship degree completion program. Today's business climate demands leaders with an entrepreneurial spirit and who possess e-business savvy. The program is designed to help individuals launch and run a successful business. The curriculum enables the student to be a successful business operator, including mission and strategy development, marketing, budgeting and quality control framed in the context of online/internet world in which we live. Courses for this program are:

INT 3063 40 eLearning & Research Skills
EBE 3163 40 Entrepreneurship
EBE 4113 40 Small Business Management
MGT 3103 40 Business Communications
EBE 4213 40 Strategic Internet Marketing
EBE 3183 40 e-Business
EBE 3153 40 Franchising for the Entrepreneur
EBE 4203 40 Ethics for the Entrepreneur
EBE 4303 40 Entrepreneurial Finance
EBE 4403 40 Business Plan for the Entrepreneur
EBE 4243 40 New Ventures for the Entrepreneur
EBE 4253 40 Entrepreneurial Implementation

Master of Arts in Education Application

Under the leadership of Dr. Donna Watson, Dean, School of Education, The Master of Arts in Education is designed for teachers and educational leaders who want to renew and re-examine their professional practice. Like the Bluefield College Teacher Education Program on the undergraduate level, course curriculum and assessment of the graduates will be based on Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC Model) Core Teaching Standards: A Resource for State Dialogue (2011). The standards, released by The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), are "a state-led effort, represent clear expectations about what all teachers should know and be able to do if they are to improve achievement of our next generation of students and are intended to set the foundation for educators, states, and policymakers to achieve their education reform goals." (Dando, 2011, ¶1). In addition, the MAEd program will align with the Core Propositions from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. With National Board Certification (NBCT) recognized as a highly respected teaching credential, students will be encouraged to seek National Board Certification, and the MAEd program will provide the learning experiences leading to facility with and understanding of the assessment processes in applying for National Board Certification (2003, Isenberg).

Instructor of Information Technology

In an effort to assist the academic program in developing best practices in both a synchronous and asynchronous online environment, the College has employed Mr. Andrew Lawrence as an instructor of Information Technology. His primary role will be to develop online course shells that are deposited in the College LMS so that information and learning can be transported to students.

Vocatio

A central component of Bluefield College's strategic plan states that the College's curricular and co-curricular programs will facilitate students' understanding of the impact of calling and giftedness on vocation.

- 1) assist the College in blending the broad issues of faith, meaning and personal mission into the general education curriculum;
- 2) to establish *Vocatio*, an umbrella program linking comprehensive convocation and chapel events that address how one makes meaning, discerns vocation as calling; and
- 3) to create the Center for the Exploration of Vocation and Calling that will assist students and faculty in the conversation about discernment, advising, career and calling.

Academic Space

As reported last year, the lack of academic space on campus is quickly becoming a critical issue. The college has no space left that will allow for an expansion of the nursing program. There is no office space left, and many classrooms need new furniture. Moreover, with the anticipated enrollment growth, the number of faculty will need to increase to accommodate the quality of instruction that is consistent with the mission of the college.

Office of Academic Affairs
Robert C. Shippey, Jr.
2012-2013 Goals

IE Planning

Continue to develop the process and understanding of institutional effectiveness at Bluefield College

Implement the Confident Communicator QEP

SACSCOC reaccreditation and response preparation in light of findings presented by the onsite committee visit, September 25-27

Educating faculty and staff on IE report/plan so that the calendar process becomes ingrained in each employee

Submitting SACSCOC substantive change request to move to Level III status in the area of education

Analyzing test data for general education outcomes

Implementing a process to insure that we have sufficient academic support in inSPIRE program courses

Developing retention focus for inSPIRE program in conjunction with Enrollment Management.

Working with Deans to improve process of Department/Dean/VPAA review of Faculty Annual Report Form and Chair Response

Developing General Education Curriculum

Assessing spiritual formation in general education/convocation curriculum

Working with General Education Committee to develop courses in inquiry, character and civic responsibility and wellness

Working with General Education Committee to implement required courses in American History and Macroeconomics

Articulate not only outcomes, but core competencies that can be tested, but still within the context of the liberal arts. Don't want to create an environment where we are teaching toward a test

Academic Planning

Develop timeline and action plan to create policies that support the Honor Code

E-Business/Entrepreneurialism, Psychology and Communication online degree programs

Building online Associate Degree in General Studies and implement six step method:
Reading Assignments
Video Lecture/I Pod/Technology Assisted Learning Component
Interaction (discussion groups, chat rooms, real time collaboration)
Research (complete project)
Reflective Engagement (Students must reflect on what they have learned,
including integration of faith and learning reflection
30 Day and 60 Day reminders

Working with Edragogy to develop dual credit/dual enrollment programs

Developing Masters programs in the Health Sciences and working with
Drs. Boozer and Lambert to develop bridge master's program with Virginia
College of Osteopathic Medicine

Developing Physics Lab (Dr. Buterakos returning to graduate school)

Global Education coordination and planning

Working with Dr. Lewis to expand RN-BSN 2 + 2 agreements with community colleges

Expand resources for ACE

Develop Remedial Studies Program in Math, English and Reading replete with full-time
faculty

Employ a graphic arts communication instructor in 2013

Employ an accounting professor in 2013

Employ Information Technologist Instructor and Course Maintenance Associate

Seek to increase the number of doctoral faculty on our campus and the amount of
funding that will allow those with master's degrees to begin their doctoral studies

Improve classroom facilities in Rish 9 and Lansdell 310

Seek funding for new furniture for classrooms

Seek funding to build additional academic space and work with Dr. Lewis to raise funds
to complete third floor of Science Building

Work with Faculty Committee to clarify issues related to Faculty Intellectual Property
Policy

Develop long-term plan for increasing adjunct pay in traditional three credit hour
courses to \$2,100 (\$700 per credit hour) for master's degree and \$2,500 for terminal
degree (\$833.33 per credit hour)

Develop *VOCATIO* with Student Development and submit NetVUE Grant while
encouraging College to fund expanded card check options

Develop plan for faculty/staff volunteers to write devotions for myBC devotional tab

Innovation Planning

Developing a three-year, 12 month degree plan with two eight-week or seven-week terms in each semester

Survey analysis of other institutions

Solicit faculty, staff, board and student input

Implications if semesters extended to 24 weeks and students are enrolled in class 18 hours per term (Six credit-hours per term; three terms) and enrolled in 36 credit-hours per year

Point is, how might we move beyond a typical spring/fall semester so that students can progress more quickly in order to obtain their college degree?

Allow for seamless progression based on achieved competencies, while still remaining consistent with liberal arts mission

Encourage collaboration among majors, so that class sizes in upper level classes are increased; faculty share teaching responsibilities; and students benefit from additional expertise

Encourage integrated majors

Move toward a 120 hour degree

Employ a director of internships to expand internship capabilities locally and to work with alumni in our service region

Develop an Academic Innovation Committee that will serve as a think-tank, surveys, analyze trends and champion new ways of delivering high-quality education at affordable rates

Faculty Accomplishments

Mimi Merritt, Faculty President

Dr. Dusty Anderson, Professor of Information Technology, applied for a Fulbright Scholarship to teach and conduct research in Ghana in 2013-2014.

Dr. Cindy Bascom, Professor of Communication, was one of just seven college professors nationwide to be selected by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) to participate in a Latin American Studies Professional Development Tour last summer. Dr. Bascom traveled to Costa Rica and Cuba for experiential learning of the political, economic, social, and religious realities of Latin America.

Dr. Bob Boozer, Director of General Education and Associate Professor of Psychology; Wendy Beavers, Assistant Professor of History; Dr. Marsha Mead, Assistant Professor of Psychology; Phyllis Owens, Assistant Professor of Education; and Dr. Donna Watson, Dean of the School of Education and Associate Professor of Education will present “From the Mountains to the Ivory Tower: Appalachian Cultural Competency in College Teaching,” in October at the Appalachian College Association’s Summit in Knoxville, TN. Their interest in this subject grew out of their organization of and participation in the Appalachian Celebration last year at the college.

Dr. Scott Bryan and the Sport Science department are working on assisting future coach-educators in obtaining national certification in coaching education. Working in cooperation with ASEP, the American Sport Education Program, 22 students in ESS 4503 Coaching Principles are completing the Successful Coaching Program. Upon successful completion, students will have the entry level skills to coach in 38 states in America. Additionally, Bluefield College coaches are speaking to students in the course, sharing practical experiences to prepare students for a coaching career.

Dr. Lewis Buterakos, Associate Professor of Mathematics, has successfully completed six graduate hours toward the SACS physics requirements.

Kim Farmer, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, and Wendy Beavers, Assistant Professor of History, are planning to team teach a course in Spring 2013 entitled “The History of Crime and Punishment,” which will culminate in a trip to London in May.

Crystal Kieloch, Director of Academic Support Services, Instructor of English and Director of the Confident Communicator, became a Blue Ridge Writing Project Fellow and Teacher Consultant by participating in the Blue Ridge Writing Project Invitational Summer Institute at Virginia Tech, a four-week institute that is a regional extension of the National Writing Project and designed for teachers of writing. **Kieloch** serves as the lead narrative writer for the Bluefield College QEP, entitled The Confident Communicator.

Dr. Thomas Kinney, Associate Professor of History, listed the following:

- Scored AP U.S. History exams for Educational Testing Service
- Answered research inquiries on nineteenth-century Cleveland industry
- Resumed preparation for Civil War course for spring 2013 (making drill muskets, reviewing drill manuals, writing lectures, creating hands-on student experiences)
- Continue to review books for *Business History Review*, *Agricultural History*, and other scholarly journals
- Surveyed the Appomattox Courthouse in preparation for a field trip with BC students in Spring 2013
- With **Wendy Beavers, Assistant Professor of History**, took a group of BC students to National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Va., and during the summer, Kinney took a WWII/Korean veteran to the memorial.

Dr. Emily Lambert, Dean of the College of Sciences, published a manuscript, *In vitro* and *in vivo* analyses of the *Bacillus anthracis* spore cortex lytic protein SleL. *Microbiology*. 158: 1359-1368, with N. Sherry, and D.L. Popham. 2012. **Lambert** also authored a book chapter, Degradation of spore peptidoglycan during germination. In: *Bacterial Spores: Current Research and Applications*. Caister Academic Press, with D.L. Popham and J.D. Heffron.

Werner Lind, Assistant Director of Library Services, attended the Association of Christian Librarians annual conference at Palm Beach Atlantic University, June 11-15 2012, on an ACA grant.

Dr. Marsha Mead, Assistant Professor of Psychology, is teaching a new course, Multicultural Counseling, this semester.

Dr. Rob Merritt, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters and Professor of English, gave a poetry reading from his book, *The Language of Longing*, in September at Virginia Intermont College to an audience of more than 100 as part of its Convocation Series, and he conducted a workshop for VI students in the English department. In addition, **Merritt** listed the following activities:

- Chairing a panel and reading a paper, “Appalachian Visions of China,” at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association Convention November 9-10, 2012.
- Attended a conference sponsored by the ACA in September 2012 concerning recruitment and retention of Latino students and will be collaborating on writing a subsequent grant related to that initiative
- Is organizing the annual conference and reading proposals for the National Association for Poetry Therapy conference to be held in Chicago in April 2013
- Attended the Appalachian Writing Project summer institute, was certified to be an Appalachian Writing Fellow, and will offer a writing workshop for teachers at UVA-Wise in December 2012.

Lisa Moxley, NCTM, Instructor of Music, is currently working on "Big River", the college's fall musical production, for which she is serving as Musical Director.

Phyllis Owens, Assistant Professor of Education, was a guest speaker for the local chapter of the International Association of Insurance Professionals and presented at the Appalachian Heritage Writer Symposium in June. Owens is currently serving as chair for the Bluefield College Appalachian Festival planned for April, at which Ruth Graham has agreed to speak. With **Dr. Donna Watson, Dean of the School of Education and Associate Professor of Education**, Owens drafted the proposal for the Master's degree in education and wrote a grant, which has just recently been approved, for special education.

Dr. Irene Rieger, Assistant Professor of English delivered a paper, “Maternity and Sewing in Under-read New Woman Fiction,” at the national conference of the College English Association. In addition, **Rieger** has an “accept with revisions” to the special literature edition of a peer-reviewed journal, *The Journal of Liberal Arts Studies*. The tentative title of the article is “Matters of Dress’: French Feminisms and Depictions of Dress in *Jane Eyre*,” and the article should appear by next spring.

Dr. Larry Sinsabaugh, Dean of the College of Professional Programs, counts as his biggest accomplishment at BC since April as the shepherding of the Entrepreneur and e-business major with stakeholders for its October inSPIRE start.

Dr. Tracey Stout, Associate Professor of Christian Studies, and **Mimi Merritt, Assistant Professor of Communication and Director of Student Success**, attended a three-week Jesse Ball DuPont Seminar on New Testament Apocrypha at the National Humanities Center in June. **Stout** presented a paper entitled “Baptist Sacramentalism: Engaging Recent Baptist Sacramental Theology” at the Baptist History and Heritage annual conference in Raleigh, NC, in June.

Dr. Donna Watson, Dean of the School of Education and Associate Professor of Education, served as chair of the Audit Team for Program Approval site visit by the Virginia Department of Education at Sweet Briar College August 18-21, 2012. With **Phyllis Owens, Assistant Professor of Education**, she wrote and was awarded a Special Education Grant by the Virginia Department of Education. Also with **Owens, Watson** spent her summer preparing a Prospectus for a Master's Degree in Education. **Watson** and **Owens** attended Tech Splash workshop at Lebanon High School in June with two students, Emily Reynolds and Hannah Spicer-Owens. **Watson** and **Owens** also attended the Appalachian Heritage Writer's Symposium in June at Southwest Virginia Community College.

April Workman, Assistant Professor of Education, completed six hours this summer toward a PhD in Special Education at Virginia Tech and is enrolled in 12 hours this fall, with plans to complete her course work by the end of summer 2013. Workman is also involved in Community Autism Support Team (CAST), a community team she helped to initiate last year, which focuses on improving services for Tazewell County students with autism and provides in-service staff development to faculty and staff in the Tazewell County Public School system. With **Phyllis Owens, Assistant Professor of Education**, **Workman** is incorporating Bluefield College student teachers and BC Special Education students in the training to better prepare them for the challenges of teaching students with autism. **Workman** serves as a post-secondary representative on the team to provide autism students with options for the transition beyond high school. CAST has worked with the Virginia Tech Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) on this project. In addition, **Workman** is co-chairing the Appalachian Heritage Committee, a sub-committee of the Appalachian Festival committee chaired by **Phyllis Owens**.

The **Business Division** and PBL hosted an etiquette luncheon for senior business students last spring at Fincastle Country Club. FCC staff provided an etiquette review and business alumni joined the students for lunch.

Two Bluefield College **Criminal Justice** majors, Andrew Jarvis and Jess Harder, graduated from the Southwest Virginia Police Academy in Bristol, and Harder received the academic award for his academy class. Both are now employed as Tazewell County Sheriff's deputies.

Respectfully submitted by **Mimi Merritt, Faculty President**, 9/21/12

Faculty President's Report to the Board of Trustees

Mimi Merritt, Faculty President

I am honored once again to report to the Trustees on the hopes and concerns of the outstanding faculty we have at Bluefield College.

Last Spring in my report to you as Faculty President, I noted that my tenure in this position had educated me about the hard realities with which the College leadership struggles in developing a budget to sustain operations. Issues of concern to the faculty, I wrote--most significantly the development and fostering of programs and practices that deliver a quality education to students--are not always in concert with how College leadership must run its business, even though these concerns are important to leadership. In the months following my last report, I'm afraid that my education, especially about budget deliberations, has required many more long hours and included more harsh realities as I watched members of the leadership team angst over decisions about trimming budgets that were already austere, in light of disappointing enrollment and retention numbers.

The strain experienced last Fall as a result of a new football program and a consequent change of atmosphere on campus—including efforts to maintain discipline in classrooms and in many cases the lowering of academic standards—seems to be easing. Four weeks into the Fall 2012 semester, many faculty members are encouraged that classroom performance has improved. We are not without the continuing challenges of what we perceive as too many absences due to travel by sports teams, and we continue to struggle with the issue that too many students do not purchase textbooks—which leads to an increased likelihood of poor academic performance, but discipline does not seem to be the overwhelming distraction it was last fall.

Much more concerning this fall is our anxiety about the college's financial situation, which was made clear to everyone the day Dr. Olive gathered us together in the cafeteria to announce the elimination of five full-time and two part-time positions. Unfortunately, this has clouded our perspective. Professors are tired and dispirited, forced to cope with budget cuts affecting travel money and compensation. We recognize that our chief academic officer, Dr. Shippey, is in a difficult situation as he struggles to help us deliver a quality academic product amid budget restrictions that force unpleasant cuts and delay improvements that seem necessary. A general sentiment exists that we toil long and hard, yet we never seem to see the fruits of our labor.

Across the nation, higher education is in turmoil, so we know the problems Bluefield College faces are not unique. The highly publicized crisis this summer involving the University of Virginia's president and its Board of Visitors vividly demonstrated the factors in play as higher education seeks a functional and economically viable model for the next generation. The battle between what many perceive as assembly-line vocational training and the classic liberal arts education rages, and valid arguments exist and are readily found for both sides. Our little college seems to be poised right in the middle of the struggle, and we anxiously consider what the solutions may be.

Despite the paradigmatic shifts that seem imminent, we direct our energies to our mission at hand: educating our students. I would like once more to take advantage of this bi-annual opportunity to share with you some of our joys and concerns:

What we are encouraged about:

- Possibilities for study abroad. We haven't had any students studying for a semester in other countries since 2008, yet now we are hearing of possibilities of having students studying off campus for a semester through programs such as the LASP (Latin American Studies Program).
- The Communication and Graphic Communication programs in particular are excited about the new Macs, updated software, and some new furniture in the Mac Lab.
- The QEP innovations as a result of "The Confident Communicator," through which students will improve communications skills intentionally and incrementally from freshman through senior years. As noted in my last report, all faculty members are involved in this project, and following fun and informative workshops this summer and at Faculty Workshop this fall, we have begun implementation by revising our syllabi to include more writing projects.
- The addition of a fulltime staff person for ACE. This was truly an invaluable improvement in meeting the needs of a growing population of at-risk students.
- Growth and innovations in the Honors Program, including the first freshman seminar for students in the Honors Program, being taught by Dr. Rob Merritt.
- Improvements this fall in our student population, which we see as vital to the College's continued solvency, as better students are much easier to retain. Faculty are pleased with

an improved classroom/campus atmosphere, better attendance in classes and an increase in student quality (grades, ability, motivation and maturity). Faculty are encouraged by increases in test scores of incoming students, as reported to us at Fall Faculty Workshop by Vice President for Enrollment Management Trent Argo.

- Positive publicity associated with the new football program.
- Our sense of community and shared sense of mission. As we worry about the College's financial state, we draw comfort from the work we do each day with students and the respect we have for each other as dedicated and caring professionals. Dr. Marsha Meade especially noted that she continues to be reminded daily of the love and concern the BC family has for her as she struggles with cancer.

What we are concerned about:

- The budget shortfall, which has generated a number of fears and concerns, including the recent decision to eliminate seven positions. We were assured that no position eliminations would affect academics, and we were relieved that no faculty positions were eliminated, yet one position was a library position and another an information technology position, both of which are associated with academic support services.
- Escalating unfunded mandates. However well-meaning, the College administration continues to add new initiatives, committees, and projects to a massively overworked faculty.
- Faculty compensation. We would like to see our salaries made competitive, and we would like for our matching retirement plan to be fully restored. We especially feel the pain of inadequate compensation as we are requested increasingly to add more and more responsibilities to our list of duties—including administrative responsibilities, additional committees and special projects on top of course loads of 4-5 classes a semester.
- Staffing for our graphic design classes. In my last report I noted the need for a fulltime instructor for Graphic Communication, but this position was again unfunded in the 2012-2013 budget and continues to be a dire necessity to provide sufficient instruction for an academic program initiated five years ago.
- Admissions and Retention. We are encouraged to see an improvement in students this fall and credit admissions efforts with this, but we are still not recruiting enough good students. As the report I prepared for Enrollment Management shows, BC's retention rates are declining across the board. We are worried about getting the students who can succeed and persist in college, and if we can't, we are worried about accommodating a large proportion of students who struggle academically and are the most likely to drop out.
- BC's involvement in Edragogy for dual enrollment classes. Many faculty members have concerns about ensuring educational quality through this program.
- An increasing anxiety that we are changing in a way we can't understand or keep up with, a feeling that we don't understand the reasons or justifications for major changes. I cited this fear last spring, and the concern has only heightened. Faculty members have noted what they perceive to be a lack of logic in ideas which have circulated: a 3-year degree program, for example, and the seeming abandonment of the liberal arts model in favor of an emphasis on vocational and professional programs, at a time when we have just approved the four pillars of learning as a foundation for our general education core.

We see the following as Challenges:

- The continued lack of financial resources. This is taking a toll on everyone as we struggle with cost-cutting decisions that have resulted in reduced funding for travel and limited

funding for faculty professional development. As one faculty member noted, “Even extremely modest funds for in-state field trips are heartbreakingly difficult to come by. We all understand that periodic belt-tightening is necessary, but at Bluefield College we never seem to be able to get even slightly ahead financially.”

- Unreliable IT infrastructure. Many faculty remain troubled by the obstacles posed by an information technology system that often does not meet instructional needs. As one faculty member stated, “IT at Bluefield College remains staggeringly inadequate, with classroom failure of IT resources a daily occurrence. Last semester concluded with a six-week long breakdown due to a backordered projector bulb and this semester began with a massive campus-wide printer problem and unannounced removal of vital VHS players from classrooms. These issues alone (and there were many more) negatively impacted numerous professors and hundreds of students, but IT appeared unconcerned. A service department that serves its own agenda and not the faculty and students remains a glaring source of aggravation and a disastrously bad advertisement for Bluefield College.”
- Public Relations. Bluefield College’s biggest challenge, perhaps, is its public relations. Though we have struggled for years with building our brand and increasing our name recognition outside our region, the public relations challenge most critical may be one within our community. Misconceptions proliferate regarding budget decisions and strategic planning. Faculty members are stakeholders who must be convinced and persuaded that dramatic changes such as Edragogy and cooperative efforts to establish a dental school are carefully analyzed decisions worth the commitment of time and effort.

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you the perspective of BC faculty members.

Respectfully submitted,

Mimi Merritt

Mimi Merritt
Faculty President
Assistant Professor of Communications
Director of Student Success