1. Professor Christopher Wilkinson, Faculty Senate Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. in Assembly Rooms A/B, NRCCE Building.

Members Present:

- Almond, C.
- Alway, S.
- Ameri, S.
- Atkins, C.
- Behling, R.
- Beichler, J.
- Bendena, M.
- Bowen, E.
- Brady, L.
- Beichler, J.
- Bendena, M.
- Bowen, E.
- Brady, L.
- Branch, D.
- Brown, G.
- Brown, James
- Brown, Jo

Members Absent:

- Bagby, M.
- Blackwood, A.
- Brister, C.
- Brooks, R.
- Bryan, W.

2. President Hardesty was unable to attend the meeting because he was in Charleston testifying before the State Senate Finance Committee. On his behalf, Provost Gerald Lang read from a copy of President Hardesty’s remarks.

Presidents Angel and Bradley met with the House Finance Committee and President Hardesty is meeting today with the Senate Finance Committee on behalf of the other presidents of institutions of higher education. This is part of the higher education unity agenda.

President Hardesty is reporting that during the Senate Bill 547 years, 1996 - 2001, WVU received State support and gave pay raises bringing the average salary of employees up to required averages. These salary increases and increased costs were higher than appropriations to WVU. 38 million dollars was reallocated on WVU’s campuses from operating budgets to salaries.

Last year WVU faced increased costs and a reduced State appropriation totaling 33 million dollars, including a mid-year recision. During the SB 547 years, most of the obvious and manageable efficiencies were achieved; making the base budget cuts of last year a considerably greater challenge. There is no question that WVU is now more efficient than in 1995. WVU has done its best to implement the vision of various legislative enactments of recent years while trying to accommodate budgets recommended by various governors and appropriated by the Legislature. Some of the difference was made up by raising tuition and
fees and through a host of cost-cutting and revenue generating measures. Increased private support and external grants have been important to undergirding the quality expected at WVU. This was done while changing governing structures, implementing new funding policies, and working with policies and regulations designed in a much more prosperous environment than we currently face today.

Notable among WVU’s achievement is a reduction in full time state workforce of 500 positions by the end of FY 2004 through attrition, a severance plan, and voluntary retirement. Colleges have been merged, and been made more productive through technology and larger classes. All this occurred while WVU the student population increased 3200 students on the main campus, and increased on the regional campuses as well.

WVU is being forced to limit the size of the freshman class to roughly 4500 this year. President Hardesty noted that when he came to WVU in 1995 the class size was about 3000 first-year students. WVU has grown more FTE students than comprise most colleges in West Virginia and has reduced -- its workforce by more than any other college with the exception of Marshall University.

WVU was pleased when the Governor proposed in his State of the State address that he wanted to see higher education fare better this year in terms of budget reductions, have more flexibility to administer campuses at the local level, and to establish a research fund designed to foster economic development in West Virginia through higher education initiatives. WVU is concerned that another major budget cut could do major damage to not just WVU, but to all of higher education.

Classes are getting larger. Faculty salaries are losing ground after reaching the SB 547 goals. Higher education lacks the funds needed to serve the State through various initiatives, including programs in economic development, healthcare, and research.

The Governor has proposed a transfer of funds intended to support a bond to WVU’s operating budget. This is a one-time fix. President Hardesty would like to have base-budgets reflect steady funding at last year’s level out of general revenues. If this can be done, the effort will be supported. If this cannot be done, WVU would accept the one-time fix as a bridge to better times; or, as a stop-gap measure to give us more time to prepare.

President Hardesty stated to the Committee that he is respectful of their position during this sluggish economic time and hopes that they are respectful of his position as a managers with increasing workloads and decreasing State funding.

Provost Lang noted that the Governor proposed a 2.5 percent reduction in State funds for higher education. In essence, what the Governor did was transfer 17.5 million dollars of one-time monies to make up a budget shortfall in higher education. Without the 17.5 million dollars, WVU would be facing a 7 ½ percent cut in base budget. The Governor has provided a 2 ½ percent base cut; 5 percent in one-time funds, which would be transferred to next year’s budget cut.
President Hardesty said that he supported a strong flexibility bill, which he thinks helps us modernize management structures. He urged the Committee not to consider these measures on an all or nothing basis. Some are clearly more complex than others; and some are more badly needed than others. The lower the funding, the more such measures are needed. We’re clearly using this year as an opportunity to try to enact some additional flexibilities from the State so we can manage our budget more efficiently. One example is, at this point in time we maintain hundreds of accounts relative to where we collect dollars. It would be easier to consolidate these into one, two, or three accounts and pay out of those accounts rather than have to ascribe each dollar to separate accounts and then at the end of the year have to figure out how to consolidate and balance those accounts.

President Hardesty reported that he would not read the research proposal as anti-tourism. Tourism is a great industry for West Virginia and it has been supported by higher education in many ways. In the Tourism Bill, it is being suggested that the money taken from tourism going to research will then affect tourism. In essence, a small percentage of the lottery was set aside, initially at roughly $800,000. That has grown substantially. What the Governor has proposed is a steady stream of roughly $10 million from this set aside that would go to support research in the long-term. It is very difficult to grow our research enterprise unless we have a consistent, dedicated source of funding. We feel that both of them can be managed at the same time concomently so that we can continue to support tourism and research, which would help build the economic infrastructure of the State.

President Hardesty said that WVU needs a steady stream of matching funds to leverage much of its larger grants from the federal government and the private sector. WVU returns at least ten dollars to the State economy for every one dollar invested. Economists say the total is actually much higher when all of WVU’s activities are taken into account. WVU is a growth engine and a good investment. Last year 42 states had to reduce their budgets, but only 13 made cuts in higher education. An urgent concern is the investment that other states are making in higher education, especially as the economy in those states rebound more quickly than in West Virginia. In January the Chronicle of Higher Education reported a more positive year for higher education in most states; yet, we know this is most likely not the case in West Virginia. Topping the list of deferred needs are faculty salaries. This suggests that the salary gap between WVU and the national average might widen even further.

President Hardesty concluded his testimony by saying that “We believe West Virginians want a quality education that stands up to any around the country. Our ability to meet this demand is becoming more and more challenged as we direct efforts toward managing our budget cuts. I am hopeful that after years of reallocation and three budget reductions in a row we can look forward this year to a much more manageable situation, indeed a time when we can truly be the growth engine West Virginia so clearly needs.”

4. It was moved and duly seconded to approve the Minutes of the January 12, 2003 meeting. Motion carried.

5. The Chair reported that the University’s Board of Governors will meet on Friday, February 13. The Chair will be reporting to the Board’s Academic Affairs Committee on the General Education Curriculum Proposal. The Board has received a condensed copy of the proposal.
This report is to inform the Committee of this proposal. It is not to seek their approval or endorsement. The University Faculty will determine the outcome of this matter.

The Chair will report to the full Board of Governors about the State of the University from the perspective of the faculty. The Chair will present his views on the ongoing impact of the financial crisis on faculty productivity and morale. After the report has been delivered to the Board of Governors, the Chair will distribute it to Senators via e-mail.

6. Professor Garbutt moved that the following Curriculum Committee reports be approved:
   Annex I, New Courses and Course Changes. Motion carried.
   Annex II, Prefix and Name Changes for Physical Education. Motion carried.
   Annex III, Alteration Report, was submitted for information.

7. The Chair reported that in the last week of the second comment period concerning the final draft of the GEC Proposal he received over 30 e-mail messages. The messages were forwarded to the GEC ad-hoc and LSP committee members.

   Paul Brown, Chair-elect, LSP Committee reported that five of the nine voting members met with the ad-hoc committee. The committee voted in favor of adoption of the proposal with no modifications. Absent members were polled with a result of eight in favor, one opposed.

   The Chair said that the GEC Proposal will be sent to the February 23rd Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting. Barring the unforeseen, the Faculty Senate will take final action on the Proposal at its March 8th meeting.

   Professor Steve Selin (Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences) introduced a resolution from the faculty of the Division of Forestry calling for the addition of an objective entitled “Natural Science and the Environment” to the General Education Curriculum Proposal. If such an objective is not added, the Resolution urges defeat of the entire Proposal.

8. The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m. to reconvene Monday, March 8, 2004.

Mary Strife
Faculty Secretary