

## Data Sheet: Study of Higher Education Faculty in West Virginia

**INSTITUTION: Shepherd University**

**1. Institutional Mission Statement: yes X**

**Key elements of the statement:**

Shepherd U. is an institution centrally dedicated to student learning, as opposed to being a research institution (research and publication is encouraged as applicable to teaching and as it informs and enhances the researcher's proficiency in his/her field or discipline). Shepherd is likewise committed to quality graduate programs on the master's level. A strong, traditional General Studies Program indicates the liberal arts commitment of Shepherd, a commitment to educating the whole individual in terms of his/her critical thinking skills and knowledge base. Shepherd prides itself on offering students, through small-class learning settings, an individualized education with a committed and highly qualified faculty, yet almost every degree has practical components and experiential requirements. Shepherd's unique "Gateway" program ensures that all students have the opportunity to take advantage of resources offered by Baltimore and Washington areas and to experience the associated global inferences of Gateway.

**2. Current Merit Pay and Salary Documents: yes X**

**a. Current Merit Pay Policy (summarize):**

10% of faculty salary increase is reserved to address inequities and market considerations; of the remaining 90%, 40% is distributed equally as cost-of-living compensation, while 60% of the remaining pool is utilized for merit. Faculty apply for merit in one of three areas: instructional service, professional/institutional service, or professional development. A rotating faculty Merit Committee evaluates the merit proposals. Faculty request to be considered for merit in one of the three areas, by writing a letter to the committee and attaching their annual report which reflects the details for the merit request. An important part of merit is faculty promotion; faculty members granted promotions receive a 10% base salary increase. The Merit pay process and substantive concerns of the policy were drawn up by a faculty committee established by the Senate, approved by the VPAA and University President.

**b. Current Salary Policy (summarize):**

10% of faculty salary increase is reserved to address inequities and market considerations. Of the remaining 90%, 40% is distributed equally as cost-of-living compensation (the Eastern Panhandle is one of the most expensive areas of the state in which to live), while 60% of the remaining pool is utilized for merit. Faculty members granted promotions receive a 10% base salary increase. Salary policy is established by the Shepherd Board of Governors.

**c. Current Practices (summarize):**

Current practices are consistent with the stated policy above and have been in effect and utilized for two academic-year salary cycles.

**d. Preliminary Recommendations or Comments:**

The policy is well articulated and appears to ensure fairness, and while there is a large across-the-board reserve (40% of the 90% salary pool after 10% equity is removed), this reserve is necessary since cost-of-living and property values are high in the Eastern Panhandle, which now serves as a bedroom community for Washington and Baltimore. The only weakness, in terms of merit, is the disparity between the avowed ideal of the "scholar/teacher" model, which the institution has embraced and is reflected in the current mission statement, and **the inability of a faculty member whose work**

**follows that model to apply for merit cumulatively in all three merit areas (teaching, scholarship, and service).** While the process is easier for the Merit Committee which divides into three groups, each focusing on one of the stated areas of application, it disadvantages faculty whose work reflects the scholar/teacher ideal and rewards faculty who concentrate their efforts on only one of the evaluative areas (teaching, scholarship, or service).

**3. Policies and Procedures for Faculty Evaluation, Promotion and Tenure: yes X**

**a. Preliminary Recommendations or Comments:**

The stated policy is **consistent with state code and with HEPC rules.** No promotion or tenure recommendations are capricious but follow strict, well-articulated standards and process. The teaching/service/scholarship “merit” model is utilized also for promotion and tenure. A portfolio application process is employed, with department chair, school PT Committee, and administrative (dean) input utilized in decisions forwarded to the VPAA and President. If there is disagreement between any of these groups, the application is forwarded to the University Professional Status Committee. For tenure, a rigorous **3-year pre-tenure review** is also utilized, following the same standards and requirements. Annual administrative reports and required feedback (reviews from department chairs and deans) are utilized as part of the tenure and pre-tenure review portfolios, as are student evaluations, course syllabi, peer reviews, course materials, and other required portfolio items. Standard forms are used across campus to achieve consistency (Request for Promotion form, Request for Tenure form, Request for Pre-Tenure Review form); discipline and peer input is highly valued to ensure recognition of varying values between disciplines and fields, and school PT committee members, elected every 3 years from the tenured faculty, are represented from each department.

**4. Instruments for Faculty Evaluation**

**a. Forms used by Faculty for Annual Reporting: yes X**

A standardized form is used across campus; the same form is submitted for merit consideration, along with a letter requesting merit and indicating the area in which to be considered.

**b. Forms or other formats used by peer and/or administrative evaluators: no X**

Rather than a specific form, the department chair, school dean, and school promotion/tenure committee render “written reviews” that reference the three evaluative criteria: service, teaching, scholarship.

**c. Forms or process to evaluate adjunct faculty: no X**

While some departments do have adjunct mentoring programs and evaluative processes, there are no formal, mandated forms for evaluating adjunct faculty, except student evaluation forms.

**d. Forms used by students to evaluate faculty: yes X**

Full-time and adjunct faculty are evaluated by students using the same form, a scantron format with space provided for open-ended comment on the evaluation instrument. Faculty and faculty supervisors have access to the results.

**e. Preliminary Recommendations or Comments:**

While there are departments that have adjunct mentoring programs and/or a system of adjunct review and evaluation, there is no enforced across-the-board mentoring system for the University to ensure absolute standards of quality. Though there is a policy

statement that school deans “provide an annual assessment of the teaching performance for adjunct faculty either directly or through the Department Chair,” there is no system currently in place that ensures this policy is consistently followed. Given the heavy reliance on adjunct staff to teach not only specialized courses but also required and general studies courses, such a system should be in place at Shepherd and at all institutions across the state utilizing adjunct staffing to a substantial degree, and the process for adjunct review should be enforced and standardized by each school dean.

## 5. Information on Adjunct Faculty

a. Policy Statement: yes  X

b. Percentage of faculty headcount, paid part-time status:  57  %

c. Percentage of courses taught by adjuncts:  44  %

### d. Disciplines with high proportion of adjunct instruction:

Disciplines that utilize a large number of adjunct faculty are math, business, English, Modern Languages, Education, Communications, Art, Music. Many General Studies courses are over-staffed with adjunct faculty; thus departments such as English over-utilize adjunct faculty. As many as 95% to 98% of GS English courses in any given semester are taught solely by adjunct faculty, with official oversight (mentor reviews) only during the first-year, given that the number of full-time faculty is limited at Shepherd (only 8 full-time English faculty, several of whom have administrative responsibilities and release time to perform those duties).

### e. Minimum Salary levels per semester hour for adjunct faculty:

Adjunct salary is based upon credit hours taught and level of professional degree: doctorate = \$677 per credit hour (\$830 summer session I, II); masters = \$541 per credit hour (\$710 summer session I, II); bachelors = \$347 (\$590 summer session I, II).

f. Minimum 1 full-time person per program: yes  X

While there are programs with no full-time faculty specifically allocated to that program (e.g. RBA), each program does have at least one full-time faculty member teaching courses for it.

### g. Preliminary Recommendations or Comments:

Given the large percentage of courses taught by adjunct staff, the University policy statement is rather cursory, only a few paragraphs, and it does not appear that all schools and departments abide by the stated policy for adjunct evaluation: “Deans provide an annual assessment of the teaching performance for adjunct faculty either directly or through the Department Chair.” **A serious study of adjunct use (one including faculty as well as administrators) needs to be conducted at Shepherd, with recommendations made for policy change and/or enforcement, as well as provision for some limited, “renewable” term contracts for those adjunct faculty teaching what are essentially “full-time” loads.** While Shepherd adjunct staff recently received a small raise, compensation is still low for the service rendered. The single most important goal for the university, in terms of academic mission, should be to increase the number of full-time faculty tracks, particularly important with current increased enrollment.

## 6. Faculty Workload Policy: yes X

### Summarize:

Full-time faculty teaching load is **12 credit hours (4 courses) per semester** and 24 (8 courses) per academic year. A minimum of 6 office hours per week and a service component (student advisement, advisement of student organizations, committee service,

community service) are also required for full-time faculty as part of workload. A workload report is part of each faculty annual report. Office hours and service assignments are reported at the beginning of each semester to the VPAA office, and a directory of faculty schedules and office hours is published. Faculty overloads are discouraged, except in emergency situations.

**a. Preliminary Recommendations or Comments:**

The workload policy is well-articulated and generally consistent for full-time staff; there is little or no abuse of full-time faculty.

**7. CTC Institutions (“Term Appointments”): [Not applicable]**