



Student Development Committee  
Agenda April 22, 2022  
10:00 a.m. | Science Center, Lyceum

Call to Order and Opening Prayer ..... , Chair  
Approval of Minutes .....  
Introductions .....Dr. Joshua Arnold, Vice President for Admissions & Student Development  
Area Overview..... Dr. Arnold  
Athletics Overview ..... Ms. Tonia Walker, Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics  
Student Remarks ..... Ms. Abby Gasperson, SGA Representative  
Faculty Remarks ..... Professor Rebecca McCoy-Reese, Faculty Representative  
Strategic Initiatives.....Administrative Staff  
    BU Center for Counseling & Wellness Services ..... Ms. Emily Cook  
    Center for Worship Arts and Campus Ministries .....Mr. Dave Pedde  
    Residence Life .....Ms. Jessica Smith  
    Campus Safety ..... Mr. Gary Ruth  
    Student Engagement..... Ms. Zoe Laney  
General Discussion .....Committee  
Closing Prayer.....  
Adjournment

**Student Development**

Rev. Craig F. Stout, Chair  
Mr. Steve Bickford  
Mr. Brandon Caldwell  
Mrs. Terri N. Cole  
Rev. Ron Hall

Mr. David T. Larimer, II  
Mr. Mike Wade  
Dr. Joshua Arnold, *AVPSD, ex officio*  
Ms. Tonia Walker, *AD, ex officio*  
Professor Rebecca McCoy-Reese  
Ms. Abby Gasperson, *SGA Representative*

Bluefield University  
Student Development Committee Minutes  
October 23, 2021

Submitted by: Ms. Whitley Phipps

Interim Committee Chair: Rev. Craig Stout

Attendees: Josh Arnold, Tonia Walker, Sherelle Walker, Jess Smith, Alan Smith, Rebecca McCoy-Reese, John Beckett, Steve Bickford, Abigail Gasperson- SGA Rep, Emily Cook, Dave Pedde, Gary Ruth, Zoe Laney, Terri Cole, Allen Jessee, Mike Wade

Rev. Craig Stout called the meeting to order and opened in prayer.

Dr. Josh Arnold, VP of Student Development and Admissions presented an overview of his report to the board. He talked about campus life and how Covid affected the enrollment cycle for 2021-2022 and how student life had to navigate new ways to interact and engage campus. Despite these hardships, students have engaged more in our campus ministries and events on campus have doubled in attendance. Dr. Arnold mentioned that more students are returning to on campus living and with the rollout of the vaccines, the student population has seen a 54% drop of covid cases pushing to 60% of campus life being vaccinated.

Dr. Arnold introduced and addressed the Speech Protection Policy that is recommended for approval from the Student Development Committee and that will be presented to the full board. The policy is to *guide* students on speech rather than telling students what they can't do or say. The policy does state that when a student is representing the university, in a role or in performance apparel, then there are parameters of their freedom of speech.

The resolution and documents were made available to trustees and committee members prior the meeting. The committee discussed concerns and objectives of the policy at length.

Rev. Stout asked VP of Athletics, Tonia Walker to share her reported area. Ms. Walker also spoke about Covid and the effects it had on the athletic department. VP Walker was happy to share that this year, BU athletes will be competing in a more "traditional" setting. However, indoor competitions will continue to wear masks to help limit exposures and keep games scheduled rather than canceling. Covid not only effected competition play, but also the mental status of athletes. Tonia spoke of collaborative efforts between athletics and the mental health counseling center. VP Walker also briefly reviewed the Athletic Strategic plan and initiative updates; she also spoke about the master facilities plan for the university; hoping that this would increase enrollment to aid as a recruiting strategy. She and others from the athletic department have created a brochure about BU athletics that can touch base with our surrounding community. VP Walker is promoting that athletics is more than a game; it is the steps and process that also follows behind it. Athletics has set goals to achieve before Spring semester:

1. to have an accumulative 2.94 athletic GPA for all 20 sports.
2. Adding sports – Women's Lacrosse and women's wrestling

VP Walker spoke about the resolution being presented and highlighted the area around peaceful protesting. The resolution provides guidelines allowing students to express their thoughts, while also adhering to the guidelines and narrative of the NAIA and Mid-South Conference. VP Walker shared that student athletes created a rough draft of the narrative to be reviewed. Dr.

Arnold suggested students working with coaches on grievances as step number one before possibly “high jacking” game experiences.

With no further discussion, Rev. Stout brought the Resolution on Speech, Expression and Protesting before the committee and called for a vote.

John Beckett motioned for approval, Steve Bickford seconded motion.

**Resolution passed**

Abigail Gasperson, SGA Representative, spoke about the student population on campus. SGA has been working on growing cabinet members. They are currently up to 16 members, which has increased activities and participation to events. She shared that, students on campus are enjoying events, but they have expressed that more communication and notice about events needs to be sent out.

Rebecca McCoy-Reese welcomed the committee back to campus and shared that as a faculty member, she is enjoying the iPad initiative. She has also heard positive reviews about Canvas from both students and faculty. Rebecca is also the Title IX Coordinator and addressed changes and updates with the committee.

- Title IX budget allowed for an extensive training that other higher education institutions are using.
- Title IX has recently altered regulations with stricter guidelines, working with student life on enhanced actions with student conduct. If the grievance does not fall under Title IX, then the grievance goes directly to the student conduct committee.
- New Brochures have been updated and places around campus.

Ms. Emily Cook, Director of Counseling Services, spoke of initiatives and new support processes with counseling services at BU. Recently, our counseling team conducted an ACES survey with students in invitation inquiry classes. The results were astonishing, showing that BU students are above the National Average on ACES Scores indicating that Bluefield is serving students a number of students that have experience childhood trauma. On a scale of 1-10, 40% of students scored a 4 or more and 20% of students scored a 6 or more. The ACES test allows mental health counselors to spread awareness without breaking confidentiality. Knowing these scores, the counseling center will be providing more training for faculty and working with athletics, specifically with physicals, to assess anxieties. Emily sends a weekly announcement to campus that highlight daily wellness events for students, staff, and faculty to join.

Dr. Arnold shared with the committee that Pastor Robbie Gaines has stepped down as campus pastor. He and his wife welcomed their second child, who unfortunately was diagnosed with several medical issues moving them to a pediatric hospital in PA. BU student, Mason West, has stepped in to fill this role and lead ministry on campus for students.

Dave Pedde, Director of the Worship Arts, spoke of student leadership on campus and the positive changes in Chapel and Elevate services. With the loss of Robbie, students stepped up to fill this gap and continued to grow campus ministries. During Duremdes Christian Emphasis week, 24 students committed their lives to Christ. Dave shared that BU has increased their female speakers, which has shown a positive response from our female student population.

Jess Smith, Director of Residence Life, highlighted that residence life had 14% increase in returning students, resulting in a higher number of returning students than incoming students. Residence Life is still dealing with Covid; however, compared to last year, there has been a 97% decrease in Covid cases. She and her team have placed the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Cruise Hall offline to

house positive covid cases. RL has experienced personnel changes as Katie Morton moved from RHD to athletics as the Head Female Soccer Coach. Kiara Brown was hired and is now the women's RHD. Dan Teater has stepped into the role as Assistant Residence Life Director and is the RHD for men. Zach Carlisle also joined the team as a Residence Life graduate assistant. Jess mentioned that student discipline has decreased by 53% compared to 2018-2019 academic year. Residence Life has seen an uptick in student conduct cases when athletes undergo random drug testing. Jess and her team are working with students to help cut down on drug and alcohol issues.

Gary Ruth, Director of Campus Safety, stated that his department has also seen personnel changes, as he was able to hire a full-time evening officer. He is working on drafting a safety survey to distribute to the campus community to gain a census of how safe BU Students, Faculty, and Staff feel on campus.

Zoe Laney, Director of Student Engagement, is newer to campus. She introduced herself to the committee and spoke of her excitement to be working with students. Zoe shared that she has been working with the student leadership teams to help establish a goal to develop better fellowship on campus. They were able to kick off the year with a student leader retreat which helped provide a solid foundation for her team of students. She was excited to welcome students to campus and celebrate alongside them for the Centennial Year of Celebrations. She expressed her goals to help students become more engaged with the campus community and surrounding outside communities.

New initiatives from student engagement include:

- Hosting a tailgate for the 1<sup>st</sup> home game of every sport
  - SGA leads the student section
- Releasing the BU Mobile App to have students more engaged with dining services
- Managing students physical and mental health

Despite Covid restrictions, students have been more engaged with campus activities and have started utilizing the Mountain Trail Outfitters outdoor activity shed that gives students the opportunity to check out bikes, kayaks, etc.

Student Engagement will be introducing BU Intramurals in November to campus with a ping-pong tournament.

Rev. Craig Stout thanked the directors for sharing their areas and working with students to create a better campus experience.

Trustee, Steve Bickford, referred to the student shared governance forum where students expressed the need for updated facilities. He asked the SD Directors and SGA Representative to share where they see the greatest facilities needs for the university. Most members indicated updates in residential facilities is the greatest need for students. Rebecca McCoy-Reese spoke of the expansion needs for the music and theatre departments.

With no further discussion, Rev. Stout closed the meeting in prayer.

Meeting adjourned.



## Spring 2022 Board of Trustees Report Offices of Student Development

*Content contributors include: Dr. Joshua Arnold, Vice President for Admissions & Student Development; Dave Pedde, Director of the Worship Arts Center; Mason West, Senior Ministry Student; Gary Ruth, Director of Campus Safety; Emily Cook, Director of Center for Counseling & Wellness Services; Jessica Smith, Director of Residence Life; and Zoe Laney, Director of Student Engagement.*

### **Context**

The Offices of Student Development at Bluefield College complement, support, and advance the mission of the institution through programs and services that promote student success within the context of a transformative faith, living, and learning community. The various offices within Student Development strive to create and maintain an environment, congruent with the values of the College that promotes whole-person learning and success throughout the various spheres of the student experience.

Student Development's spectrum of care includes Campus Ministries & Chapel Services, Campus Safety, Counseling & Wellness Services, Residence Life & Housing, Student Conduct & Care, and Student Engagement (Student Activities & Leadership Development). Additionally, personnel within the Offices of Student Development serve as Deputy Title IX Coordinator and Title IX Investigator in support of the Senior Title IX Coordinator.

Our emphasis for Spring 2022 has been the acceleration of our "return to normal," resuming many of the traditions and activities that have long characterized the Bluefield student experience that were paused during the Covid-19 global pandemic. The availability of the Covid-19 vaccine has allowed our community to safely gather in ways that were not possible last year. In fall semester, we resumed in-person activities; however, programming efforts were focused on providing frequent small gatherings where students could safely participate in our shared community life. As infection rates in the region waned (after a brief post-holiday spike), coupled with fewer restrictions from state and local health agencies, we have shifted to hosting larger events again for the spring semester. This has contributed to a renewed sense of vibrancy on campus.

Covid-19 infection rates increased dramatically this semester; however, the overwhelming majority of these cases (78%) occurred in January, either upon arrival or shortly after returning to campus from Christmas break. This was approximately when the Omicron variant was sweeping through Virginia – a variant less deadly than prior variants, but much more contagious. University leadership made the decision twice to delay in-person instruction an additional week to prevent us from over-extending our quarantine capacity. To date, **104** students have been isolated/quarantined this semester due to either testing positive for the Covid-19 virus or direct exposure to a known positive case (60 positive cases; 44 exposures). In contrast, we only had **24** total isolations/quarantines in all of Fall 2021 (8 positive cases, 16 exposures).

Perhaps our most noteworthy accomplishment this semester has been an increased synergy as the various offices across Student Development have functioned as “one team.” In Fall 2021, Jess Smith had taken on additional responsibilities for shepherding and supporting the Student Development team, leading our monthly staff meetings, facilitating bi-weekly one-on-one meetings with Directors, and assisting the Vice President in setting strategy. Her exemplary service and support came at a critical time, as the Vice President had taken on considerable new responsibilities in enrollment management, and a fresh, young team of new hires prepared to assume their various roles and responsibilities. In Spring 2022, Jess Smith took maternity leave as she welcomed Luna Mae Smith into the world. Her mentoring and coaching efforts last semester have paid off. The Resident Directors stepped in to fill gaps in housing administration and student conduct; the Offices for Student Engagement & Counseling Services collaborated on campus programming and events; and Campus Safety collaborated with the Office of Residence Life to host a campus climate survey. Campus culture is thriving, thanks in large part to the leadership, contributions, and sacrificial service of an effective and committed team.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **BC Center for Counseling & Wellness Services**

*Submitted by Emily Cook, Center Director*

The BU Center for Counseling and Wellness Services has remained busy throughout the 2021-2022 academic year with individual sessions, therapy groups, and wellness events. This year, we’ve partnered with more campus stakeholder groups, including university leadership, faculty, coaches, residence life personnel, campus safety officers, and others to provide the best support for students. Sessions have continued to focus on student needs including college life adjustment, generalized anxiety, performance anxiety, loss of loved ones, relationship issues, stress due to financial concerns, substance use, maladaptive coping skills, career counseling, crisis counseling, difficulty studying and/or completing assignments, lack of motivation, self-esteem work, skills for self-advocacy, trauma support, eating concerns, anger management, support during isolation/quarantine, etc.

Currently, two groups meet regularly, including the “Mind the Gap” group which focuses on coping skills, goal setting, building resiliency, making connections, and growth mindset. Participants in Mind the Gap are often referred from the Student Conduct Office. While more analysis is necessary to determine the efficacy of the group, initial evidence suggests that it has been a positive intervention for this high-risk student population. A Grief Support Group was started in February 2022. The purpose of the Grief Support Group is to offer participants an opportunity to feel heard and supported in the uniqueness of their situation. This group was created after recent losses in the local community in hope to support all students who have experienced a loss or want to support others who have experienced loss.

Along with student sessions, daily wellness events have continued to take place to promote a culture of wellness of campus. We want students to know how to take care of themselves and be well. At the beginning of the spring semester, we hosted a campus-wide clothing drive and placed donation boxes in all the dorms and other buildings. We collected the donated clothing, sorted it, and hosted a campus clothing drive for students. Students were invited to look through the clothing, shoes, bags, and other items and take anything they needed for free. After two days, the remaining items were donated by a BU student, Elisha Pena, who works with the homeless in Knoxville, TN. The campus-wide clothing drive was such a success we plan to offer it as an annual event.

Other wellness events have included painting events where students can choose a canvas, rock, picture frame, or other wooden craft to paint and relax. We continue to offer guided mindfulness events and yoga classes. We have partnered with the BU Art Club to host a weekly art event such as pottery, watercolor, wreath-making, etc. We also do frequent giveaways for students including journals, hand sanitizers, healthy snacks, Scripture journals, water bottles, etc. We hope to provide students with the tools they need to prioritize their well-being.

Bluefield University was fortunate to receive grant funds from the Virginia Counselors Association (VCA) Foundation to enhance and repurpose existing space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Science Center as a “Mindfulness Space.” We redid the seating area near the windows to incorporate flexible seating including a swing, gaming chairs, and cushions, essential oils, prayer and Scripture cards, a Buddha board (a relaxing painting experience where you use a bamboo brush to paint water onto the surface and your creation comes to life and then fades away), and beautiful plants. Psalm 46:10 says, “Be still and know that I am God.” The space is designed for the campus community to learn healthy coping strategies for stress, practicing mindfulness, and can be a place for spending time with God, praying, meditating on God’s word, and giving thanks.

We have loved working with BU’s future therapy dog, Hazel Sharp, to help serve and support students. Hazel continues her training to become a fully certified therapy dog, and she should be finished in Fall 2022. She is greeted and loved by students every day. Some students visit daily to give her belly rubs or to take her for a walk. She always greets students with love and joy, and she has taken on her role as future therapy dog well. She turns one on April 26<sup>th</sup>, so we are preparing to have a campus-wide birthday for her to celebrate.



\* \* \* \* \*

### **Campus Ministries & Worship Arts**

*Submitted by Dave Pedde, Director for the Center of Worship Arts & Mason West, Senior Ministry Student*

The Centennial Scripture theme for the year has been Ephesians 5:8-9: “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.” Song selections and visual branding in chapel have been used throughout the fall semester to highlight this theme. Several chapel speakers have used these foundational verses to craft sermons delivered over the course of the year.

The Center for the Worship Arts continues to advance the establishment of a worship culture at Bluefield University. Our weekly Chapel services, referred to by some as our “largest classroom on campus,” are the centerpiece for worship at Bluefield University. Musical worship is led each

week by a trained team of students (12 students in active leadership), with a sermon delivered by a member of our faculty, staff, and guest speakers (including local pastors and nationally recognized guests). Speakers for Black History and Women’s History Months were selected with prayer and intentionality. Chapel services are live-streamed with many online viewers both on and off-campus. This year we are witnessing an intentional integration between Chapel and Elevate, a weekly student-led worship service headed by members of the BCM team. Prayer.30, a weekly prayer-time, has been continuing to grow with participation by students, faculty, staff, and guests alike.

Below is a selection of our Chapel speakers for the Spring 2022 academic term:

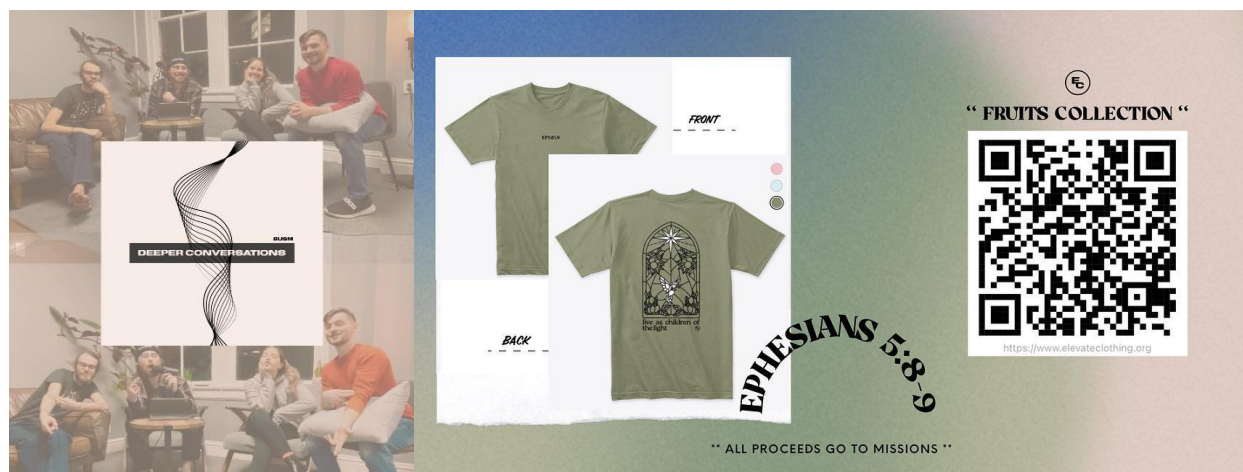
Dr. Rick Farmer  
Dr. Lewis Brogdon  
Dr. Valerie Carter Smith  
Benny Burrell

Appalachian Teen  
Challenge  
Roger Adams  
Mrs. Matasha Clary

Drew Moser  
Dr. Marshall Flowers  
Chris Johnson

Bluefield University Student Ministries (formerly Campus Ministries) continues to enjoy significant momentum. Participation in “Elevate,” a weekly, student-led chapel service on Sunday nights, has doubled in regular attendance this year. The student volunteer and ministry leader base has more than doubled as well. Bible studies have sprung up across campus as a result of the “Roots Initiative,” with approximately 30 students participating in various Roots groups each week. This semester, “Elevate Extended Community” has collaborated with local churches, such as Lifeline Church in Princeton, WV. Bluefield University hosted their worship team for an Elevate Service, and the Elevate Worship Band led one of their student services at the Princeton site.

Elevate has also partnered with our mission club leaders for monthly co-support of the BUSM and fundraising. Our momentum as a student ministry has enabled us to also start other cultural engagements & promotional opportunities such as a new podcast called “Deeper Conversations” To engage more students in the growth of student ministry and the advancing of the gospel on campus, two new initiatives have been launched – a podcast series called “Deeper Conversations” and “Elevate Clothing,” which is a fully-functional clothing brand that funds missions in the summer.





\* \* \* \* \*

## **Campus Safety Department**

*Submitted by Gary A. Ruth, Director of Campus Safety*

Campus Safety is committed to providing a safe living, learning, and working environment for every student, faculty member, staff, and visitor, in keeping with our values as a Christ-centered university. The Campus Safety staff include (3) full-time campus safety officers, (1) part time reserve officer, and (4) part time student officers. Half of the Campus Safety Officers are female. Among our student workers, one quarter are international students, and one quarter are student athletes, continuing to reflect the demographic diversity of our student body. A search continues for (2) additional non-students or commuting students necessary to maintain 24/7 security for the Bluefield University Campus during academic breaks.

- Gary A. Ruth, Appointed Campus Safety Director April 8, 2017
- Jon D. Leftwich, Hired Full-Time 8/22/14, Alum
- John P. Embrescia, Hire Full-Time 9/29/21
- Farah L. S. Schweers, Part-Time Student-Athlete International CSO (graduated in December 2021 and remains in Germany trying to receive work VISA).
- Sonny J. Stewart, Part-Time Student-Athlete CSO
- Arisa Namwong, Part-Time International CSO
- Elishia Pena, Part-Time Student-Athlete CSO
- Kimberly Farmer, Part-Time Reserve CSO

Campus Safety Director Gary Ruth and Officer Jon Leftwich have completed all requirements to remain certified Armed Security Officers and Campus Security Officers. Officer John Embrescia has completed the requirements to become a certified Armed Security Officer and will complete the requirements to become a certified Campus Security Officer during the summer break. All three full-time Officers complete in-service requirements throughout the year to retain their certifications, under the supervision of Campus Safety Director Gary Ruth, who is a certified Campus Security Officer Instructor.

As incidents of racial violence across the nation have eroded trust between communities and law enforcement, the Campus Safety Department understands the importance of projecting a caring and trustworthy posture in the enforcement of campus rules and regulations. The Campus Safety survey was sent out to the Bluefield University Community last December - January to gauge how safe the community feels. This was an anonymous survey.

80 staff/faculty responded to the survey. Ethnic background: 91% white and 9% of other ethnicities. Female to male ratio was almost the same. The following are the results:

1. Almost 100% feel safe on campus.
2. 91% feel safe on campus at night.
3. Almost 100% feel that Campus Safety is concerned about their safety.
4. 97% feel Campus Safety enforces rules consistently.
5. Almost 100% feel that Campus Safety staff are respectful.
6. Almost 100% feel that the Campus Safety staff respond in a timely manner.
7. Almost 100% feel that Campus Safety patrol the campus regularly.
8. 100% feel the Campus Safety staff are approachable.
9. 100% feel that the Campus Safety staff take their job seriously.
10. Almost 100% feel that the current Campus Safety uniforms look professional.
11. 85% feel comfortable with full-time trained Campus Safety Officers carrying firearms.

12. 90% would be comfortable with trained Campus Safety Officers carrying Tasers.
13. 74% would not be comfortable with trained full-time Campus Safety Officers only carrying Tasers.
14. 84% would be comfortable with trained full-time Campus Safety Officers only carrying firearms (current status).
15. 89% feel comfortable with trained full-time Campus Safety Officers carrying both firearms and Tasers.

Only 33 students responded to the survey; measures will be taken to improve the number of student respondents in the future. Ethnic background: 70% white and 30% of other ethnicities. Twice as many females completed the survey than males. 27% were commuters. The following are the results:

1. 87% feel safe on campus.
2. 76% feel safe on campus at night.
3. 83% feel parking is enforced fairly.
4. 86% feel safe inside their residence hall.
5. 83% feel the Campus Safety staff are concerned about their safety.
6. 83% feel the Campus Safety staff enforce rules consistently.
7. 93% feel the Campus Safety staff are respectful.
8. 88% feel the Campus Safety staff respond to a request for service in a timely manner.
9. 97% feel the Campus Safety staff patrol the campus regularly.
10. 90% feel the Campus Safety staff are approachable.
11. 87% feel the Campus Safety staff take their job seriously.
12. 96% feel the current Campus Safety uniforms look professional.
13. 86% feel comfortable with the trained full-time Campus Safety Officers carrying firearms.
14. 96% would be comfortable with trained full-time Campus Safety Officers carrying Tasers.
15. 70% would not be comfortable with trained full-time Campus Safety Officers only carrying Tasers.
16. 81% would be comfortable with trained full-time Campus Safety Officers only carrying firearms (current status).
17. 89% feel comfortable with trained full-time Campus Safety Officers carrying both firearms and Tasers.

Over 95% of the comments concerning the Campus Safety Department were positive.

As one would expect, women felt slightly less safe on campus at night than men – otherwise, there were no significant differences between how women and men responded to the survey. Curiously, male students of color expressed feeling less safe at night than women when responses were filtered for race and gender. Students of color, especially male students of color, were also less comfortable with armed campus safety officers possessing weapons (both deadly weapons and less-than-lethal).

Distinct professional uniforms, to include button up uniform shirts, shoulder patches, and badges, are no longer in the production phase and being reevaluated due to the feedback from the Campus Safety survey. An overwhelming of students and staff expressed discomfort with law enforcement/military-style uniforms and prefer the current uniform style (polo, tactical slacks, ball cap).

On February 28, 2022, the student Black Alliance Society in conjunction with the Criminal Justice Department held a Traffic Stop Forum. The forum was held in the Lyceum.

Representatives of law enforcement agencies attending were Virginia State Police, Tazewell County Sheriff's Department, Bluefield VA PD, and BU Campus Safety. Approximately 25 students attended for a discussion on what to do when stopped by the police, individual rights, and other safety concerns when interacting with law enforcement agents. There was a lot of positive energy between the law enforcement representatives and students. Many misconceptions concerning both local law enforcement and BU students were discussed and both sides left with more knowledge, understanding, and empathy. The students enjoyed interacting with a K-9 unit brought by the Tazewell County Sheriff's Department in the parking lot after the presentation and also saw the inside of a cruiser. The event was definitely a positive step in bridging the gap of trust between BU students and local law enforcement.

On March 9, 2022, Bluefield University hosted Jamie Finney, Chief of Protective Security (A) Region 3 (VA, MD, WV, PA, DE, NCR), Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security to conduct a threat assessment. During the day, we toured all the buildings, and spoke to key personnel. We will receive a comprehensive report outlining recommendations for improvement, and our hope is that this partnership will lead to future grant funding that may provide resources to upgrade our campus safety infrastructure, such as enhanced camera coverage, card access, etc.

The Campus Safety team grieves the loss of life incurred during the recent active shooting at Bridgewater College, a fellow Virginia-based independent liberal arts university in Bridgewater, VA. Tragically, two of Bridgewater's campus law enforcement officers were shot and killed during the incident. It is a sober reminder of the difficult job faced by our campus safety personnel and other members of the law enforcement community each day as they put their own lives in harm's way to protect and serve others.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Office of Residence Life**

*Submitted by Jessica Smith, Director of Residence Life*

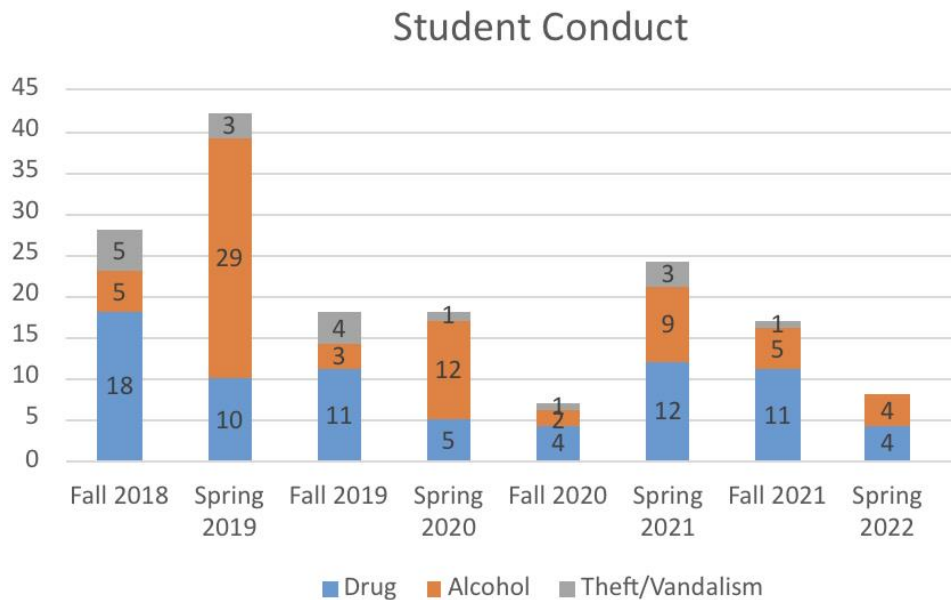
#### **Residence Life Updates**

Resident Assistant recruitment/selection occurs in the spring. The RA team will have a large graduating class this spring. Last year 17 RAs could reapply; however, this year only ten are eligible. 100% returnable RAs applied for next year's RA position for the fourth year in a row. During this year's 2022-2023 hiring process, 32 students applied to be an RA including 10 returning RAs and 22 new applicants. The team had a 1% increase in new applications from last year.

Residents of East River Hall have enjoyed an update to the second-floor lobby. The lobby was renovated into a gym for female students – providing female students with a less intimidating space to exercise in their own residential facility. Bluestone Commons is the next facility in need of further enhancements. The living room furniture has long exceeded its useful lifespan and much of the simulated leather material is flaking off and ripping due to age. All of the couches need replaced. Additionally, it is recommended that centrally-programmable thermostats be installed in all of the units at Bluestone Commons to prevent students from damaging the HVAC units. Parts to repair these units are exceedingly difficult to secure given global supply chain issues. Centrally-programmable thermostats will extend the life of these units and prevent situations where students may be without heat or air-conditioning for extended periods of time while parts are secured.

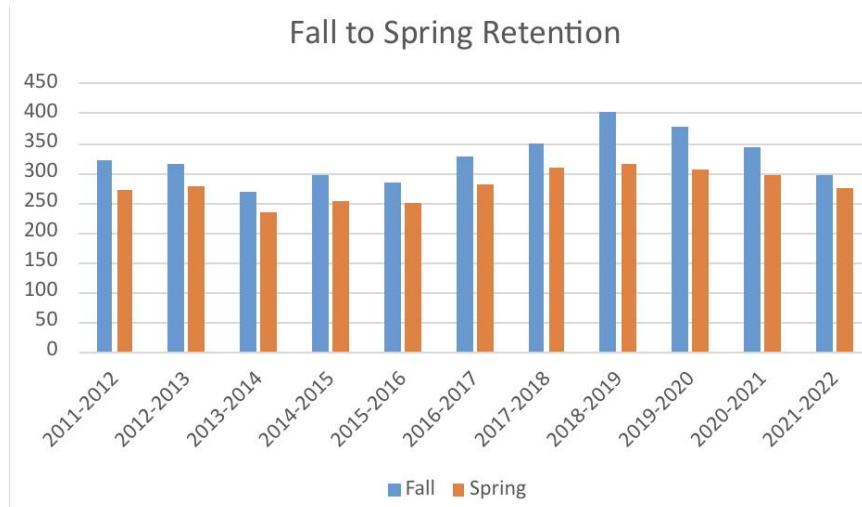
## Student Conduct

In the 2018-2019 school year 70 student conduct cases were adjudicated and found responsible under the categories of theft, vandalism, drug, and alcohol. Discipline decreased by 49% after the Residence Life team's second year of educating the students on the conduct process and cultivating a different culture on campus. The Residence Life team aims to continue promoting a culture of good campus citizenship. Three factors may affect the disciplinary process this year and increase conduct rates – Athletics has altered their process of random drug testing, the legalization of marijuana in the state of Virginia has afforded easier access to CBD and marijuana substances to students, and the Covid-19 pandemic continues to stress student coping mechanisms. Continued education, accountability, and support will be necessary to help maintain and promote a healthy campus climate and culture.



## Residential Student Numbers

Recently, the housing selection system was overhauled to allow returning students to have greater ownership of where they live with the Room Rush process. Room Rush will take place again this year on April 22nd. Since 2011, the highest fall to spring housing retention was 89%. This year we had 97% of eligible students remain in housing from fall to spring when adjusted for December graduates. This shows an increase (6%) in our housing retention efforts for the second year in a row. Through the continued efforts of the student development team creating a healthy campus culture, coupled with regular improvement to the residence hall facilities, we strive to continue retaining a high number of students from fall to spring in the residence halls.



\* \* \* \* \*

**Office of Student Engagement**  
*Submitted by Zoe Laney, Director of Student Engagement*

The Office of Student Engagement coordinates activities and events where students can connect outside the classroom. The experiential nature of such programming encompasses a broad array across campus, including:

- Student Activities and SALT (Student Activities Leadership Team)
- Mountain Trail Outfitters (MTO) building and equipment
- The Bluefield University Student Leadership program
- Student clubs and organizations
- SGA (Student Government Association)
- Community Service
- Mobile Up App Content
- Intramurals

**Student Activities**

This spring, we continued to focus on our regular array of seated programming and events – made possible by the available of the vaccine and waning Covid-19 infection rates in the region. Centennial and tradition events, like Mud Pig Day, foster a sense of belonging and reinforce community ties for alumni, new, and returning students. Tradition events provide opportunities to reconnect and reminisce, in addition to nurturing students as future alumni. Our hope is that tradition will knit our communities together for years to come.

The graph below shows the events and attendance for Spring 2022.

Event	Sum of Attendance
Bowling	120
Volleyball & Baseball Tailgate	70
Valentine's Party	65
Casino Party	55

Wrestling Tailgate	45
Open Mic Night	45
Game Night	40
Granada Theater (Just Mercy viewing)	27
Connection Fair	25
Softball Tailgate	20
Service Day	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>516</b>

Our most engaging events were bowling, the volleyball tailgate, and the Valentine’s Day Party in the Student Center. The success of these events could be attributed, in part, to our responsive to student feedback gathered from last semester. We have had more communication with athletics for this semester’s activities, which has improved attendance and ensured a broader, diverse representation of the student body at campus events. An abundance of food from local food trucks (Taco de Marcos, The Blue Spoon Café, and The Well Coffee Shop) certainly helped as well!

This semester, our initiative to support athletics teams with first home game tailgates fostered a sense of comradery that we have not seen in a while. Having events for the first home games spurs school spirit, especially among new students, encourages future attendance, and give our athletes a sense of appreciation and support. In addition to home game support, we planned one large event each month. This was a bit different than our emphasis on frequent small gatherings in the fall. Focusing our efforts and finances in this way helped our students to thoughtfully plan and streamline their events and produce a more enjoyable and memorable experience. Intramurals started out with a bang with bowling – our largest event to date. The goal for the Intramural program going forward is to develop a balanced and Christ-like character in the lives of students and to strengthen the university community through competition, team building, and physical activity.

**Updates**

We continue to leverage and update the Bluefield University Mobile App. Recently, Mobile Up Software released a new version of the app, which is more streamlined than the older version. The new solution can upload flyers to advertise events. With the new solution, we are also able to add private groups for clubs and other organizations on campus to chat in their own feed. This will help catalyze engagement and improve communication throughout the campus.

**Leadership Development**

This spring, student leader training focused on team building, mental health, and employment skills (headshots, resume-building, interviewing skills). Before launching our first monthly meeting, a survey was sent to all student leaders, asking them to identify where they felt they stood as a leader and their goals in developing additional leadership skills. Progress will be tracked throughout the semester, helping to gauge the efficacy and success of our efforts to develop student leadership skills.



In Fall 2019, we combined the leadership development efforts of our diffuse groups across campus into one, single leadership cohort. Our goal was to identify who is a leader on campus and have a common, integrated approach to developing campus leaders. We are pleased that the scope of our leadership cohort continues to grow. The leadership team includes the following student leader groups: SALT, SGA, Residence Life, Admission Ambassadors, and BUSM (Bluefield University Student Ministries). 39 new applicants applied to participate in student leadership this year – the most in recent memory. This year, we started with three individuals in SALT. After our spring semester connection fair, four new members were added. SGA also continues to grow, beginning the year with three members and adding seven more. We have also had successful club additions – including a Missions Club and International Student Association. At the connection fair, we had 26 new signups for clubs. Beta Chi has also returned to campus, a long-standing fraternity with Bluefield's campus. Student engagement is at an all-time high!