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## **Shepherd looking at expansion**

### **Doyle hired as consultant as university investigates a new satellite location**

By Tricia Fulks

MARTINSBURG - Shepherd University President Suzanne Shipley is in the investigatory stages of opening a satellite location in Martinsburg by the summer of 2013.

At an April 9 spring assembly meeting of university personnel, Shipley suggested educational outreach opportunities, noting that the Shepherdstown campus' "shrinking capacity," for an adult and graduate location outside of its current location.

"(Shepherd) host(s) a population of students who are not attracted by or make use of (our) facilities," reads a document Shipley issued to faculty at the April meeting. "They are working adult students who are largely part-time students and our graduate students in selected programs. Many of these students come to us from nearby towns that are larger than Shepherdstown. ... These students are drawn to our academic reputation and quality of instruction, but do not take as much advantage of our student services aimed at the traditional undergraduate student."

"Martinsburg looks like the ideal place because of Interstate 81," said Valerie Owens, executive director of University Communications.

Should the university be able to expand in some way, shape or form, to the Martinsburg area, the new location would offer only a few classes for select programs, Shipley said. She added that 300-, 400- and graduate-level courses could be offered at the satellite center.

"It's about degree completion," Shipley said.

Also assisting in developing ideas for the potential center is Delegate John Doyle, D-Jefferson. Doyle announced last December that he wouldn't seek re-election for his seat in what has become the 67th District. His term ends December 2012.

On June 1, Doyle will begin employment with the university as a "planning officer" on the project, according to an advisory opinion issued by the West Virginia Ethics Commission.

Doyle said he sought the opinion by the commission for transfer from the Finance Committee to the Judiciary Committee due to a potential conflict of interest. The ethics commission approved the transfer.

"John is helping us gather information on how other schools have done (satellite locations)," Shipley said.

Doyle said he will look at West Liberty University's, of Wheeling, Highland Center.

"That is a model that we can use to do something similar to this," he said.

"John's been hired to investigate this and other options," Shipley said.

But, she stressed, the phase is currently "investigatory."

"The absolute closest we would offer a course or two is summer of 2013," Shipley said.

A business plan will be drafted this summer.

Shipley said so far the business and nursing departments have expressed interest in potentially expanding should a branch location be an option.

Shipley will unveil initial ideas to the Chamber of Commerce of Martinsburg and Berkeley County at its breakfast on May 25.