

President's Advisory Council Meeting

February 13th, 2019 4:00pm

Stallard Boardroom, Lancaster Building

Present: President Taylor Reveley, Jennifer Apperson, Adam Franssen (recording), Carl Harvey, David Lehr, Chuck Ross, and Robin Smith

The meeting opened with greetings and the PAC sharing the agenda with President Reveley. In order of discussion:

1. Dr. Franssen relayed that some faculty were still somewhat unclear as to why the brick color chosen for renovations of Curry and Frazer doesn't match the rest of campus.

The president shared that discussion among stakeholders from the university, community, and architects resulted in the selection of a design and color that is more welcoming to the town. There was a sense that community members in particular felt that the original look and feel of the builds was "ugly" and set apart from the town. The goal of the new design is to avoid the big, bright, and even institutional feeling dormitories in favor of a design that will convey the feeling of a freshly renovated high-rise building from a larger city.

2. Dr. Lehr asked about the next steps in developing a new Strategic Plan to replace the recently expired plan.

The plan is to create another Strategic Plan that can serve as a functional document. The flexibility and functionality of a one-page plan is something that has served the university well and the Board wishes to replicate. Discussions will begin in earnest at the March BoV meeting. Next, the April UPC meeting will likely serve as time when the Strategic Plan can be work-shopped. After that, interested campus parties will have an opportunity to comment on a draft with the intent of finalizing the Plan at the June BoV meeting for release in September.

3. Mr. Harvey asked if the President would share the Administration's thoughts on the recently released Campus Climate Survey (CCS) data.

[There was significant discussion on this important topic. These are the major points I was able to record.]

Firstly, the President appreciated that the CCS was an indicator of the things that are working well and some things that perhaps are not working as well. He then noted that there certainly would be an expectation that some things wouldn't be viewed as going well in that there is significant pressure for universities right now because of both public and political pressure from both the Left and Right. Still, this CCS is an opportunity to help Longwood welcome mainstream reasonability in our discourse.

One of the major take-away messages is that LU needs to increase the number of diverse faculty in our ranks. Students spoke clearly on this point. Dr. Lehr emphasized how important it is to better attract candidates and develop strategies to hire and retain those candidates. Further, he noted that the VPAA has talked with the Chair's Council regarding improving our hiring practices. The President rejoined that Longwood has many strengths to sell, including our higher-than-average tenured faculty percentage. Increasing communication between students and faculty, between faculty and administration, and among those groups about the importance of campus diversity is key moving forward.

On the CCS, there was a question to which students noted that not enough had been done at Longwood to support diverse groups. Dr. Franssen asked if the President or the administration found that result frustrating given what has been done at Longwood over the past few years from Town-Gown relationships to interconnections with Moton, to building statues. The president responded that no, he's not frustrated by the response. Rather, he said that we all need to appreciate how deeply troubling today's climate is for people of

color and recognize that the needs of people under threat. Rather than celebrating the distance traveled thus far, some communities are right to continue to demand faster and farther progress.

4. Dr. Apperson asked if the complete mess that is RIC politics right now might be used as a teachable moment on our campus.

In short, yes, this *could* eventually be a teachable moment. Right now, though, the President cautioned that emotions are so raw and the situations so unresolved that we would be best served to wait.

5. Dr. Smith broached the subject of campus safety and communication on campus, specifically as it related to the gunman that was present in the Longwood Village.

The President has been assured that not sending out a Campus Alert was the right thing to do. Some campuses have used the Alert system too extensively and it has been ignored. Since, in this situation, the police determined that there was not an ongoing threat, the Alert system was not the appropriate venue of communication.

That said, it is abundantly clear that our students required more timely communication regarding the incident. In that regard, changes will have to be made. Even if the message is something along the lines of, "there was a man with a gun, he has left the campus, we have no reason to believe anyone is in danger at this time," would have been better received.

As a side note, we discussed that Virginia is an Open Carry state. However, it is against LU policy to have guns carried on campus or in classrooms. If someone were to come to campus or to class with a gun, the faculty member should call the campus police and the person would be escorted out of the classroom and/or off campus.

6. We ended the meeting by letting President Reveley know that we'd like to hear his thoughts on the future of Longwood at our next meeting.

At that meeting, we'll likely discuss ways in which we can all support our changing student body. This can be done in terms of attracting students that are a good fit for Longwood, by enthusiastically thinking about how our curricula can be retooled to attract, maintain, and support students, and by developing relationships with Farmville (perhaps by bringing in more academic conferences).

The meeting ended at approximately 5pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Adam Franssen