

**PAC Meeting Via Conference Call
Friday, April 24, 2020 at 1:00 PM**

President Reveley thanked the faculty and staff for their hard work over the past several weeks. Before answering the questions below, he offered a summary about the broader context of the COVID-19 and economic crisis. He referred to the current public health and unemployment crisis as “unprecedented” and certainly a time of great uncertainty and worry. The General Assembly has decided to push back the timeline for making budget cuts until the fall. It is uncertain whether the Governor will exceed his allotted 15% budget cut in an effort to rework the state budget.

President’s Opening Remarks

The president began with some remarks regarding the “broad context” of the current situation. He said:

- *The current unemployment crisis is unprecedented, and we haven’t quite felt the “visceral impact yet.” Looking back in 20 years, we will likely see the economic fallout as the most “impactful part of the pandemic.”*
- *The geopolitical crisis, including relations with China and the instability in the European Union, is worrisome also.*
- *The president is “incredibly worried about higher education. 20 years from now we may ~~this~~ see that this pandemic fundamentally changed the nature of residential higher education.” The online universities have been trying for decades to make substantial changes in the landscape of higher education; it would be “calamitous” if the pandemic leads to that permanent shift.*
- *There is an “incredible amount of uncertainty at the state level.” The legislature has postponed making budget adjustments until the fall, which interjects uncertainty for Longwood. “By law, the Governor can cut 15% of the budget at his discretion. By putting off the cuts until the fall, it signals that the General Assembly might think 15% is not enough.”*

Financial

1. **What are the general principles/guidelines/priorities that will guide decision regarding finances? How will it be decided what will be cut?**

While the future is uncertain, President Reveley stated he hopes Longwood will not have to layoff personnel. When making budget cuts, the process will involve examining the services that are least vital (auxiliary services). If students are not able to return to campus in the fall due to COVID-19, examples of auxiliary services include housing, dining, intramurals and athletics. The President stated Academic Affairs and faculty are among the most vital services at Longwood and he hopes they will be preserved.

2. **Will we first try salary cuts/furloughs.** *Yes. At this time, the hope is to make layoffs a last resort.*
3. **How much do we have in reserves right now?** *The President stated our reserves are “comparatively ample” and will most likely stand at 10-15 million dollars by the end of the fiscal year. He also explained the reserve funds cannot be used to supplement faculty salaries. By law, the reserve funds only can be used to fund auxiliary services.*

Lee Bidwell asked the President to speak about the Endowment. *The President explained when we compare Longwood to other higher education institutions in the state, we are fifth on the list in the endowment per student ratio. At this time we have approximately \$19-20,000 per student; ODU is sixth, with \$12,000 per student. However, our Endowment cannot sustain Longwood with the anticipated economic “tsunami” that lies ahead of us. Longwood’s annual budget “has been running at about \$130-140 million.” Longwood still relies heavily on state funding and student revenue from enrollment.*

4. **When will we have a confident sense of what fall enrollment will be? David Lehr also asked the President to speak about the metrics used to forecast the impact of the anticipated economic “tsunami”.** *The President explained the deposit date has been pushed back to June 1, so Longwood will have a better idea come early summer about freshman enrollment. At this time, there is evidence suggesting we will hopefully have a meaningful number in the freshman cohort. He also stated fall registration for returning students is steady. However, he cautioned it still remains to be seen how the unemployment crisis will play out in our fall enrollment numbers.*
5. **If we have left over money from this year is it likely the Governor will give us an exception to allow us to keep it?** *The hope is we will be able to hold on to any leftover money. Per Virginia Code, we have previously been able to hold on to \$750,000 from one year to the next. The President is not certain whether that will still be an option after the state finalizes the budget.*

Lee Bidwell asked whether the President was optimistic if unemployment will decrease once the state reopens on June 10th, perhaps bringing a ray of hope for our economy. *The President stated the concern is some models are predicting COVID-19 to peak later in the summer, possibly in June, July or August. The more time people spend unemployed, the more unemployment can take on a life of its own. This may result in some jobs not bouncing back at all. The optimistic view of economists is that there will be a “V-shaped recovery, meaning that the virus led to acute unemployment followed by quick recovery. The longer Covid-19 forces lockdowns, the longer unemployment is Covid-related.*

6. **What is the timeline for determining how and when to start the fall semester?** *Hopefully by early June, we will have a stronger sense of what the fall will look like. This will be conveyed to faculty for planning purposes. The President stated “opening likely on schedule as normal is a good window,” but we might need to think of ways to modify classes so we can shift to online without too much disruption if there is a resurgence in the illness.*
 - a. **Why are there no faculty on the reopening committee? Also, why is Rob Wade or Nursing faculty not involved?** *Per the President, the current committee is not intended to represent the whole set of brains and personnel. At this time faculty can funnel their ideas through David Shoenthal as he is there to represent Academic Affairs. As the committee begins to gather more clarity on the situation, other entities such as ACC and Senate will be involved in the process.*

Academic

7. **Given that the BOV has not met (are there plans for the BOV to meet?), what is the plan for conferring tenure and promotion to that group of faculty this year? Will this happen over the summer? If not, what does that mean for this group of faculty?** *Conferral should happen this spring. As soon as the Governor has created criteria for state business to resume (face-to-face or virtual), the BOV will meet and finalize the P & T conferral. The Attorney General’s office is trying to figure out how to conduct meetings that by law must be public and still meet social distancing requirements.*
8. **If this virus is still with us in the fall (it will be), what types of accommodations will we make for both faculty and students who have prior conditions that make them more at risk for this illness?** *At this time the specifics are unknown but the President stated Longwood will strive to be equitable. If Covid-19 testing and contact tracing can be widely available, we would have a better sense of how to help faculty and students who are at risk.*

Bill Burger provided an example. In the event a faculty member is in a high-risk category, would it be reasonable to think he/she could put the course online for a period of time? *The President seemed to think this could be an option.*

Tuition Reimbursement from the Spring Semester - Chuck Ross asked if the President believes some students may be reluctant to pay full tuition in the fall if they fear a relapse in the virus? *The President stated this is a hard call. He reported there were some parents upset with the spring reimbursement but overall the reaction to the refunds was that families/students felt it was equitable.*

Lee Bidwell encouraged Longwood to be transparent with students and families regarding the refunds. Providing them with a rationale as to how the university came up with the reimbursement figure is essential.

Chuck Ross asked if the university Presidents in Virginia will coordinate efforts in regards to reopening universities in the fall. *The President stated that during normal times, competition tends to override coordination. But in this situation, there appears to be more coordination among higher education institutes within the state especially in regards to what things will look like in the fall.*

Community

9. **Is Longwood working with the Farmville community in any way to help move through this crisis? In what ways might members of the university work to help the community mitigate effects of the pandemic and economically recover after?** *Yes, Longwood is working closely with the community. In regards to the emergency response, Longwood has offered spaces on campus (Willett Hall) to accommodate a possible hospital overflow. We gave PPEs and hand sanitizer to the state and to Centra. Longwood is involved in weekly emergency response conference calls. Additionally, Longwood is working closely with Farmville Mayor, David Whitus, to keep local business updated on when Longwood plans to reopen. A silver lining is that Farmville seems to have embraced being a college town and is eager for the return of both Longwood and Hampden Sydney students in the fall.*

Lee Bidwell mentioned that Jen Cox from Longwood worked closely with community members to develop the “Farmville Cares” response to COVID-19.

Final note – Both Chuck Ross and Lee Bidwell shared many people were caught off guard by the somber tone in the President’s email a few weeks ago. Lee Bidwell shared her optimism because the jobs Longwood prepares students for are still much needed in our society; urged the President to provide realistic assessments to the Longwood community, but to note hopeful and promising developments when possible.

President’s Closing Remarks

The President noted that higher education in the North East will be hardest hit by the virus, and that area tends to get disproportionate attention in the higher education press. Because many colleges and universities in that region already were struggling financially and the fact that the area has been hardest hit with the virus means many of those institutions will be seriously affected economically.

On an optimistic note, the generation of students just starting college and below (“Gen Z”) has some wariness of technology compared to the millennial generation. This experience of having education moved online for them might sour their perspective about online education and make the residential, face-to-face, in person college experience more desirable to them.