

## **President's Advisory Council Meeting**

February 25, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Location: Stallard Boardroom

**Present:** President Reveley, Lee Bidwell, Darrell Carpenter, Eric Hodges, Lisa Kinzer, Benjamin Topham

President Reveley started by commenting on the great work of students and faculty that went into the production of Little Women.

**Faculty are grateful for...**

- **All of our amazing colleagues who ensure our safety and keep essential services running during winter weather.**

**Federal Orders and the Future**

*We appreciate your February 10 letter to the campus acknowledging the feelings of uncertainty. Everyone at Longwood is dedicated to this institution, the students, and each other. Faculty are anxious about the potential consequences for Longwood of the Presidential Executive Orders and the “[Dear Colleague](#)” letter. Recognizing that much is in flux, we have questions regarding the effect of the federal orders on institutional finances, priorities, processes, and practices.*

President Reveley started this discussion by noting four major challenges for higher education: demographic changes, public perception of higher education, current federal issues, and financial stressors tracing back to COVID. He noted that as a public institution in Virginia, LU is relatively well-positioned to meet these challenges.

With regard to demographic changes, he indicated that Virginia has been projected to experience less of a decline of college-age individuals compared to other states. He noted that early numbers for deposits for this next academic year are slightly ahead of last year at this time.

Although the public perception of higher education institutions has deteriorated in recent years, President Reveley reported that there is strong bipartisan support at the state level. Lee asked if this may change due to the election, to which President Reveley responded he is not worried about that right now.

The election and related federal issues are significant, but President Reveley mentioned Civitae as a strength for our student body. He also discussed some of the strengths of federalism that makes the United States strong and resilient.

President Reveley acknowledged the work at the state level to strengthen the financial shape of higher education institutions in Virginia. LU is in a sound financial position going forward. He pointed out that the challenges now are different than those brought by COVID. The potential financial challenges now have led to significant issues not just at small, private institutions, but also large, R1 institutions due to various issues related to funding. He stated that the LU Board of Visitors cares deeply about LU and that

what happens at some of the top institutions is not necessarily an indication of what is happening elsewhere, including LU.

### **Finances:**

- **Please explain the sources of federal funding that Longwood receives. Which of these sources are under threat by the federal orders? What percent of the budget and how many positions at Longwood are tied to federal money?**

President Reveley stated that the total federal funding is about 5-7% of the LU budget (including Pell Grants). He said that there were no Longwood positions tied directly to this funding, though federal grant funds help support some positions. Even in the unlikely case this funding was removed, LU would be in a position to respond. The situation with Pell Grants is being monitored. These are not likely to go away and any decrease in federal funding would likely be a priority for state funds to offset differences. Lee asked about pressure on state funding due to other cuts. President Reveley answered that Virginia is in a good financial position. He added that the situation regarding Medicaid would be important to monitor.

President Reveley made some additional comments about the Virginia budget. He noted that it recently passed the General Assembly but still had some work ahead. Even considering unlikely, bad scenarios (loss of federal jobs in northern Virginia, bad economy, etc.), LU is in a sound position both short- and long-term. He again referred to challenges faced at small, private institutions and large, well-known institutions and that LU is in a good position. He also expressed confidence in the system as a whole to shield LU from some of the likely political battles ahead.

### **Priorities:**

- **A priority in the 2019-2025 University Strategic Plan is, "Reflecting the Diversity of America - strong commitment to diversity of backgrounds, identities, and intellectual perspectives is crucial for our success pedagogically and civically, as is focus on faculty and staff recruitment and retention, including competitive compensation." Will the federal orders change this priority? If so, how? If not, what are the potential consequences for the university?**
- **The University Diversity Council helps facilitate this strategic goal. Will the federal orders affect the existence and work of this body? If so, how? If not, what are the potential consequences for the university?**

There is no plan to make any changes to the Strategic Plan or University Diversity Council at this time. LU will continue to move forward. Lee asked what "moving forward" means, and how that would be communicated. President Reveley said that there is work underway to create a FAQ page on the LU website to discuss these questions.

### **Processes:**

- **How are the decisions about the institutional response to the federal orders made? Who is and/or will be involved in crafting and guiding the decisions? Is there room for dialogue**

**with and input from faculty, staff, and students? How and when will information be communicated to the campus?**

President Reveley indicated that this may be different if anything was changing, but that was not the case at this time. He stated that LU would be staying the course, not making changes that we don't need to make.

**Practices:**

- **What supports will the university maintain for trans, immigrant, and minority students to protect their safety and well-being?**
- **How will the federal orders affect areas such as the WGST and RAES minors, Call me Mister program, Moton Legacy Scholarship, Office of Multicultural Affairs, and Moton Museum?**

President Reveley acknowledged these serious concerns. No changes in existing supports are planned. Lee added that faculty and staff members who are part of these targeted communities are exhausted and overwhelmed as they shoulder the most responsibility for supporting marginalized students and are experiencing personal fears as well. Lisa asked if students have voiced specific concerns, and the President said that some have reached out whereas have remained more private to avoid drawing attention to themselves. President Reveley emphasized the importance of the LU community to look out for one another as we do so well.

**Current Budget Circumstances**

*Faculty have questions about state support and the fiscal health of the university before potential federal funding losses.*

- **How does State funding for higher education in general and Longwood specifically seem to be shaping up in the General Assembly?**
- **Are there other streams of revenue at Longwood beyond E&G, auxiliary, and philanthropic money? Does the real estate foundation provide a revenue stream?**
- **How does Longwood's current budget situation compare to the same time last year? Do you foresee a need to use local funds again to meet budgetary demands this fiscal year?**
- **Has the university restored all of the promised funds to departments and organizations on campus that the administration seized during summer 2024?**
- **Will Longwood be able to support faculty raises and/or bonuses that are included in the final state budget?**

President Reveley again noted the progress of the state budget, with the awareness that there was still uncertainty about circumstances at the federal level. He stated that local funds would not be swept this year and that they would not be swept in future years. He indicated that all of the local funds seized during summer 2024 had been returned. He stated that he would love it if we were in a position to fund faculty raises and/or bonuses and that we would know more in April. He noted that the continued increase in health care costs is an important factor.

## **Follow-up on addressing building maintenance issues**

*As we noted at our last meeting, the deteriorating conditions of several academic buildings affect our ability to recruit and retain students and faculty. You stated that you said you would look into addressing these issues. We would like to follow-up on what you have learned.*

- **What are the plans for addressing the building maintenance issues in Chichester, Hiner, and Rotunda? How will the work be paid for? What is the time frame for completing repairs?**
- **What actions have been taken to improve cleaning services within campus buildings?**

Due to time, Lee suggested that an email update on building maintenance issues would be appreciated. President Reveley followed up in an email with the following information:

“These are indeed very important [issues], and work and plans are in motion. With the Rotunda, an architectural firm is under contract to trace and plan the remedy for the elusive pathway that water is taking. With Hiner and Chichester, HVAC units have (as suspected) been identified as the culprits. Cumulatively the solutions may cost a total of up to \$2 million (hopefully less), and as these are E&G buildings the state is especially involved — which can be helpful with funding. I’m right in the midst of working on the funding, which would be coming from state pools different than our operating support. Facilities and I are pushing to have things funded and fixed by the start of the fall semester, and sooner with any luck.”

## **Trust and Transparency (15 minutes)**

*Faculty trust in the administration seriously eroded last summer because the local funds sweep lacked budgetary transparency and clear communication. The combination of mistrust, poor communication, and a lack of transparency about how and why decisions are made creates conditions that foster rumors and fear. We would like to discuss how the administration can rebuild trust with faculty.*

Lee explained that the surprising sweep of local funds last summer, which occurred after repeated assurances that the university’s budget situation was strong, resulted in mistrust of the President. The climate of mistrust has fueled rumors about the fiscal strength of the university. The president categorically denied there was any truth to rumors that Longwood is experiencing financial difficulty. He further denied that he received a substantial raise and bonus last year, a time when many faculty did not receive salary increases. PAC members explained that they want to work with him to help restore trust and improve faculty morale and suggested that perhaps he consider having open forums like we did during COVID to address concerns and questions of faculty and staff. President Reveley said that he is certainly busy but always has time to meet individually with concerned faculty. Lisa suggested that individuals may fear retribution from such personalized discussions and iterated the importance of broader campus conversations. PAC members suggested that meetings about budget and other campus concerns should provide an opportunity for open dialogue, rather than be formal presentations. Faculty desire more transparency and communication from administration and opportunities to share ideas to address challenges at the University.