

Board of Visitors Meeting
Dec. 2-3, 2011
Report to Faculty

This was a quiet meeting—little drama, minimal discussion—but the stage has been set for a memorable gathering in March. I have skipped over a number of items for purposes of concision, and yet still I've managed to write a longish report. The full minutes of the meeting are available [here](#). As in my previous report, I frequently use agentless prose, with a few key exceptions, in order to decrease verbiage.

I. President's Report

President Finnegan provided a synopsis of the various acronyms under the auspices of which people across campus are hard at work—ASP, QEP, SACS, NCATE—and noted the positive impressions recent visiting agencies expressed regarding student-faculty interaction at Longwood. Members of the BOV wondered what potential problems might emerge from the impending SACS review (understanding that institutions expect to be in noncompliance in at least a few areas); the President mentioned two:

1. Insufficient number of full-time faculty
2. Ineffective assessment of academic programs

We have already made some progress in both areas in recent years, the President explained.

The following statistics were provided as part of the President's Dashboard Indicators:

- Longwood increased revenue from total credit hours in 2011 as compared to 2010 (including summer and fall numbers, an overall increase of \$1.8 million).
- Our classroom occupancy rate in 2010 (according to SCHEV) was 61.22%, slightly below the state average of 68.96%.
- Faculty workload—wait for it—has *decreased* (credits generated/per FTE faculty by college for fall 2011). Here is the breakdown:
 - CCCAS: 266 credits in 2011 vs. 294 in 2010
 - CBE: 235 credits in 2011 vs. 242 in 2010
 - CEHS: 225 credits in 2011 vs. 231 in 2010

Members of the board wondered how this had been accomplished; in response, the President pointed to the addition of new faculty members and to the recently lowered caps for a few general-education courses (e.g., ENGL 150).

- Total headcount and total first-time full-time freshman headcount have increased slightly over the past year, but total non-white headcount has decreased (698 in 2011 vs. 756 in 2010); retention has remained essentially flat.

- As tuition has increased, much of the financial burden has shifted to students and parents; parent (PLUS) loans increased by an average of \$400 between 2010 and 2011.

II. Audit

The BOV received an update on the Enterprise Risk Management program for Longwood; examples of “top university risks” include items such as

- competition from other institutions
- faculty staff morale/retention
- increased student needs

III. University Advancement

1. *Comprehensive Campaign Report.* Although fundraising is up slightly for fiscal year 2011-12, funding for the University Center lags considerably behind other areas (of a goal of \$15 million, \$2 million has been raised). Members of the board wondered “why?” In response, Dr. Bryan Rowland, Vice President for University Advancement, stressed the importance of matching “the right case to the right people” and adduced Brock Commons as exemplary in this regard.
2. *Campus Marketing Plan Update.* Representatives from CRT/tanaka updated the BOV on the effectiveness of recent marketing efforts made on Longwood’s behalf. “Academic Reputation,” they noted, is twice as important as the next most important driver for prospective students and parents, and thus recent television, computer, and radio advertisements have represented Longwood as an academically rigorous institution. Sometimes spirited discussions erupted over the course of the next hour with respect to the following questions:
 - Are the cartoon television/internet advertisements “edgy,” or mean-spirited? (e.g., Not attending Longwood results in flipping burgers—isn’t that honest, honorable work? Do we want to associate ourselves with “I’m with stupid” jokes?)
 - What will alumni think?
 - Why “why.longwood.com?” Might having a separate website result in confusion for parents and prospective students?
 - Prominence of Twitter on the Longwood homepage?

The representatives insisted that, according to their research, the campaign has been successful, but they assured members of the BOV that their questions and comments would be taken into consideration going forward.

3. *Progress Report from Hull Springs Farm Strategic Planning Task Force.* As chairperson of this task force, Mr. Otis Brown led a comprehensive presentation that underscored the

pedagogical, marketing, and economic potential of Hull Springs Farm. Interim Dean Alix Fink and Professor Pat Lust outlined the anticipated benefits to existing academic programs (e.g., Liberal Studies) and to possible new programs (e.g., Environmental Science, Environmental Education); Dean Paul Barrett explained how properly managing Wetland Mitigation Credits, educational outreach, and special-event hostings could transform Hull Springs Farm from a revenue drain into a significant revenue source. In response to a question from the BOV, Dean Barrett suggested that roughly \$2 million in preemptive capital improvements will be needed.

IV. Academic & Student Affairs

1. *Policy Revisions.* Several adjustments to current policies and procedures were proposed and approved:
 - How students who take courses within the Southside Higher Education Consortium will be charged (by the credit hour instead of by the course)
 - A more precise definition of FERPA that allows Longwood to disclose the names of students who have received awards
 - The Emergency Alert System (the new system is color coded and will communicate with the campus community in a variety of ways, depending on the assessment of risk)
 - Weapons on Campus (in order to provide an enforcement mechanism for the currently existing Weapons on Campus *policy*, a new *regulation* prohibiting possession of weapons on university property was created)
 - Revisions to the *Student Handbook* (in order to bring our Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policies into compliance with current Title IX federal statutes).
2. *Report on Fall Admissions.* As of December 1, 2011, Longwood had received 2,030 applications, the highest number ever (in the three previous years [2010-08] the total was 1,572, 1,981, and 1,795, respectively).
3. *Report on Fall Enrollment.* While our total headcount has increased over the past three years, our percentages of out-of-state, male, international, graduate, and minority students have either declined or remained flat. (The BOV was reminded that it is particularly difficult to ascertain the number of minority students because it depends entirely on self-reporting).
4. *Report on Faculty Ranks.* At the request of the BOV, the current definitions of all faculty ranks were provided. Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs Ken Perkins noted that 82% of faculty positions are filled by tenured or tenure-track professors.
5. *Report on Student Housing.* We continue to operate at 101% of current capacity.

V. Presidential Reports

1. *Report on Intercollegiate Athletics.* A number of minor NCAA violations were listed and explained. We continue to seek opportunities to market Longwood's new mascot, Elwood, and to pursue admittance into the Big South conference.
2. *Report on Real Estate Foundation and Small Business Development Activities.*
 - New policies designed to increase occupancy rates at the Longwood Bed & Breakfast were proposed and approved (unreserved rooms will now be made available to the general public within 30 days of special events such as Spring Weekend).
 - Sherri McGuire reported on the successful Small Business Development Center regional exposition held in September of 2011 (over \$13,000 raised; over 200 attendees).

VI. Administration, Finance, Facilities and Technology

1. *Review of Unaudited Fiscal Year 2011 Financial Statements*
 - Ms. Kathy Worster, Vice President for Administration and Finance, explained that financially we are "about as good as we've ever looked." Upon learning that Longwood is currently holding \$14 million in General Auxiliary reserve funds (of a required \$3 million), members of the BOV cautioned against being "too conservative," and specifically wondered how this good financial news could be used to address longstanding faculty compensation deficits. Ms. Marjorie M. Connelly, Rector of the BOV, requested that salary and tuition issues be included on the March agenda, and concluded the discussion by suggesting that it is time "to have this debate."
 - Several points of financial uncertainty were raised: What percentage of our resources will we be required to reallocate in the Governor's new budget? Might we be subject to additional budget cuts? What if the state regulates tuition increases?
2. *Review of Report on Instructional Faculty Salaries for Fiscal Year 2010-2011.* Given the previous discussion (see directly above)—and given the wide-spread agreement among members of the BOV that faculty salaries are a significant institutional problem—this report was only glanced at. The numbers are in keeping with recent such studies; the full report is available [here](#) (this takes a minute or two to load).

VII. Faculty Report. My report centered on a phrase I borrowed from a colleague: "The most important commodity for faculty at Longwood is time." You may read the full report [here](#).

VIII. Presentation by the Virginia Business Higher Education Council. Mr. John Winn, member of the Board of Directors of the Virginia Business Higher Education Council, explained to the BOV various opportunities and pitfalls facing state-funded higher education. On the one hand, he noted, the Governor has made education a priority with such initiatives as STEM and Grow by Degrees; on the other hand, education has experienced a series of unwise cuts that demonstrate the degree to which state government undervalues its return-on-investment potential. Mr. Winn urged us to continue to "make the case" for supporting education to our legislators—and to embrace opportunities to demonstrate our readiness to adapt to the needs of a changing student body and future workforce.

IX. Report from the Academic Strategic Plan Task Force. I had to step out before this presentation, but I have heard from several participants that, having been updated on progress with the ASP, members of the BOV stressed the importance of marrying specific goals in the plan to the sorts of opportunities and initiatives mentioned by Mr. Winn (see directly above).

Respectfully submitted,

Derek Taylor