

Board of Visitors Meeting

September 2013

Report to Faculty

E. Derek Taylor (filling in for Audrey Church, Faculty Representative)

This report should set a new standard for minimalism. My goal here is simply to underscore the several important points or decisions made during the course of what was in many respects an introductory meeting—new President, several new BOV members, new Staff, Student, and Alumni representatives. The minutes of the meeting (available [here](#)) provide a nicely economical synopsis of what was a refreshingly unintimidating affair; anyone who has presented to the BOV in the past surely knows what I mean. The meeting materials (available [here](#)) hold a wealth of information as well—feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Here are the things that struck me as particularly noteworthy:

1. President Reveley stressed not only Longwood's overall financial health (over \$90 million in endowment and reserves) but also its significant financial opportunities (particularly the relationship between student retention and E&G monies [*i.e.*, the side of the budget that funds things like raises for faculty and staff]).
2. We are on track in our SACS reaccreditation efforts, thanks to Virginia Kinman and a host of supporting players. As perhaps you've heard, "if it isn't documented, it didn't happen." But it was documented; and thus it did!
3. A prolonged discussion of what was un-lovingly referred to as "the Longwood shuffle" erupted—*e.g.*, the \$50 fee we heretofore charged students to file an application for degree. That fee, as Vice President for Administration and Finance Ken Copeland informed us, has finally been put out of its and our collective misery (tell your advisees—no more excuses!)
4. Students will no longer be required to apply for the right to move off campus; after two years, that option will automatically be available to them. After the motion for this change was made, discussed, and passed, the President offered his assessment of the long-term benefits of encouraging a more symbiotic relationship between "town and gown": Farmville *needs* the economic support of Longwood students; Longwood *needs* a thriving Farmville to attract and retain them.
5. As part of the administrative reorganization implemented by President Reveley, a new office of Commonwealth Relations has been created. Under the leadership of Vice President Brenda Atkins, this office will be responsible for encouraging investment from state and philanthropic sources by enhancing Longwood's profile and visibility.
6. For my part, I elected to return to a point of emphasis that emerged during the Academic Strategic Planning process a few years ago: the importance of committing as an institution to a vital "general education" program (I use scare quotes because one of the points that emerged from ASP was the desire for a new label—"Core Curriculum," perhaps). Rather

than reinvent the wheel, I essentially boiled down my comments from January, 2011 (still available [here](#) on the ASP blog, I've discovered).

7. I was unable to attend the meeting on Saturday morning, but David Lehr was kind enough to cover for me. Here is his summary:

The morning was devoted to a discussion on graduation and retention. Various topics were discussed, including: the value of a data-driven approach, the role of financial literacy of parents and students, institutional structure that may provide disincentives to graduate on time - most notably the repeat policy was discussed at length with the BOV seemingly settling on the notion that our policy is perhaps too lenient. Generally, the conversation centered for a bit on maintaining rigor and standards - something I noted most faculty will be very pleased to hear.

Respectfully submitted,

Derek