

Longwood University Planning Council (UPC)

Minutes

January 30, 2018

Present: President W. Taylor Reveley IV, Troy Austin, Xun Bian, Lee Bidwell, Rhonda Brock-Servais, Roger Byrne, Paul Chapman, Ken Copeland, Jen Cox, Larissa Ferguson, Alix Fink, Jeff Halliday, Susan Hines, Gary Honickel, Naomi Johnson, Mark Kendrick, Victoria Kindon, Virginia Kinman, Matt McGregor, Bettie Bass Mitchell, Cat Mobley, Kevin Napier, Timothy O’Keefe, Jonathan Page, Jeannine Perry, Tim Pierson, Justin Pope, Sarah Porter, Lissa Power de-Fur, Brent Roberts, Michelle Shular, Kim Wingo

Welcome

The University Planning Council (UPC) met on January 30, 2018 at 3:30PM in the Blackwell Ballroom of the Maugans Alumni Center. President Reveley called the meeting to order and welcomed all members and guests. He reflected on the university’s progress and momentum in several key areas, including a 14 percent increase in full-time faculty over the past five years, annual performance-based compensation increases, and philanthropic success, including Longwood’s largest-ever gift. He discussed the challenges of student mental health nationally and at Longwood, and the presentation later in the meeting on NSSE and the potential to make use of its data. He gave a brief financial overview, including updates on admissions and the recent action on the university’s bond rating, which he said would not negatively impact Longwood operationally and budgetarily. He expressed his excitement regarding the implementation of the new Core Curriculum, and new buildings for academics, student success and admissions. He also expressed his excitement about progress with downtown Farmville, with the new bookstore thriving and the Weyanoke Hotel set to open in the spring.

UPC Committee Updates

Technology Committee – Mark Kendrick announced that Banner 9 is going into test and they are continuing to work the “bugs out”. The biggest ongoing project is Docfinity, which will dramatically improve a wide range of processes across the university. Susan Hines discussed the new online catalog, noting the committee was on the final edits and within 10-15 days the catalog should be final. The new online catalog will be searchable and easy to use. The recruitment staff and parents council are excited.

Purchasing Committee – Cat Mobley announced that IT is having discussions on the current phone system and the need for replacing it and they are checking on the available options. Mark Kendrick added that they are looking at the different systems and costs as the current phone system is approaching end of life; it can be maintained for the next five years. The committee is researching industrial standards and looking at all options. There was discussion of further developing options for finding additional savings on costs such as office supplies, and all faculty

and staff were encouraged to contact staff who work in procurement for help of any kind in this area.

Finance Committee – Jeff Halliday expressed concerns from some faculty regarding the Moody’s rating and asking for a better understanding of the university’s reserves in order to present and update at the Faculty Senate meeting later in the week. Both President Reveley and Ken Copeland addressed the questions at hand. Ken Copeland said he disagreed with Moody’s analysis and decision but said even with the recent downgrade the university maintains a strong bond rating. He and President Reveley noted that the bond rating itself is not necessary for the university because Longwood does not issue its own debt, but was requested several years ago as a shorthand demonstration of strong financial health for SACSCOC; because the rating is still strong it continues to serve that purpose. Mr. Copeland explained that auxiliary reserves have been growing for some time, partly because of deferred maintenance and in preparation to be spent down on new construction. He said holding large reserves in cash with the Commonwealth represents a deteriorating asset class because they cannot reap investment earnings and can only be spent in limited ways. President Reveley noted that in prior decades the university has looked at reserves as an indicator of financial strength, but a number of important voices in Richmond are wary of institutions maintaining sizeable reserves because they suggest students have been overcharged. Mr. Copeland provided information on how reserves have been deployed in recent years, including \$44 million for campus construction and essential maintenance projects, and additional amounts for IT infrastructure, marketing initiatives and hosting the Vice Presidential Debate. Mr. Halliday said the AAUP would host a budget forum in the weeks ahead, with the exact date to be announced soon.

Diversity Committee – Naomi Johnson announced that she is excited about the campus climate survey that will be circulated in early February and thanked everyone for supporting the efforts of the committee. The seven sub-committees have been working on projects ranging from generating activity on campus, gaining coverage in the Farmville area through the newspaper and radio, and working on a website design along with messages and language to use. They will be working with the campus climate survey results and looking at the fall suspension and probation numbers, considering possible interventions to share with advising groups. The recruitment of faculty and staff continues as the committee drafts language for ads and working on ways to make it easier to find information about diversity at Longwood and other areas on the website. The committee plans to meet with President Reveley to talk about future directions, and continues to work on a draft of bylaws to present for review by the spring meeting.

Assessment Committee - Lee Bidwell reported the committee has worked to refine the assessment policy and would like the University Planning Council (UPC) to adopt as a draft to then go to the BOV for consideration at its March meeting. A call was made for approving the recommendation to take the Assessment Policy draft to the BOV. The call passed without opposition. Jen Cox added that the committee is working with the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research on standardizing process for those surveying larger groups.

Presentations:

Susan Hines, Wendy McMillian and Mark Kendrick gave an overview of the implementation of Docfinity. Project Management is currently working with the Registrar's Office and Admissions. Forms currently being constructed include material for HR, Financial Aid and Student Accounts.

Onie McKenzie gave an overview of the NSSE survey, which Longwood participates in on a three-year rotating schedule, and the information it provides on Longwood and the student experience, including trends over time. President Reveley encouraged those in attendance to have Onie come to departmental meetings to help share the findings.

President Reveley and Ken Copeland addressed questions from Lee Bidwell concerning whether bond ratings had been downgraded at any other institutions in the Commonwealth, and whether there is a suggested minimum amount or ratio that Virginia institutions hold in reserves. Mr. Copeland said he was not aware of other institutions since many don't need bond ratings and thus don't have them. However, he said Moody's has issued a negative report on higher education nationally and there have been a number of recent downgrades nationally. President Reveley said he believes roughly half of public institutions in Virginia have ratings and reiterated Longwood has one for purposes related to SACSCOC, not because it needs one for financial reasons. In hindsight, he says Longwood's initial A1 rating was unrealistically high given the amount of construction that was soon to begin at the time. Mr. Copeland noted the following buildings were either built or upgraded using Reserves: the Sharp and Register residence halls, Health and Fitness Center, Wheeler & Cox, and portions of Stubbs and the Dining Hall. He said Longwood had been accumulating reserves for a long time with little-to-no upkeep to the residence halls. Regarding any suggested minimum amount or ratio of reserves, President Reveley responded that different bodies in Richmond, including the General Assembly and SCHEV, have different views, with many in the General Assembly excessive reserves indicate students are being overcharged. He said the issue of reserves bears continued attention and care, but he and the Board are comfortable with the strategy of carefully deploying and managing reserve spending while continuing to build up the more flexible assets of the university endowment, which thanks to recent philanthropy now stands at roughly \$80 million. He said the university is in strong financial shape. Even as support from the Commonwealth declines in relative terms over time, it is still a meaningful source of strength to Longwood to be a public institution.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.