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## **Longwood University Planning Council (UPC)**

### **Minutes**

**January 28, 2021**

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The University Planning Council (UPC) met virtually on Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 4:00 PM. Rather than regular committee updates at this meeting, President Reveley provided a campus update regarding Covid and Q&A session from attendees.

President Reveley began with welcoming all in attendance. He announced that Prince Edward County Public Schools teachers and staff are receiving their first Covid vaccines today on campus in Stevens Hall. He thanked the Nursing department faculty and students, Lisa Mooney and the Human Resources staff, Russ Carmichael, Dave Hooper, Matt McWilliams, Victoria Kindon and Justin Pope. He reiterated that the vaccine process has been an across-campus effort and it has been applauded by state and local officials.

#### **Covid-19 Update**

President Reveley stated the second dose of Covid vaccine for Longwood faculty and staff is on track to occur the week of February 15<sup>th</sup>. He said Longwood would continue doing its part as a university for the region and broader community, and asked attendees to thank Kim Little and the rest of the Nursing faculty and students when they are encountered on campus. He said the university is currently seeing a high case count and stressed the importance of not letting our guard down at this time. Cases appear to be on a plateau at the moment but can be unpredictable. Knowing where and how the spread is occurring makes it easier to keep in check. The University and Virginia Department of Health are not aware of any transmission from student to faculty staff at this time, or any classroom transmission.

President Reveley commented that he thinks it is remarkable that faculty and staff took a temporary salary cut to help the university. Longwood went about things in a different way from other universities, colleges and corporations. He has received a lot of positive feedback on how this was handled and that it is true to the nature of Longwood. The salary savings have allowed the university to make one-time payments for expenses related to keeping campus safe. As planned, classified employees have had their full pay restored to pre-Covid levels. This is expected to happen for AP staff and faculty over the summer. He added that there are unpredictable things that could happen between now and then to halt this and that watching Covid trends was key.

Regarding whether or not the federal government is helping a lot more now President Reveley noted that things are slow and complicated. The stimulus funding that came with CARES Act 1.0 in late spring/early summer had strings attached. CARES Act 2.0 will have strings too and it is unknown whether there will be a 3.0. He stressed that large portions of funding are directed to

students. Longwood is lucky so far due to the fact there is a steady enrollment, but this is hard to predict with the unpredictable financial crisis happening around the nation and world, on top of existing demographic trends we've seen coming for some time. He stressed the one fact becoming clearer is that more people are having fewer children. Since the Great Recession of 2008, the number of children being born in America has not rebounded to pre-recession numbers. This will have continue to have a reverberating affect on American higher education. He stated the importance of continuing to prepare for this changed environment and is confident Longwood will prepare smartly and will be ready.

In regards to open positions, President Reveley stressed the importance of thinking differently going forward. When a position comes open, there needs to be real thought given regarding how best to fill it. He added it is not as though Longwood is not hiring, but instead needs to be smart and focused on health and safety considerations and going forward needs to be conscientious of funding questions.

On a happy note, President Reveley announced that he is thrilled that a Barbara Johns statue will be placed in the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol. He looks forward to the day when everyone can go visit.

### Q&A

Lee Bidwell asked how the university is dealing with the recent negative content in the Farmville Herald from a community member contending Longwood had jumped ahead in line for the vaccine. President Reveley summarized the background of Longwood's opportunity to vaccinate faculty and staff, and said Longwood is now in a position to be helpful to the broader community. He can attest that the Prince Edward County School Board, Farmville mayor and town council are very pleased and so is the state government along with the Virginia Department of Health district office. He encouraged everyone to approach this in a spirit of public service rather than being boastful.

Lee Bidwell also asked about open positions, particularly filling academic positions and if someone leaves whether the department will lose those positions. President Reveley commented that academic positions will always have a different rhythm than other positions and it is not the case that when someone transitions out that that intrinsically means that position will be eliminated. It just means to be mindful about employee headcount. He added that healthcare costs in particular have been ballooning the most, and benefit costs rise in proportion to headcount. We are not in a university hiring freeze, but this is also not a moment of abundance such as in the past.

Patti Rosenberg asked that given strain on families from the continuous pandemic, what the trends are regarding returning students – whether they stable or seeing a decline since winter break. President Reveley remarked the numbers have been pretty stable. Academic probations and suspensions have trended more or less as they did last year. Fall to spring enrollment has held pretty well and this is encouraging. The number of rising freshman applications for next fall looks satisfactory but the complexity and unpredictability of the admissions cycle is unprecedented, and the patterns and timelines this year may be different. Currently the university

is on the front end of the yield part of the cycle. Application numbers are currently solid and comparable to recent years. He believes there is reason for optimism with a lot of hard work ahead.

Naomi Johnson said she has been thinking about the community reactions to the vaccine and is excited about an opportunity for Longwood to assist the community. She asked if there is a way to reach out to the so-called lost generation from the 1960's school closures, especially since that age range of people are now eligible for the vaccine. She questioned if this could perhaps be done through the Moton Museum and if the institution has any plans to aid in some way to that group of people. President Reveley commented that this is a beautiful idea and he is eager to be helpful in any way we can and the Virginia Department of Health is happy we have the person power and deliverable capability. The VDH knows we are ready and Longwood is looking for the green light to do whatever is next.

### **Adjournment**

President Reveley thanked everyone for attending and stated he is incredibly appreciative of everyone's hard work. He announced the next UPC meeting will take place in April and will hopefully include the ordinary business of the UPC. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.