

Report from Board of Visitors Meeting, June 12, 2020

Lee Millar Bidwell, Faculty Representative to the BOV

The June meeting of the Board of Visitors was held June 12, 2020 from 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. via phone conference.

- Click here for the [meeting agenda](#)
- Click here for access to the [Board meeting materials](#)

The primary purpose of the meeting was to elect Board Officers and approve the proposed 2020-2021 budget, including tuition and fee increases. Therefore, no reports were delivered from any of the Vice-Presidents or representatives.

Roll Call, Rector's Welcome, and Consent Agenda

- All Board members were present for the meeting
- The Board voted to approve the consent agenda, noting that they would amend the Title IX policies as necessary based on the resolution of national litigation.
- Rector Hansen announced that all 3 Board members whose term had expired were reappointed by the Governor and that they were thankful for the continuity in the Board membership, particularly given the present circumstances.
- He thanked Board members, faculty, and staff for their hard work and dedication through the difficult Spring 2020 semester.

Presentation by Frances "Fran" Bradford, Deputy Secretary of Education

- The President introduced Deputy Secretary of Education, [Fran Bradford](#), to give brief remarks to the Board. Ms. Bradford began by thanking the Board, faculty, staff, and students for their hard work and resilience in Spring 2020. Her remarks touched on 3 items: COVID-19, Virginia's fiscal situation, and Equity.
 - COVID-19: Ms. Bradford noted that COVID-19 has "thrown education into uncharted waters." She said that we are a "long way from a new normal" and that higher education has to be mindful that students, faculty, and staff can be in high-risk categories for the virus and said that people's safety was of primary concern. Ms. Bradford noted that yesterday, June 11, [Governor Northam had released guidance](#) on safely reopening public and private higher education institutions in the Commonwealth. She noted that President Reveley was instrumental in shaping the guidance from the Governor and thanked him for his many hours of hard work in that endeavor. The guidance recognizes the unique dynamics of colleges and universities across Virginia. SCHEV is sending out information today (June 12, 2020) to colleges and universities to offer further direction on implementing the Governor's guidance document. All higher education institutions in Virginia are required to submit their plans for reopening to SCHEV by July 6 for approval.
 - Virginia's Fiscal Situation: Ms. Bradford noted that the massive job loss and number of businesses shutting down has had a tremendous effect on state

revenues. Currently, we are facing a budget deficit of between \$800 million and 1 billion dollars this year, and a deficit of between 1 and 1.5 billion dollars is forecast for next year. She complimented Longwood University on the choices it made for budget reductions that were designed to protect as many employees as possible. She said we should expect more challenging times to come on the “budget front.” However, she said that the Governor and General Assembly recognize that higher education is an integral part of the Commonwealth’s economy, providing over 100,000 jobs and generating over 40 billion dollars per year.

- Equity: Ms. Bradford stated that the state is working hard to address equity issues and that “college campuses are a natural and rightful place for important conversations regarding equity.”
- Ms. Bradford spoke for about 10 minutes. Rector Hansen thanked her for her remarks, particularly for noting the importance of colleges in the conversations about and solutions to address equity.
- In response to a question from President Reveley, Ms. Bradford said that the General Assembly is likely to reconvene in August. Currently, the Governor has called for reconvening the General Assembly solely to address the budget, but there is talk of expanding the session to include discussion of issues related to social justice.
- Ms. Bradford left the call at 11:30 p.m.

Annual Election of Board Officers

- All current Board officers (Rector: Eric Hansen; Vice Rector: Pia Trigiani; Secretary: Michael Evans; and Member at Large: Eileen Anderson) were re-elected.
- Click [here](#) for a list of Board of Visitors members.

President’s Report

- President Reveley offered brief remarks, thanking the Board of Visitors for their work in the spring, thanking faculty “who worked heroically to keep students engaged and flourishing,” and thanking all the Vice Presidents, who he described as a “splendid squad.”
- He noted that in these days we are dealing with “difficult matters” that involve the deaths of over 100,000 Americans to date as well as the highest unemployment since 1982.
- He said in regards to equity that he is proud that the Board of Visitors is one of the most “diverse parts of Longwood University.
- President Reveley noted the many issues that the University had to work through in the Spring of 2020:
 - Handling positive COVID-19 cases on campus;
 - Shifting to online instruction;
 - Setting up telework for employees;
 - Managing keeping students in campus housing who had to be there while simultaneously closing down most housing without spreading of infection;

- Managing refunds to students for housing and dining;
- Making decisions about commencement;
- Thinking through fiscal choices and temporary salary reductions;
- Navigating the admissions cycle without being able to bring students and families to campus;
- Currently, the institution is making decisions about how to implement state guidance for the next academic year.
- He said when the crisis began to emerge in the spring, he told his vice-presidents that the pandemic was the “worst crisis for higher education since World War II.”
- Rector Hansen said he thought the “collective sacrifice” of salary cuts was an “equitable and fair way to solve the budget problem,” and that it “shows the true character of the leadership team.”

FY20-21 Tuition & Fees and Budget Discussion

- Louise Waller, Vice-President of Administration and Finance, presented an overview of the proposed [FY20-21 budget](#) and operating plan. (See pp. 31-60 of the Board Materials for details.)
- Ms. Waller said that prior to the pandemic, she was prepared to recommend holding flat tuition. Last year the General Assembly offered tuition moderation to help institutions hold tuition constant. However, given the present circumstances it is unlikely that such funding is likely to be received from the state.
- Therefore, the proposed budget recommends a moderate increase in tuition and fees that is in line with other state colleges and universities. The proposed budget calls for a 2.88% increase in tuition, based on 30 credit hours.
- If the university receives tuition moderation from the Commonwealth, the tuition increase will be rolled back and again tuition will be frozen.
- Ms. Waller said that we will not know true enrollment for the fall until August. Forecasters have predicted a 20% drop in college enrollment for next academic year. Furthermore, the amount of state support is not yet known, nor is it known if the state will mandate further cuts to address budget shortfalls.
- She said the proposed budget is “agile and flexible and allows us to adapt to changes,” and walked the Board through the details of projected revenue and expenses as reported in the proposed *Operating Budget and Plan*. Some of the highlights she pointed out in the budget are:
 - Revenue: Expected increased revenue from tuition, using conservative enrollment estimates; an assumed 31.5 million from state support; an increase in auxiliary revenue from a 4.25% increase in housing fees and a 4% increase in dining fees; a 2.9% increase in comprehensive fees; and additional revenue generated by the Real Estate Foundation.
 - Expenses: Proposed increase in spending of \$1.2 million for Civitae; an increase of \$69,000 for raises and promotions; additional expenses for financial aid; additional expenses from bringing Curry back on line; \$1.3 million in increased

spending related to COVID-19; and increased dining costs (to improve food service for students).

- She said she is presenting a balanced budget with many uncertainties. We still are looking at other cost saving measures including: reductions in travel, a continued hiring freeze, ways to cut costs with vendors and contractors, greater energy efficiency, and housing enterprise savings. The budget will be modified as additional information becomes available.
- President Reveley noted that “we are in a climate of austerity, but we still need to continue to move forward and carry on plans, such as developing Civitae, that are critical to our mission,” which is “a delicate balancing act.”
- Rector Hansen asked how much money or what percentage of expenditures in the budget are specific to COVID-19. President Reveley said that the best estimate of hard costs is about \$1.5 million, but the soft costs, particularly related to people’s time and energy can’t be calculated.
- Stephen Gould stated that because of his work with the Small Business Development Center, he would not participate in the discussion or vote on the budget.
- Eileen Anderson commended Ms. Waller for presenting a flexible budget with the best revenue and expense estimates available currently.
- Pia Trigiani moved to accept the proposed budget; Nadine Marsh-Carter seconded the motion. The budget was approved without discussion.
- The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

