

## Report from Board of Visitors Meeting, September 13, 2024

Lisa Kinzer, Faculty Representative to the BOV

The Board of Visitors met in Stallard Boardroom, 9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

Current Board membership found [here](#).

Board materials for 9/13 meeting [click here](#).

My written report on faculty philanthropy is on p. 123

### o **Rector's Remarks**

Rector Ronald White called the meeting to order at 9:00, declaring his mission is to “drill down complex things and make them simple.” He reminded board members that everything they do is to serve the families who have entrusted their students to the university; to develop them and help them become citizen leaders. He then introduced new board members Vellie Dietrich-Hall, David Rose, Kathleen Early, and Chuck Fagan, allowing each to share a bit about themselves. The rector thanked all board members for their service and time. Dr. Larissa Smith introduced Dr. Khawaja Mamun, Dean of the College of Business and Economics, and Mr. Tim Hall introduced three new head coaches: Charlotte Clark (Men's and Women's Tennis); Dwayne Hicks (Lacrosse); and Ray Noe (Baseball). Each of the coaches shared a few words of introduction with the room. The rector concluded, “These are exciting times for Longwood Athletics; let's support them.”

Attention turned to the consent agenda, which contained amended minutes from the previous board meeting (I did not receive those edits). Brian Schmalzbach's comments regarding the Freedom of Expression policy (p. 26 of materials) prompted discussion and the consent agenda (with amendments) was unanimously approved.

### o **President's Remarks**

President Reveley began by reflecting on the impact of 9/11, how the country changed after that, and how it was good to recognize this anniversary. A more celebratory anniversary, he noted, was the 10-year relationship Longwood has had with the Moton Museum, prestigiously nominated for possible inscription on the World Heritage List.

“Last year was one of the worst years for higher education,” he continued, “even more challenging than during Covid, when all hands were on deck.” He pointed specifically to the challenges that FAFSA created, along with the delayed state budget (for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row). In the face of these challenges, he recognized the success of the Moton Museum, last year's large matriculating class, a new music building- fully funded by the state- on track for construction, our post-graduate success initiative in place, a March madness run, and the raising of 10.9 million dollars, the last of which made for the transition to a discussion of the policy for use of philanthropic dollars.

At this point the president stated the importance of being a good listener, and making things right when they are not. “Often dealing with abstractions,” the president admitted to not realizing that the value of every dollar is not the same. “What I didn't understand (until listening better) was the importance of the annual funds raised, especially at the department level. Not coming in large increments, but small, from young alumni, and they have plans associated with them for our students.” With this the president submitted a [revision of the policy](#) that had allowed for the late summer sweeping of funds from local accounts.

The rector thanked the president for acknowledging the misstep, accepting responsibility, and acting to rectify it. “It falls on the board to ensure that funds are used as allocated. [To President

Reveley] You not only understand the misstep, but you understand that it's not about how many zeros are behind the decimal, but the emotional ties behind the dollars. While the board understands that guardrails are warranted so this doesn't happen again, I want everyone to understand that the president wants to make this right."

Vellie Dietrich-Hall asked if the moved money would be transferred back. "The error was in not realizing the sentimental importance of these funds. The policy update is a step to solve the long-term aspect of this. A different step to Vellie's question; ensuring that these dollars are replenished. I don't have all the details fleshed out right now, but I am eager to see that in the months ahead. Fund raising has continued to move quite strongly this year," the president responded. "The whole amount will be replenished?" Ms. Dietrich-Hall pressed, to which the president responded, "Yes, it will." The revised policy was unanimously accepted by the board.

#### ○ **Reports from Vice Presidents**

Vice President of Student Affairs – Cameron Patterson, p. 114 of [board materials](#)

An anticipated 700 individuals will be on campus for family weekend, participating in events and activities today and tomorrow, in the backdrop of Heart of Virginia Festival. Commenting on general preparations for the new academic year Patterson said, "It's a big collaborative effort to make sure the opening week is successful." He hopes to "capture the magic" post-Covid with the energy and spirit of THE GAME. In addition to 160 student clubs and organizations, new ones are in the hopper. Some new initiatives include "Lancers Vote" working with faculty and staff. Patterson continued, "It's neat to students embracing the importance of the election and voting, make sure that their peers are locked in." He cited the debate watch party led by Dr. Eric Hodges as an important gathering of students, likely with opposing beliefs. With 168 more individuals living on campus this year, Patterson emphasized the importance of space for creating connections. He expressed gratitude that SCHEV has provided funding for an additional counselor this year, calling it a win for our students. He recognized the collaborative work of the office of Fraternity and Sorority life with admissions and the alumni association on a summer regional meet and greet aimed at helping 1<sup>st</sup> year students make connections.

Vice-rector Jeffrey Nottingham asked about campus tensions as they relate to the election. Patterson said that Student Affairs is focused on post-election climate, how to promote unity, and model that. Ricshawn Roane commented that it was remarkable that 160 people could come together to watch the debate; noting that this could have been challenging. She commended Civitae, and everyone's work towards the campus culture. Rector White added, "the beauty of it is that these students will carry that with them out into the world and it will be infectious. I'm not saying Longwood's gonna save the world, but it's going to do its part."

Vice-President of Strategic Operations – Jennifer Green, p. 106 of [board materials](#)

Jennifer Green thanked the president for trusting her in her new role and is looking forward to working towards strong enrollment and retention. She stated that the single most significant factor in retention is relationships students make on campus. Her office is fostering this through many collaborative efforts, including the coaching program, which has been tweaked this year to provide more individual interaction. She acknowledged SCHEV's support in allowing the hiring of two new student success coordinators, and pointed to the importance of the regional counselor model where counselors are attending events in high schools and communities. Green shared an email she received from one freshman's mother who had glowing things to say about the warm

welcome her son received upon his arrival. “It just feels like home,” he said. With regard to last year’s FAFSA challenges, she said, “We did something right.” Her team focused on customer service and relations-building, supporting families through the complicated admissions and financial aid process.

Ms. Dietrich-Hall asked if there are of quotas for counselors, to which Green responded affirmatively, indicating that there are goals for each counselor specific to area, and sometimes within specific disciplines. Ms. Roane pointed out that this is an example of incremental work over the years. “There will be no single thing that moves this needle, but a combination of things. It’s been a privilege to see that happen.” President Reveley contributed that retention rate (ours at 81%) is probably the most important (though not only) barometer an institution has. “If that number is high, everything must be working well.”

Vice President for Administration and Finance – Matthew McGregor, p. 86 of [board materials](#)  
Matthew MacGregor reported that summer activities included finalizing audit statements, processing student bills, and distributing financial aid. McGregor’s office’s financial planning and analyses are based on enrollment numbers. “Our operating plan projections are on target. It’s early to track expense changes, but things seem to be on target (with the budgeting changes we made this summer),” McGregor stated. He then pointed to several projects, including the SEED innovation hub (which the board members will tour later in the day); Charter Hall, the new facilities building which has a 10/23 completion date; and Wygal Replacement Music Building, which has a target Summer 2027 completion. There is a Dorrill dining hall renovation to begin this summer, funded by Aramark, with whom we’ve partnered since 1955. This project should be ready for Fall 25, but there is a contingency plan if things run late. Next week bids will come in for the donor-funded renovation of the baseball field, where artificial turf will replace the current grass. McGregor sited numerous opportunities the new turf will provide for Longwood. He recognized his team for the highly coordinated process of preparing the campus for the flip from summer conferences to the arrival of students for the academic year.

The rector commended McGregor for meeting or exceeding SWAM goals. “That doesn’t happen by accident.”

Chuck Fagan asked McGregor if retention and enrollment increases inform his budget projections, to which McGregor replied, “Now we look at previous years, and budget conservatively.”

Ricshawn Roane noted how the campus has changed over the years and wondered if a review of the Master Plan might be brought to the Board of Visitors. President Reveley offered that the Cooper Robertson master planning firm would be engaged for an update to the plan (an 18-month process).

Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs – Larissa M. Smith, p. 71 of [board materials](#)  
Larissa Smith announced the hiring of 30 new faculty members, including 20 tenure-track positions, bringing our total number of full-time faculty to 245. She was happy to report that some of these had been long-time vacancies, and our new colleagues were a nice mix of recent graduates and others coming from previous positions. She emphasized to the board that faculty are engaged with much more than their teaching loads: preparing for classes, grading, advising students, conducting research labs, supervising internships, advising clubs, hosting co-curricular events, and traveling with students. She reflected that our students become friends and

colleagues, with whom we have built powerful relationships that last. She recognized “Invest in Stem Scholars,” a cohort who this fall signed a commitment to complete their education at Longwood and go out and teach in communities in high need. A \$1.5 million grant was secured to support this work. Dr. Smith noted her pride in the way that Civitae, developed 10 years ago, is alive and responding to current day needs. Our post-graduate success initiative (the QEP) is underway, aiming to develop student plans early in their academic careers, help students design their lives, and learn how to pivot when necessary. She highlighted upcoming events at LCVA, Moton Museum, and Baliles Center at Hull Springs Farm, all of which are detailed in her written report, and she reminded everyone about the upcoming Children’s Book Festival that Longwood will host this fall.

Chuck Fagan emphasized the importance of the new cyber security post and the field in general. “Faculty are considering new curriculum opportunities in response to the field,” responded Smith.

Ricshawn Roane shared her happiness at seeing faculty receive awards at Convocation, and asked if the board might review the Civitae structure at a future meeting. President Reveley took a moment to recognize Jeannine Perry’s important work with graduate programs.

#### Director of Athletics – Tim Hall, p. 102 of [board materials](#)

Mr. Hall reiterated the significance of the new turf for the baseball field, pointing out Longwood’s advantage over other universities with grass fields that are subject to weather conditions, and how Longwood would be able to host really nice camps in the summers. 77% of student athletes made the big south presidential honor roll, he stated. In speaking about ticket sales for athletic events, he acknowledged Courtney Hodges’ office’s work which makes him confident that sales will meet and surpass our goals. There is a new initiative to promote group ticket sales, and 13 groups are already signed up.

On August 26, a new society for giving was launched – For the Blue and White Society. Funds from this account will be restricted to student-athlete well-being, and student excellence. Jeffrey Nottingham commented, “this group thing is fantastic, were we doing that last year?” Hall answered, “Yes, reactively. We recognize that people like to do things in groups.”

#### Vice President for Institutional Advancement – Courtney Hodges, p. 94 of [board materials](#)

Courtney Hodges praised Judith Campbell and her small team for the successful handling of 3,000 event requests from both internal and external clients. She went on to say that philanthropy, which attracts and keeps students at the university, is off to a strong start. Kevin Napier will be working on matching donors to academic opportunities, and Zeke Traylor will be focusing on Athletics.

Ricshawn Roane thanked Ms. Hodges for sharing the relevant upcoming dates, and wondered if she could speak a bit about planned giving. Ms. Hodges responded that these were estate gifts, often larger than the average gift, with broader parameters.

#### ○ **Reports from Representatives**

##### Alumni Association

Chris Tunstall described the association’s 3-fold mission: to create opportunities for alumni to connect over three main regions, keeping them informed and bringing them back to campus; support current students in their career preparations; and support citizen leadership on campus.

His team was actively engaging alums at the alumni award ceremony last spring; that event will be held on June 6 next year and they are now accepting nominations. They also hosted “Welcome to the city” events in other locations, including Farmville. Homecoming/Alumni Weekend has 645 registrations so far, and he believes attendance will surpass last year’s, promising to include the popular tailgate event. The Alumni Office’s work with the Career closet provides clothing for students to wear to interviews, internships, etc. They will also host Career week in October, bringing alums to campus to network and help students recognize career opportunities. Their Alumni charity challenge to bring relief to central Virginia raised \$2500 and involved a large number of alums.

### Foundation Office

Tammy Jones reported on Longwood’s \$101.4 million endowment, with a 100% increase in scholarships. Their office came in under budget, similar to past years.

### Faculty Report

I thanked the board members for their dedication, expertise, and commitment to serving as fiduciaries for Longwood University, acknowledging the significant responsibility they assume in this role. I expressed gratitude for having the opportunity to share faculty perspectives and valued their genuine interest in them. I directed them to a link to a complete list of submissions outlining faculty philanthropic contributions (and the consequences of losing said contributions) and noted the distress we felt by the recent decision to reallocate funds raised and donated for specific projects to balance the budget this summer without prior warning.

We are grateful to the president for acknowledging the miss-step of sweeping local funds, and to the board for their action in revisiting the policy that allowed that to happen. Since the writing of my initial report, the president, provost, and deans have been meeting with department chairs to begin returning funds to the swept accounts. I pointed out that the prevailing sentiment among faculty is that ALL FUNDS should be returned in order to honor the intended purposes of each account. I shared that the action taken in June on the policy, which had significant implications and was relegated to the consent agenda at a summer meeting without faculty representation or discussion, was not viewed as transparent by faculty. I continued, “At this time, departments remain uncertain about precisely where the money from these accounts went, and are concerned about the institution’s financial health if such sweeping actions were deemed necessary.

Additionally, we seek clarity on the allocation of the \$90 million (or \$45 million per year) allocated by Governor Youngkin for the VMSDEP bill and distributed by SCHEV—specifically, how much of this has been returned to Longwood. If this is still pending, we hope to be kept informed about the state’s reparations.”

I shared that faculty are concerned about rebuilding and maintaining positive relations with our donors and alumni, and that we will look to our advancement office leadership for guidance in rebuilding lost trust.

In spite of these genuine concerns, my conversations with colleagues during the first weeks of classes revealed a positive attitude and renewed commitment to our work. I reminded the board that the funds that were lost were intended to fulfill the mission of our university and provide opportunities for our students.

During the meeting, a number of board members thanked me for my report and had read the full submissions of faculty. Ricshawn Roane contributed that the board does not share the faculty’s concern for the financial health of the institution. I thanked her for her comments and shared that

while President Reveley had done a marvelous job of reporting on the long term, big picture of the university's financial state at his recent welcome, faculty are still unclear about our short-term well-being.

#### Student Government Association

Neil Miller introduced himself as the new president of the Student Government Association. Their goals this year focus on service and community. He shared that parking is an ongoing issue for students, and he foresees ongoing discussion on that topic. He described an initiative called "It's all about ME (Meaningful Engagement) which prioritizes quality over quantity of organization participation.