

Report from Board of Visitors Meeting, December 6, 2024

Lisa Kinzer, Faculty Representative to the BOV

The Board of Visitors met in Stallard Boardroom, 9:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m. Current Board membership found [here](#). Board materials for 12/6 meeting [here](#). My written report on faculty engagement with alumni is on pages 90-91.

Rector's Remarks

• Rector Ron White welcomed everyone and abandoned his prepared, written welcome in exchange for speaking from the heart, which experience he recognized to be meaningful to people. The re-opening of the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris made him think of Longwood; about perseverance and commitment. He expressed his deep gratitude for the work of all those in the room and reminded everyone that there are only 18 more shopping days until Christmas 😊

He then presented the minutes from the previous meeting and the consent agenda (page 12 of materials), which were unanimously approved by the board.

President's Remarks

Acknowledging the beauty of the rector's words, President Reveley was inspired to "warble from the heart" too, and declared how nice it was to be on the cusp of the holidays in this "weary world."

- The president touched on several "points of momentum to be grateful for," including:
 - Successful homecoming weekend
 - The endowment above \$100 million
 - Encouraging admissions numbers
 - Best fundraising fall we've had
 - Meaningful talks associated with the election, spearheaded by Pam Tracy, among others
 - SACCS reaccreditation
 - New music building on the horizon
 - Excellent season start for Longwood basketball teams
 - Moton Museum's consideration for World Heritage status
 - Barbara Johns statue to be unveiled in DC, to which he added, "The light of progress in Prince Edward County is really shining."

Reports from Vice Presidents

Vice President for Academic Affairs – Larissa Smith

Dr. Smith began her report by noting the "ancient rhythms of the closing of the fall semester:" students in the library, faculty grading, holiday tree lighting in the rotunda, student art sale in Bedford (benefiting FACES), Camerata singers caroling, and the 48th annual Holiday Dinner. She took a moment to acknowledge the hard work of David Shoenthal, Sarai Blincoe, and Pam Tracy that went towards our SACCS reaccreditation. She also recognized Liz Narehood in the Career Center, who has applied for and received over \$300k in grants which will support the QEP initiative of post-graduate success, funding internships and work-based learning opportunities. The CAPE accreditation is coming up next, and she thanked the board members for approving the new Special Education program which demonstrates Longwood's response to

the needs of the commonwealth. Also, in the College of Education, a SCHEV grant will fund a program to bring middle-schoolers to campus; with the assistance of Aaron Sims in admissions, 400 students were here for an immersion day in Education. She concluded by mentioning Longwood's broad positioning in the commonwealth (Montrass to Martinsville), from the newly expanded Balies center on the Chesapeake Bay to the Martinsville satellite campus. Vellie Dietrich-Hall sought clarification on the location of the Baliles Center, and asked about the cost of funding internship programs. Dr. Smith offered that the grant process helps reveal this information, and students are being asked to report the financial barriers they encounter. Rector White thanked everyone for their work towards the SACCS reaccreditation, comparing this multi-layered work to that of the inner workings of a clock; not always apparent at first glance.

Vice President for Administration and Finance – Matthew McGregor

Mr. McGregor thanked the board for approving the proposed increases in room and board rates, which were kept as low as possible (1.5-3.5% increase). His office has been working with Aramark to keep prices down, offering some new meal plan packages. He indicated the move to centralized procurement was a response to the state, and that ultimately it would decrease waste, provide oversight to small card purchases, and help meet SWAM goals (which Longwood has been commended for exceeding). He highlighted ongoing projects and their status (all of which can be read fully in his written report) such as Charter Hall (new facilities building), Seed Innovation Hub, refresh of Dorrill Dining Hall, and the baseball field renovation. The Cooper Robertson firm has been engaged to work into the next decade on the revision of the university's masterplan. He took a moment to recognize the many significant contributions of David Pletcher, who will be retiring from Capital Planning this year.

Board member Vellie Dietrich-Hall expressed concern about a salary deficit appearing in the Financial Overview dashboard on p. 56 of the board materials. McGregor explained that the line in question showed projected savings and indicated that it was indeed less than what was earlier projected. Ms. Dietrich-Hall was not satisfied with the explanation and asked if she might go over the spreadsheet with Mr. McGregor at a later date, perhaps accompanied by board member Chuck Fagan, who had also commented on the topic. Ms. Dietrich-Hall asked if Mr. McGregor could say how much cash was on hand at the moment, to which he replied "it's adequate."

Board member David Rose asked, "Isn't it fair to say that we [the university] ended FY24 with a strong surplus?" This question was not answered directly, to my recollection.

President Reveley voiced the importance of "everyone being on the same wavelength." The dashboard presented to the board is in a format used throughout higher education and is intended to show operating planning, according to the president.

Director of Athletics – Tim Hall

Mr. Hall was excited to share that the homecoming game was sold out for the second year in a row, and the basketball teams are off to a great start. He also highlighted the golf's team's Justin LaRue's big wins, declaring "we will see him in PGA tournaments." The soccer teams made it into the post season; the cross-country team tied for their best finish, 5th in the Big South; and women's soccer goalkeeper Sara Curtis earned Big South Goalkeeper of the Year honors. The hiring of best-selling author, John Feinstein to call basketball games brings prestige to the university, and a \$550k gift to renovate the weight room will be transformative. When asked about an update on the renovation of university travel busses, Hall says this has made a great difference and the university will be exploring a second bus renovation citing a \$100k savings by

not chartering busses for teams to travel. President Reveley added that one of the perks of being in the Big South conference is that the region is geographically compact and travel is not too far.

Vice President for Student Affairs – Cameron Patterson

“The semester is a series of multi act plays,” began Patterson. He described Octoberfest as “the same spirited event you have come to know; it fuels students to plow through mid-term.” The club and organizations dinner involved 180 groups on campus. He was pleased to see student involvement in homecoming weekend and hopes to see even more in the future. He cited twice monthly Table Talk Lunch Conversations with President Reveley and student groups such as Call me Mister, Lancer Productions, hearing about how students navigate life here at Longwood. He noted appreciation for Cheryl Steele and Pam Tracy and their work with campus election activities.

CAPS served 400 students this semester with 1200 appointments. They continue to expand offerings with single session therapy for acute issues. The Careteam provided accessibilities for over 500 students, and we now have 100 more students in Longwood housing. One BOV member asked about topics for the Tabletop discussions, were there serious concerns? Patterson replied that the topics were general in nature. Brian Schmalzbach asked if our Title IX policy supports accommodations for new moms? “Students take temporary time away and are supported,” Patterson answered.

Vice President for Institutional Advancement – Courtney Hodges

Ms. Hodges indicated that there is strong fundraising this year, “our supporters are eager to support Longwood.” She attributed this success to a successful homecoming weekend, athletic games, and donor confidence in the mission of the university. Events and Ceremonies is busy with external and internal guests; “That’s our goal,” continued Hodges. When asked about the procedure for endowed scholarships, she noted a new campaign (Family of Scholarships 2.0) where instead of an entry point of 25k over 5 years, donors can give 15k over 5 years, which will be matched if you donate, and 5k is ready to distribute to a student. She noted the importance of unrestricted dollars, due to the changing needs of a university. Vellie Dietrich-Hall commented that LYLD donors are concerned about where their money went. “The president was going to return that money. What do I tell people with concerns?” Hodges responded, “gifts are always given to the purpose they were given. We hold donor intention paramount.” Ms. Dietrich-Hall expressed that some donor amounts are small. “I hope we are not losing our credibility.” Ms. Hodges said she would be happy to revisit that with Ms. Dietrich-Hall. At this point President Reveley contributed, “We’re in good stead. There’s been plenty of campus conversation. Things are moving well. Funds are all in good order.” Other board members praised the mechanism in place on LYLD to allow patrons to choose a specific campaign for giving. “That’s what I love about LYLD. So many choices,” said Rector White, who indicated that his donation was to the library. “Give where your passion is.” Ms. Carter liked seeing the myriad of ways you can make a difference. Ms. Dietrich-Hall felt it was important to recognize that faculty are actively donating, too.

Vice-President of Strategic Operations – Jennifer Green

Dr. Green reported that applications look promising at this point in the cycle and the quality of applicants is strong. She said that students often wait to visit campus until they’ve been accepted by the university. “It’s encouraging that we’ve still seen an increase in visits in light of that.”

She praised Jason Ferguson (Ferg) for “putting himself out there, giving out his personal cell phone. He comes any time if open house dates don’t work [for families]. He’s out there greeting people. We make personal connections. Even those that don’t choose Longwood remark on this.”

Green noted that FAFSA revision is quick and should allow them to make offers earlier this year. Homecoming assessment revealed growth in participant satisfaction, and Green noted several positive quotes from attendees. In the area of retention, 80% of students are returning from year one to two; Pell students at a rate of 79%.

Kathryn Roberts asked if AI was affecting applications? “Admissions is looking at essays and cross-referencing with GPA and recommendation letters,” responded Green. The essay requirement is actually short, more of a personal statement and less susceptible to AI. The board is also curious about how faculty are coping with AI, to which Dr. Ferguson replied, “We’ve convened a task force with faculty and staff chaired by Brent Roberts and there have been professional development offerings.” A search in English has been launched for a professional writing expert who has experience with AI.

Returning to recruitment, President Reveley pointed out that the Admissions environment is tough across the country. “Nationwide, enrollment is down 8.5%, but we’re above that,” noting this is encouraging in a complicated climate. “There is just a decline of 18 year-olds. That number in VA is going to decline, but not in a sharp way.” VA offers a god bit of aid, and specifically at Longwood we are able to assist.

Reports from Representatives

Foundation Board – Tammy Bird Jones

Ms. Bird-Jones reported that the endowment is at \$101.3 million, with \$3.5 million in scholarships. Also, there was \$3.1 million in wetland sales. She added that the Foundation board has 2 new members and that 1018 endowed scholarships will provide support for students.

Alumni Board – Chris Tunstall

Mr. Tunstall highlighted a few of the board’s initiatives. They hosted two tents with raffles at Homecoming/alumni weekend, all very successful. They also supported regional events such as Welcome to the City gatherings in Richmond and Virginia Beach. The board was impressed by the involvement of alumni during career week, where over 700 current students were served.

They will be working with Athletics on a Hall of fame, and with academic faculty on work shadow programs and micro-internships. They hope to continue a series of lunches (every other month) for alumni 55 and up. 17 alums attended a recent event in Bon Air.

Vellie Dietrich-Hall asked: “How are you teaming with Academics?” Mr. Tunstall indicated that Dr. Elizabeth Narehood is closely connected (she had recently given a presentation at Faculty Senate meeting).

Faculty Representative – Lisa Kinzer

In gathering information from faculty on engagement with alumni, I was particularly struck by the amount of collaboration between alumni and freshmen that faculty are facilitating and how

that works in tandem with our QEP. I highlighted the alumni database of videos that the Psychology department has built which contains short talks from alumni on a range of topics that are indexed and can be easily accessed by faculty for use in their classes. One of the hopes of my reports is that faculty may read about what their colleagues are doing, and perhaps our work can be shared and executed more efficiently by partnering with offices, such as the alumni office.

Student Representative – Neil Miller SGA president

Mr. Miller highlighted the Graduate Student Association which provides professional development for graduate students. They are seeking additional initiatives for graduate students, tailored to their needs. They continue to seek donations for Elwood's Cabinet and address accessibility concerns. He noted the creation of 3 new organizations: an NAACP college chapter, baking club, and k-pop club. He concluded his remarks by respectfully asking board members to be mindful of approving increases in university fees and tuition, particularly how this impact students who are employed throughout their college years.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30.