

## **President's Advisory Council Meeting**

September 17, 2024, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Location: Stallard Boardroom

Present: President Reveley, Lee Bidwell, Kari Hampton, Eric Hodges, Lisa Kinzer, Benjamin Topham

### **Faculty are excited about... (5 minutes)**

#### **Welcoming new faculty**

Lee read parts of an email from a new faculty member describing the positive experience transiting to Longwood, noting interactions with individuals across campus. President Reveley highlighted the new faculty welcome reception as being a nice tradition.

#### **Welcoming back students, including a first-year class strong in size and that is ready to engage in college work**

Lisa said that her students have been completing all assignments and seemed ready to learn. It was agreed that campus felt different this year from recent years, perhaps correlating with time passing since COVID disruptions. The overlap of Family Weekend and the Heart of Virginia Festival was also mentioned as a positive event for Longwood and the Farmville community.

*Lee asked the following questions, followed by responses from President Reveley. Additional discussion as indicated.*

#### **Budget Questions (60 minutes)**

##### **Why were department budgets, both E&G and Local Funds access, dramatically cut if we are in a good financial position as has consistently been stated?**

President Reveley indicated that frugality is related to having a strong financial position. The budgets are being set conservatively on the front end with the possibility of additional funds later. He noted the strange, unsettled times, especially in this election year.

Lisa asked for examples of how the strange times affect Longwood's budget. President Reveley stated that there are lingering FAFSA issues tracing back to last year, along with questions about federal funding related to Pell grants, federal research grants, federal loans, and others. Although these issues are settled for the current year's budget, uncertainty remains for the '25 federal

budget. The state is in a good financial position to buffer some of the possible issues at the federal level. It would be a priority to add E&G money back to departments if possible.

**Where are the savings from the budget cuts and new budget system being spent?**

The conservative budget was set with conservative revenue estimates since they aren't known until after certain points of the year (add/drop, intercession, spring add/drop, etc.). A big part of the budget is the increasing cost of benefits. He noted that the state negotiates the insurance plans, which are the same for all public universities in Virginia.

**Budget cuts make it more difficult for departments to conduct their activities, such as hosting career fairs and honors banquets, and fulfilling program and university goals. How can departments provide for catered events given university policies and Aramark costs? What can be done to save on food costs amidst budget cuts?**

President Reveley will look into this issue. He mentioned that there are policies that depend on the campus building. He also pointed to inflation as a factor.

**How can the recommendations set up by the university diversity council in their five-year strategic plan be fulfilled when, for example, the Race and Ethnic Studies program budget was cut by 83% this year and the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program has yet to receive a budget after it was completely depleted?**

President Reveley was not aware of these specific cases but has a meeting already planned with Jonathan Page and JoEllen Pederson to discuss the diversity plan.

**Why can't the university budget to fund faculty raises, particularly when there is raise money for other positions?**

Two issues were discussed. The first is the scale of funds needed to give raises to over 200 full-time faculty. The other is the effort to grow the ranks of the full-time faculty. There are 25-30 more full-time faculty than there were a decade ago, which is important but also expensive. This is not a binary issue, but there are trade-offs. Philanthropy can help with this, particularly by raising funds for endowed chair positions.

Lisa asked if there were any significant savings that come from turnover, such as when a retiring faculty position is replaced by a new assistant professor. President Reveley replied this was not significant.

Kari asked about a plan for raising funds for endowed chairs. President Reveley responded that he wants this to be a focus of philanthropic work and that there are people working on it, including the initial work of determining an opening bid. He mentioned that this will lead to other discussions about awarding those positions.

**Can you please explain how the new budget model will work? How will budgets be built?**

The E&G budgets were built conservatively but reliably through the full year, in part by looking at last year's spending. This gives a clear budget instead of one that has to wait for add/drop, intercession, etc. The Local Funds are separate from E&G and can be considered a "margin for excellence" for departments for faculty travel, research, and other projects. This is different from using Love Your Longwood Day for specific projects, which could cause some issues. For instance: If a project received only part of the required funds, what is to be done with the partial funds that were raised? The goal is to provide a reliable amount that is independent of fundraising for a specific year.

Eric asked for information about the sources of Local Funds. President Reveley replied that Love Your Longwood Day (which used to be a phone bank run by students) goes along with annual giving which is ongoing. Another source is the annual yield from endowed funds. These funds are held by the Foundation. The majority of these funds go to scholarships. Other smaller chunks of the Local Funds come from revenue such as merchandise sales and camps during the summer.

**Thank you for agreeing at the Board of Visitors meeting to restore all of the local funds that were taken in June. How and when will the money be returned and how will that affect department budgets?**

President Reveley acknowledged that he made a mistake by not understanding how different funds have different purposes and sentiment attached to them. The local funds swept in June will be replenished over the course of this fiscal year, likely in phases (ideally reinstating funds partially by the end of the semester and the rest of the funds by the end of spring semester), but the details are yet to be determined. The President said we continue to have fundraising success and suggested that some of the new money raised this year will be used to backfill the money taken out of department accounts in June.

Lisa asked which funds would be replenished first and who is working on this process. President Reveley said this has started already with some of the accounts, such as those more external to Longwood (i.e., Community Music School, Longwood Life). He is working with the Provost on this. There will be no subsequent cuts on the replenished money.

**Rebuilding Donor Trust (15 minutes)**

**How are you going to communicate with donors that local annual fund money is restored and will not be taken in future?**

There are ongoing discussions and work with the advancement office. Longwood Magazine is one possible vehicle for communication. It is also important that the Alumni Association Board and the Board of Visitors understand how to respond to donors..

In this discussion, Eric asked about the funds related to the tuition of military spouses and dependents. President Reveley said these funds have been “sort of” refunded, but the distribution of these funds (by SCHEV) is unusual this year.

**Can you describe the vision for philanthropic fundraising this year and beyond? How will Love Your Longwood Day change?**

**How will donors’ freedom to donate to causes of their choice be affected by the new model?**

**Will there be a dedicated philanthropy team or will they continue to rely on faculty to raise the funds?**

Love Your Longwood Day is a source of pride and joy for many. There will be a “slight change” in how LYLD will work going forward; departments will not need to identify a specific project for donors, but will be able to point to examples of how the money is currently being used or has been used to enhance excellence. Departments still will be able to identify specific projects for donors. Lisa commented that this is different from the direction that faculty have been given in previous years and that faculty would need advice on messaging and strategy about LYLD in advance. Donors will still have unfettered rights to direct gifts.

**Staffing Questions (10 minutes)**

**Will there be a search for a Director of Assessment? How can we stay in compliance with all of the University and program accreditation and SCHEV reports with only a single person in the Assessment Office? This was all supported by a three-person office previously.**

Yes. This discussion is underway and plans are to hire this year. Hopefully, the search will begin this semester.

**What are Justin Pope’s current responsibilities now that he is on a 10-month contract? How were his responsibilities redistributed to account for his reduced time at work? How**

**many other full-time AP employees work on a 10-month contract? Was his salary changed as a result of the new work responsibilities?**

It is not unusual for AP to be on a 10-month contract. His salary was adjusted. His 10-month contract was a “temporary change;” he will be returning to a 12-month contract.

**Do full-time AP employees qualify for sabbatical? What is the policy for AP employees regarding sabbaticals?**

Sabbatical may not be the appropriate term, but the President is interested in pursuing an option to provide long standing AP employees with time away to pursue professional development and revitalize work.

*President Reveley was asked if there were questions for the committee.*

The President asked if we had sensed any tension from students related to the upcoming election. Committee members had not sensed this tension. Based on classroom observations, students seem a bit withdrawn from political discussion. This led to a discussion of the importance of teaching and modeling how to have conversations, especially related to politics and other potentially divisive topics.

President Reveley also asked the committee about AI. The committee agreed that AI is an important new tool that will require attention but is not yet creating widespread havoc in the classroom.