

## **Minutes of President's Advisory Council September 22, 2022, 3:30-5:00 p.m.**

Members Present: Virginia Lewis (Chair, Faculty Senate), Karla Collins (Vice Chair, Faculty Senate), Andrew Yeagley, Sarah Tanner-Anderson, and Lee Bidwell (Faculty Representative to Board of Visitors)

- The meeting opened with introductions. Virginia shared with the President faculty are excited about the enthusiasm of students for in-person learning, more normal teaching conditions, the hiring of the Dean of Admissions, a larger freshmen class, the US News and World Report ranked [Longwood #5 in the South Region](#), and the positive feedback from Longwood Alumni reported in the SCHEV "[Virginia Educated](#)" study of posts-college outcomes at Virginia Public Colleges and Universities.
- Virginia then outlined most of the concerns brought to PAC for this meeting related to the financial stability of the university and the sustainability of Longwood's current austerity measures.

### **Tenure-Track Faculty Lines**

- The first concern raised was that several tenure-track faculty lines remain unfilled. Virginia asked what the plan is for filling these positions. The President shared he recently met with the Provost and within the last week several searches were approved and are ready to be posted. There are 25-30 faculty coming up for tenure this year, which is a particularly large number of faculty. This suggests we are retaining faculty well. The President shared how much it means to him to have tenured full-time faculty for the future of Longwood.
- Lee expressed concern that it is difficult to sustain and grow majors when people retire if faculty lines are not replaced in departments and particularly in small programs. She asked what the calculus is for determining whether faculty positions will be replaced in a department when a position is vacated. President Reveley responded there are many variables that are considered. A balance must be maintained between enrollment in programs and having sufficient numbers of faculty to teach students and grow programs. There is no specific process used to make these decisions. Andrew expressed timelines for searches are critical when trying to hire the best candidates.

### **Reduction in Support Staff**

- Virginia shared faculty are also concerned about the decline in the number of academic administrative assistants along with other support staff and asked what plans are in place to hire additional people for these positions to effectively support faculty and students. The President replied it is a challenge in both the near-term and long-term. In the near term the Commonwealth of Virginia is attentive to the number of employees, especially classified employees. Health care costs and other benefit costs have risen dramatically, which the Commonwealth of Virginia helps support financially. In the long-term, hiring for these positions is difficult because people are not as drawn to these positions as they used to be. The skill set for administrative assistants is remarkable. It is important to find ways to make classified positions more attractive to candidates.

- The President noted some positions have transitioned to AP from classified, which also helps explain the [decline in those positions relative to AP](#). The Commonwealth of Virginia benefits for classified positions are excellent, but rigid. Getting younger candidates to appreciate the benefits of classified positions is difficult. The benefit structure for AP is more flexible.
- Lee asked if we have many posted classified positions that are unfilled. President Reveley said it depends on the position. Trade positions, for example, are posted and hard to fill. He assured us Longwood is not actively reducing classified positions as a cost-saving measure.

### **Summer Pay Delays and Errors**

- Virginia explained summer pay was delayed for over 60 faculty members and calculated incorrectly for others. Additionally, summer pay for PRISM students was paid late. She asked why this happened and what will be done to ensure it does not happen in the future.
- The President expressed disappointment for the delay and shared he did not know of this issue until it appeared on the PAC agenda. The President did some research and explained two things contributed to the delay:
  - The state budget was genuinely complicated this summer. Department Administrative Assistants submitted paperwork in a timely fashion, but Payroll was deep in the complexities of a delayed Commonwealth of Virginia budget.
  - The Cardinal HR system was not designed to accommodate the nuances of higher education (specifically special pay situations), and the transition was not smooth. The Commonwealth of Virginia is aware of this issue and is working to improve the software.
- Lee asked why the Cardinal system was problematic in the summer, but not over winter-intercession. The President said there was a confluence of factors and communication about the delay should have been more clear and direct, but said we should not see this type of delay again in the future.
- Karla pointed out some faculty still have not been paid in full for their summer work.

### **Out of State Employment**

- The President stated Longwood is not paying the back-and-forth travel for employees who choose to live out of state.

### **Building Maintenance Issues**

- Virginia explained faculty are concerned about maintenance issues in some academic buildings and asked what the plan is to address them. The President said the issues with Hiner are being addressed and the situation is improving. Andrew explained other buildings have maintenance issues, and explained the problem in Chichester will require significant expense and work to fix. In the meantime, money is spent annually to put patchwork fixes on the problem. President Reveley was not aware of the particular maintenance issue in Chichester, but said any time HVAC systems are involved it is definitely expensive and can be over a million dollars.
- Lee said less expensive maintenance issues, such as replacing the carpet in Rotunda, also need to be addressed and asked what the process is for assessing and prioritizing maintenance issues. The President said a plan was in place prior to COVID-19 to spruce up the Rotunda, and it is time to revisit that plan. However, because the building is in use year round, it is difficult to find a suitable time to temporarily take it off-line to make improvements.

- Karla and Sarah mentioned overall many buildings do not seem to be as clean as they were in the past. President Reveley said Budd Group has had difficulty hiring an adequate number of staff.

### **Search Updates**

- The President was asked to give an update on the search process for a new Vice-President for Student Affairs. He said the Board of Visitors will give thought to where to go next now that Tim Pierson has retired in late fall and is committed to ensuring continued strong leadership for Student Affairs.
- The President also was asked to clarify his previous email regarding Louise Waller transitioning out of her role as Vice-President for Finance. He said she will finish the month as a Longwood employee and continue to work with the Real Estate Foundation a bit longer. In the meantime, Matt McGregor is doing a great job during the transition. Searches to hire some key finance positions are needed.

### **President's Remarks**

- Virginia asked President Reveley if he had questions or thoughts he wanted to share with us. He shared the following [IPEDS](#) data showing Longwood is committed to full-time, tenure-track positions. Between 2012 to 2020 the number of full-time Longwood faculty is up 12-14%. In Virginia overall, the number has risen 4.7%, but for Virginia baccalaureate/master's public institutions, it has decreased 9.7%. Nationwide, the number of full-time faculty has increased 8.6% nationally, but when looking nationally at only baccalaureate/master's public institutions the number of full-time faculty have decreased 21.8%.

### **Closing**

- In summary, Virginia asked if he could see why the issues discussed today (unfilled faculty lines, reduced classified support positions, delayed summer pay, and building maintenance issues) caused concern among the faculty about the financial stability of Longwood. The President expressed that he understood that, but Longwood is financially stable. He said that as President, he must constantly balance between spending now or saving now, and currently thinks saving is most prudent. However, Commonwealth of Virginia funds and our endowment, along with our thriving graduate programs, give us strong financial footing. Philanthropic donations are strong, with more than \$10 million in contributions last year. He acknowledged it is important to maintain our focus on a strong undergraduate base.
- Lee thanked the President for continuing to engage in meetings like these with the faculty. She noted communication is a key component of faculty governance. She noted in recent years administrations at other Virginia schools have suspended the governance process, cut programs, and dismissed tenured faculty. She said faculty appreciate that he and the Board continue to engage in conversations with faculty and consider faculty input. President Reveley said he understands that, like him, faculty have the best interests of the institution at heart.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15.