

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

September 21, 2023 at 3:30pm – 5pm

Location: Stallard Boardroom

Present: Andrew Yeagley, Lee Bidwell, Haley Woznyj, Toni Sorrell, Kari Hampton, Lisa Kinzer

**Faculty are excited about:** Andrew Yeagley opened the meeting by sharing that faculty are excited about the campus feeling normal again after the pandemic, the recent convocation in the new Joan Perry Brock Center, and that the campus grounds look really nice.

- President Reveley agreed that there are good feelings on campus this semester, but there are many problems beyond Longwood that can have an effect on us.
- First, the federal budget is generally concerning. Sometimes the effects of a government shutdown are relatively minor. However, it is not clear that government leaders will be cautious in moderating the effects of a shutdown. Virginia is more exposed to the economic impact of a government shutdown because so many jobs in the Commonwealth are connected to the federal budget.
- Second, upcoming elections in the Virginia General Assembly can ultimately affect Longwood. All Senate and House of Delegate seats are on the ballot and recent redistricting creates uncertainty for the General Assembly. Higher education is not nationally seen as favorably as in the past and colleges and universities already are struggling with enrollments in these post-pandemic years.
- Longwood's total enrollment is likely going to be higher on census date than in 2019, but the distribution of graduate and undergraduate students has changed.
- The administration is making sure the financial base of the university is strong. Our Foundation funds are stronger than they were in 2019. Funding for the new music building and movement of the facilities building shows the State supports and has confidence in Longwood.
- The process of approving the state budget was historically different this year. The newly approved budget includes funding to replace some HVAC units on campus and for raises. The university is still waiting to learn the exact details of how distribution of raises will work. Faculty and AP positions usually are treated differently than other state positions. This year's budget includes funding for 2% raises across the board.
- Because the budget was approved after contracts were issued, there are ongoing discussions about how these raises will be implemented. President Reveley hopes to meet the budget's deadline of January 1. Existing contracts will need to be amended prior to that.

### **Interest in the Bicentennial Initiative (Committee?)**

**Questions Presented to President Reveley:** With our bicentennial anniversary arriving in 2039, the BOV created the bicentennial initiative at the turn of 2020. The initial "committee" was comprised of the appointed faculty, John Miller and Cainan Townsend, who then worked alongside L. Francis "Skip" Griffin, Jr., David Coles, and Theresa Clark. The original task of this group being the collection of data related to Longwood's historical legacy. Other faculty are

beginning to show interest in being a part of this bicentennial initiative and questions of how to get involved have come up. The following questions were shared with President Reveley:

The bicentennial website has not been updated with new committee members, so is the current committee still comprised of the same individuals? Can we expect the website to be updated with some of the new information? How are the committee members selected? In looking towards the current roles of faculty within this committee, is the committee still in the data collection phase of its task? Is there a way that faculty can express their interest in being a part of this committee? Will there be room for faculty to research or work in other areas of the bicentennial initiative? In looking towards scholarship opportunities, is there currently a course release for being on the committee or is the work involved in this committee expected to reach the level that a course release might be necessary?

- President Reveley said the initial committee is prioritizing collecting oral histories. Cainan, John, and David are in the midst of thinking through the next steps in the process with the President. Faculty who are interested in being involved in the Bicentennial Initiative should contact Cainan Townsend or President Reveley.
- The project will examine the history of Longwood over its 200-year history, both the “good and the bad.”
- When asked if there was a timeline established for how the project will evolve, the President said that the goal has been to leave the process unstructured and to let it unfold to allow for flexibility and new ideas.
- Alongside the research for this project, the Moton Museum is being considered by UNESCO as a World Heritage site.

### **Hiring new faculty**

- Andrew shared concerns regarding recruiting and hiring new faculty. The university would benefit from a cleaner exchange of information about faculty hiring. The primary concerns are the need for time to properly search within the academic year and difficulty successfully recruiting new faculty. He pointed out that over a dozen new hires were made within the Cook-Cole College, but only two of them were Assistant Professors. The remainder were VAP or lecturer positions. The President was asked whether this is the new norm for the university.
- President Reveley pointed out that last year 26 faculty received tenure. The percent of full-time faculty and tenure-track faculty compares favorably with other similar institutions. Several faculty left tenured positions late last academic year and there were more failed searches than usual. The administration worked hard over the summer to successfully complete searches in the College of Business and Economics. The university is not backing away from hiring tenure-track faculty.
- Like all universities, we spend money on people. About 80% of our budget is in salaries. We have to be careful about our head count. The President personally approves all position postings.

- Andrew asked if the university could create a policy and timeline for how vacant faculty lines are approved. President Reveley said we would likely come to regret an ironclad policy. The deans are talking with the Provost about these issues.
- Lee asked if there is an exit survey given to faculty to identify what issues contribute to them leaving. The President said that it is difficult to do that for practical and legal reasons. Anecdotally, salary was not a driving factor in why faculty left last year; most cited family reasons.
- The President said it is important to understand the value of benefits that are combined with salaries in the hiring process. The total compensation package needs to be clearly explained to candidates, as those are strong contributors to household income.
- Haley asked if efforts have been made to identify struggles faculty have, such as workload, before they decide to leave so they can be addressed and we can retain the employee. The President said the deans can potentially identify and address those issues.
- The President said that students seem to be in a better frame of mind since the pandemic and this might relieve stress and pressure on faculty. PAC members said that in their experience the first-year students are a bi-modal distribution of both psychological health and college skills. Addressing the needs of the students with the most difficulties, as well as teaching classes of students with vastly different abilities, is challenging.
- Andrew asked to what extent the work from the University Diversity Council and the Provost's Advisory Committee will inform faculty searches. President Reveley said that this is a good example of where good intentions can be woven in with practice. Search Committees should reach out to the Provost's Advisory Committee.
- Andrew asked: What are the plans to address: a) the low-pay that is offered for new hires (compared to other public institutions in Virginia), b) the existing pay disparities between faculty members? The President responded that the deans and chairs need to ensure the university has a competitive chance to hire quality candidates.
- Andrew asked: How is the university handling hiring of coach positions and how are we following the NCAA guidelines? How are adjustments being managed for other funds? President Reveley said that philanthropy is helping pay for coaching positions. Lee asked how giving dollars can be used to fund positions when that money fluctuates annually. The President explained that over time annual giving can be reasonably predicted and used to fund positions.

### **Concerns about house-keeping on campus**

- Andrew said the faculty are aware that the Budd group is low staffed, but we are concerned that a multitude of spaces are still being neglected. These reoccurring issues reflect poorly on Longwood to potential faculty and students that are visiting our campus spaces. How can we make sure these neglected spaces are cleaned in a regular rotation?

- The President said the Budd Group needs to be clearer in their communication of when projects will happen. He acknowledged that staffing is a challenge. The Budd Group should be commended for increasing employee pay compared to the previous contracted company. Despite that, hiring in Prince Edward County is still problematic because of the lack of affordable housing in the area. He is working with the Better Housing Coalition in Richmond to get Longwood Village transformed into affordable housing and hopes by this time next year there will be more such options locally.
- Andrew stated that with the movement of the recycling center, faculty are wondering if campus is actively recycling at the moment. The President confirmed that we are still recycling.

**President's Concluding Remarks:** The President said despite the problems on the horizon he cited at the beginning of the meeting, he is optimistic. The music building ground-breaking should be in summer of 2024. Lisa asked what will happen with the Wygal building once the new music building is on line. The President said that it depends on the structural condition of the building at that time.

The meeting concluded at 4:40 p.m.