

President's Advisory Council Meeting

April 16th, 2024 at 3:30pm – 5pm

Location: Stallard Boardroom

Faculty are excited about ... (5 minutes)

The tenor of the full faculty meeting was fantastic. It was great to hear very positive news, and the overall environment was inviting.

Faculty are very excited about the Showcase/Symposium.

It was great to see everyone on Wheeler Lawn for the solar eclipse. Many students and faculty were mingling and interacting. It would be great to see more interactions similar to these.

Campus Safety Concerns (15 minutes)

Faculty brought concerns about about campus procedures to the Senate after the January Edmond St. shooting. Faculty felt unprepared, students were equally confused, and the building safety came into question. Chief Comer and Matt McWilliams both attended the Senate meeting to address concerns that had been brought up, as well as steps that their offices were taking with regard to the incident. The faculty were pleased to see so many campus offices mobilize to make changes in the aftermath.

- New State legislation on training HB713 will mandate student training, but what will be done about faculty training? (Code Red training is currently voluntary)
 - Response: We are not at a moment to fully articulate roles for all parties (faculty, staff and students). Students come to us with a different set of expectations that need to be translated from the K-12 setting to the Longwood University environment. We need to do some kind of articulation of the plan in a way that works best for Longwood and this is a good opportunity to think that through
- Faculty are concerned that the Code Red Training does not adequately describe what actions we (faculty) are mandated to perform in an emergency. What are our responsibilities?
 - Chief Comer and Matt McWilliams did say that a short advice piece will go out in alerts (“seek shelter in locked space”), but faculty are more concerned about their larger responsibilities. Chief Comer has offered to meet with different departments and offices to work to define the best options for each building.
 - Response: Longwood University has more officers on campus and in close proximity to campus than K-12 schools do, so the hope is that situations will be resolved quickly as they arise on and around campus.

Parking Reservations Increasing (10 minutes)

Parking lot reservations are starting to happen more frequently and with little warnings. There is also a bit of fatigue here in the spring with so many different Open House events using our parking.

- Response: This issue was one that President Reveley stated he was concerned with as well. He shared that the process of reserving parking needs to be addressed, as there is currently too much ease in removing spaces. About 20-40 % of the reservations are admissions-related, which is beneficial. However, with other factors, the continuous reservation of spaces is getting out of control. The parking committee shared that parking spots close to the associated event and/or to campus tend to be most often requested. A question was asked about possibly creating a guest lot. The president agreed that a designated lot would solve what we're talking about, but it needs to be a spot that visitors can find easily, can get readily oriented to campus, and shows off campus well. The Midtown lot has been considered as a possibility, but there needs to be some beautification in that area to ensure that the path to campus is one that is attractive to visitors, prospective students, and their families and to clarify how to access buildings on campus from that location.

Students require more support (15 minutes)

Based on Lisa's report to the BOV, we seem to be accepting students whose expectations, behavior, and preparations were not supported in K-12. They are carrying over bad habits surrounding tardiness, meeting deadlines, and general communication strategies.

The issue that is being seen with students and their level of preparedness is seen across the board. Issues are being seen in ensuring that students' needs are taken into account while also ensuring that standards are upheld.

- CAPS appears to be at capacity, but is it understaffed?
 - Response: The President asked if it was just freshmen experiencing these issues, and the PAC said it's more of a widespread issue than just freshmen. The President said CAPS is doing the best it can in our current climate, but more help is needed. There has been a push by the state to provide more resources to help. The university released an app last year, Longwood Ready, that is helping to address some of the concerns about evening and overnight hours from the past. The high demand for mental health services tends to be seen nationally and is not a resource or staffing issue- it has hit universities that are resource plentiful in much the same way.
 - CAPS and ARO are currently tracking the level of success of the current services. We are also discussing the issue with peer institutions to determine needs across the board, and the resources we offer are comparable to other institutions.

- Lisa asked if there were guidelines on the number of visits a student who is seeking help can have. President Reveley stated that there is a standard of practice and there are gaps being addressed with an integrative multi-pronged approach (e.g., gaps of care in the nighttime hours). We are working to help students to be successful members of society not just to be successful academically.
- Lisa asked if certain medications can be filled through The Student Health Center. Certain medications (ex. for depression) can be refilled, but others need to be explored through other mental health providers. The Health Center can assist with continuity of care but is not able to prescribe new prescriptions.
- Lee said that the faculty rely on colleagues in other offices on campus, including CAPS, ARO, and Academic Support Services. All of these offices do a stellar job. While we know there are fiscal issues to consider, the faculty want to ensure that these offices have adequate staffing and resources to handle the increased demands for their services.
- The reduction in stigma attached to mental health and the increase in diagnoses speaks to change and to something that the university will continue to work towards. President Reveley shared that there is a lot of discussion in Richmond with regard to mental health services in higher education but there is little agreement with regard to an approach.
- Andrew talked about the difficulty in knowing the best approach to working with our diverse student body sharing examples conflicting way that faculty are addressing the variety of scenarios that are coming up. The ways shared were referenced by President Reveley as examples of how Longwood faculty are going “above and beyond”.
- President Reveley suggested that, given the scale of the issues, CAPS come to a Senate meeting, opening faculty meeting, or departmental meetings in the fall to offer some guidance/update to faculty.

Shared Access to Software (10 minutes)

Some of the software packages our departments use are getting more expensive. We have had to slowly drop many of our departmental software packages with department funds decreasing. Faculty (and some outside bodies) feel that this becomes an equity issue when some of these software programs are key to our fields and something that students exiting our programs need experience with.

- Response: President Reveley said that the state has been interested in this basic issue to ensure that statement procurement powers are helping to make sure processes like these work better.

- Some software packages that have been cut are examples of field-specific ones that employers are looking for potential candidates/graduates to have exposure to. There was a question as to if and how funds for the QEP could be utilized to best prepare students for future success as well as to keep costs low for students.
- Andrew and Toni suggested that there should be ways that Longwood can benefit from University group rates on software and electronic resources, especially when schools all need the same products. The President said he believes this is an issue he can help us get traction on.

What questions do you have for us? What additional thoughts would you like to share with us? (10 minutes)

Shared by President Reveley:

- We are now four years post-Covid, and the world has changed so much in those four years. As our seniors graduate, he wanted to acknowledge how well we all came through.
- Even in light of the difficulties with FASFA this year, the admissions cycle here at Longwood is doing well. Longwood admissions staff is doing a good job of continuing to reach out and maintain communication with prospective students. We are hopeful that financial aid packages will be able to be sent out within the next week, which is ahead of a lot of other universities.
- The world is chaotic at the moment and all of it is weighing on all of us, including our students. Longwood has created a relative oasis for students, but outside our walls, there is much uncertainty that will most likely continue through this election cycle.
- Virginia still has not passed a budget for the coming year, but it is anticipated that one will be passed before the deadline. Virginia is doing well financially and has a high financial standing among states.
- Other bills, both those passed and those that were vetoed, were discussed with regard to their impact on higher education, particularly the removal of the VCLA for prospective teachers. A conversation ensued about the difficulty of attracting and retaining students in teacher-preparatory programs when the “provisional license” option is highly utilized as a “backdoor” way into the profession. Teachers who do not have teacher education preparation often leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. Many programs are experiencing difficulty finding student-teacher mentors because teachers must be licensed and have at least three years of experience to supervise a student teacher. With so many teachers having a provisional license or being new teachers, several school systems within relatively close driving distance for students do not have enough qualified mentor teachers.