

LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS MEETING
Friday, December 4, 2020
Minutes

Call to Order

The Longwood University Board of Visitors met via conference call Friday, December 4, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 2 p.m. by Rector Eric Hansen.

Members Present:

Mr. Eric Hansen
Mrs. Eileen Anderson
Ms. Pia Trigiani

Ms. Katharine Bond (via conference call)
Mr. Michael Evans (via conference call)
Mr. Steven Gould (via conference call)
Mr. David Hallock (via conference call)
Mrs. Colleen Margiloff (via conference call)
Mrs. Nadine Marsh-Carter (via conference call)
Mr. Larry Palmer (via conference call)
Ms. Polly Raible (via conference call)
Ms. Ricshawn Adkins Roane (via conference call)
Ms. Cookie Scott (via conference call)

Also present:

President W. Taylor Reveley IV
Justin Pope, Vice President and Chief of Staff
Cameron O’Brion, University Counsel
Dr. Larissa Smith, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (via conference call)
Ms. Louise Waller, Vice President for Administration and Finance (via conference call)
Ms. Victoria Kinson, Vice President for Strategic Operations (via conference call)
Ms. Courtney Hodges, Vice President for Institutional Advancement (via conference call)
Dr. Tim Pierson, Vice President for Student Affairs (via conference call)
Dr. Lee Bidwell, Faculty Representative (via conference call)
Mr. Matt McGregor, Associate Dean of Wellness
Ms. Jennifer Fraley, Dean of Students
Ms. Jennifer Green, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management
Mr. Jonathan Page, Director of Multicultural Affairs and Title VI Coordinator
Mr. Cameron Patterson, Executive Director, Moton Museum

Dr. Naomi Johnson, Professor of Communication Studies
Dr. John Miller, Professor of English and Modern Languages
Mr. Cainan Townsend, Director of Education and Outreach, Moton Museum

The Rector welcomed the Board and commended the entire University community on its achievement this year keeping the University moving forward in the face of Covid-19. He asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Mr. Evans so moved, Mr. Gould seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

President Reveley said the challenges of 2020 have been extraordinary, and the University is exceptionally proud. He emphasized tremendous uncertainty remains regarding Covid, including state and federal financial support, as well as the overall landscape for higher education. He particularly commended students for their stalwart public health practices, and thanked the Board, the Farmville community, and the University vice presidents.

Dr. Pierson gave an overview of student response to the challenges of the year. He said the opening of Moss and Johns has made a big difference for first-year students, and the new dean of the Honors College has also brought great energy. He said results from a recent National Survey of Student Agency showed a strong sense of community, “home,” and traditions even through the course of the unusual fall. He said it was important for students to find safe ways to gather and connect, and that it was reaffirming to see students take ownership for the course of the semester. He gave an overview of the cross-campus work to preserve campus traditions safely and responsibly. Mr. Hansen repeated his commendation of students for taking their responsibilities so seriously this semester. Dr. Pierson addressed a question from Ms. Raible about demand for mental health services, which he said has been steady, with CAPS conducting meetings by Zoom.

Ms. Waller focused her remarks on the partnership with Aramark and Budd Group, and their work in partnership to assist with the University’s Covid response. She commended their commitment to professionalism and training staff, including the addition of four certified disinfection experts. Budd Group also played an essential role in support of students. Over the semester, Longwood used 1,181 gallons of sanitizer. She also commended Aramark on its adjustments to food service and dining arrangements, and helping deliver meals to students in quarantine, including in some cases off campus. Longwood benefitted from the experience, commitment and national expertise of these two partners. Mr. Hansen commended Ms. Waller on Longwood’s navigation of the financial changes of 2020.

Ms. Meadows expressed her pride in the return to competition by the basketball programs. She said this season will be a unique experience, which Longwood has already experienced with several games postponed by opponents. Longwood has been moving forward under protocols from the NCAA and Big South and in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Health. She said she was optimistic regarding the prospects for both the men’s and women’s teams on the court and very proud of both programs in terms of character development and academic success. The basketball programs recently reported Graduation Success Rates of 93 and 92 percent, respectively, and 90 percent for the department overall. She gave a brief overview regarding spring competition plans for Longwood’s other NCAA programs.

Ms. Hodges gave an overview of how the University Events and Ceremonies office worked under the leadership of Judith Campbell as part of the University Covid response, transferring their skills in hospitality and customer service to help support students in quarantine. Staff aimed to put guests at ease. Students received a packing list, a welcome letter upon arrival with phone contacts, and a live person (often Judith) they could call if unanticipated needs arose. Ultimately Longwood had 545 students in quarantine and 155 in Arc at some point in the semester, and served almost 4,000 meals. Judith's team ensured each room was stocked with clean sheets and other necessities, which ultimately served the cause of public health by ensuring students felt supported if they had to go into quarantine. Ms. Raible commended the efforts to support students during an anxious time.

Ms. Kindon gave an update on adaptations by the Admissions Office to respond to the challenges of Covid, including limitations affecting campus visits and college fairs. She said Longwood has met December benchmark goals for the incoming freshman class, with about 4600 applications in place, compared to a target of 4300. She gave an overview of programming adjustments to respond to the constraints of the fall and continue campus visits. Covid has provided an opportunity to do some new things virtually, for instance a College 101 for Parents Happy Hour. She commended the rapid growth of the Faculty Ambassadors program, with the number of volunteers tripling from 40 to about 120 thanks to the recruitment efforts of Dr. Emily Heady. She noted deposits are running ahead of last year, but said she believes it will be a challenging admissions cycle, with family finances a serious concern; clearly a national trend that Longwood cannot avoid is that low-income students are struggling noticeably to enroll in college. In response to a question about the Common Application, she indicated it was clearly the right step for Longwood. Last year's yield pool was about 43 percent from the Common App, and the number is slightly higher so far this year. It is especially useful to have in place this year with high school counselors stretched so thin.

Dr. Smith commended faculty for their exceptionally hard work, teaching under conditions that challenged even the most experienced teachers. They met challenges with creativity and determination and hard work. She also thanked the staff of the Digital Education Collaborative and the IT Services staff, who made the work of the semester possible. What lies ahead is another semester with Covid guidelines in place. Based on current enrollment, Longwood anticipates that 53 percent of undergraduate on-campus classes this spring will be fully in person. About 25 percent of courses will be fully online, mostly synchronous. About 21 percent are a combination of in-person and online. These figures will be very similar to the fall. She then gave a forward-looking overview of the upcoming SACS-COC reaccreditation process.

Mr. Pope gave an overview of the University's Covid response over the course of the semester, noting the goals were to maintain mostly in-person learning for the benefit of students, to mitigate spread and contain inevitable cases, and to protect the vulnerable in the community. He said those efforts had been successful because of the strength of Longwood's residential model and sense of community, which proved to be a great asset, and the behavior of students, who contrary to the criticism and doubts faced by college students nationally showed exceptional commitment to keeping the community safe and healthy. Longwood's priorities in its plan were enlisting student leadership, aggressive quarantine and contact tracing, and providing a

supportive environment in quarantine so students would be willing to participate. All three of these efforts were highly successful. Overall he emphasized the semester is not finished yet, let alone the challenge of the full academic year, but the results on campus show success is possible. Longwood served 545 individuals in quarantine at some point in the semester and 155 in Arc. The 116 cumulative student cases averaged about one per day, and there have been no hospitalizations. The fact that a large portion of the positives came from students already identified as contact exposed and in quarantine showed the system works.

On the employee side, there have been 9 positives, or about 1 percent of all employees, as compared to a rate of 4.3 percent in Prince Edward County altogether, 4 percent of all Virginians, and 4.3 percent nationally. There is no evidence of any cases of workplace transmission at Longwood. In pursuit of such outcomes, Longwood redesigned 288 classrooms and learning spaces, upgraded 3,000 air filters, posted 6,900 signs and notices, used 1,181 gallons of sanitizers, placed 100 Adirondack chairs for outside gatherings, and delivered 3,260 meals to students in quarantine.

Matt McGregor discussed the exceptional value and service provided by Potomac Healthcare at the University Health Center. He noted there was no evidence of transmission from faculty to students and vice versa, or in fact any transmission other than student-to-student. He noted that the UHC has acquired sufficient resources to provide peace-of-mind testing and we expect to be able to continue that over the spring. The reentry for the spring will be an important occasion to continue the precautions that have worked in the fall, and he is in close consultation with the Virginia Department of Health, which is exceptionally pleased with Longwood's approach. He emphasized treating students as adults and a part of the process has been key to success. He noted the University has closely followed evolving CDC and VDH guidance, and recent changes should make quarantine management somewhat simpler in the spring.

Jennifer Fraley reported that quarantine numbers were surprisingly low, as were compliance problems. Students had no reservations holding one another accountable and she is optimistic that will continue in the spring.

Jennifer Green gave an overview of academic support provided for students who requested scheduling adjustments, and academic support for students who were in quarantine. Fewer than 1 percent of students in quarantine and isolation were too sick to engage with academic work, and students consistently expressed appreciation for their faculty's support.

Mr. Evans asked for a motion that the Rector and the President compose a public resolution thanking the University leadership, faculty and staff for the hard work that allowed in-person learning to take place this semester, and to share the resolution publicly with the community via the Farmville Herald. Mr. Evans so moved, Mr. Hallock seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Dr. Bidwell thanked the Board for the resolution. She said faculty feel relief, pride in students for their cooperation, appreciation for those who worked behind the scenes, and thankful for the careful planning, consistent messaging and leadership. She said faculty feel relieved, and fortunate to have had the opportunity to teach face to face at least to some degree. She said that

kind of teaching is a large part of why many faculty work at Longwood. She said faculty are also exhausted by the work of adjusting to the new teaching requirements, technology and physical layout challenges. She noted faculty have completed this work while earning less this year, which she said they do not resent but was important to note to the Board.

Equity and Diversity

Cameron Patterson provided an update on the work of the Equity Action Task Force, commending the appointment of Jonathan Page as Title VI coordinator. The group has engaged with more than 30 student groups this semester, and is making progress integrating the Moton Experience into the coaching group experience for students, as set out in the original goals of the Task Force. These include 1) developing a process for addressing potential incidents of racial discrimination under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 2) developing plans for every Longwood student to engage with the Moton story and 3) planning campus conversations related to race. He gave progress reports on each, noting more than 30 academic groups engaged with Moton in the fall of 2020 despite the pandemic. He said students have engaged in a variety of campus conversations, including two town halls, and events with Police Chief Doug Mooney.

John Miller and Cainan Townsend provided an update on the work of the Bicentennial Initiative. Steps include meetings with stakeholders regarding what stories to tell, how to tell them and incorporate into pedagogy, and meeting with the Initiative's distinguished advisory board.

Dr. Naomi Johnson thanked the Board for their interest in the work of the Diversity Council, and thanked Provost Smith and President Reveley for their generosity with time and resources in supporting their work. Jonathan Page provided an update on campus survey work and described a framework called the "Full Participation Model" to ensure campus communities have an opportunity to access campus resources. He described steps including an audit of campus practices, and a literature review of nearly 200 strategic diversity plans across higher education as part of the develop of a Diversity Strategic Plan. He also described the work of the new Multicultural Student Advisory Committee to solicit feedback from underrepresented students, who he said frequently do not feel their voices are adequately heard. He said much of the work this semester, including the outreach of the Task Force and the opening of the Clark House, focuses on that important work of making sure students feel welcomed and heard.

Mr. Evans and Mrs. Marsh-Carter commended the group for the work they have accomplished and the careful planning they have undertaken.

President Reveley concluded the meeting with a final word of thanks and appreciation for the work of persevering through the semester. Mr. Hansen also reiterated his appreciation for how hard faculty, staff and administration have worked to keep the campus a safe and vibrant learning community.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.