

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA  
BOARD OF VISITORS AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

BOARD MEETING: April 2, 2005

COMMITTEE: Full Board

AGENDA ITEM: Policy Discussion on Institutional Brand

BACKGROUND: To be successful in this campaign, the University must develop a clearly defined brand. "Brand," in this sense, is the special relationship and bond forged with a potential donor that comprises physical attributes, values and perceptions of the institution. The University's brand must inspire the loyalty of current and potential benefactors. With a well-defined brand, the University will be better able to appeal to the values of its donors and to stand out in the barrage of messages that alumni and friends receive every day. The University's development and public affairs operation is now engaged in an effort to develop an effective brand strategy. This work has reached an important juncture.

This past fall, the deans joined forces to craft a brand message proposition that expresses their view of the University's unique position in higher education and their aspirations for the University's future. Subsequently, a focus-group session was conducted with the Campaign Executive Committee to test a series of statements of the University's core values to determine which are the most believable, differentiating, and compelling. These exercises built on years of discussions that were held with internal and external constituencies on the University's defining characteristics, including the Virginia 2020 and Envision sessions.

DISCUSSION: Combining the results of these efforts, the development and public affairs leadership has drafted a brand message statement on the University's unique mission and distinctive character. From this statement, a set of key funding priorities were developed. Appendix A includes the brand message statement and the funding priorities.

Board members will be asked to respond to the statement and to consider and endorse the funding priorities that support it. The results of the discussion will provide vital input into the branding process.

Mr. Sweeney will introduce the session and its facilitator, Ms. Gretchen Gehrett from G2 Marketing. A guide that outlines and describes the plan for the discussion is attached as Appendix B.

Ms. Gehrett was very effective in leading a similar discussion with the Campaign Executive Committee in January. She brings a wealth of experience and expertise in qualitative market research, specifically in working with focus groups on positioning, branding concepts, and marketing issues. As a qualitative researcher, Ms. Gehrett draws on extensive training with the acclaimed RIVA Institute as well as her own two decades of experience in conducting and applying qualitative research. Ms. Gehrett was Vice President of Advertising and Communications for MCI, where she launched the highly successful MCI 5-cent Sundays and 5-cent Everyday advertising campaigns, building double the brand awareness for half the price competitors were spending. Previously, she was Vice President of Consumer Marketing at the Chase Manhattan Bank, where her team was one of the first to launch the mileage partner programs that now rank among the most effective marketing programs. She holds an MBA from Cornell.



# **APPENDIX A**

## Appendix A

### Brand Message Statement

#### Positioning Principles

- 1) The University of Virginia was created by Thomas Jefferson to establish a new ideal of higher education in America.
  - 2) As it has evolved from Jefferson's founding vision, the University has developed an extraordinary capacity to cultivate leadership, both among its students and its faculty.
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#### Positioning Concept

Thomas Jefferson created the University of Virginia to nurture the principles of the Enlightenment in America and to uphold a young democracy. The University is unique in the United States as a major public research institution born of this hopeful founding vision. From this vision has evolved an academic community uncommon in its capacity to produce outstanding leaders. The University of Virginia will carry this vision into the twenty-first century and will fulfill it in the following ways:

- I. By its unparalleled dedication to the student experience and to cultivating leadership, character, and service
  - o By integrating ethics, honor, integrity, and civility into all aspects of institutional life
  - o By fostering a culture of student-faculty interaction inspired by the ideal of Jefferson's Academical Village
  - o By following Jefferson's dictate to give all capable students, "from the richest to the poorest," the opportunity to benefit from the University experience
- II. By emphasizing the public value of research in all its forms, from medicine and science to the humanities and the study of society to the pioneering work of its professional schools
- III. By leveraging its unique strengths, including its architecture, its history, its people, its libraries, and its programs, to become the foremost institution for the study of America, its public life, and its place in the world
- IV. By embracing the broadest meanings of its public mission: to mold character, to educate citizens of the Commonwealth and the nation, to further the common prosperity, both socially and economically, and to advance strategic opportunities at home and around the world.

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1  
Least  
Compelling

2

3

4

5  
Most  
Compelling

## Funding Priorities

To become the university that provides an outstanding student experience, hosts a robust research environment, is the foremost institution for the study of America, and fulfills the broadest meaning of its public mission, funding priorities must be established.

### **I. Unparalleled dedication to the student experience and to cultivating leadership, character, and service**

- A. Scholarship and fellowship support (AccessUVA, Jefferson Scholars Program, Ridley Scholars Program, school-based scholarships and fellowships)
- B. Curricular innovations across schools and programs (Law and Business Program, Commerce and Engineering Program)
- C. Increased support for undergraduate research
- D. Diversity initiatives (in schools and programs and University-wide)
- E. More opportunities and funding for study abroad and real-world learning experiences
- F. Advising and counseling services, such as programs in the Women's Center and the Office of African-American Affairs, and the Faculty Advising Fellows program in the College
- G. New academic, athletics, and arts facilities that benefit students and promote student-faculty interaction
- H. Programs that integrate ethics, honor, and civility into all aspects of institutional life
- I. Endowed professorships and other new faculty resources that allow for smaller class sizes and interdisciplinary teaching

**II. Emphasizing the public value of research in all its forms, from medicine and science to the humanities and the study of society to the pioneering work of its professional schools**

- A. Major science initiatives, including the Virginia 2020 institutes and FEST (Funding Excellence in Science and Technology, seed funds for research)
- B. The Shannon Center for Advanced Studies, endowed professorships, and other programs aimed at recruiting and retaining gifted scholars
- C. Graduate fellowship support
- D. New research facilities in the Health System, Engineering, Arts and Sciences, Nursing, other areas
- E. New technology in the Library, in schools and programs, and across disciplines

**III. Leveraging its unique strengths, including its architecture, its history, its people, its libraries, and its programs, to become the foremost institution for the study of America, its public life, and its place in the world**

A. Increased funding for the Center for Politics, the Miller Center of Public Affairs, the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership, the Woodson Institute for Afro-American and African Studies, and other programs that focus on politics, government, public policy, history, and related topics

B. Preservation and interpretation of the University's historic buildings

C. Library collections and support

D. Digital centers, such as the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities and the Virginia Center for Digital History

E. New history building for the South Lawn project and other facilities for teaching and research

**IV. Embracing the broadest meanings of its public mission: to mold character, to educate citizens of the Commonwealth and the nation, to further the common prosperity, both socially and economically, and to advance strategic opportunities at home and around the world.**

A. New medical facilities, such as the Children's Hospital building and the Clinical Cancer Center

B. Support for health-care priorities in specific areas, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, neuroscience, children's health, and global health

C. Translational medical research that converts lab discoveries into new treatments and cures

D. K-12 initiatives, such as Teachers for a New Era, programs for at-risk children and youth, research on educational technology, and the Darden-Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education

E. Endowment support for the School of Continuing and Professional Studies

F. School-based public service programs

G. Programs that address environmental issues, such as the Institute for Environmental Negotiation, Center for Regional Environmental Studies, and the Law School's Center for Environmental Studies

H. Support for the University's College at Wise

# **Appendix B**

## Appendix B

**University of Virginia**  
**Board of Visitors Meeting**  
**April 2, 2005**  
**Discussion Guide**

### **Meeting Purpose**

The University of Virginia is embarking on a \$3 billion capital campaign. As part of the preparation for this campaign, the University is developing a clearly defined brand to inspire the loyalty of current and potential benefactors. In this facilitated discussion with the Board of Visitors, we will solicit reactions to a potential brand positioning concept to identify elements that reflect the vision of the Board and that are compelling.

We will discuss the funding priorities required for the University to achieve the vision described in the concept. Lastly, we will begin to explore the level of overall support for the Campaign as articulated by the brand positioning concept and the highest funding priorities. The objectives are to:

- Explore the overall positioning concept to gauge the level of support and to find the elements that are most compelling and why
- Explore the potential funding priorities required to achieve the proposed brand vision
- Explore the level of support for the Campaign as articulated by the brand positioning concept plus the top funding priorities.

### **Roadmap of Planned Activities**

<b>Category of Information to be Covered</b>	<b>Approximate Time Allotted</b>
Introductions	5 minutes
Issue A: Brand Message Statement	30 minutes
Issue B: Potential Funding Priorities	45 minutes
Issue C: Compelling Case for the Campaign	10 minutes
Total Time Allotted	1 ½ hours

### **Issue A: Brand Message Statement** [30 minutes]

Board members will be asked to read the statement, to circle words, phrases or paragraphs they find appealing and compelling, and to put a line through words, phrases or paragraphs that need to be improved. They will then circle a number that represents how compelling this brand message statement is overall. 5 is the highest, 1 is the lowest.

Board members will be asked if the statement reflects their vision of what the University could become. Other questions:

- Is this compelling? Is it exciting? Does it have magic?
- Is it believable? Achievable?
- Is it differentiating?
- What values and outcomes are most motivating?
- How could this be improved to make it more compelling?
- What words, phrases or paragraphs are crossed-out?

### **Issue B: Potential Funding Priorities** [45 minutes]

To become the University that provides an outstanding student experience, hosts a robust research environment, is the foremost institution for the study of America, and fulfills the broadest meaning of its public mission, funding priorities must be established.

Board members will receive a list of funding opportunities for each of these four key areas. They will be asked to read the list and to circle the funding opportunities they feel are the most important.

We will seek consensus on the top priorities in each of the four key areas. For funding opportunities that are not included among the top choices, we will try to determine what would make these opportunities more compelling. More information? A different way of articulating this funding opportunity?

### **Issue C: Building a Compelling Case for the Campaign** [10 minutes]

For each of the key areas, a flipchart will be prepared with the top funding priorities listed.

Combining the brand message statement discussed earlier plus these funding priorities, does this vision for the University's future build a compelling case for the Campaign?

Key questions include:

- Will this appeal to significant donors?
- What needs to be added?
- Does it have the power to “get people out of their seats”?