MEMORANDUM

TO: The Committee on The University of Virginia’s College at Wise:

Don R. Pippin, Chair
Alan A. Diamonstein
G. Slaughter Fitz-Hugh, Jr.
W. Heywood Fralin
Gordon F. Rainey, Jr.,
Thomas F. Farrell, II, Ex Officio

and

The Remaining Members of the Board:

A. Macdonald Caputo Lewis F. Payne
Susan Y. Dorsey Warren M. Thompson
Glynn D. Key E. Darracott Vaughan, Jr., M.D.
Mark J. Kington Georgia M. Willis
Vincent J. Mastracco, Jr. John O. Wynne
Catherine S. Neale

FROM: Alexander G. Gilliam, Jr.

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Committee on The University of Virginia’s College at Wise Meeting on September 26, 2005

The Committee of the Board of Visitors on The University of Virginia’s College at Wise met, in Open Session, at the C. Bascom Slemp Student Center at the College on Monday, September 26, 2005. The Committee traveled in two aircraft and were met at the Lonesome Pine Airport at Wise at 9:00 a.m. by the Chair, Mr. Pippin, the Chancellor, Mr. Prior, the Chancellor Emeritus, Mr. Smiddy, and officials of the College. The Committee toured the campus by bus and on foot for an hour.

The meeting of the Committee began at 10:00 a.m. with the Chair, Don R. Pippin, presiding. Alan A. Diamonstein, G. Slaughter Fitz-Hugh, Jr., W. Heywood Fralin, Gordon F. Rainey, Jr., and Thomas F. Farrell, II, Rector, were present.
Ms. Georgia Willis Fauber and Ms. Catherine S. Neale also were present; A. Macdonald Caputo participated by telephone.

Present as well were John T. Casteen, III, Leonard W. Sandridge, David J. Prior, Alexander G. Gilliam, Jr., David Neuman, Joseph C. Smiddy, James M. Gott, Gilmer W. Blackburn, Russell D. Necessary, Ms. Ruby Rogers, Ms. Marcia A. Gilliam, Sim Ewing, Don Green, Gary W. Juhan, Jim Knight, Montgomery R. Spenilla and Mr. and Mrs. Ernest H. Ern.


After calling the meeting to order and welcoming the Committee to the College, the Chair asked Mr. James Gott, Chair of the Wise Board, to introduce Mr. Prior, the new Chancellor of the College.

REMARKS BY THE CHANCELLOR

The Chancellor took as the basis for his brief remarks, the goals for The University of Virginia’s College at Wise as presented and agreed upon at the Board Retreat in July, and approved by him.

The goals are (1) New Staff, (2) New Dormitory, (3) New Degree Program, (4) New Land, (5) New Convocation Center, and (6) Diversity.

New Staff is defined as adding new classified and general administrative positions to assure high quality services, to bring staffing levels on par with those at peer institutions, and to meet state standards and audit requirements.

The second goal calls for the development of plans and funding to accommodate one half of the student body, along with additional dining facilities for all students.

The goal of a new degree program is consistent with the College’s commitment to work force development in Southwest Virginia. The new program would be in software engineering.

It is important for the College to acquire adjacent properties both to create an attractive environment surrounding the College and to provide for future expansion.

The fifth goal is aimed at acquiring planning funds for a convocation center.
The final goal is to improve diversity in the student body and to sustain an inclusive academic community.

REPORTS:

The Chair called on members of the administration at Wise, as well as Members of the Wise Board, to report on a variety of topics of interest involving the College.

Diversity - Ms. Ruby Rogers, a Member of the Wise Board, spoke to questions of diversity at the College, which has employed a number of strategies to encourage diverse enrollment. In 1995, she said, 5% of the freshman class identified themselves as being minorities; this fall, the figure is 17%. The College’s efforts at retention are increasingly successful: in 1995, 4.6% of the total student body identified themselves as minorities; this fall, the figure is 10%. The number of international students has grown as well - from 0 in 1995 to 13 this fall.

Ms. Rogers then outlined various methods the College is using to increase the diversity of its student body and faculty.

Enrollment - Mr. Necessary, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, told the Committee that total enrollment this fall stands at 1,904 students, well ahead of the College’s goal of having 2,000 students by 2010. The strong relationship between the College and the University is perhaps the strongest factor in this success.

This fall, Mr. Necessary said, both the freshman and transfer classes were the most talented in the College’s history, with the highest average SAT score, the highest grade point average and the strongest class rankings. As for geographic diversity, 9% of the first year class comes from eleven states outside Virginia; 42% of the class comes from outside far Southwest Virginia and 15% of the transfer class comes from six states (outside Virginia) and four countries (outside the United States). The 2003 freshman retention rate was 77.1%, the highest in the College’s history; the mid year freshman retention rate for 2004 was 96.5%, also the highest in the history of the College.

Some 80% of the students at Wise qualify for need based financial aid, and the College has the highest percentage of students receiving financial aid in Virginia. Nonetheless, Wise students, on average, graduate with the lowest student loan debt in the country for liberal arts colleges.
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Campaign - Ms. Marcia Adams Gilliam, Member of the Wise Board, reported to the Committee on the College’s campaign, “Fulfilling the Dream,” of which she is co-chair (the other co-chair is Ms. Hunter Smith of Charlottesville).

The Wise campaign is in its silent phase and will follow the timeline and general guidelines of the University’s campaign. It also makes use of the University’s gift accounting office and prospect management system. And, she noted, Mr. Sweeney has been very helpful in Wise’s fund-raising efforts.

A campaign cabinet has been organized of prominent citizens of Southwest Virginia and beyond, and it has held two meetings. The cabinet will meet again in January and at its meeting next May, it plans to establish the campaign goal.

Ms. Gilliam said the campaign will include capital projects, the need to build the endowment, and funds for current operations. She thought scholarships will continue to be of great interest to donors; other possible needs to be included in the campaign are professorships, athletics, foreign study, student research, theatre and fine arts space, recreational space and a new student dining hall.

Finance - Mr. Ewing, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Government Relations, told the Committee that the College’s total operating budget for Fiscal Year 2006 is $26,553,567, the E&G portion of that being $16,184,824. The College this year had a 25% increase in general fund appropriations, as compared with the general average in the state of 21%. The appropriation of general fund dollars over the original recommendation of the Governor was 12%, the only institution with a double digit increase.

Academic Affairs - Mr. Blackburn, Senior Vice Chancellor and Provost, told the Committee that the College’s core curriculum defines its academic program, a program in the liberal arts tradition that will train students to think clearly, to articulate their ideas, and to make sound judgments about matters of importance in their lives.

He reminded the Committee that this year, the College will face both the reaffirmation visit of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools - which accredits both the College and the University - and the Six-Year Restructuring Plan of the Commonwealth.
Student Life - Mr. Juhan, Vice Chancellor for Administration, reported that beginning next fall – with the opening of the new dormitory – the College will require first-year students to live on the campus. The present occupancy rate in College housing exceeds 100%, as it has done for several years. With Culbertson Hall, the new dormitory, the College will be able to provide housing for 700 students – the goal is to provide 900-1,000 beds. To do this, probably two additional dormitories will be needed.

Much emphasis is placed on student activities, intramurals and outdoor recreation, to the extent that last year there were 12,468 participants; 48% of the total student body last year took part in the intramural sports program.

Development and College Relations - Mr. Knight, Vice Chancellor for Development and College Relations, explained to the Committee that his office is responsible for fund-raising, special events, alumni relations, community and public relations, media, government grants, the College magazine, the campaign and two foundations. He described the College’s 50th anniversary celebrations over the past year – celebrations which will conclude, he said, with the dedication of the Jefferson statue after the Committee’s meeting.

In the fiscal year which ended June 30th, the College raised $4.6 million in private funds. Scholarship funding continues to be the most popular form of gift support; thirteen new endowed scholarships were created during the past fiscal year, and this fall, more than 600 students – or a third of the student body – have their educational costs underwritten by private scholarships.

The College is supported by two 501(c)3 College-related foundations: The Alumni Association, founded in 1969, and the College Foundation, founded in 1992. Both foundations use the University’s gift accounting and prospect management systems.

Buildings and Grounds - Mr. Juhan gave a brief report. Buildings and Grounds staff consists of 35 employees and has, as Mr. Juhan put it, the “capability from a skill level to do anything – but are limited only by time and manpower.”

Given the topography of the College, the ADA accessibility requirements are a challenge, but the opening of the Student Center with its elevator and outside exits at different levels, has helped considerably.

The campus has been transformed over the past few years and its beautification has helped to recruit and retain students.
There is now a sense of place, as is evidenced by the number of students who have chosen to return to the College to have their weddings on the grounds.

**Napoleon Hill Foundation** - Mr. Green, Member of the Wise Board and Executive Director of the Napoleon Hill Foundation, spoke to the Committee about the Foundation, a 503(c) organization founded in 1962 by Dr. Napoleon Hill.

Napoleon Hill grew up in Wise County and left to attend the Georgetown University Law School. He was an advisor to Presidents and a journalist, and he wrote motivational books, the best known of which being *Think and Grow Rich*. His Foundation, which has been located in Wise for the last five years, primarily supports scholarships, prison work and literacy.

**Athletics** - Mr. Spenilla, the Director of Athletics, told the Committee that the motto of his department is “A Commitment to Excellence.” Since 2003, teams from the College have won ten championships or invitations to regional playoffs – the most recent being the women’s softball team’s participation in the 2005 N.A.I.A. World Series.

Over the past decade, he said, the graduation rate for student-athletes at Wise has been 10% higher than the rate for non-athletes, and last year over 20 Wise student-athletes were named as Scholastic All-Americans. Wise athletes also are actively involved in volunteer efforts in the community.

**FUTURE BUILDINGS AND DARDEN HALL**

Mr. Neuman, Architect for the University, gave the Committee a brief report on architectural matters at the College.

The College, he said, has received authorization from the Department of Planning and Budget in Richmond to submit proposals for the renovation of both Smiddy Hall and the Old Science Building, and for the construction of a new Information Technology Building – these projects were presented in the College’s Six-Year Capital Plan. The College is requesting authorization to expend non-general funds to move forward to the next biennium, the construction of the next residence hall and a new dining facility.

Currently under design are the renovation of Crockett Hall, the first building at the College, and the renovation and addition to the Drama Building – the addition is to include a privately funded art wing. The College is at present
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interviewing landscape architects to design the new entry way and storm drainage project.

Mr. Neuman then discussed several proposed modifications of Darden Hall to improve the appearance of Darden Hall, which is a matter of general concern at the College. Mr. Wynne is leading a campaign to raise money to pay for these modifications.

COMMENTS ON THE CHANGE OF THE NAME OF THE COLLEGE

After Mr. Neuman’s presentation, the Chair asked Mr. Necessary and Mr. Ern to comment on the change of the name of the College from Clinch Valley College. Mr. Necessary said there was a demonstrable rise in applications for admission after the name change. Mr. Ern gave his observations, based on his year – just concluded – as Chancellor. He said he arrived at Wise totally unprepared for the impact of change in name, an impact he summed up in one word – pride.

The Chair, as he has done before, thanked Mr. and Mrs. Ern for their service and devotion to the College.

The Chair then called on all Board of Visitors Members present, as well as the President, Mr. Sandridge, and the Secretary, to make brief comments.

COMMENTS BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATION

The Committee recessed for 20 minutes and resumed at 11:40 to hear comments by Members of the General Assembly delegation from Southwest Virginia. Senator Puckett and Delegates Carrico, Johnson, Kilgore, and Phillips all spoke to the importance of the College’s role in the region, and all emphasized that the delegation’s support of the College is non-partisan in nature.

The President thanked the delegation for their support and said the relationship between the College and the delegation was unusual in the state in that all members rallied to the support of the College without reference to party politics.

Mr. Smiddy, Chancellor-Emeritus of the College, also spoke to the support the College has always received from the General Assembly. Mr. Diamonstein recalled instances of this support during his time in the House of Delegates.
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The meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.

After lunch, the Committee went to the Wyllie Library to participate in the dedication of a statue of Thomas Jefferson, presented to the College by the University, which is placed temporarily in front of the Library.

At 2:00 p.m., the Committee, save the Chair, departed from Lonesome Pine Airport.

AGG:lah
These minutes have been posted to the University of Virginia’s Board of Visitors website.
http://www.virginia.edu/bov/uvawiseminutes.html