MEMORANDUM

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

W. Heywood Fralin, Chair
The Honorable Alan A. Diamonstein
Susan Y. Dorsey
Marvin W. Gilliam Jr.
Austin Ligon
Vincent J. Mastracco Jr.
John O. Wynne, Ex Officio

and

The Remaining Members of the Board:

A. Macdonald Caputo       Glynn D. Key
Hunter E. Craig           Mark J. Kington
Helen E. Dragas            Randal J. Kirk
Robert D. Hardie          The Honorable Lewis F. Payne
Sheila C. Johnson        Stewart H. Ackerly

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Committee on The University of Virginia’s College at Wise Meeting on February 24, 2011

The Board of Visitors Committee on The University of Virginia’s College at Wise met, in Open Session in the Board Room of the Rotunda, at 4:15 p.m., on Thursday, February 24, 2011; W. Heywood Fralin, Chair, presided.

Present were the Honorable Alan A. Diamonstein, Ms. Susan Y. Dorsey, Marvin W. Gilliam Jr., Austin Ligon, Vincent J. Mastracco Jr., and John O. Wynne, Rector.

Present as well were A. Macdonald Caputo, Ms. Helen E. Dragas, Robert D. Hardie, Ms. Glynn D. Key, Mark J. Kington, the Honorable Lewis F. Payne, and Stewart H. Ackerly.

Jonathan B. Overdevest, the student member-elect of the Board of Visitors, was present as well.

Remarks by the Chair of the Committee

Mr. Fralin spoke about the major issues facing the College at Wise in the current economic climate. Many Wise students come from families with very few resources, and the College serves almost exclusively Virginia residents. Mr. Fralin said significant progress has been made on the Committee’s goals, and asked Mr. Prior to elaborate.

Report by the Chancellor

The Chair introduced David J. Prior, the Chancellor of the College at Wise. Mr. Prior provided some statistics about the coalfields region of Virginia, the poorest in the state. The poverty rate is significantly higher than the poverty rate in the United States. Financial aid is provided to 85.1% of the students. Even so, U.S. News has ranked the College at Wise among liberal arts colleges as number one for lowest debt of graduating students.

Mr. Prior reiterated the three 2010-2011 goals set by the Committee and gave a progress report for each goal. Envisioning 2020, a strategic planning exercise, is underway. Committees are in place and public fora will be held. The first focus is academic programming, particularly STEM programs. Courses are being reviewed for structure, content, and abolition of some courses and minors. A summer undergraduate research program is part of the plan for a STEM pipeline.

The second goal is improving retention and graduation rates. The retention rate has increased and is now around 69.8% to 70.8%, but it is still too low. Graduation rates are too low. One program for admission of students provisionally has not succeeded and will be phased out. They will attempt to replace the numbers with students who are stronger academically.

The third goal is to continue the health and wellness program, Healthy Appalachia.
Mr. Prior mentioned that UVIMCO representatives had visited and impressed the College at Wise Foundation members with their knowledge and intelligence.

Mr. Prior said outcomes show that they are accomplishing something important. Seven graduates went on to medical school last year, including one from The Pound who will attend the University of Virginia.

On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

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