

June 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Student Affairs and Athletics Committee:

Robert D. Hardie, Chair
Macdonald Caputo
Susan Y. Dorsey
W. Heywood Fralin
Marvin W. Gilliam Jr.
Glynn D. Key
Mark J. Kington
Austin Ligon
Jonathan B. Overdevest
John O. Wynne, Ex Officio

and

The Remaining Members of the Board:

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| Hunter E. Craig | Randal J. Kirk |
| The Hon. Alan A. Diamonstein | Vincent J. Mastracco Jr. |
| Helen E. Dragas | The Hon. Lewis F. Payne |

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Student Affairs and Athletics Committee
Meeting on June 10, 2011

The Student Affairs and Athletics Committee of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 1:30 p.m., Friday, June 10, 2011, in the Board Room of the Rotunda; Robert D. Hardie, Chair, presided.

A. Macdonald Caputo, Ms. Susan Y. Dorsey, Marvin W. Gilliam Jr., Ms. Glynn D. Key, Mark J. Kington, Austin Ligon, Jonathan B. Overdevest, and John O. Wynne, Rector, were present.

Also present were Hunter E. Craig, The Hon. Alan A. Diamonstein, Ms. Helen E. Dragas, Vincent J. Mastracco Jr., and The Hon. Lewis F. Payne.

Present as well were Ms. Teresa A. Sullivan, Leonard W. Sandridge, Michael Strine, J. Milton Adams, Ms. Susan G. Harris, Paul J. Forch, Ms. Susan A. Carkeek, Steven T. DeKosky, M.D., James L. Hilton, R. Edward Howell, Ms. Patricia M. Lampkin, Craig K. Littlepage, Marcus L. Martin, M.D., Ms. Yoke San L. Reynolds, Ms. Colette Sheehy, Thomas C. Skalak, Allen W. Groves, Rick Nelson, and Ms. Jeanne Flipppo Bailes.

The Chair introduced Ms. Patricia M. Lampkin, the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer, to discuss the critical components of the U.Va. student experience.

Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer Remarks

Ms. Lampkin said she wanted to tie together the year's work on defining the student experience and touch on several themes that she heard from the alumni panel who spoke at the February Board meeting, and student focus groups that met over the past few months. She walked the Board through the basic steps they take in framing the student experience. Each step is done with intention and is aimed at making a big place feel small.

Ms. Lampkin showed a pyramid depicting key areas of focus for the Division of Student Affairs. These areas guide how they structure staff, resources, and programs. She said the foundation is safety; only when our students feel safe can they stretch and grow. Safety is defined broadly: it means not only students' physical safety, but also their mental health, the alcohol education programs in place, the standards of conduct and expectations of behavior, and the avenues for helping students understand those who are different from themselves. Once students feel safe and comfortable, then - and only then - can they move up the pyramid to thrive in the classroom and access the many opportunities for involvement. Built into those opportunities is what students and alumni refer to as a "leadership ladder," where students are able to join an organization and grow into a leadership position during their time at the University.

Ms. Lampkin focused her remarks on involvement and leadership -- the top two tiers of the pyramid -- because it is within these areas the "special sauce" that Mr. Hardie refers to is developed.

She said the focus groups and alumni panel told them involvement is a defining characteristic of the U.Va. student experience, i.e., students' high level of participation in organizations and other activities outside of the classroom. Involvement is important because research has shown that when students are involved with the life of the school, whether it is through undergraduate research or playing on a club sports team, they are more likely to stay in school. Statistics show that the first-to-second year retention rate is high

at the University, and we continue to surpass the peer mean for six-year graduation rates.

Reasons for this success expressed in the alumni panel and the focus groups include that students feel connected to U.Va. through their classrooms, their activities, and their peers. Therefore, they stay and graduate at high levels. This is the baseline of Student Affairs' work.

Also, it has been shown that peers positively influence learning and this has particular relevance and introduces some of the nuances in what sets the University student experience apart from others. Peer mentorship has been a defining characteristic of the student experience.

Alumni and students confirmed that having a shared experience is still a powerful component of the student experience, whether it is sitting on the Rotunda steps overlooking the Lawn, or discussing issues of concern with current students.

Student self-governance continues to be a defining feature of the student experience. Both alumni and current students perceive it as offering an unusual degree of responsibility and autonomy. Consensus is strong that this sets U.Va. students apart.

Honor, centered around the Honor System but also articulated as part of the culture of the institution, remains a defining characteristic and shared value across the student body. One alumnus described it as "an important tradition that transcends decades." Strong reaction to the single sanction - both for and against - remains part of the experience as generations of students discuss its relevance. The discussion itself, which occurs regularly, forms a bond across generations.

Academic rigor is an assumed and valued component of the student experience.

Ms. Lampkin said they discovered that student involvement is - and has been for several decades - critical to giving students a sense of place at the University. That emphasis on involvement can actually be quantified: 89% of students are engaged in an organized activity outside of the classroom. This compares very favorably to American Association of Universities (AAU) peers and Carnegie peers.

One alumnus commented that "*involvement at U.Va. is like an all-you-can-eat buffet,*" and students remarked that involvement is "*part of the culture here.*" One upper class student noted that "*U.Va. does a great job of letting you choose your level of involvement.*" Ms. Lampkin showed a chart illustrating the different types of organizations that students can join and the proportions of their involvement. This number and range of opportunities helps students

find their niche at the University. High-level responsibilities often accompany students' involvement, including appropriating and managing budgets, starting and running organizations, managing peers, and implementing major projects. Initially, students get involved in these organizations through their own initiative, but peers quickly become important to moving up the leadership ladder. Membership in these organizations allows students to develop relationships with faculty, professionals, and peers. As a result, students identify with the University by being a part of it.

Ms. Lampkin said this capacity for involvement, ownership, and responsibility is recognized in the workplace and graduate school. University graduates are known as remarkably well-rounded and capable.

Ms. Lampkin reviewed the structures and approaches that enable that shared experience. She said there are many opportunities for students to rise up the "leadership ladder" of an organization into substantive peer leadership roles. Each student organization consists of general members and a leadership team and they reach different proportions of the student body. Within this structure, any student interested in leadership can find a way to get that experience.

Of the 13,000 students who are involved in a student organization, almost a quarter of them hold at least one leadership position, and the data shows that most of them are holding two or three positions. A current student said: "*Students hold students accountable...it's not an administrator saying I can't believe you didn't show up... It helps make folks want to participate more - being held accountable by their peers.*"

Ms. Lampkin said to facilitate the level of involvement and peer leadership that characterizes the student experience, Student Affairs intentionally structures programs, training, and resources as support for that experience. While relationships with faculty and staff are important in the student experience, it is clear that peer relationships are paramount to students' perceptions of their success.

Ms. Lampkin said the first-year residential experience is the first and most important structure in place to create a safe and comfortable environment for students. A student Resident Adviser staff of 166 provides mentorship and support for the entire incoming class. The range of 20 to 24 students per Resident Advisor is critical to establish the peer relationship. The Resident Advisors report to other undergraduates who are supervised by four professionals.

Students and alumni noted that in the first-year residential experience students form their strongest relationships, they are exposed to and learn the most about those who are different from themselves, and they first learn to rely on their peers for support, guidance and leadership. This structure is a model of student self-

governance. Resident Staff members receive extensive training in community building, crisis management, and policy enforcement. They are on the front lines when issues arise, and they do a superb job in responding to the needs of their communities.

Ms. Lampkin pointed out that while it was gratifying to hear from students and alumni that this approach continues to be effective, they conduct regular assessments to be sure they are on track. Two of the primary assessment tools are the National Survey of Student Engagement, or "nessie" as it is commonly called, and the First-Year/Fourth-Year survey, which is conducted by the University's Institutional Assessment staff. In addition, Student Affairs conducts an ongoing series of program evaluations that are focused on core values to be sure that they are meeting the needs of students and adapting to their needs as they change.

Ms. Lampkin summarized the key themes that emerged from their work this year and matched them with the core values in the student experience:

- Wellness (Safety)
- Student self-governance and its components
- Academic rigor
- Honor and integrity
- Diversity
- Public service

Following her remarks, Ms. Lampkin directed the Committee to a written report about changes in the summer orientation program. She also thanked Ms. Dorsey for her work with students and her time as the Chair of the Student Affairs and Athletics Committee. Ms. Lampkin presented Ms. Dorsey with a framed remembrance of her first-year suite in Maupin House.

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Athletics Director Remarks

Mr. Craig Littlepage, Director of Athletics, introduced Mr. Nick Nelson to the Board. Mr. Nelson is a fourth-year wrestler who is the former president of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. He reported on the various University and community service initiatives of student-athletes. He said most student-athletes come to the University first and foremost to get a great education; the experience of athletes is not very different from the experience of non-athletes. Athletes participate in student self-governance in general, but they also focus on those organizations that affect athletes specifically, such as the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and the Student-Athlete Mentor Program.

Mr. Nelson said The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee is similar to a student council for athletes. Last year, they had four main objectives: 1. Be sure student-athletes' voices are heard; 2. Inform student-athletes of happenings around Grounds, in the ACC, and the NCAA; 3. Represent the student-athlete's perspective at events and meetings; and 4. Vote on ACC and NCAA legislation to give the students' perspective. The group hosts various events for student-athletes.

The Student-Athlete Mentor Program is a peer support group and mentor program. Student-Athletes do community service every year, and there are a variety of opportunities including working in the local schools.

Differences between the student-athlete and other student experience include the John Paul Jones Arena dining facility, which provides the nutrition athletes require, and is more time-efficient because study halls and other programs are held in the same building.

Following Mr. Nelson's remarks, the Committee watched a video clip of the national champion Lacrosse team and met the Lacrosse coach, Mr. Dominic Starsia. Mr. Starsia said in the middle of the season, because of injuries and other issues, he had to reconfigure the team. He said some of the success came out of a sense of panic, which got everyone's attention. The team came to understand who they were and they got better at it over the last few weeks. Mr. Starsia thanked many people for supporting him and the team. Pictures of Mr. Starsia, President Sullivan, and Mr. Littlepage were presented by Mr. Littlepage to President Sullivan. The Rector made some closing comments about the extraordinary work of Mr. Starsia.

On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

SGH:dr

These minutes have been posted to the University of Virginia's Board of Visitors website.

<http://www.virginia.edu/bov/studentminutes.html>