MEMORANDUM

TO: The Special Committee on Research:

Randal J. Kirk, Chair
Hunter E. Craig
Marvin W. Gilliam Jr.
Robert D. Hardie
Glynn D. Key
Stephen P. Long, M.D.
John L. Nau III
Jonathan B. Overdevest
Edward D. Miller, M.D., Ex Officio
Helen E. Dragas, Ex Officio

and

The Remaining Members of the Board:

A. Macdonald Caputo  Mark J. Kington
The Hon. Alan A. Diamonstein  George Keith Martin
Allison Cryor DiNardo  Vincent J. Mastracco Jr.
W. Heywood Fralin  Timothy B. Robertson

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Special Committee on Research Meeting on November 11, 2011

The Special Committee on Research of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 11:55 a.m., Friday, November 11, 2011, in the Board Room of the Rotunda; In Randal J. Kirk’s absence, Helen E. Dragas, Rector, presided. Present were Hunter E. Craig, Marvin W. Gilliam Jr., Robert D. Hardie, Ms. Glynn D. Key, Stephen P. Long, M.D., John L. Nau III, Jonathan B. Overdevest, and Edward D. Miller, M.D.

Also present were A. Macdonald Caputo, The Honorable Alan A. Diamonstein, Ms. Allison Cryor DiNardo, W. Heywood Fralin, Mark J. Kington, George Keith Martin, Vincent J. Mastracco Jr., and Timothy B. Robertson.

The Rector introduced Mr. Thomas C. Skalak, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, to report on the goals of this new committee, and to introduce the initial framing questions to guide the committee’s work.

Mr. Skalak said the central goal is strategic development of growth-oriented, differentiated, and high impact research at the University. He reviewed the following framing questions:

1. What can research do for a university and at what cost?

2. What are the financial models for research and what model do we currently employ?

3. What models are theoretically possible?

4. Where are the research opportunities today - by subject, by type of funding source?

5. What areas of research are growing, and are forecasted to grow, most rapidly?

6. Under various strategic assumptions, what can research do for the University?

7. What is the relationship of the current U.Va. scholarship portfolio/reputation to value and prospects in contemporary society?

8. What are the impediments and problems of other larger research universities today?

Mr. Skalak highlighted these objectives for the committee:

1. Identify means for the University to get ahead competitively at this time, including peer rankings.

2. Identify the ways in which the University can aspire to and work towards a leadership position.
3. Renew (by making more relevant) the intellectual quality of our faculty.

4. Provide better education for our students.

5. Diversify our revenue mix.

6. Move the University into the front and center of our Commonwealth’s economic development strategies and funding.

Mr. Skalak said the specific topics for consideration as related to the central goal and objectives include:

1. Making University research and scholarship more visible to the world.

2. Fund-raising for research initiatives and graduate students.

3. Supporting our faculty/staff and infrastructure in research: mid-career investments and shared resources.

4. Proof-of-concept funds and innovation linkages to commercialization partners.

5. Immersive research and external internship opportunities for all undergraduates – setting culture and delivering opportunities.

6. Pan-university programs: addressing complex social challenges via collaboration.

7. Linking arts/humanities/social science programs with science/engineering/professional schools in creative ways.

Mr. Fralin said he thinks there should be priority put on initiatives that engage more than one university—collaboration with other universities. Mr. Skalak said the Bay Game is an example of partnering with other universities—Princeton and MIT. We were just invited to join the international Aquaduct Alliance, and we are the first university to be asked to join.

Mr. Caputo asked about pockets of really strong research opportunity around the country: Stanford, MIT, etc. He asked if the University was looking at these programs. Mr. Skalak said yes, and the University looks for differentiating investments and strategies. He mentioned the Coulter partnership: University of Virginia is one of nine schools selected. He said that doing things differently, we may leapfrog the competition in certain areas that we choose to invest in. We have substantial resources and connectivity; we need to have low barriers between the 11 schools at the University to make this work effectively.
Innovation Partnerships and Commercialization Status

Mr. Skalak introduced Mr. Michael Straightiff, Executive Director of the University of Virginia Patent Foundation. Mr. Straightiff reported on the status of technology transfer operations and commercialization at the University. He highlighted several new corporate partnerships, including Astra Zenica; the University is the company’s only trusted university partner. Mr. Straightiff discussed the goals for a proposed Innovation Accelerator and associated venture fund for developing technologies.

Mr. Strine said the return from technology transfer is not an ongoing revenue stream; the benefit is the quality of the faculty that are attracted to the University.

Upon motion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

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