MEMORANDUM

TO: The Special Committee on Diversity:

Allison Cryor DiNardo, Chair
A. Macdonald Caputo
The Hon. Alan A. Diamonstein
W. Heywood Fralin
Mark J. Kington
Timothy B. Robertson
Jonathan B. Overdevest
Helen E. Dragas, Ex Officio
Gweneth L. West, Consulting Member

and

The Remaining Members of the Board:

Hunter E. Craig          Stephen P. Long, M.D.
Marvin W. Gilliam Jr.    George Keith Martin
Robert D. Hardie         Vincent J. Mastracco Jr.
Glynn D. Key             Edward D. Miller, M.D.
Randal J. Kirk           John L. Nau III

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Committee on Diversity on February 24, 2012

The Special Committee on Diversity of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 2:00 p.m. Friday, February 24, 2012, in the Board Room of the Rotunda; Ms. Allison Cryor DiNardo, Chair, presided.

A. Macdonald Caputo, the Honorable Alan A. Diamonstein, W. Heywood Fralin, Mark J. Kington, Timothy B. Robertson, Jonathan B. Overdevest, and Ms. Helen E. Dragas, Rector, were present.

Ms. Gweneth L. West was present as the Faculty Consulting Member.
Also present were Hunter E. Craig, Marvin W. Gilliam Jr., Robert D. Hardie, Ms. Glynn D. Key, Randal J. Kirk, Stephen P. Long, M.D., George Keith Martin, Vincent J. Mastracco Jr., John L. Nau III, and Edward D. Miller, M.D.

Present, too, were Ms. Teresa A. Sullivan, Paul J. Forch, Ms. Susan G. Harris, Ms. Susan A. Carkeek, James L. Hilton, Ms. Patricia M. Lampkin, Marcus L. Martin, M.D., Ms. Yoke San L. Reynolds, Ms. Colette Sheehy, Thomas C. Skalak, Robert D. Sweeney, Maurice Apprey, M.D., and Ms. Debra D. Rinker.

Report on African-American Student Academic Performance

The chair introduced Dr. Marcus Martin, Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity, who in turn introduced Dr. Maurice Apprey, Professor of Psychiatry and Dean of African-American Affairs. Dr. Apprey said that part of the mission of the Office of African-American Affairs is to assist other areas of the University in meeting the challenges of service delivery to African-American students. An important part of their mission is to increase the number of graduates placed in competitive work places and graduate and professional schools. It is not enough to graduate, but to do well, which increases the chances of doing better in the world. The end depends on the beginning. It is important to lift the class cohort to at least a 3.0 grade point average.

Dr. Apprey said the University maintains a high graduation rate of 85% for African Americans and has the #1 ranking among peer flagship institutions, according to the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education. He said graduation is the floor and not the ceiling. This begins with the first two semesters at the University. Over the past few years there has been a steady increase in the number of students in the 3.4-4.0 range - high honors. There has also been an increase of the cumulative grade point average for First Years from 2.509 in the fall of 2005 to 2.951 in the fall of 2011. There has also been a corresponding decline in the percentage of students below a 2.0, from 26% in the fall of 2005 to 5% in the fall of 2011.

These accomplishments have been achieved through several means: providing a safety net in a culturally sensitive environment; an informal curriculum that addresses better decision making in course selections; use of tutoring, study groups, mentoring and advising; and fostering the alignment between high graduation rates and correspondingly high grade point averages. Dr. Apprey said he advises students to start with calculus to provide the necessary foundation to move onto other math and science programs; he recommends a sequence of calculus, statistics, and then economics and other courses.
Vice President’s Remarks

Dr. Martin reported on the Martin Luther King celebrations this year. He thanked President Sullivan for appointing the Office of Diversity and Equity to coordinate the more than 30 programs. He said over 100 individuals worked with enthusiasm to put on the film screenings, lectures, and youth programs. He remarked that Dr. King said "the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice". Dr. Martin showed a video montage of the programs.

Upon motion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 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