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, M.D.
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 May 22, 2012

The Special Committee on Research of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 10:45 a.m., Tuesday, May 22, 2012, in the Board Room of the Rotunda; in absence of the chair, Ms. 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, M.D., and Edward D. Miller, M.D.

Also present were A. Macdonald Caputo (via teleconference), The Honorable Alan A. Diamonstein, Ms. Allison Cryor DiNardo, W. Heywood

James H. Aylor was in attendance as a presenter.

Report by Vice President for Research

Ms. Dragas introduced Mr. Thomas C. Skalak, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, to report. Mr. Skalak spoke about diversifying collaborative options for research initiatives with external partners. Several opportunities may be available, including working with Vonage and the “Big Data” initiative. He explained that these projects present novel research for faculty and create collaborative groups that span areas. The Office of the Vice President for Research is working on how to make the University receptive, attractive, and capable of responding to these kinds of opportunities.

Mr. Skalak introduced Mr. James Aylor, Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, to talk about various ways the Engineering School has worked with external partners in the past and their plans for the future. Mr. Aylor gave a brief background on research at the Engineering School, explaining that approximately $65 million are available for external research. Research funds have grown 45% over the past five years. He explained the largest set of partners in research are those in the federal government, such as the National Science Foundation, DOD, NASA and DOT. These partnerships are good fits primarily because they match what the faculty do best: basic research and long term initiatives.

Mr. Aylor explained that the other major external partners come from industry. In 2005, the Engineering School realized that expansion was needed, and has increased the research portfolio with industry partnerships from 10% to 20% over the past five years. He explained how the school obtained these partnerships, starting with the crucial realization that the interface between industry and academia was severely broken. The main issues when dealing with industry have been making sure students are published, and issues about intellectual property divisions. When dealing with these issues, Mr. Aylor explained the importance of determining what is best for both parties. He highlighted the success the school has had with Rolls Royce and other similar partnerships. These allow for both undergraduate and graduate students to gain real world experience.
Mr. Aylor said the traditional sources of academic funding for classified research are not growing. There will always be funds for research in areas like infectious disease, cyber security, and Asian studies; the government needs partners for this research. Most research at the University will not be classified.

In response to a question, Mr. Aylor explained that there are currently four master contracts in place, all of which came directly from the University's efforts.

In response to a question, Mr. Skalak gave a brief review of the responsibilities of his office. He explained that his role is to support the whole research infrastructure at the University, and to be involved with the creative synthesis of initiatives that may come up in one school, but need collaboration with another area. The office has two formal functions: the service function, that is, complying with federal regulations and the disposal of various chemicals, and creating, motivating, and supporting interdisciplinary initiatives that span more than one school. The office also works closely with the provost’s office to enhance the integration of education and research to provide students with hands on experiential learning.

In response to a question, Provost Simon said the University is encouraging faculty and deans to become involved in collaborative efforts. He explained that for young faculty, they have made it clear that working on interdisciplinary issues is rewarded at the provost level. He said the deans are partnering quite well, and he mentioned the Batten and Curry partnership.

Mr. Aylor spoke from a dean’s perspective, explaining that the big concern for faculty is promotions in the tenure process, but they have found a way to give faculty credit when publications are completed jointly with other faculty. There is now a better understanding of the way individuals contribute that may not be directly in their discipline. This led to research partnerships with medical school faculty.

In response to a question, Mr. Skalak said the University’s ability to transfer new knowledge to the marketplace is viewed as a virtuous cycle: once faculty get involved with translational research, it inspires new research and new opportunities for students. Translational research is a very important element of the University’s research picture.

Upon motion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.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