MEMORANDUM

TO: The Special Committee on Strategic Planning:

Frank B. Atkinson, Co-Chair
Linwood H. Rose, Co-Chair
The Honorable Alan A. Diamonstein
Victoria D. Harker
Bobbie G. Kilberg
Randal J. Kirk
Stephen P. Long, M.D.
Vincent J. Mastracco Jr.
Edward D. Miller, M.D.
Helen E. Dragas, Ex Officio

and

The Remaining Members of the Board and Senior Advisors:

A. Macdonald Caputo         John L. Nau III
Hunter E. Craig             Timothy B. Robertson
Allison Cryor DiNardo       Hillary A. Hurd
George Keith Martin         Leonard W. Sandridge Jr.

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Special Committee on Strategic Planning
Meeting on September 14, 2012

The Special Committee on Strategic Planning of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 10:00 a.m., Friday, September 14, 2012, in the Small Auditorium of the Harrison Institute; Frank B. Atkinson and Linwood H. Rose, Co-Chairs, presided.

Also present were A. Macdonald Caputo, Hunter E. Craig, Ms. Allison Cryor DiNardo, Marvin W. Gilliam Jr., George Keith Martin, John L. Nau III, Timothy B. Robertson, Ms. Hillary A. Hurd, William H. Goodwin Jr., and Leonard W. Sandridge Jr.


Report by the Co-Chairs

Mr. Atkinson and Mr. Rose reviewed the strategic planning discussion at the Board Retreat which was held in August, and referred to a letter they sent to President Sullivan, which is attached, regarding establishing a committee to address undertaking a comprehensive institutional assessment and developing a strategic plan.

President Sullivan said that it is a collaborative process that involves continuous planning rather than a one-shot solution. Previous plans, such as Virginia 2020 and the Commission on the Future of the University (completed in August 2012), will be incorporated. A steering committee and working groups will be coordinated by Mr. J. Milton Adams, the Senior Vice Provost, and a one year project director will be hired. Planning will be in two phases: assessment and benchmarking, and the planning phase. A set of metrics will be established. The steering committee will be ready to proceed by the end of the year and will check in monthly with the Rector and Vice Rector.

Upon motion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 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
September 3, 2012

Teresa A. Sullivan  
President  
University of Virginia  
Post Office Box 400224  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22904-4224

Dear President Sullivan,

We have been appointed as chairs of the Special Committee on Strategic Planning by Rector Dragas. This letter serves as a discussion piece on how we might best proceed with this effort. We would appreciate your review and suggestions on the purpose and process described below.

By all measures, the University of Virginia is regarded as a leader among our Nation’s public research universities. However, we along with all of higher education, face an uncertain future with myriad challenges and opportunities including but certainly not limited to, sustaining a distinguished faculty, maintaining affordable and accessible academic programs in the face of constrained resources, and determining how emerging technologies might be used to lower cost and enhance quality. In the spirit of leading rather than responding, the time is right to undertake a strategic plan that will examine our very purpose and reason for being, and then develop a roadmap for our future. Said another way, we need to examine and, if appropriate, refine our mission and articulate our aspirations with a strategy for making them a reality.

This plan should articulate strategic direction for the University as a whole recognizing that its ultimate success will, of course, be in large measure derived from collaboration and the collective efforts of our schools and academic units. Thus, the College and Schools that comprise our institution and drive our distinguished reputation should not be the structural focus of this plan, nor does it seem useful for the content of the report to be organized according to these academic units.
Undertaking a comprehensive institutional assessment with the engagement of University stakeholders might be a productive first step in the planning process. It could be a separate stand-alone work product, or it could easily be the first step in a comprehensive sequential planning effort. Following an analysis of the external environment in which we operate and an assessment of the University’s strengths, opportunities for improvement, and threats to mission success, it should be possible to focus the strategic planning process on a manageable list of strategic initiatives and priorities to which the Board of Visitors, administration, faculty, students, and supporting constituents might commit. It is expected that such a plan will incorporate relevant indicators of success and performance measures, an estimate of resources required for accomplishment, and identification of responsible parties.

We respectfully suggest that you establish a steering committee and the necessary work groups to address the requirements of this endeavor. The process for involvement and inclusiveness of various perspectives and points of view is up to you, but we are confident that broader involvement in the development of the plan will produce an improved final product. We note that the Faculty Senate has already expressed a desire to participate in plan development, and we encourage their engagement in this important work. We also recommend that a consultant or consultants experienced in higher education strategic assessment and planning be retained through a competitive procurement to advise and assist the steering committee and the Board’s special committee as this process moves forward. We would appreciate your inclusion of one or both co-chairs of the Special Committee for Strategic Planning as participants in the consultant selection process.

While the framework for developing the strategic plan rests with you and your team, it is ultimately the responsibility of the Board to review and approve the plan. To facilitate plan development and approval, the process should be an interactive one that provides opportunities for the Board’s Special Committee for Strategic Planning to interact with the steering committee from time to time. For example, among other opportunities for special committee and Board engagement in the process, meetings could be arranged when certain planning milestones are realized, such as the completion of the institutional assessment, conclusion of the environmental assessment, and upon completion of the plan draft. We would like for you and the steering committee to develop a timeline for these activities as soon as practical with delivery of the
draft plan to the special committee to occur by the end of the academic year.

It is not our desire to prescribe or limit topics to be addressed or accommodated in the strategic planning process, but among other critical issues we hope that the following topics will be addressed:

- Accountability to stakeholders
- Academic quality and instructional innovation
- Efficiency of operations
- Sustaining the professoriate
- Financial constraints
- Research and Innovation
- Student Life
- Enrollment
- Access, affordability and financial aid/scholarships
- STEM/Health workforce needs
- Instructional delivery and knowledge certification
- Facilities and other physical assets
- Private support

In addition, since the University’s six-year planning process is ongoing pursuant to the recently enacted “TJ21” state-level reform and reinvestment legislation, we recommend that the broad objectives and specific provisions of that statute be fully addressed as part of the steering committee’s work. Once the university’s strategic plan is approved, it should then be used to inform the next six-year plan submitted to the Governor and General Assembly.

Finally, we recognize that some issues are ripe for joint attention by the Board of Visitors and the administration, and we anticipate that neither the administration nor the Board will wish to delay such consideration while the planning process is underway. For example, faculty retention, recruitment and compensation as well as the sustained funding of AccessUVa would seem to be topics worthy of immediate attention, and perhaps there are others. It would be helpful to have a sense from the administration as to what pressing matters are in this category, so that the planning process can be organized appropriately.
We look forward to working with you and members of your team as we undertake this planning process together. It will, no doubt, consume considerable professional commitment. But, we are equally steadfast in our belief that now is the time to advance our collective thinking to ensure a bright future for the University of Virginia.

Sincerely,

Frank B. Atkinson                      Linwood H. Rose
Co-chair, Special Committee            Co-chair, Special Committee
 on Strategic Planning                 on Strategic Planning

LHR:dr

cc:  Helen E. Dragas, Rector
     Alan A. Diamonstein
     Victoria D. Harker
     Bobbie G. Kilberg
     Randal J. Kirk
     Stephen P. Long, M.D.
     Vincent J. Mastracco Jr.
     Edward D. Miller, M.D.
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