MEMORANDUM

TO: The Student Affairs and Athletics Committee:

Allison Cryor DiNardo, Chair
Marvin W. Gilliam Jr., Vice Chair
A. Macdonald Caputo
Hunter E. Craig
Hillary A. Hurd
Bobbie G. Kilberg
George Keith Martin
Timothy B. Robertson
Linwood H. Rose
Helen E. Dragas, Ex-officio
Allison S. Linney, Consulting Member
Dennis R. Proffitt, Faculty Consulting Member

and

The Remaining Members of the Board of Visitors and Senior Advisor:

Frank B. Atkinson  Stephen P. Long, M.D.
William H. Goodwin Jr.  Edward D. Miller, M.D.
Victoria D. Harker  John L. Nau III
Leonard W. Sandridge Jr.

FROM: Susan G. Harris

RE: Minutes of the Meeting of the Student Affairs and Athletics Committee on April 18, 2013

The Student Affairs and Athletics Committee met, in Open Session, at 1:55 p.m., Thursday, April 18, 2013, in the Board Room of the Rotunda; Allison Cryor DiNardo, Chair, presided.
Report by the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer

The chair described a wonderful morning of discussions over breakfast with groups of students, set up by Ms. Patricia M. Lampkin, the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer. Hillary Hurd, the student member of the Board was included. She said it was good to hear from the students directly about their experiences.

The chair asked Ms. Lampkin to give her report. Ms. Lampkin said her office has been busy helping students focus on completing their final projects and theses, coping with the stress, and finding ways to celebrate responsibly. They are now in the transformative period of working with the new group of student leaders elected by their peers, to equip them with the skills and connections they need to lead their organizations. They are also busy preparing for the class of 2017 arrival for summer orientation.

Ms. Lampkin said they have teamed up with the Batten Institute at Darden to create a satellite i-lab on central grounds in newly renovated space in Newcomb Hall. I-lab advisors will be available in the media activities center to assist with interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial activities.

Ms. Lampkin said that a new summer program for 120 rising high school juniors and seniors called Leadership on the Lawn raised $30,000 last year. Its purpose is to strengthen leadership skills while living the student experience.

She said that the meeting will focus on the foundation of the student experience, housing, particularly for first-year students. One policy is to house all first-year students together. They are intentionally clustered in the McCormick Road, Alderman Road, and Gooch-Dillard residential complexes to develop relationships. This has been the approach for almost 40 years.
The second intentional policy is how residence halls are staffed. A low student-to-staff ratio in the first year areas is maintained: one staff member for every 18-24 students. There are 220 Resident Assistants (RAs), and they are supervised by Senior Residents, who are veteran staff members. Together, the RAs and Senior Residents live with the students and work through the challenges of holding students accountable for applicable laws and University policy and bringing a hall together. She said it is important to maintain the unusually low 1:24 ratio because the RA can get to know each student and serve as a resource and guide during that critical first year. Research shows it to be a period of rapid developmental change, and the staff support and guidance can help first-year students successfully transition into adulthood.

Staffing in upper class residential areas is about 1:60, reflecting the growth and autonomy students have developed. This staff is also trained for the needs of upper class students.

The other conscious choice is to have mostly undergraduate students as Residence Staff. Instead of a professional staff living in the halls, they use a peer advisor model. These students are highly trained for community building and crisis response. It is cost-effective and establishes a basis for student self-governance; having students serve as RAs and Senior Residents demonstrates immediately the high expectations for student leadership. There is a strong network of professional staff in Housing and Residence Life for support of these student leaders.

Report on Housing and Residential Life

To explain ways to improve and identify new opportunities for growth, Ms. Lampkin introduced Ms. Gay Perez, an Associate Dean of Students and Executive Director of Housing and Residence Life.

Ms. Perez said when she arrived in December 2011, the consolidation of the Housing Division with the Office of Residence Life was complete, combining two previously independent units with similar services and goals. This created a cohesive organization under the leadership of one person.

Housing and Residence Life (HRL) is now responsible for the entire residential experience, serving a variety of populations: undergraduates, graduates, faculty/staff, and summer conference clients. HRL provides the physical space and trained staff to facilitate growth and development, while maintaining safety. HRL is an integral part of the overall student experience.

The consolidation of the two units has realized almost $300,000 of cost savings through consolidating functions, the reduction of five positions, and realignment of some staff positions.
Ms. Perez said they have made changes to improve operational efficiencies and user satisfaction. On-line systems for resident staff selection, promotions, and evaluation processes, the graduate/faculty/staff leasing process, and the reapplication process for returning students, have been developed over the past year.

She said the Resident Staff Program is one of only a few in the country to provide advanced leadership opportunities for undergraduates through the promotion process to Senior Resident, Program Coordinator, or Co-Chair position. It is also one of the most fiscally responsible programs. A peer institution generally hires a full-time master's level professional at $30,000, plus a furnished apartment including utilities, internet, cable, a meal stipend, and full university benefits. Our Senior Residents' total remuneration package is $2,500 in stipend, $800 in meal allowance, $5,090 in housing, for a total of $8,390.

Speaking from experience, having a B.A. and a Masters from the University and moving through the ranks of the Resident Staff Program, Ms. Perez believes that the residential experience is the cornerstone of the student experience, and is one aspect of the University ranking among the top public institutions in the nation. Welcoming students, making connections, exposing students to differences, and establishing relationships is the reason their program is the key to the student experience.

The residential experience and its future have come into question with the explosion of interest and investment in Massive Open On-Line courses. Ms. Sullivan said in her recent address to the University community that we must protect and enhance the residential student experience, but also continue to experiment with technology as an instructional and research tool. At the University, residential life continues to be a critical part of the college experience.

Ms. Perez said there are 6,100 beds for undergraduates, with 3,500 of those reserved for first-year students. There are 400 beds for graduate students. Just over 42% of all undergraduate students live in on-Grounds housing, in line with national comparisons. They began last fall with an occupancy rate of 99.56%, which dropped to just under 97% in January due to December graduates and the study abroad programs. Over the last six years, the total number of first year students living on Grounds has gradually increased, with the number of upper classmen gradually decreasing. The demand for graduate student housing has decreased slightly. Changes in the Charlottesville zoning laws, increases in enrollment, and a first-year residency requirement contribute to these trends.

The University engaged a national housing consulting firm, Brailsford and Dunlavey, to determine if there is an unmet need for
on-Grounds housing, what factors are considered in deciding where to live, and what students are looking for in their living space. They conducted multiple focus groups and interviews.

In January, Brailsford and Dunlavey conducted an on-line survey of 9,000 enrolled students and had a 27.86% response rate. One of the most significant findings indicates that 88% of the students are moderately to very satisfied with their living situation, representing both on- and off-Grounds students. The consultants found an average satisfaction rate of 80% at UNC-Chapel Hill, UT-Austin, Cornell, Penn, and Berkeley.

The consultants triangulated where the student lived with their satisfaction level and found that the further out they live from central Grounds, the lower their satisfaction level. In looking at the type of accommodations available, the traditional double rooms along a hall and suite style housing are popular for the initial years on Grounds because they are more conducive to community engagement. As students progress to later years, they look for more independent living.

Survey results indicate that of undergraduates after their first year, 37% prefer a four bed/two bath unit. The top four factors important to undergraduate students in making their housing choice are, in order: 1) proximity to central Grounds (15 minute walk), 2) ability to choose roommate(s), 3) private bedroom, and 4) cost/utilities. Graduate students were different; they valued: 1) units with kitchen facilities, 2) cost/utilities, 3) private bedrooms, 4) proximity to central Grounds.

The consultants also measured unmet demand, excluding the 30% of undergraduates that would not live on-Grounds for any reason or who paid $500 per month or less off-Grounds. The results indicated a demand for 7,733 on-Grounds beds, with the current inventory of 6,142 beds, showing a potential for 1,591 on-Grounds beds. This demand comes from third and fourth year students who currently live off-Grounds, but would prefer to live on-Grounds. The unmet demand for graduate student accommodations is significant: almost 2,600 beds.

With the understanding of what students want and how they make their decisions, HRL has made changes to the reapplication process. Upperclass students that wanted to remain in their current area were consolidated to make units available for rising second year students. They also moved to a phased-in process where students made choices throughout the process and could opt out at any time prior to accepting an offer. This resulted in providing over 300 more returning students their first choice in housing than last year.

Ms. Perez said the data allows HRL to plan ahead and provide attractive housing features important to students. They can focus on
Student Affairs and Athletics Committee

providing an environment for first year students to transition to rigorous academic programs, strong safety and security, leadership development, and introducing them to student self-governance, honor, and peer support through a low student to RA ratio. There were 91 six-person groups of rising second year applications for on-grounds housing, an indication of their success. At other institutions, students have one or two classmates they want to room with; our data shows first-year students make an average of five close connections.

The support for upper class students includes an orientation for transfer students; easy access to referral programs and services; interactions with faculty; leadership development; and enhanced career and academic advising.

Ms. Perez said their on-Grounds occupancy is close to 100%. Upperclassmen want a close location, and there is an unmet demand for graduate student housing with one bedroom units.

Ms. DiNardo asked if anything surprised Ms. Perez from the survey data or comparing her experience with other institutions. Ms. Perez said she was surprised by the high occupancy rate. She sensed the high satisfaction our students have with their housing and residential life; there is a good balance between on-Grounds and off-Grounds housing. She believes there is a higher level of satisfaction with their college experience among those that live on-Grounds, and if we offered the type of housing they want, they would choose to stay on-Grounds.

Mr. Rose said he has been an advocate for increased housing, particularly for safety and quality--have they asked for the parents' opinions on housing? Ms. Perez said it was not included in the current study, but they are about to begin the second phase and they can include a focus group of parents.

- - - - - - - - -

On 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/studentminutes.html