MEMORANDUM

TO: The Board of Visitors:

George Keith Martin, Rector
Frank B. Atkinson
Hunter E. Craig
Allison Cryor DiNardo
Helen E. Dragas
Kevin J. Fay
Frank E. Genovese
Marvin W. Gilliam Jr.
William H. Goodwin Jr.
John A. Griffin

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Special Committee on Strategic Planning on September 20, 2013

The Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, September 20, 2013, in the Board Room of the Rotunda; George Keith Martin, Rector, presided.


Also present were Teresa A. Sullivan, John D. Simon, Patrick D. Hogan, Susan G. Harris, Paul J. Forch, Susan A. Carkeek, Dorrie Fontaine, R. Edward Howell, Donna Price Henry, Marcus L. Martin, M.D., Colette Sheehy, Thomas Skalak, Robert D. Sweeney, Catherine Brand, Anthony de Bruyn, Archie Holmes, David W. Martel, Maurie McInnis, Nancy A. Rivers, and Martha Sites.
Opening Remarks

Messrs. Atkinson and Rose briefed the Board on the meeting of the Special Committee on Strategic Planning held September 19, 2013. They said President Sullivan shared information about the five pillars and 15 strategies.

Introductory Remarks and Report on Planning Process

Messrs. Atkinson and Rose introduced President Sullivan and asked her to discuss the framework for the strategic plan and why the pillars and strategies best position the university over the next five years.

President Sullivan reminded those present that the planning is from a position of strength, and this gives a great advantage to work together on a road map for the University’s future. The plan has been created to fortify and further distinguish what is already one of the strongest, best managed, most financially stable, and most affordable, universities in the country.

After noting recent rankings, President Sullivan said the return on investment for the University of Virginia ranks third in the nation among all public and private universities. This shows that investing in education at a top-tier public university might be the wisest investment for students and their families.

She said although state support fluctuates, the University’s public mission to offer excellent, affordable education does not. She said there are neither plans to decrease the number of Virginia residents offered admission, nor to make the university a private institution.

She discussed the pillars and strategies presented in May and in the previous day’s committee meeting. Presenter John Hawley, Professor of Astronomy, was asked to speak, but he was unable to attend because he was in Hong Kong receiving the Shaw Prize in Astronomy. The Shaw Prize is Asia’s equivalent to the Nobel Prize. She said he recorded a message to the Board that would be played later.

Mr. Tom Skalak, Vice President for Research, and Martha Sites, Deputy University Librarian, presented the strategy on Research Infrastructure and Services. They said the big idea for Strategy 5 is to solve major societal challenges of the state and nation, to enable the individual creative behaviors that will define careers of the future, and to produce foundational scholarship that opens new frontiers in all fields – from humanities and arts to sciences and engineering, and in professions such as business, law, and medicine. Mr. Skalak noted that research is conducted by individual faculty and by
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schools, and yet in many cases we must provide enterprise-wide infrastructure and services. To achieve this, the University of Virginia will enhance research proposal development teams, computational capabilities, libraries, collaboration mechanisms, and core equipment. These will support both group and individual scholarship by faculty and students. Therefore, this aspect of strategy builds overall capacity as well as the foundation for distinguishing research.

Mr. Skalak said students will increasingly create their own jobs during their lifetimes. Major societal challenges today require highly collaborative solutions spanning traditional disciplines. Downsizing of private R&D is creating new opportunities for partnerships. At the same time, the University's founding mission of discovery requires continually advancing knowledge through scholarship by individuals in all fields. These activities are also inextricably linked into the mission of providing cutting-edge experiential learning to students at all levels, from the entering 18-year-old undergraduate to advanced post-doctoral fellows. Providing these capabilities will allow us to realize distinguishing research impact, as well as enhance our individual, curiosity-driven scholarship.

To achieve this, Mr. Skalak said the University will provide grant proposal development assistance via flexible, short-term assignment teams for outstanding scholars who seek large-scale grants, and improved post-award processing services. Then, the University will develop a plan for a new "Makers Space in the Arts" for artists and designers to realize their visions physically, and provide seed funds for distinguishing and frontier individual faculty research at the early stage in all fields. The University will enhance the Computational Infrastructure, serving all fields from engineering design to digital humanities, and from social sciences working on census data to the professions including business and medicine. This will include flexible assignment teams that can bring individual faculty and teams to a high level of computational fluency. The University also will expand the OpenGrounds collaboration spaces and programs to enable a nationally-unique culture of interaction. OpenGrounds is designed as a physical and virtual place for ideation and collaboration, and is now a proven method for bringing together people across the disciplines to address complex challenges.

Mr Skalak said in three to five years, the first steps of the research platform should produce an environment that allows students and faculty to develop the capacity to be their competitive, collaborative, and creative best, and to attract new talent to join them.

Ms. Sites noted the University Library is particularly well positioned to provide a research support infrastructure for the
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University. This is necessary as content, tools, and methods are changing and growing at an extraordinary pace, and researchers are more successful when they have access to cutting-edge content and expert assistance. To do this, Ms. Sites said it is necessary to develop the Library as the face of research services, provide experts who engage proactively with researchers across all disciplines, and increase access to digital content in all formats.

Ms. Sites said the Library is well known for its centers with specialized services, where librarians work very closely with researchers. The centers are highly valued and are copied both nationally and internationally. She said this will help transform the entire library service model. In terms of a timeline, there is a five-year plan in which retiring staff will be replaced with blended professionals.

John Hawley’s prerecorded presentation was played. He discussed high-performance computing and where the University of Virginia should strive to be. With advancements in fields including medicine and weather, computation-enabled research has come to the forefront of traditional researching methods. It is multidisciplinary and overlaps with big data. It also overlaps with every aspect of society.

Mr. Hawley named the goals that align with the strategic plan: 1) to attract top scholars working in medicine, science, and computational science; 2) to increase student and societal demand for computing expertise and methodologies; and 3) to address the needs of faculty and researchers that compete for time and funding.

Mr. Hawley noted there is a need to collect, move, analyze, and store data, as well as support those who work and research in this field. Newly hired faculty will provide new computing resources and compile these resources for use and universal storage by the entire university system. We will know we have succeeded if we successfully recruit students and researchers in the field of computational science.

Ms. Maurie McInnis, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and Mr. Archie Holmes Jr., Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Associate Provost, spoke about high-impact educational experiences, defined as those curricular experiences that go beyond the traditional classroom setting. They include increased classroom engagement through flipped and hybrid courses, and other opportunities that are often experiential in nature such as undergraduate research experiences; community engagement; global immersion experiences; and opportunities to pursue entrepreneurship. Ms. McInnis said these experiences provide opportunities for students to grow intellectually and develop critical thinking and leadership skills through connections with their academic work and their experiences in the
community. She said we know from research that these experiences lead to deeper learning and greater career preparation. She wants to use technology to ensure that all students are equipped to learn in an on-line environment. She also discussed transforming the classroom experience so that students will be engaged in class and have time for more faculty interaction both inside and outside the classroom.

In order to succeed, Ms. McInnis suggested the University build and expand on present opportunities. Faculty who are world-renowned scholars in their field can share their expertise with our students through different avenues: engaging students in their own creative and scholarly research, designing projects that couple students with members of the community, or traveling with students to explore teaching and research in an international setting. The increase in faculty hires we expect over the next decade will help, but the University must also support faculty already on Grounds.

Some examples of this engagement include College Pavilion Seminars and McIntire and Batten Schools expanding their curricular offerings in social entrepreneurship. All schools involve students in undergraduate research opportunities, and every year but there is a desire to expand these.

Ms. McInnis noted a current effort focused on improving first-year STEM education by transforming the teaching of introductory science courses and their accompanying laboratories. This effort is being led by Archie Holmes, recently appointed Associate Provost, and he is working with faculty across Grounds to make this high-impact curricular experience a reality.

Mr. Holmes then discussed community and global engagement projects in the architecture, engineering, and education schools.

The third strategy on continuous active faculty recruiting was presented by Dean Dorrie Fontaine, dean of the School of Nursing, and Catherine Brand, Director of the Executive Search Group. They presented the process for recruiting new faculty. Dean Fontaine said she believes the key to keeping the University competitive is good faculty.

Ms. Brand explained how the University will provide additional support to faculty recruiting. To meet this goal, the internal Executive Search Group will collaborate with the offices of the Provost, Chief Operating Officer, Equal Opportunity Programs, Diversity, Human Resources, and others to make sure the resources of the University are widely used. However, recruiting is ultimately owned by the schools and should be shaped by the scholars and experts who know their disciplines the best.

Ms. Brand said the Executive Search Group's primary role is to provide a full range of executive search services upon request
to schools and departments at a significantly reduced fee compared with search firms. With creative recruiting, offering tailored recruitment support, and using the recruiting industry's successful search methodologies, the University of Virginia will be able to recruit the best faculty available.

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On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

SGH:dr
These minutes have been posted to the University of Virginia Board of Visitors website.
http://www.virginia.edu/bov/publicminutes.html