MEMORANDUM

TO: The Special Committee on Strategic Planning:

Frank B. Atkinson, Co-Chair
Linwood H. Rose, Co-Chair
The Honorable Alan A. Diamonstein
William H. Goodwin Jr.
Victoria D. Harker
Bobbie G. Kilberg
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 Advisor:

A. Macdonald Caputo
Hunter E. Craig
Allison Cryor DiNardo
Marvin W. Gilliam Jr.
George Keith Martin

John L. Nau III
Timothy B. Robertson
Hillary A. Hurd
Leonard W. Sandridge Jr.

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Special Committee on Strategic Planning Meeting on February 8, 2013

The Special Committee on Strategic Planning of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 3:00 p.m., Friday, February 8, 2013, in the Board Room of The Rotunda; Frank B. Atkinson and Linwood H. Rose, Co-Chairs, presided.

Present were Ms. Victoria D. Harker, Ms. Bobbie G. Kilberg, Vincent J. Mastracco Jr. (via phone), Edward D. Miller, M.D. (via phone), and Ms. Helen E. Dragas, Rector.
Also present were Ms. Allison Cryor DiNardo and Ms. Hillary A. Hurd.


Participating by phone were Jeffrey C. Walker, James L. Hilton, and Ben Edwards and Craig Goebel (Art & Science Consultants).

Report by the Co-Chair

Mr. Atkinson stated that it was obvious a great deal of work had been done on Grounds already, and that much progress was being made. He then asked the President to give a report.

President Sullivan expressed her gratitude to Lin Rose and Frank Atkinson for their diligent work as co-chairs and to all of the committee members for their dedication to helping plan for the University’s future.

To set the stage for the discussion of strategic planning, Ms. Sullivan mentioned two recent news stories. The first one involved the US Department of Justice filing a lawsuit against the nation’s largest rating agency, Standard & Poor’s, charging the agency with inflating its ratings on bad mortgage investments to boost its bottom line, thereby defrauding investors.¹ The piece was from The Washington Post, who reported that five colleges have recently admitted to inaccurate data provided to U.S. News & World Report in an effort to boost their positions in the rankings.²

The President said these two organizations, Standard & Poor’s and U.S. News and World Report, are often viewed by American consumers as infallible oracles of sound judgment. Their ratings and rankings are accepted as God’s truth, however, the breaking news this week tells us two things: 1) the institutions that rate and rank UVA and other universities and organizations are not perfect, and not immune to the pitfalls of bad data and human misbehavior; and, 2) although we value our high position in the rankings and our solid bond ratings from external agencies, we need to have a strong internal compass to guide our planning.

President Sullivan stated that we need to assess the external environment for higher education and the position of our peers as we

¹http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/federal-lawsuit-accuses-sandp-of-defrauding-investors/2013/02/05/ae63e10e-6fa5-11e2-ac36-3d8d9dcaaa2e2_story.html
²http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/five-colleges-misreported-data-to-us-news-raising-concerns-about-rankings-reputation/2013/02/06/cb437876-6b17-11e2-af53-7b2b2a7510a8_story.html
plan, and our consultant is helping us with that assessment phase. But most importantly, we need to look within ourselves and within our University, to our ideals and our values as individuals and as an institution, as we plan and build a bright future for UVa.

President Sullivan said almost exactly five months ago, on September 4, 2012, she received a letter from Mr. Rose and Mr. Atkinson laying out the charge for the University’s strategic planning effort. The letter described the challenges facing higher education, and argued that UVa. should be the leader in addressing these challenges. The charge was to create a strategic plan that would give us a “roadmap for our future.” Over the past five months, dozens of faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents, and friends have been working together in seven working groups under the leadership of a steering committee. There have been open forums to give everyone on Grounds a voice in this process. An initial report from the working groups will be provided at this meeting.

The President said the strategic planning process gives us an opportunity to re-examine and re-imagine the University’s mission. The current mission statement was adopted by the Faculty Senate in 1985, and so it is nearly three decades old. A great deal has changed in the past three decades; we want to have a mission statement that works for 2013. With that in mind, she asked the Faculty Senate to consider how UVa.’s mission might be re-stated and perhaps modernized. The Senate has a working group focused on this, and they are developing a draft.

This planning period also gives the University an opportunity to define the vision for the University’s future. Unlike a mission statement that describes our core purposes today, a vision statement should describe a desired future state for the university: a vision of what we can become by pursuing a shared set of goals, guided by a shared set of values.

President Sullivan said it would have been impossible for her to lay out a vision when she first arrived at the University in 2010; she needed to learn about the current state of the University before envisioning its future. She said she has been working on a document that distills her personal beliefs about the University, accrued over the past two years, into a concise vision statement. She said it was still a work-in-progress, but she provided some of the key points.

At a time when many European and Asian countries are racing to imitate American research universities because they see us as models of excellence, in this country we are tearing our own universities down. The pressures and criticisms are tremendous. President Sullivan said she believes UVa. can emerge as the leader in public higher education during this period of tremendous challenges. If we don’t set an example by meeting the challenges, all public universities are going to struggle.
The President said if we lose our public universities in this country, it will be a profoundly damaging loss. The late Clark Kerr, who served in the 1950s and 60s as president of the University of California system, said that "the university is a prime instrument of national purpose." It is in our national interest, and essential to our national purpose, to preserve our public universities. She believes UVa. is the best-qualified university to lead in this period of challenge, for four reasons:

1. Thomas Jefferson founded this University with a specific purpose: to create an educated citizenry to sustain the Republic. This founding story makes us different from our peers, and it gives us inspiration and a clear sense of purpose today; we want to be the premier training ground for national and global leaders.

2. Innovation is in our DNA. Jefferson redefined higher education when he created a wholly new, unprecedented kind of secular university 200 years ago, and we can draw on that tradition of innovation now to redefine higher education in UVa.'s third century.

3. The University's scale is uncommon, because we combine the resources of a research university with the smaller size of a liberal arts college. At large mega-schools, faculty focus on their own research; at small liberal arts colleges, faculty reproduce knowledge. At UVa., we produce knowledge, and our students and faculty are partners in discovery and innovation. Our faculty guide our students through an intellectual progression: turning information into data, data into knowledge, and knowledge into wisdom.

4. UVa. is a secular institution where values matter. Honor and ethics, self-governance, leadership, diversity — these values give moral and ethical backbone to our academic enterprise, and they shape UVa.'s unique culture.

President Sullivan said these qualities define the University today, so what will UVa. be tomorrow? Building on these distinctive qualities, the University will break down the traditional academic barriers that separate disciplines to build multi-disciplinary faculty teams that seek solutions to the most complicated problems of our time. The individual, curiosity-driven researchers will still thrive here, but they will thrive in an environment that fosters collaboration at the intersections between disciplines.

The President said we will re-focus our research enterprise to leverage existing areas of strength in Big Data, biomedical sciences, global health, and other areas, while identifying new areas of opportunity as they emerge, and we will continuously revise our curriculum to face the evolving job market. We want to be known for our agility and aggressiveness in anticipating and responding to the needs of this century. We will offer the very best residential
education in the country, because, even as we experiment with new
technologies, we know that face-to-face education is the best means
for teaching and learning — especially here, where the Academical
Village gives us a physical model for how we teach and learn.

The President said the University will be known as a truly global
university, but the only global university with a distinctively
American story connected to the nation’s founding. We will use our
unique scale to optimize residential education and to drive innovation
at a pace and quality that other universities can’t match. And we
will be known for promoting a set of values that other universities
simply don’t have. She stated that you may find one or two of these
qualities in other universities around the country, but you will only
find all of them here at UVa. And together, through their
commensurate effect, they make the University of Virginia greater than
the sum of its parts.

President Sullivan also stated that she plans to continue working
on a statement that encapsulates this vision, and it should dovetail
with the planning effort.

Mr. Milton Adams gave an overview of the strategic planning
process. There are seven working groups: 1) Faculty Recruitment,
Retention, and Development; 2) Public University; 3) Resources; 4)
Streamlining; 5) Student Life; 6) Synergy; and 7) Technology. Mr.
Adams stated that these workgroups have been working diligently and
meeting over the last several months and have developed a set of
emergent ideas and reports. Those reports can be found on the
Strategic Planning website. The working groups have each held an open
forum and they added an eighth forum for students to talk about all of
the topics in general. Mr. Adams said that all of the forums were
well attended.

Mr. Adams spoke briefly about the Art & Science Group
consultants; Ben Edwards and Craig Goebel are the principals. They
have completed interviews with almost all of the Board of Visitors
members, and are currently interviewing 20 or so higher education
“thought leaders” around the country, many of whom are presidents or
chancellors of leading institutions, and others who write and publish
about what is going on in higher education today. The consultants,
along with administration, have identified nine peer institutions to
measure ourselves against; four are public and five are private. They
have proposed and the University is working on a set of metrics to use
for this assessment. We have already received the first set of
measures and that work is currently underway right now. We expect to
get the results from the “thought leaders” next month which will
further inform the strategic plan. In April, he said we should
receive the results from the environmental and academic assessments to
feed into the work groups and the steering committee to identify gaps
that may exist and to make sure we are addressing the right
strategies. Mr. Adams presented a roadmap to the Committee. It
begins in February and ends with the final report in September for
Board of Visitors’ approval. It contains all of the steps that the University feels are necessary to get to where we need to be. The roadmap will evolve over the upcoming months.

Mr. Adams said the Steering Committee met on January 28 and will meet again on February 18. At the January 28 meeting, all of the seven working group chairs reported out and they developed a preliminary list of emergent ideas. He said these will change over time. A couple of the emergent ideas were highlighted by Mr. Adams.

The committee heard reports from three of the chairs of the working groups. Dean Bruner reported on the work of the Streamlining Work Group. He stated that streamlining means many different things to different people. Most often it means cutting costs. He assured the committee the members of the working group were fully aware of the need to watch resources. Streamlining is not a one-time effort; best organizations focus on continued improvement. He stated it should be more than cutting costs; it should focus on the continuous pursuit of excellence. The working group conducted an on-line survey that attracted about 2,000 responses of faculty and staff, held a large forum, interviewed about 30 administrators, reached out to several groups of students, and did an in-depth streamlining research review of three peer institutions: UNC, Berkeley, and Michigan. This research yielded an enormous amount of insight. The working group outlined three top priorities:

1) Launch an initiative on operational excellence while being aware of University excellence initiatives already in place. The University needs to gather more information, look for potential additional cost savings opportunities, set goals, and frame a multi-year strategy.

2) Academic and student life initiative: the University should review the curriculum, to offer sufficiency to meet demand and need. Other areas to focus on include space allocation and the ability to change a classroom on the fly; a student system that is timely, up-to-date and user-friendly; student affairs is the spirit of student life and needs to be well staffed; student services should be reviewed, particularly financial aid and academic advising.

3) Articulate the University’s mission, vision, values, and essential culture. Inefficiencies arise out of confusion about the purpose, vision, and values. Excellence is unlikely to be sustained without alignment around our principles.

Dean Bruner stated that both President Sullivan and Pat Hogan have said streamlining should begin now and not wait for the strategic plan. We should start to reap the benefits of streamlining as soon as possible.

Jeff Walker, chair of the Synergy group, was on the phone and gave a report on the status of his working group. He began by talking about the involvement of so many entities in this process: faculty,
staff, deans, students, alumni and others have been working well together and actually listening to one another. He invited the Board of Visitors to not only be a review group in this process but to become a partner in the process as well. He invited the Board to sit in on a working group session to hear what is going on within each group. The Synergy group is currently working on a survey to send out to all alumni. They are focusing on a several areas that include:

1) Communications - need to figure out ways to connect - leveraging technology. He used the example of a Chemistry professor going to the School of Medicine and sitting in on classes to gain new ideas of how to use technology in the classroom and how to integrate that into his own classroom and bringing technology experts together with professors to adapt to the way students are now learning.

2) Hiring - has to be focused, not just departments looking at faculty. There should be a change in the tenure process--seek input from individuals outside of the department.

3) Innovation - central fund for early innovation. These funds would be used for ideas that are too early in the process to ask a donor to fund. Once you have brought these collaborative ideas together, then you could go out and raise more funds for the initiative by asking donors at that point. The culture has to be supportive of quick changes and quick innovation, but at the same time be quick to shut them down if they don’t make sense. Mr. Walker said it was also about integrating flipped classrooms and taking the University into the 21st Century.

4) Linkages within the State of Virginia - collaborations with other universities could be a win for all. Explore ideas to integrate programs that cross with other schools such as William and Mary, Virginia Tech, JMU, etc.

James Hilton, chair of the Technology working group spoke by telephone and gave a status report. He said that his group started by stepping back from technology and looking at the forces that get ignored at our peril as we go forward. They identified eight of them:

1) Big data - every single discipline is moving toward big data - our consumer lines are driven by big data. The big issue will be, how do our students live in this century?

2) Changed nature of inquiry - for example, humanities in the digital age. All of the products of discovery look and smell different. We have no way of knowing where technology is going or what the E-Book will look like 50 years from now.

3) Consumerization - it used to be we could control technology and how everyone receives data. That's not the way we want to be now; everyone expects to construct their own technology. With that come the thoughts of how our curriculum changes.

4) Globalization.

5) Screen time.
6) Technological literacy – what does it mean to be a technologically literate person?
7) Interoperability versus proprietary systems.
8) Connective learning – all instruction takes place in connective learning even if still have face-to-face lectures.

The working group looked at each of these areas and asked, what are the implications for the University? Is it something that is strategically differentiating and at our technology capabilities? Out of these discussions, the working group came up with three broad areas: big data, scholarship in the digital era, and reimagining the Academical Village – with technology in mind, how do we embrace connective learning?

President Sullivan closed the meeting by reviewing next steps for strategic planning: the steering committee will meet again on February 18 and the President and Mr. Adams will share the feedback from the February 8 meeting. At the February 21-22 Board of Visitors meetings, Mr. Rose and Mr. Atkinson will report to the full Board on planning work to date. On March 4, the Faculty Senate is holding a working meeting to consider the priorities identified by the working groups; the members of the steering committee were asked to attend.

President Sullivan asked several working groups to take specific actions right now. For example, many of the ideas coming from the Streamlining group could have immediate impact, so EVP-COO Pat Hogan will be meeting with that group soon. Some of these ideas make sense to implement immediately rather than waiting to incorporate them into the strategic plan. She asked the Resources group to meet with UVIMCO CEO Larry Kochard and UVa. Treasurer Jim Matteo to discuss their ideas. She asked the Faculty Life and Synergies groups to consider a joint meeting, because the intellectual synergies will entail faculty engagement in the short range and strongly affect faculty recruitment going forward.

President Sullivan stated that improving advising was one of the recommendations from the Student Life group, so she asked that group to flesh out in more detail what it would entail for the University to take a position as the leading institution in advising, broadly – not just academic advising – but also career advising and development according to the values that we espouse (honor, self-governance, and others).

President Sullivan asked the Information Technology group to consider how the University would best incorporate e-learning into its activities, keeping in mind the necessity of maintaining or improving the University’s valuable brand.

The President said the report from the working group focused on what it means to be a public university has concentrated on the University’s relationship with the Commonwealth. She asked that group
to consider re-framing the issues to include the broader public and other stakeholders.

President Sullivan said she was impressed with the hard work and creativity that went into the working group reports. She said she thinks the planning effort needs to be more aspirational, and it needs to have intellectual direction. She said the priorities identified by the working groups cover a lot of different areas, and they point in a lot of different directions. She asked each of the deans to prepare by February 14 two “Valentines”: a paragraph about aspirations for UVa., and another paragraph about the most important intellectual directions for the University in the next five to 10 years. This should help give direction to the planning effort.

The President touched on what the plan will look like when finished. She said eventually the 20+ priorities that appear now in the working group reports will be boiled down to about five big ideas or priorities. Along with the aspirational tone and intellectual direction, an addition of specific tactics for achieving our goals and metrics to measure our success is necessary. That will be the general structure of the strategic plan: aspiration and intellectual direction backed by concrete tactics and metrics.

Mr. Atkinson said the three working groups show the quality and range of ideas. He said with the turnover of faculty, what will their expectations be in terms of technology?

Ms. Kilberg said we have to provide a strategic plan and vision that really sets us apart from other institutions. We have to be clear about how we are very different from other schools that are undertaking this same strategic planning process.

Mr. Rose suggested that we need to make strategic choices as a first step before strategic initiatives. We need to review what those opportunities are and come up with a top 10 list. President Sullivan suggested the May Board meeting as the timeframe for this top 10 list.

Ms. Harker stated she was heartened to hear that the administration wanted to move ahead with new efficiencies and not wait on the strategic plan. She also stressed her desire to see an integration of the streamlining process with technology.

Ms. Hurd asked if a comparative study was being conducted to look at best practices on advising systems at other universities. Ms. Sullivan said that she had asked the student life working group and subgroup on career services to look into this area.

Rector Dragas said she was impressed by all the work that had taken place already and she was sorry more Board members were not able to come to the meeting to hear the reports. She will encourage Board members to attend the working group meetings in the future. She also said that it would be great – to the extent possible – to bring this
depth of information to the regular Board meetings so they were better informed as well. It will enrich the process, it will enrich the understanding of the Board, and it will enrich the actual adoption of the plan.

Mr. Adams spoke briefly about the timeline. The different working groups/processes are working in parallel. The timeline is subject to further revisions. Mr. Atkinson said there was an ongoing judgment of whether the strategic plan will be ready by August. He said it was important to take the time to get it right. The President said the goal was to keep up the momentum and to keep the schedule, with major writing in June and July.

Rector Dragas asked at what point it would be possible to start talking about allocating resources for these ideas that come out of the plan? The President said she had given thought to this--the tactics and metrics part of the plan will include a resources plan. She stated that we will have projects with milestones and set sunset dates as well so if a project does not work out the way we had planned, we can put an end to it.

Rector Dragas also asked about the overlay of the individual schools’ strategic plans with the University’s strategic plans. The President said Mr. Adams has accumulated and is reviewing the different school strategic plans. There will be many cases where we have common goals - they won’t all match but some will.

Mr. Simon said the budget process this year is a two-step process. The dean will explain their strategy for moving their schools forward and then when we go through the budget process in March they will explain how they will fund those strategies. The school plan will inform the University’s plan and vice versa – it works both ways. This process will build a partnership between the two.

Mr. Rose brought the committee meeting to closure by thanking everyone participating in the process. He highlighted the fact that the President is very engaged and thanked her for laying out such a thorough process.

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Upon motion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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