MEMORANDUM

TO: The Special Committee on the Nomination of a President:

William H. Goodwin Jr., Co-chair                      Victoria D. Harker
Frank M. Conner III, Co-chair                        John C. Jeffries Jr.
Mark T. Bowles                                        Babur B. Lateef, M.D.
L.D. Britt, M.D.                                      John G. Macfarlane III
Robert F. Bruner                                      George Keith Martin
Whittington W. Clement                                James B. Murray Jr.
Elizabeth M. Cranwell                                 Jahan Ramazani
Thomas A. DePasquaie                                  Margaret M. Riley
Thomas F. Farrell II                                  Pamela Sutton-Wallace
Aryn Frazier                                           Michael Suarez
Barbara J. Fried                                      Phoebe A. Willis

and

The Remaining Members of the Board:

John A. Griffin                                       Tammy S. Murphy
Kevin J. Fay                                           James V. Reyes
Frank E. Genovese                                      Jeffrey C. Walker
                                                                 Nina J. Solenski, M.D.

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Listening Session with Members of the Special Committee on the Nomination of a President and University Faculty on March 22, 2017

Members of a subcommittee of the Special Committee on the Nomination of a President (subcommittee) met, in open session, at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 22, 2017, in Room 101 of Nau Hall. Mr. Martin, Ms. Sutton-Wallace, and Ms. Riley conducted the meeting.

Other members present were Mr. Conner and Mr. Murray.

Present as well were Margaret Grundy, Susan G. Harris, Catherine A. Lindqvist, Melissa Hurst, and executive search consultant representatives John Isaacson, Ponneh Varho, and Katherine Stellato from Isaacson, Miller.
The purpose of the meeting was to listen to opinions of members of the faculty on qualities they seek in the ninth president of the University. Mr. Martin opened the meeting by asking the faculty in the room to answer some questions, the first of which was, “What are the greatest assets of the University?”

A graduate student in Nursing said she chose UVA because of the people and the culture as well as the program, which she said was unique. Her third reason for attending UVA was access to many learning opportunities.

Several participants pointed out that the culture of an academic enterprise is distinct from the rest of the public and private sphere because faculty must have the freedom to explore, experiment, and innovate. One participant said the Greek inscription on Cabell Hall says “Know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” He said the job of a faculty member is to spread the truth.

There was discussion about the University’s heritage as an institution founded by Thomas Jefferson and how that “brand” should be marketed. A participant said the legacy should be leveraged through a focus on citizenship.

A participant said the University has become too bureaucratic; there should be more academic freedom and less micromanagement.

Mr. Martin asked the participants to answer the question, “What qualities should we look for in a president?” Answers included the following:

• The president should understand the academic mission.
• Non tenure-track faculty have been valued and protected at UVA and this is a real asset to the institution.
• In the past there has been a disdain for the sciences, and this has not changed; an illustration is the makeup of the Special Committee on the Nomination of a President because none of the faculty work in the sciences—there should be more emphasis on research and STEM-related fields.
• The next president should pursue reinvestment in higher education by the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is bad for us as a culture and a democratic society not to value education, which is a public good.
• The next president should fight for, defend, and protect the value of education. The life of the mind is important to society.
• UVA is not a corporation and should not be expected to function as a corporation.
• As a public university, the next president needs to understand the duty and role of educating our citizenry, and not just, or primarily, the wealthy.
• The president should be willing to forego gifts to the University that do not conform to the values held by UVA.
• It is possible for an effective president to come out of the business world, but the possibility of finding such a person is very, very, small.

Mr. Martin asked the participants to list the personal characteristics the Special Committee should seek in the next president. Participants provided the following responses:

• The president should have a long-term, global perspective.
• The University has a congenial atmosphere, working together for common goals, and this is important to maintain.
The president must have “spectacular” communication skills and be a collaborator because academia is collaborative and not hierarchical.

The president should understand the inequalities on campus, understand and recognize the historical context, and promote diversity and inclusion.

UVA needs a president who listens to learn.

The president must have a commitment to shared governance and academic freedom.

Finally, Mr. Martin asked what areas of experience the next president should have. Responses included:

- Knowledge of the University's culture.
- Knowledge of what doesn't work as well as what works, and let go of what doesn't work.
- The president should be a successful researcher and truly understand what it means to develop knowledge.
- Experience working across disciplines.
- Have an understanding of UVA's problematic racial history and be forward-thinking.
- The president should be a public intellectual. The example given was Martha Nussbaum, who is intellectual in a winsome way.

A participant asked for a show of hands on the question of whether the audience believed the next president should have an academic background, and a strong majority of attendees raised their hands. The question was asked as to whether the intent is that this be a litmus test, which was not fully answered.

Ms. Sutton-Wallace then summarized what she heard from the audience. One participant asked if the president’s attention to the needs of UVA staff had been addressed, and several requested that this be added to the list. Ms. Sutton-Wallace said there would be further listening sessions in each of the schools.

Mr. Conner reminded the audience that there is a survey on the search website, and he asked that they review the draft presidential profile and comment on it.

The meeting concluded at 5:20 p.m.

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