MEMORANDUM

TO: The Ad Hoc Committee on AccessUVa:

Mark J. Kington, Chair
A. Macdonald Caputo
Allison Cryor DiNardo
W. Heywood Fralin
Robert D. Hardie
Glynn D. Key
John L. Nau III
Jonathan B. Overdevest
Helen E. Dragas, Ex Officio

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Ad Hoc Committee on AccessUVa Meeting on February 6, 2012

The Ad Hoc Committee on AccessUVa of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in Open Session, at 8:00 a.m., Monday, February 6, 2012, in the President’s Conference Room at Madison Hall; Mark J. Kington, Chair, presided. Present were W. Heywood Fralin, Robert D. Hardie, Jonathan B. Overdevest, and Ms. Helen E. Dragas, Rector. Participating by telephone were A. Macdonald Caputo, Ms. Allison Cryor DiNardo, Ms. Glynn D. Key, and John L. Nau III.

Present as well were Michael Strine, Ms. Patricia M. Lampkin, Ms. Susan G. Harris, Ms. Yoke San L. Reynolds, George A. Stovall, Ms. Nancy Rivers, Stephen A. Kimata, Gregory W. Roberts, Ms. Colette Sheehy, Ms. Yvonne B. Hubbard, Ms. Megan K. Lowe, and Ms. Debra D. Rinker.

Consultants Craig Goebel, Ben Edwards, and Ms. Emily Oliver were also present.
Michael Strine, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, began by introducing the elements of the study by the Art & Science Group (A&S), which include financial aid optimization, peer benchmarking, and a strategic investment survey. He said that the University of Pennsylvania, University of California Berkeley, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, University of Michigan, Duke University, Cornell University, and Virginia Tech had been asked to participate in peer benchmarking. So far, Duke University, Virginia Tech, and University of North Carolina Chapel Hill have agreed to participate, University of Pennsylvania declined participation, and University of California Berkeley as well as Cornell University remain uncommitted. Replacements will be found for both the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and University of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Goebel of A&S presented the parameters and findings of the financial aid optimization study. He outlined the admissions data used in the analysis, including year of application, geography, race, legacy, SAT scores, Echols/Rodman scholars, and the "bandwagon effect," which occurs when the likelihood of students' interest in the University increases following a year when the high school has many graduates matriculate at the University. The financial data used was need amount, state aid, and UVa grant size. International students, student-athletes, tuition remission students, and non-aid applicants were not included in the models.

The key factors considered in the study were yield, diversity, academic quality, and net revenue, and the parameters excluded students who pay full tuition and those who are below the 200% poverty level. A&S found that small changes could be made to the existing financial aid awards given to in-state students in order to cause a slight increase in diversity, academic quality, and net tuition revenue. Each out-of-state student brings in significantly higher revenue and would increase diversity and academic quality. On the basis of net revenue, in-state students are worth less, and the loss of out-of-state students would decrease the net revenue. The option of substituting full-paying out-of-state students for the out-of-state students receiving aid would negatively affect academic quality and diversity. Mr. Roberts said that there is a difference in quality between in-state and out-of-state students, and that he could not read "need blind" in this scenario because he would have to know who was full paying.
The study’s findings show that only marginal gains in net tuition revenue, diversity, and academic quality can be made for in-state. It would be marginally more efficient to grant more awards to students with higher need. It would be most efficient to increase awards to students with lower need, but awards to higher need students also could increase net tuition revenue.

Mr. Edwards presented the pricing and positioning study. He said that the focuses were on the factors that lead students to apply, and the places where UVa can invest and make changes to influence more desirable prospects to apply. Key aspects of the methodology are that it takes into account true competitor sets, imputes decision factors, and leads to predictive models of behavior. The process includes: first phone call to screen, gather information and determine competitor sets; mailing of scenario cards; and second phone call to ascertain response to key variable, rank attributes and initiatives. The cohorts that will be sampled quantitatively are four in-state regional groups, out-of-state, lower income, underrepresented minorities, highest ability students, students planning to major in engineering, and others.

The attributes to be rated are: commitment to need-based financial aid, affordability, tradition of student leadership, beauty of campus, 4-year graduation rate, emphasis on public service and citizenship, and advising and mentoring. The variables to be tested are: big university v. smaller college feel; strong v. limited emphasis on faculty-student relationship; extraordinary student leadership opportunities v. more than usual v. typical student leadership opportunities; strong v. some emphasis on global citizenship; tradition/like-minded culture v. individuality/diverse culture; need-blind and meets full need v. need-blind v. need aware; cost of attendance: current and 3 levels of increase; in-state and out-of state, some v. extensive need-based aid; student debt caps: 3 levels, some v. no merit aid. The initiatives to be tested are: support degree completion in STEM; “graduate-like” junior-senior concentrations; “3+1” dual degree programs; focus on innovation and entrepreneurship; opportunities in Washington, DC, for all; and freshman seminar with faculty member who becomes advisor.

Mr. Goebel said that database models will show the impact of each of the attributes. Ms. Lampkin suggested that the student experience outside of the classroom is also important. Mr. Kington agreed with Ms. Lampkin and said that the questions are about both experiences inside and outside of the classroom.
Ms. Lampkin said a question should be asked about parental influence, especially to Access-eligible students. Mr. Kington asked about the possibility of a follow-up after four years. He questioned whether it is best to give 17-18 year old students what they say they want, or if we assume that we know better and give them what we believe they really want?

Ms. Dragas asked about career placement and advising. Mr. Edwards said that it appears in the leadership variable and other places. Ms. Dragas said it should focus more directly on advising both as an attribute and an initiative.

The model will show how yield will go up or down depending on different conditions, studying applicants and non-applicants, and matriculants and non-matriculants. Mr. Roberts said in determining the best pool of applicants the best indicators of success in college are high school transcript, strength of schedule, and grades. SAT scores are a less reliable indicator.

Ms. Dragas asked if the core curriculum requirements had an effect on applications. Mr. Edwards said they have tried testing them a number of times, but most schools are similar. For some schools they are a major factor, but for most they are not. They are not likely to be a factor for prospective students to the University. Mr. Edwards said that there will be an open-ended question: Why did you or did you not choose to apply to UVa?

Mr. Kington said that it was good to hear that there are not many ways to optimize the existing program. The goal is to make AccessUVa better, but the first goal is do no harm. The survey will help to find ways to better serve the students.

Mr. Strine said he gave a presentation to SCHEV where he said some schools are at a tipping point; the next dollar of tuition will need to be plowed back to aid, and the study will tell us where we are in terms of the tipping point. Those schools who are past the tipping point raise their price and their yield plummets. He said that some peers have more aid available, so net price will be lower at those schools than in-state tuition at UVa.

Mr. Kington thanked everyone for their participation in the discussion, and upon motion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.