REPORT OF THE NOVEMBER 15, 2020, INFORMATION SESSION

An information session (open session) for the Board of Visitors was held on Sunday, November 15, 2020, from 1:00 to 2:20 p.m. in the Latham Ballroom at The Inn at Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg, Virginia. There were no action items, and there was no public comment period. The agenda included:

- Update on the Innovation Campus by Dr. Lance Collins, the new Vice President and Executive Director of the Innovation Campus. He announced some leadership additions, including Chief Operating Officer Ken Smith. He is building a culture for the innovation campus, which should not be considered merely a branch campus. An innovation campus is bold and may accept a little more risk. However, the metrics associated with the quality of faculty and evaluation of student performance are identical to the Blacksburg campus. He is establishing pillars of the academic programs, and among them is creating the most diverse program in the country. Creating a pre-college (K-12) pipeline with the public schools in the area is being considered. He is also developing strategies with Luisa Havens-Gerardo, Vice Provost for Enrollment and Degree Management. He shared the membership of the advisory board for the Innovation Campus, which will play a very important role. For the academic building, the schematic design is complete. The preliminary design should be completed in March 2021, and construction is expected to begin in July 2021. The innovation building across the plaza is being developed by JBG Smith. Virginia Tech will lease space, and there may be an incubator in the building as well.

- Presentation of the Continuous Strategic Plan by Dr. Menah Pratt-Clarke, Vice President for Inclusion, Diversity, and Strategic Affairs. She began by sharing a high-level summary slide of all 41 metrics indicating progress by the colors red, yellow, and green to indicate no progress, moderate progress, or good progress, respectively. She indicated that the administration is still figuring out which 10-15 metrics of the 41 total metrics are the ones that define the university. She expects that this will result in a two-tiered system in which the top tier would include the 10-15 defining metrics, and the second tier would be the remainder. Mary Helmick, Director of Procurement, responded in depth to a question about the SWAM metric for small, women, and minority-owned businesses. Dr. Pratt-Clarke noted that the on-line dashboard is being updated continually and is accessible at any time; she encouraged the Board members to visit the dashboard.

- Briefing on Shared Governance. Provost Cyril Clarke briefed the Board on the work of the President's Committee on Governance (PCG). He and the President of the Faculty Senate co-chair the committee, which completed its first phase of work last academic year and is now working on the second phase. The university's current system of shared governance was established in the early 1990s and has served the university relatively well, but one missing element has been a mechanism for the collective voice of faculty (Faculty Senate) and the other constituent groups (Staff Senate, Graduate Student Assembly, Student Government Association) to have direct input into policy development and approval. He went on to explain that in the

restructured system that is envisioned, not every voice will have equal weight in every matter. Rather, the weight of the representative body will depend on its level of responsibility and accountability for a given issue. However, under the restructured system, anyone at the university will have an "on-ramp," some commission or senate to which they can bring an issue. Vice President for Student Affairs Frank Shushok went on to explain the work of the Task Force on the Future of Student Governance, which he co-chairs with Kim O'Rourke, VP for Policy and Governance. The work of that group will be coordinated with the PCG as recommendations are formed for the new structure. He explained that there are three goals for the student governance structure: (1) to provide a profound and powerful leadership lab for students; (2) to help students to create a representative student government body that allows all voices to rise to the top and for issues to be debated; and (3) to generate powerful participation by students in governance to provide an important feedback loop. The group met with the Executive Director of the American Student Government Association and learned there are not many schools that are examining their student government organizations currently. Texas A&M and the University of Florida have broad participation in student governance. The task force thus far has determined that the dispersed series of student bodies is not coordinated, meaning that administrators often receive differing feedback from different pockets of students. There needs to be a better way for those organizations to curate the issues raised by students. The task force will endeavor to complete its work by March so that proposals can proceed through the existing governance system this academic year and implementation can occur next year. Board member Melissa Nelson noted that she was president of student government while a student at Virginia Tech and offered to be a resource for the task force. Board members stressed the importance of communication and transparency in the process.

- Constituent Reports were presented by Camellia Pastore (undergraduate student rep) and Sabrina Sturgeon (graduate student rep). Due to time constraints, reports by Eric Kaufman (faculty rep) and Tamarah Smith (staff rep) were postponed until the full Board meeting on Monday (November 16).

*(Copies of the presentations and reports are filed
with the permanent minutes and attached.)*

VIRGINIA TECH
VT INNOVATION CAMPUS

Innovation Campus

Board of Visitors Update | November 2020

Innovation Campus Leadership

- Ken Smith joined the Innovation Campus as Chief Operating Officer on October 25

- Ken brings 23 years of experience at Virginia Tech

- We will develop a staffing plan and campus budget

Ken Smith – Former Vice Provost for Resource Management

Building...

- Innovation Campus Academic Building

- Engagement with the Tech Ecosystem

- Tech Talent Pipeline
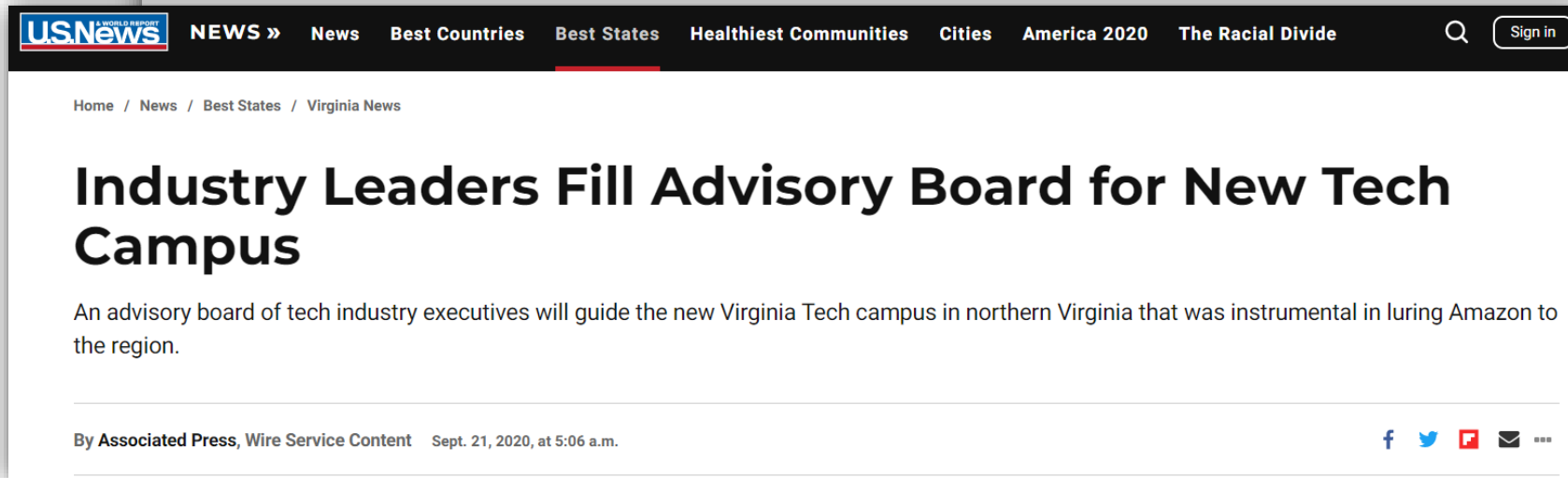
- World-class Faculty

Building...

- **CULTURE**

- Bold

- Outward Facing—Connected—Impactful

- Lives up to "Innovation" along <u>every</u> dimension

The Innovation Campus Advisory Board was announced publicly on September 21, 2020.

Press Coverage

WASHINGTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE
Federal, state and local help to navigate the coronavirus crisis ›

INDUSTRIES & TOPICS | NEWS | LISTS & LEADS | PEOPLE & COMPANIES | EVENTS | LEADERSHIP TRUST | MORE...

Education

These Greater Washington business leaders are shaping Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus

U.S.News A WORLD REPORT

NEWS » | News | Best Countries | Best States | Healthiest Communities | Cities | America 2020 | The Racial Divide

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Industry Leaders Fill Advisory Board for New Tech Campus

An advisory board of tech industry executives will guide the new Virginia Tech campus in northern Virginia that was instrumental in luring Amazon to the region.

By **Associated Press**, Wire Service Content   Sept. 21, 2020, at 5:06 a.m.

Pillars of the Academic Programs

- **Diversity.** Build the most diverse tech graduate program in the country

- **Project-based curriculum.** Working with the Advisory Board, faculty and staff to develop experiential project-based curriculum as a central feature of all master's degrees

- Frontier online education
  - Studio quality video and a team of course designers
  - Creating pathways for working professionals in an urban environment
  - Certificate training programs
  - "Pre-tech" for non-tech majors interested in a career change

Faculty Hiring

- Hire leading faculty from around the world in key research areas:
    - AI / ML / Data Science (privacy vs public good, fairness)
    - "Next G" (wireless, cloud, networks, policy)
    - Immersive Environments (human-computer interaction, virtual and augmented reality)
    - Cybersecurity and Privacy
    - **Quantum Information Sciences** (based on quantum mechanical laws)

- Committee of CS and ECE faculty

- Input from the Advisory Board

- Focus on **senior hires** this academic year

Tech Talent Investment Program

- 2019-2020 bachelor's degree CS and ECE graduates:
    - 349 in-state students, 141 out-of-state students (414)
    - Exceeded undergraduate degree targets in CS and ECE
    - Met undergraduate enrollment targets for Fall 2020
- 2019-2020 Master's Degree CS and ECE Graduates:
    - 20 in-state students, 78 out-of-state students (207)
    - Over 100 deferments
- Implementing enrollment management strategies
    - Engaging Julie Ross and Luisa Havens-Gerardo
    - Increase numbers **and** diversity by 2022

Supporting Community Relations

- Met with local Alexandria City officials in September:
  - Mayor Justin Wilson
  - Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker
  - City Council members: Aguirre, Chapman, Jackson, Pepper, and Seifeldein
  - CEO of Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, Joe Haggerty
  - Alexandria City Manager Mark Jinks
  - CEO of Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, Stephanie Landrum
  - Alexandria City Public Schools, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Jr.

"Virginia Tech made the perfect hire and we are so excited to welcome Lance to our community." – Alexandria City Council

Pre-college programs for the tech pipeline

- "Tech Academy" for K-12 students in Alexandria City Public Schools
  - Build on the **Thinkabit** program sponsored by Qualcomm
  - Measurable outcomes
  - Complement broad education ecosystem (e.g., NOVA)
- Develop pathways to achieve regional scale and service the full spectrum of tech talent needs

Qualcomm
thinkabit lab

Academic Building on target for Fall 2024

- Schematic Design review completed on September 28

- Three independent cost estimates within 1.25% of each other

- Preliminary Design underway, to conclude next February

- Shovels in the ground **July 2021**

Academic Building I

Innovation Building

- Virginia Tech allocated 75,000 sq ft
- Career services
- Identifying corporate partners to co-locate
- Possibly an incubator for startups

BLOCK 10
NW CORNER | AERIAL VIEW

Continuous Strategic Planning Annual Milestones Report:

The Virginia Tech Difference

BOARD OF VISITORS

NOVEMBER 15, 2020

VIRGINIA TECH

Strategic Priority 1: Advance Regional, National, and Global Impact	Progress
Extramural Research Expenditures	🟩
Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education (WSJ/THE) US College Rankings	🟩
Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings	🟩
Experiential Learning	Recently updated
Undergraduate Student Enrollment	🟩
Graduate Student Enrollment	🟨
Internationally and Nationally Recognized Faculty Awards	🟨
Internationally and Nationally Recognized Faculty Publications	🟨
Internationally and Nationally Recognized Faculty Citations	🟨
Countries Represented by International Faculty	🟨
International Student Representation	Recently updated
Vibrant Virginia Initiative	Recently updated
Invention Disclosure	🟨
License Agreements	🟩
Start-up Companies	🟩
Distance Learning/E-Learning (Milestone is in development)	TBD

Strategic Priority 2: Elevate the Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) Difference	Progress
Underrepresented Minority Students	🟩
Underrepresented Minority or Underserved Students	🟩
Corps of Cadets Enrollment	🟨
Underrepresented Minority Graduate and Professional Students	🟨
Underrepresented Minority Faculty	🟨
Female Faculty	🟨
New Underrepresented Minority Faculty Hires	🟨
New Female Faculty Hires	🟩
Graduate Education Programs That Have Incorporated an Inclusion and Diversity Education Component	🟨
Undergraduate Students (Enrolled Since 2018) Who Have Completed Two or More Critical Analysis of Equity and Identity Pathways Courses	🟩
Undergraduate Students (Enrolled Since 2018) Who Have Completed Two or More Intercultural and Global Awareness Pathways Courses	🟩
Underrepresented Minority Staff and Administrative and Professional Faculty	🟨

Strategic Priority 3: Be A Destination for Talent	Progress
Instructional Faculty Salaries	
Staff and Administrative and Professional Salaries	
Four-Year Graduation Rates for Entering Freshmen	
Three-Year Graduation Rates for Transfer Students	
Average Student Loan Debt Per Graduating Senior	Under review
Human Resources: Career Advancement	
Human Resources: Work-Life Balance	
Undergraduate Student Participation in Hokie Mentorship Connect	Recently updated
Students in Living Learning Programs	

Strategic Priority 4: Ensure Institutional Excellence	Progress
College and Unit-Level Strategic Plans	🟩
Auxiliary Maintenance Reserve Funding	🟩
Debt Rating – Moody's and Standard & Poor's (S&P)	🟩
University Debt Ratio	🟩
University Unrestricted Net Assets	🟨
SWaM Expenditures – Small Business or Woman Owned or Minority Owned	🟥
Endowment	🟨
Alumni Giving	🟩
New Gifts and Commitments	🟩

Live walk-through of the Strategic Planning Dashboard:

https://udc.aie.vt.edu/spm

Outline:
- Corona
  - Proud
  - How the semester felt/is feeling
  - Switch to cold
  - Quality of academics
  - Hopes for spring
- d&i → international
  - Freshmen experience now
  - Making people feel welcome
  - Highlights a dominant culture on campus
  - The little things (oasis, etc.)
- Administrative support
  - Social media statistics
  - We are in a tough position
  - Covid: connecting to students
  -

I want to start by saying that it's wonderful to see you all in person, and I am so proud of and thrilled about how Virginia Tech and the local New River Valley community have handled the past several months. Though we did have a spike in cases at the beginning of that semester, the numbers have steadily gone down since then as students have learned how to navigate new forms of social and academic activity. At the last meeting, I spoke about needing to set students up for success, and you did just that. This has really been a collective effort and we wouldn't be at this point without the support from administrators who have approved in-person events, faculty who have had compassion for our situations, and staff who basically make everything happen at this school. Thank you to all of those groups for your empathy and resources, and of course a thank you also goes out to my fellow students, who have adapted all of ours norms, held each other accountable, and used creativity to make the best of a tough situation.

For many of us, this has been the hardest semester of our lives. What I hear from students across the board is that mental health and academic performance have taken a dive. Students who have never missed a deadline aren't starting assignments until the night they are due; students who had a morning routine at McComas are finding it hard to get out of bed and go for a walk. On top of this, many virtual classes allow students to have video and audio off, leaving us feeling distanced from one of the only stable parts of our day. From the student perspective, it feels like our experience and opportunities are being chipped away at -- it is harder to make connections with professors and classmates, harder to stand out at a career fair, harder to get involved with clubs and try new things. I have received a barrage of emails from students asking when we'll receive the Credit/No Credit grading options, more flexibility with time off, or options for tuition reimbursement. I don't know what to tell them. Students understand that this

year will never be "normal" and that accommodations have to be made to keep our community safe, but there is a common thought among students that the administration keeps "taking" without understanding the impact on our lives.

Looking forward to the spring semester, I hope to see the university continue the positives that I mentioned above, but work to address the issues that left students struggling this semester. It is undebatable that the academic rigor has taken a dive, and many classes feel duller than ever while the work continues to pile up. All this without the same day-to-day human interactions that keep us sane and regular semester breaks that allow us to recharge with loved ones. I believe that we all have to work not just to replicate a typical semester in the virtual environment, but truly push ourselves to use these new resources to create an engaging learning experience and community space.

I would be remiss without pointing out that the pandemic and its effect on the student body has not been felt equally. It is hard enough to be a freshman at a large university without being in a global pandemic, but being an international student makes that experience exponentially harder. International freshmen have to overcome navigating the immigration and travel systems to get to the US, language barriers, a new culture, and making friends at a school where the majority of students are from the local area. Even the small details can feel isolating, such as not being able to get the food your family cooks at a dining hall or from a local restaurant. Many students who start at Tech already know who their friends are, what clubs they want to join, and how school traditions work. For those who don't have that prior knowledge, it can be easy to feel like an outsider. Now more than ever, Virginia Tech feels overwhelmingly homogenous in a way that serves as a constant reminder to students that they are in the minority.

For our international undergraduates who chose to remain abroad, they are being asked to continue attending classes, participating in meetings, and holding leadership positions on east coast time, which forces many of them to wake up throughout the night in order to continue their academic and career trajectory. While time difference issues are certainly not the fault of the university or any professor, I want to take this moment to really appreciate all that our international Hokies do everyday that can go unnoticed.

Though I am so excited by the progress Sabrina, myself, and other students have made so far, I remain frustrated with the lack of administrative support that I feel. Student leaders at this university have been working tirelessly to represent their constituents and push for policy with little to no results. I have heard this sentiment echoed across the university that we feel like the student opinion is only considered when it is convenient. Sometimes I'll see an update from VT News with an announcement of something that I've been asking for, and am left wondering if my ideas were used and never credited. Other times, I'll be asked for my opinion only to see the exact opposite decision be made with no explanation. Even worse is when the student body is handed decisions that impact our everyday lives knowing full well that no student voices had any say in the matter. I and every other student leader at this school are simply trying to be heard in

a way that is more than superficial. Virginia Tech is overflowing with dedicated administrators who excel at their jobs, and I would like to see much more direct support for student representatives and campus organizations who are working for the betterment of the whole university.

My dream is for the systems of student governance to be explained at orientation, so that all students attending Tech can understand who is standing up for them and how they can take advantage of or get involved with that process. Further, I would be thrilled to have more official university personnel or news channels and social media accounts help elevate the profiles and projects of student leaders. The pandemic has made making these connections infinitely more difficult, but it layers on an existing problem -- as representatives, we are being asked to leverage social media to reach the entire student body, connect with everyone from the newest Hokie freshmen up to the highest decision-makers at the university, identify issues and come up with creative yet impactful solutions that haven't been thought of yet, bring concepts from academic policy to keep on track with peer institutions, and finally, we have to execute all of our ideas on our own. There are so many people at the university that are more skilled in these areas than I am. I don't want to stand up here and speak on the same problems that you've been hearing about from representatives for years. That's why I'm asking for increased direct engagement with the issues and ideas that student leaders bring to the table, so that we can make tangible progress where it is needed

At the last meeting, I spoke on the concept of mass flourishing. Our whole community has demonstrated this in action through our commitment to the health and well-being of each other. However, this concept extends to shared governance and policy as well. The more people we involve with ideating and working for change, the richer the end result will be, and this applies for every constituent group. It's what makes us Hokies -- we do better together.

Good afternoon, everyone. This report is the culmination of ideas from faculty, staff, students, and colleagues, who without their support would not have made this possible.

Graduate Assistants in Programmatic, Teaching, and Research Roles

I am deeply concerned about graduate students being able to maintain work-life balance. Frequently, in addition to our academic obligations, graduate assistants have limited autonomy in our roles and cannot exercise choice in determining our work schedule or demands on our time. For example, in September the Division of Student Affairs directed that offices on campus host programming over Labor Day weekend to occupy the undergraduate body. This announcement was made *days* before Labor Day and effectively rendered graduate student's university sanctioned break void. For the Spring semester: Student Affairs has initiated a call to action that programmatic offices host 50% of their programs as in-person experiences. This 50% mandate forces graduate students to be present at in-person experiences, which places them at greater risk while the pandemic is in effect. One might argue that graduate assistants have a choice to work these roles and that if we are not comfortable with those expectations, that we can work elsewhere. I counter with that being an illusion of choice. The stakes are too high that make the choice of simply resigning unreasonable. Our educational funding is often tied to these positions. This illusion of choice extends to other student employees. like Resident Assistants who have their housing security dangling in the balance of being told, "they have a choice in working there or not"

The university's plan for spring semester includes a push to return to in-person instruction and five intermittently spaced one-day breaks rather than a full week off for spring break. Students who have lab work and teaching expectations will likely have to exercise these days to contribute to scholarship, research, and instruction preparation to adequately meet administrative, college, and federal deadlines. With the multitude of competing demands that graduate students must commit to, I compare these one-day breaks to a gasp for air whilst being pulled along a sweeping current – they provide momentary relief, but the overall threat remains. We must ensure that these breaks can be used by graduate students and that all of our competing demands and priorities do not undermine their purpose. What can we do to make sure graduate students are supported, treated fairly, and don't feel as though they are being exploited?

Diminished Quality of Education

My quality of education has declined; many students have shared with me a somber disappointment in the education they have received this semester. Students are expressing that they are not learning as much, stressed, and disengaged by the virtual classroom. One might respond that, "this was to be expected" or that "we are living in a pandemic, of course it's not going to be the same quality!". While these statements provide justification, they simultaneously dismiss accountability. I am grateful that the cost of tuition did not rise this academic year, but the record should note that the equivalent cost is for a faltering online education vs the experiential learning that we hoped for. I think that something should be done to either improve

the quality of online education or create more achievable metrics under a lower quality of education – simply put, inclusive pedagogy. At least until in-person education resumes in full.

I understand optional intensive training and preparation was provided to faculty and teaching assistants prior to the start of the semester. Perhaps we need more of this? We could allow students the opportunity to choose to be evaluated on the credit/no-credit grade modality like last Spring as opposed to the A-F model? We could extend course completion deadlines to ease the stress of student's negatively impacted by the lower quality of learning? Maybe a slight reduction or rebate in tuition rates for students in online only experiences? Now, I recognize each of these proposals comes with a "We can't do that because…". I urge you to **not** mire in the barriers, but to instead seek solutions. We can all agree; Virginia Tech was not meant to be experienced online. But if we have to experience it online, how can we improve the experiences of students and faculty?

Virginia Tech Communication

Communication continues to be a challenge. In reviewing previous student representative reports, it appears that this concern has been raised several times over the past two years. We have talked about how communication is too polished, poorly disseminated, and lacks centralization. In June 2018 undergraduate BoV Representative , Seyi Olusina highlighted that communication with students needs improvements. In June 2019, Rachel Iwicki spoke to the lack of transparency regarding communications. Madelynn Todd spoke to this issue at the August and November meetings last year and discussed a Student Leader Communications Workshop to begin to address the issues – that never happened. Camellia and I brought up communications three months ago. Camellia has worked tirelessly toward a collaborative relationship in leveraging Instagram to disseminate information on behalf of the University. This appears to be effective, indicating that communication team and student partnerships might be worth exploring, but I caution students bearing the load of university information dissemination. In my previous report, I proposed that an assessment project be performed to collect real data on where the communication problems lie. I submitted a survey proposal for this and met with our communications team – ultimately the project was abandoned. That is 6 times that a student representative has raised awareness to this issue.

To contextualize this issue, I will provide an example and can provide others upon request. The parking fiasco that happened this semester was defended by expressing to the campus community that it was part of the 5-year parking plan. This 5-year plan gave plenty of time to disseminate and prime students of the upcoming change, but instead was reported abruptly and two weeks later than the 5-year plan designated, no less. When students called the parking office, they were even given different information from what the website suggested when trying to buy a permit. Finally, even though this is on the 5-year plan, I as an involved student leader cannot find this plan on the website. This example highlights untimeliness, poor centralization of communication, and poor dissemination.

It appears we are operating on an "advancement model" of communication, which might be appropriate to external constituencies of the university who need to get a high-level overview

of what is going on at the university and one that frames us in an attractive light. Perhaps more attention could be paid to a model that shares necessary information with students, faculty, and staff? We, as members of Virginia Tech community, expect complex ideas and policies disseminated in digestible ways – the rationale behind decisions. We want to understand what is happening at our home – triumphs and defeats. We want information that does not appear sanitized. I am indifferent to whether these problems are addressed through a workshop, press briefings, partnerships, a consultation, or assessment – I simply want to see the problem addressed in a successful way so that the next student representatives do not need to raise the issue. This issue has come to a boiling point, what will be done to remedy this?

Conclusion

I want to conclude by asking, how will you, as Board of Visitor members execute your authority to remedy student representative concerns voiced today and in the future? My over-arching request is that the experiences and needs of graduate and professional students be attended to more intentionally by faculty and administrators. I come to you hopeful that we can pursue changes to how we are operating based on the observations of the student body. Thank you for this time.