

BOARD OF VISITORS INFORMATION SESSION MINUTES
November 7, 2021

An information session (open session) for the Board of Visitors was held on Sunday, November 7, 2021, at 1:15 p.m. in the Latham Ballroom A/B at The Inn at Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg, Virginia. There was no public comment period.

Board Members Present

Letitia Long (Rector)
Ed Baine (Vice Rector)
Shelley Barlow
Greta Harris
C. T. Hill
Anna James
Sharon Martin
Melissa Nelson
L. Chris Petersen
Mehul Sanghani
Horacio Valeiras
Jeff Veatch
Preston White

Absent

Carrie Chenery

Constituent Representatives Present:

Paolo Fermin, Undergraduate Representative to the Board
Phil Miskovic, Graduate/Professional Representative to the Board
Serena Young, Staff Representative to the Board
Robert Weiss, Faculty Representative to the Board

Also present at the meeting were: President Timothy Sands, Kim O'Rourke (Secretary to the Board), Beth Armstrong, Callan Bartel, Lynsay Belshe, Rosemary Blieszner, James Bridgeforth, Eric Brooks, Greg Carter, Charlene Casamento, Cyril Clarke, Lance Collins, Al Cooper, David Crotts, Jon Deskins, Corey Earles, Jeff Earley, Juan Espinoza, Kari Evans, Ron Fricker, Rachel Gabriele, Rebekah Gunn, Miles Guth, Kay Heidbreder, Rachel Holloway, Robin Jones, Chris Kiwus, Sharon Kurek, Lee Learman, Jack Leff, Erin McCann, Elizabeth McClanahan, Nancy Meacham, Scott Midkiff, Ken Miller, Laurel Miner, Justin Noble, Kelly Oaks, Mark Owczarski, Charlie Phlegar, Dwayne Pinkney, Ellen Plummer, Katie Polidoro, Menah Pratt-Clarke, Robin Queen, Chris Rahmes, Julie Ross, Rick Sparks, Dan Sui, Aimee Surprenant, Don Taylor, Judy Taylor, Jon Clark Teglas, Tracy Vosburgh, Lisa Wilkes, a number of students from the _____ and representatives of the media.

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Rector Long convened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Information Session. She thanked the students from the United Feminist Movement, who were attending in silent protest to call attention to the issues of sexual assault and sexual violence. The agenda included:

- Update on the Innovation Campus – Lance Collins, Vice President and Executive Director of the Innovation Campus, briefed the Board on recent activities, including plans for students, faculty, curriculum, facilities, and staffing (see attached presentation). Specifically, there is a goal of having 50 faculty by 2028; Dr. Collins is in negotiations with 14 faculty from the departments of computer science and computer engineering, and he expects to make faculty announcements in the next few months. He also plans to hire two collegiate faculty and recently hired a K-12 programming director. Three research themes are emerging: Machine learning/artificial intelligence; wireless, next-generation technology; and quantum information science. The Center for Excellence in Teaching held a workshop for them on September 15 to delve into what it means to have a project-based curriculum; this curriculum differentiates VT from other universities. By 2025, the pilot projects will conclude and the project-based curriculum will be at scale. As enrollment grows, the student body will pivot from mostly international students currently to a larger proportion of domestic students that meets diversity goals. The groundbreaking was held on September 14, and construction is on time and on budget.
- Strategic Plan Annual Progress Report – Menah Pratt-Clarke, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Diversity, delivered a presentation (attached) on the metrics contained in the online strategic planning dashboard. Some of the metrics have been modified, such as the one about experiential learning, and some new metrics have been added, such as a new metric about commercialization. While good progress is being made on most of the metrics, a few are in the red zone. She went on to discuss continuous strategic planning efforts and an initiative launched over the summer called the Diversity and Innovation Think Tank Conversation Series, the purpose of which is to gather feedback on strategies and priorities for accelerating the achievement of the Beyond Boundaries vision in light of the changing higher education landscape, global pandemic, increasing economic disparity, political climate, and social justice movement. Groups of faculty, staff, and students are asked to answer the question: If you could wave a magic wand and make one key change to help Virginia Tech actualize its potential in light of the changing higher education landscape, what would that change be and why? In contrast to Beyond Boundaries, which was focused on 2047, this initiative has a more compressed perspective of 2027 based on the premise that due to what we have learned from the pandemic, some of our initiatives are accelerated. Feedback will continue to be gathered through spring 2022 and synthesized over the summer. The Board will be asked to help determine priorities. The importance of aligning priorities with budget allocations was noted.
- Enrollment Management – Juan Espinoza, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Director for Undergraduate Admissions, delivered an enrollment management update (presentation attached). The undergraduate admissions office reopened in mid-June and has experienced a high number of visitors to campus. In contrast to the national situation in which college enrollment nationwide is at its lowest level in 50 years, Virginia Tech received over 42,000 applications last year, a 36 percent increase over the prior year. VT's admissions process was test-optional last year and will be test-optional again this year (for 2022 admission). Discussions are under way with faculty as to whether the test-optional process will continue in the future, and information will be shared with the Board in the spring. There was

considerable discussion about financial aid and in particular that some aid is not based on financial need but rather merit (if that is the donor's wish). Beth Armstrong, Director of University Scholarships and Financial Aid, will provide a more detailed breakdown of need met by various "financial need" ranges.

- Constituent Reports –The report of the undergraduate student representative, Paolo Fermin, focused on the issue of sexual assault and sexual violence on campus, and the report of the graduate/professional student representative, Phil Miskovic, focused on the need to promote community on campus. In response, President Sands noted that the work group he has appointed on sexual assault/violence is comprised of people who are responsible for the various areas involved in addressing the problem; although only two students are a part of the work group, many people outside the work group will be involved in the conversation. The focus initially will be on undergraduate students and particularly entering students because it is thought that that is where the greatest impact can be made the quickest. Then it will be expanded. The intention is that this will follow the InclusiveVT model in which the issue becomes owned by everyone. A recommendation was made to include more underrepresented minority students on the work group. Rector Long added that as an alumna, she had a very different experience when she was a student and is saddened to hear about the current problems. She reiterated the administration's and the Board's commitment to address the issue. Due to time constraints, the reports of the staff and faculty representatives were postponed until the full Board meeting the following afternoon.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

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