

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.)*