

BOARD OF VISITORS RETREAT

August 23, 2020

The Board of Visitors held a retreat on Sunday, August 23, 2020, at the Pavilion at Historic Smithfield, 1000 Smithfield Plantation Road, Blacksburg, VA. Prior to the retreat, director of Historic Smithfield provided a tour of the museum for the board that focused on the enslaved people who had lived there.

Present

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

Absent

Jeff Veatch

Constituent Representatives

Eric Kaufman, Faculty Representative to the Board
Tamarah Smith, Staff Representative to the Board
Camellia Pastore, Undergraduate Student Representative to the Board
Sabrina Sturgeon, Graduate Student Representative to the Board

Also present at the retreat were President Timothy Sands, Kim O'Rourke (Secretary to the Board), Cyril Clarke, Kay Heidbreder, Anne Khademian, Erin McCann, Mark Owczarski, Dwayne Pinkney, Tracy Vosburgh, and a Roanoke Times reporter.

The retreat was facilitated by consultants from McKinsey and Company: Caroline Frost, Jack Guest, Bryan Hancock, and Ted Rounsaville.

Rector Valeiras convened the retreat at 12:25 p.m. and welcomed everyone. He introduced new board member Carrie Chenery, the new constituent representatives, and the group from McKinsey & Company.

The retreat was organized into five sections:

- A. Presentation by McKinsey on the potential economic impact and structural changes in society in a post-COVID world.
- B. Presentation by McKinsey on trends in higher education and how Virginia Tech is positioned to adapt to those trends.
- C. Break-out session to identify and discuss the most important questions that Virginia Tech needs to address. Participants were grouped into three groups based on themes identified in pre-retreat interviews that McKinsey conducted with board members: Growth, Diversity and Inclusion, and Costs and Operations. The groups considered priorities, opportunities (“never waste a crisis”), and re-thinking traditions.
- D. Presentation by President Sands on the implications for Beyond Boundaries and Virginia Tech’s strategic plan. (Attached)
- E. Break-out session (same groups) to determine priorities.

President Sands summarized the discussion with four what-if statements:

- 1. What if students, faculty, and staff could be anywhere in the world engaged in learning communities and still be fully engaged with Virginia Tech?
- 2. What if Virginia Tech were known as the best in the world at convening diverse talent to take on challenges from a holistic human-centered perspective?
- 3. What if Virginia Tech engaged learners from cradle to grave? (i.e. lifelong learning)
- 4. What if wealth, income, and/or zip code were not factors for determining access and success at Virginia Tech?

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The retreat concluded at 5:00 p.m.