

**OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Monday, 16 November 1998**

MINUTES

The Executive Committee of the Board of Visitors met on Monday, 16 November 1998, at 3:00 PM in the Board Room of Webb University Center. Present from the Executive Committee were:

Edward L. Hamm, Jr., Rector
Joan D. Gifford
William M. Lechler
Anthony C. Paige
Lawrie Falck Rollison

Also present from the Board of Visitors were:

Elizabeth W. Atkinson
J. Jack W. Hilgers
Ronald John A. Villanueva

Also present were:

James V. Koch, President
John P. Broderick
Dana D. Burnett
Nancy P. Coberly
Stephen P. Daniel
Lorraine Eaton (*The Virginian-Pilot*)
Jo Ann M. Gora
David F. Harnage
Donna W. Meeks
J. Worth Pickering
William C. Rice
Jack Robinson
Martha Smith Sharpe
William E. Thro
Michele Young

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Until the arrival of Rector Hamm, Secretary Rollison presided. Ms. Rollison called the meeting to order and asked for approval of the minutes of 19 October 1998. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes were approved as distributed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Rector called on President Koch for his report. President Koch distributed copies of an article from today's issue of *USA Today* featuring the work of Old Dominion University's Center for Coastal Physical Oceanography in the use of virtual reality to study the Chesapeake Bay. He also distributed copies of editorial written by him which appeared in *The Raleigh News and Observer* commenting on the difficulty the University has experienced in bringing TELETECHNET to North Carolina. Copies were also sent to members of the North Carolina legislative delegation. President Koch commented that North Carolina does not have a distance learning program similar to TELETECHNET.

President Koch distributed copies of an opinion piece on presidential and board relationships by Rita Bornstein, President of Rollins College, which appeared in *Trusteeship* published by the Association of Governing Board. He commented that he agreed with her viewpoints expressed in the article.

President Koch distributed data comparing funding among Old Dominion University's peer group institutions. He noted that Old Dominion University ranks number one in terms of percentage of budget devoted to instruction, which is evidence of Old Dominion's restructuring efforts. In terms of state appropriation per FTE student, however, Old Dominion University ranks 24th, or 17th if tuition and fees are added. Clearly, Old Dominion University is not well funded when compared with its peer institutions.

Mr. Hilgers questioned the data which are not the same as data reported recently in the newspaper. President Koch commented that he has provided the official data published by the State Council of Higher Education and does not know where the newspaper obtained their information.

STUDENT RETENTION

Provost Gora briefed the Committee on student retention data and efforts being made by the University to increase the student retention rates. She commented that Old Dominion University is not a traditional residential institution, and freshmen represent only a small portion of the student body, but the freshman class is comprised mainly of traditional freshman students, i.e., average age of 18.5 years with only 6% over the age of 20.

Retention rates differ for different categories of students, and at Old Dominion University, TELETECHNET students, students admitted with distinction and students enrolled through the Military Career Transition Program have the highest retention rates. As might be expected, freshman students encounter the most difficulty and the attrition rate, which is reported annually to the State Council of Higher Education as one of the core performance measures, has been decreasing over the years but still remains at 30%.

Provost Gora reviewed the various reasons why freshman students encounter difficulties, including poor time management and study skills. Survey data suggest that only 70% of first time freshman believe they will earn at least a B average. Today's freshman students also have more demands on

their time, and some are working 16 or more hours per week. Transfer students show similar traits and encounter similar difficulties.

The Provost summarized the efforts being made by the University to increase the retention rate of freshmen and transfers to at least 75%. Data collected from freshman surveys, senior assessments, freshman focus groups, exit surveys of non-returning students, regression analysis of freshman courses, alumni surveys, intervention assessments and freshman predictors reveal that academic success is closely related to a student's high school GPA. This is also true at the national level. In addition, the more selective the institution, the lower the attrition rate.

Old Dominion University, which in the early 1990s was virtually an open institution, has been increasing its admission standards. The minimum GPA for admission for the fall 1999 semester will be raised from 2.2 to 2.5. The data support that attitudes have changed with the increasing admission standards, leading to higher retention rates. Transfer students must also meet the same admission standards and will also be required to attend Preview. Recruitment efforts are also focused on increasing retention rates, with merit based scholarships available for both freshman and transfer students.

The data also suggest that students desire more structure, time management assistance, assistance in making career decisions, and more faculty contact. Programs initiated by the University have helped to meet these needs. These programs include: learning communities, electronic attendance keepers (which is being demanded by more and more faculty), faculty advising for all students with a declared major, writing tutorial services, the Summer Transition Program for student with good grades but low SAT scores, supplemental instruction and mandatory recitation sessions for courses with high failure rates, the peer mentoring program, the Summer Bridge Program in the College of Engineering and Technology, the Academic Success Fair, the Career Advantage Program, Freshman Year Experience Hall, University Professor Award, and the Honors College. All of these programs are designed to help students be better students and to show that the University cares about the success of its students.

Rector Hamm commented that he is pleased with the initiatives being taken by the University, and hopes that these efforts will further decrease the attrition rate which, in his opinion, is too high. He asked that the students be made aware that the Board of Visitors is concerned with their academic success. Reverend Paige commented that it is important for the administration to understand that we are educating a new student with life situations that are different from those experienced by us or even our children. These differences must be recognized and taken into account when developing programs to assist in their success.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Rector recognized Ms. Rollison, who made the following motion: "Mr. Rector, I move that this meeting be recessed and that we reconvene in executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters, specifically, the evaluation of Office of Public Safety; and legal issues within the jurisdiction of the Board, specifically to receive an update from University Counsel on potential

litigation, as permitted by Subsection (A), Paragraphs (1) and (3) of Section 2.1-344 of the Code of Virginia.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION AND FOIA CERTIFICATION

At the conclusion of executive session, the meeting reconvened in open session, at which time the Rector called for the Freedom of Information Act certification of compliance that (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements under the Freedom of Information Act were discussed and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the executive session was convened were heard, discussed or considered. The certification of compliance vote was eight in favor and none opposed.

NEW BUSINESS

The Rector asked if there was any new business to come before the Board. Mr. Villanueva inquired about the status of the University Village. Vice President Harnage indicated that the administration is in daily contact with the Bureau of Real Property Management in an attempt to finalize agreements. The process has been extremely frustrating and he is at a point of contacting the Secretary of Administration if closure is not reached within the week. Mr. Hamm stated that the Board stands ready to assist if necessary.

Reverend Paige voiced his concern with the process established for submitting nominations for Vice Rector to the Nominating Committee through the Office of the Board of Visitors. Mr. Hamm stated that process was requested by Chairman Russell, but nominations could be made directly to Dr. Russell or to any member of the Nominating Committee.

Mr. Lechler requested that discussion be reopened regarding on the document entitled, "Board of Visitors: Principles, Duties and Responsibilities." The document was approved unanimously by the Board in April, but concern was expressed at the meeting in June when a resolution to codify the document as board policy was introduced and subsequently tabled. Mr. Lechler made a motion to rescind the policy. Mr. Thro, Interim General Counsel, advised the Board that the notice provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act precluded the Board from taking action on any issue not noticed to the public. The Rector thanked the Interim General Counsel but did not concur in this instance. Following discussion, Mr. Lechler withdrew his motion.

With no further business to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned.