

# Student Town Hall Meeting Minutes

## Tuesday April 15, 2014

### Foster Hall 300 12:30pm

Attendance: Dr. Shackelford, Mr. David Meadows, President Keith T. Miller, Deputy Chief Perry, Dr. Cortez Dial, Dr. Weldon Hill, Mr. Hubert Harris, students, and staff.

Meeting brought to order by Dr. Michael Shackelford and an introduction of President Keith T. Miller. President Miller spoke with student about the campus culture and the direction the university is heading. "We are about academic excellence. We have some of the best student in the commonwealth of VA. It's all about being the best you can. Maximize your potential."

- **Mr. Jahliel Thurman, SGA President**

Mr. Thurman shared information reflective of this year's Student Government Association (SGA) accomplishments, namely:

- Campus wide food drive – all items donated to local food bank
- Bone marrow drive
- Trojan T-shirt exchange – get a free VSU t-shirt
- Thanksgiving Turkey Basket Contest – baskets donated to needy families in the community
- Cocoa Hour – exam preparation for students
- Total Trojan Tuesdays - Show Trojan Pride, wear orange and blue
- Crush Friday activities for students

Additional campus outreach: Future plans include painting the outdoor gazebos. SGA has also begun developing a video, using the song *Happy* by Pharrell Williams, to showcase what it's like to be a Trojan.

Mr. Hyisheem Calier, current SGA Vice President, President elect for 2014-2015 academic year announced that he will continue Trojan pride weekly events for students next year.

Miss. Kendra Michael, SGA Chief of Staff. Dr. Cortez Dial shared that Miss. Michael has been the best SGA chief of staff and is a true advocate for students. No other SGA chief of staff has been as effective and efficient.

- **Mr. David Meadows, VP of Administration & Finance**

Mr. Meadows provided update pertaining to Administration and Finance as listed below:

Annual university audit recently completed. The purpose of the annual university audit is to gage the health and financial wellness of our university. The audit had a great outcome.

Construction/Renovation Projects:

The New bookstore renovation will be complete in 2 weeks.

Current Blvd construction (in Colonial Heights) is almost complete however workers will begin construction on the opposite side of street for uniformity and necessary repairs.

Dupy Rd. will become 3 lanes and River Rd. will become 4 lanes when the road way construction is completed. There will be lots of machinery and construction equipment visible for many months.

Construction of the new multipurpose center has begun.

Currently developing a town and gown to include apartments and shopping for the campus community. Mr. Meadows stated "Within 3 year VSU's campus will be one of the best on the east coast."

**Student Question:** Are there any plans to renovate older residence halls?

Mr. Meadows responded to the above student question as follows: We will be keeping older residence halls. There are no plans to rebuild or renovate them.

- **Dr. Weldon Hill, VP of Academic Affairs**

Dr. Hill provided the following updates regarding student academics:

Only 35% of students buy books as a result of this statistic VSU is currently considering electronic book options for students.

After evaluation it has been determined that classes will end the Tuesday before Thanksgiving during the Fall semester. Classes will meet twice a week and labs will be held on Fridays. Classes will be extended 10 minutes to accommodate credit and course hour requirements. Saturday classes will also be offered.

Commencement will be moved from Mother's Day to the Saturday prior. This decision was made following several concerns presented with commencement being held on Mother's Day.

**Student Concern:** There is poor communication between administration and students, I would like for this to change.

Dr. Hill responded to the above student concern as follows: I agree. I will work on improving communication.

**Student Question:** How are you going to improve communication?

Dr. Hill responded to the above student question as follows: By using rave alerts and digital bulletin board communication.

- **Mr. Hubert Harris, Chief IT Officer**

Mr. Harris provided the following updates pertaining to computer technology on campus:

The cost to upgrade the internet capacity on campus, \$242, 000.<sup>00</sup> When the Fall 2014 begins all capacity orders will be faster, meaning faster internet.

New cell phone tower construction has begun near the Fauntleroy building and should be complete by next month. The tower will bring improved services for major cell phone carriers in the formerly weak areas on campus.

IT is currently working on the next version of the VSU website. There will also soon be a new version of the internet portal to access staff and student email for example.

IT will be introducing a new mobile app. This will allow communication to be sent out quickly to the campus community. It will also allow students to access black board and banner.

Banner will be put in a cloud environment so it never goes down similar to blackboard.

- Cortez Dial, Athletic Division Lead & Coordinate for the President

**Student concern:** The 1 bus that transports student to Wal-Mart and Southpark Mall is always full. We need additional space or transportation.

Mr. David Meadows responded to the above student concern as follows: We will look into providing a larger bus to transport students.

**Student concern:** There were changes to cost to wash and dry in Moore Hall, this information was not shared with the student living in Moore Hall, we didn't know cost was going up. Additionally, Moore Hall doesn't have newer washers and dryers like some of the other halls.

Dr. LaVerne Briggs responded to the above student concern as follows: The new washing and drying implementation occurred in stages. Moore Hall was a part of the final stage where other students had already experienced a cost increase months prior. This information was shared with students during the beginning stages of implementation.

**Student Question:** Will the sound system in Virginia Hall be upgraded soon?

Staff Response to the above listed questions: Yes

**Student Concern:** Rust present in some of the resident halls' shower water.

**Student Question:** Why do academic organizations have to pay to use VA Hall auditorium, we are different from extracurricular organizations.

Staff Response to the above listed questions: All organization must pay to utilize Virginia Hall's auditorium as it is not an academic facility.

**Student Concern:** I would like to request a change/coin machine so that students are able to put in dollar bills to receive change.

Mr. David Meadows responded to the above student concern as follows: We can arrange that capability for students.

Additional Update: The steps in front of Harris Hall are being replaced.

**Student Question:** Why are graduating seniors not allowed to wear Greek strolls or decorate their gowns to represent their organization for graduation?

Staff response: Those items take away from the uniformity of the graduation ceremony.

- Dr. LaVerne Briggs, Director of Residence Life

Dr. Briggs provided the following updates pertaining to the newly implemented sophomore experience:

It is now mandatory that all sophomore or student s with an equivalent number of credit hours as a sophomore reside in on campus housing.

- Mr. Eddie Perry, Deputy Chief of Police

Mr. Perry reassured students that he understands their experiences and that he is here to work with all students.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by April Bennett