

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS  
COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
9:00 A.M.; Thursday, September 17, 2020  
(No Public Comment Period Scheduled)**

**DRAFT AGENDA**

- CALL TO ORDER ..... Ms. Pamela Currey, Chair
- ROLL CALL     *(Dr. Annie C. Redd)*
- INVOCATION   *(Mr. Rodney Hall)*
- APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES
- SELECTION OF COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR
- PRESIDENT’S REMARKS ..... Dr. Makola M. Abdullah
- REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
  - DIVISION OF ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS ..... Dr. Donald Palm  
Senior Vice President/Provost
    - Approval Item(s)
      - Post Tenure Review Process
    - Information Items
      - Academic Affairs Update
        - Enrollment/Fall Enrollment Overview
        - Retention Rate
        - Six-Year Graduation Rate
        - Student Success Initiatives
        - New Program(s) Update
        - Innovation at Virginia State
        - Outstanding Faculty Award Program
        - Student Success and Engagement Update
      - Faculty Senate Resolution
      - Public Safety Update
- OTHER BUSINESS
- ADJOURNMENT

*\*\*All start times for committees are approximate. Meetings may begin either before or after the posted approximate start time as committee members are ready to proceed. Meetings may also end either before or after the posted time. The Board reserves the right to change its schedule as needed.*

*9.16.2020*

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS  
ELECTRONIC ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**9:00 AM; Thursday, September 17, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Pamela Currey, Chair, called the Electronic Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting to order at approximately 9:10 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

A quorum was present.

*Committee Members Present:*

Ms. Pamela Currey, Chair  
Dr. Christine Darden  
Mr. Charlie Hill  
Mr. William Murray  
Mr. Xavier Richardson  
Mr. Wayne Turnage (*absent*)  
Mr. Gregory Whirley  
Mr. Huron Winstead, Rector  
Dr. Zoe Spencer, Faculty Representative to the Board  
Mr. Kameron Gray, Student Representative to the Board

*Other Board Members Present:*

Mr. Glenn Sessoms

*Administration Present:*

Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, President  
Dr. Donald Palm, Provost/Sr. Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs  
Mr. Hubert Harris, Chief of Staff  
Mr. Rodney Hall, Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management  
Mrs. Regina Barnett-Tyler, Interim Associate Vice President, Student Success and Engagement  
Dr. Tia Minnis, Associate Vice Provost/Ex. Dir., Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness.  
Mr. Kevin Davenport, Vice President for Finance  
Dr. Annie C. Redd, Special Assistant to the President and Board Liaison

*Legal Counsel Present:*

Ms. Deb Love, Office of the State Attorney General

*Other Attendees:*

Ms. Cynthia D. Baker, Student Success and Engagement

Dr. Cynthia Ellison, University Counseling Center

Ms. Christy Johnson-Oliver, Student Health Services

Ms. Danika Clemmons, Student Health Services

Dr. Maxine Sample, Professor and Director International Education

Ms. Yourdonus James, Conference Services

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Currey advised the committee of one change to the agenda. The presentation planned today regarding the HBCU History – HIST-349, History of Black Colleges and Universities would be tabled until the full board meeting on September 18, 2020. The committee approved the agenda by roll call vote.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

The committee approved the minutes from the February 6, 2020 meeting by roll call vote.

**SELECTION OF COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR**

Ms. Currey nominated Dr. Christine Darden for the position of vice chair. Mr. Charlie Hill made the motion to recommend approval of Dr. Darden to the full Board. Mr. William Murray seconded the motion. The committee approved the motion by roll call vote.

**PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**

President Abdullah discussed the University's decision to not invite students back to VSU, which was primarily for health and safety. While it was a challenging decision with great impact financially it was the best decision to make. The projected enrollment for fall 2020 is 3800 to 3900 with the current enrollment sitting near 3700. The President stated the decision to not invite students back also hinged on the prevention of having to reverse course as other Universities are having to do after the students were back on their campuses.

President Abdullah informed the Board that he has implemented a Process Improvement Committee to be led by Dr. Tia Minnis. The primary focus will be systems and people challenges. In addition, the President stated that the University will revisit the VSU strategic plan –Pre COVID vs Post COVID. President Abdullah noted that the year 2025 was the original target date for the University courses being online courses, however, VSU is currently at 100% now for online courses with most faculty certified to teach online. He anticipates planning for a committee to be created with Faculty, Staff and Alumni for further discussion.

**REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Dr. Palm, Provost/Sr. VP for Academic and Student Affairs, then addressed the Board regarding enrollment and the fall enrollment overview. Currently, there are 1071 validated students for fall 2020 vs 803 that were validated for fall 2019. Transfers consist of 231 validated for fall 2020 vs

128 validated for fall 2019. The enrollment overview for fall 2020 was noted as 4,406 being registered, 3,667 validated with FTIC registered as 1,063 and FTIC validated as 803. Dr. Palm advised that with the primary reason being COVID-19 for the decrease in enrollment, there are also various other reasons as to why students are not validated to include financial reasons.

Discussion followed regarding a letter sent to the Board from alumni regarding the concern of a downward spiral with VSU enrollment. President Abdullah advised the Board that a response to the alumni had already been sent advising that maybe a town hall meeting was not the best avenue to address the concerns and that maybe they would prefer a more intimate conversation with the President, the Provost, and perhaps the Rector. Further discussion followed about enrollment, decision to offer only online classes, the impact on graduation rates and on state funding allocations. Dr. Palm advised that the decision to go remote had the most impact on enrollment, but also funding due to high Pell recipient students in black communities. VSU is monitoring student's persistence but noted that not all downward spirals are about grades but rather engagement. Advised that VSU 5-year graduation rate is 42% with the 6-year graduation rate being 46%. The 2014 cohort numbers must be utilized in order to obtain 6-year graduation rate.

Dr. Palm advised the board that VSU held a 39% graduation rate and 11<sup>th</sup> place out of 40 HBCU colleges from the posted 2012 six-year graduation rates. The average graduation rate is 32%. Dr. Palm also advised that the five-year retention rate is 32%. VSU stood in 2018 with the average of 65% to 69% and was COVID impacted. The posted 2018 retention rate out of 40 public HBCUs, VSU stands in 13<sup>th</sup> at 65%. Dr. Palm addressed retention stating that academic performance is not a reflection on retention, as previously advised it really has more to do with engagement, academic support, and finances. VSU continues to seek out additional funding for students who cannot afford to return.

Dr. Palm updated the Board on VSU innovations that include network upgrades, IT and physical security upgrades, communication and collaboration (Zoom, WebEx, Jabber, and Office 365), Dr. Palm noted that the Office of Distance Education had 204 professors who are successfully certified for online teaching. He indicated that the University had a collaborative effort with faculty, faculty and student ambassadors, Trojan Student Online Assistance aka TrojanSOS consisting of various VSU employees with expertise knowledge, skill set, as well an empathic understanding to work toward resolving needs and frustrations during this virtual environment. Dr. Palm highlighted the innovative efforts in the College of Graduate Studies and the Honors Program to include the TMCF Fleischer HBCU Scholars in which VSU was the only HBCU to host virtual summer entrepreneurial summer camp during the pandemic. The TMCF Fleischer HBCU Scholars program is a recognized national program.

Dr. Palm highlighted some of the efforts within the department of Career Services to include launching of the app "Handshake" and conducting of a Virtual Career Expo on September 17, 2020. Dr. Palm highlighted the efforts within the ACE (Academic Center for Excellence) to include online group advisement sessions and Qualtrics automation. The Enrollment department initiated virtual tours, online orientation, and online validation. The Registrar's office was noted

for the implementation of electronic fillable forms, the availability of electronic transcripts, and virtual commencement. Ms. Nedra Jones was acknowledged as the Interim Registrar. Dr. Palm commended the work of the former registrar, Ms. Debera Bonner, who recently retired. Several noted highlights from the University Library were also mentioned such as contact free check out and pick up of books, EBooks, and the newly named Interim Dean, University Libraries as Ms. Tessa Perry for the now retired Dr. Essie Weatherington.

Dr. Palm also highlighted the efforts of Student Health Services to include enhanced social media presence and the Mediat Electronic Health Record Systems. Dr. Palm recognized the new director for Student Health Services as Ms. Danika Clemmons with special thanks given to Nurse Christy Johnson-Oliver for her continued efforts and support during this pandemic. Finally, Dr. Palm highlighted the University Counseling Center and Dr. Cynthia Ellison with the implementation of Zoom counseling services and mobile check-ins. Dr. Palm then gave the floor to Ms. Regina Barnett-Tyler, Interim Associate Vice President for Student Success and Engagement (SSE).

Ms. Barnett-Tyler highlighted Student Activities such as virtual SGA and Royal Court elections; The Mr. and Miss VSU Pageant; a virtual “So you think you can dance/sing”; virtual Parent and Student Town Hall meetings. SSE implemented alerts and parent emails advising that an important email has been sent from VSU to their students and encouraged the parent to follow up with his/her student and implemented a student housing electronic application process. The Student Activities Department, in collaboration with other departments, held a virtual Student Leadership Retreat “Shoot your shot”. Other 2020 SSE programs and innovations included ACE holding a virtual Welcome Week and workshops with new students, Student Leaders with Freshmen mentoring-Big Brother/Big Sister Program, and virtual meetings of the President’s Advisory Board for LGBTQIA Diversity/Inclusion. Ms. Barnett-Tyler announced that TRIO recently received funding for the TRIO Student Support Services Program. This program was previously at VSU but was unfortunately defunded over 10 years ago and has now returned.

Dr. Palm wrapped up his presentation by giving updates on new degree programs and new faculty recognition initiatives. Degree programs for approval in May by SCHEV with hopeful implementation at VSU in fall 2021 include MBA in Business Administration and Management, MS Data Analytics Engineering, and Ed.S. Education Specialist. Dr. Palm advised the board on the implementation of the Rising Star Award for Tenure Track Faculty which will honor (4) honorees, and the Star Award for Tenured Faculty also honoring (4) honorees. Each recipient will be recognized and honored with plaques and monetary gifts in the following categories:

- Excellence in Teaching
- Outstanding Research
- Outstanding Community Service
- Stellar Award in Teaching/Researching

Dr. Palm presented one action item for approval--Post Tenure Review Process which is required by the Appropriation Act of the 1996 General Assembly for the Commonwealth of Virginia. This

process ensures that tenured faculty remain productive with continued commitment to the mission and goals of the University. Ms. Currey delayed the motion to recommend the Post Tenure Review Process for approval until the committee members had a chance to review the full policy.

The Faculty Senate held a meeting on Friday, September 11, 2020 and discussed some resolutions in detail. A timeline has not been determined because it is an ongoing resolution process. A working group will be a part of the process going forward especially regarding next semester, identifying efficiencies and the need for being transparent. This working group to be identified in the near future. The Chair asked for an update at November Board meeting.

The Chair expressed that she was hoping that Dr. Spencer would still in attendance at today's committee meeting to highlight her collaborations with the recently held first meeting of the Regional Policing Leadership Taskforce. Due to Dr. Spencer's emergency early departure, it was requested that maybe an impromptu update be provided by Dr. Spencer at the full board meeting on tomorrow, September 18, 2020. Dr. Sample advised that she would share the request with Dr. Spencer.

Mr. Hubert Harris, Chief of Staff, updated the Board on Public Safety at the University. In spite of the students not being on campus there have been several Public Safety updates to include the following. Further updates will be provided at the November Meeting.

- Police radio upgrades for all vehicles
- Vehicle computers upgraded and able to complete reports on the field
- Dispatching of units by computer
- Vehicle registration system was kicked off two weeks ago

Visitor(s) requested an update of the climate survey at the November meeting. Ms. Currey stated that the Personnel, Compensation, and Governance Committee is now responsible for the climate survey.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the Chair called for a motion to be given for adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Approved:

*Pamela A. Currey\**

11/19/2020

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Pamela A. Currey, Chair

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Date

\*Approved at the Academic & Student Affairs Committee, 11/19/2020