

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS**  
**Executive Committee/Strategic Plan Advisory Sub-Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**The Board Room, 310 Virginia Hall**  
**Thursday, January 31, 2019**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Huron F. Winstead, Rector, called the meeting of the Virginia State University (VSU) Board of Visitors (Board) Executive Committee/Strategic Plan Advisory Sub-Committee to order in the Board Room of Virginia Hall, Room 310, on the campus of Virginia State University at 11:07 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

A quorum was present.

*Committee Members Present:*

Mr. Huron F. Winstead, Rector

Mr. Charlie Hill, Vice Rector

Ms. Thursa Crittenden, Board Secretary

Ms. Pamela Currey, Chair, Academic & Student Affairs (*absent*)

Mr. Michael Flemming, Chair, Facilities, Finance & Audit (*absent*)

Ms. Jennifer Hunter, Chair, Institutional Advancement

Mr. Glenn Sessoms, Chair, Personnel & Compensation

*Other Board Members Present:*

Dr. Valerie Brown

Mr. Gregory Whirley

Ms. Gabrielle Wilks

*Administration Present:*

Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, President

Dr. Donald Palm, Provost/VP, Academic Affairs

Osubi Craig, Special Assistant/Director, Government Relations

Dr. Annie C. Redd, Special Assistant/Board Liaison

Dr. G. Dale Wesson, Vice President for Research and Economic Development

Sheila Alves, Chief Audit Executive

Dr. Tia Minnis, Associate Vice Provost/Ex. Director, Office of Institutional Planning & Effectiveness

Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, Dean, Reginald F. Lewis College of Business

*Legal Counsel Present:*

Ms. Ramona L. Taylor

*Other Staff Present:*

Ms. Sharon Taylor, College of Business

Malika Blume, Internal Audit

Dr. Kimetta Hairston, ACE Fellow

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**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Committee approved the agenda as printed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Minutes from the September 6, 2018 meeting were approved at the November 16<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

**THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**

President Abdullah shared with the Committee that a local news station aired a report on VSU's Spring 2019 enrollment. A brief discussion followed regarding the enrollment.

**DISCUSSION**

Dr. Palm presented the updated draft of the Strategic Plan. The Board members received a copy of the presentation and a Strategic Plan Overview Draft: Preeminence with Purpose 2025. The outline of the presentation included:

1. VSU SACSCOC Reaffirmation – Update
2. Strategic Plan
  - a. Development Process
  - b. Data Collection
  - c. Strategic Plan Overview
    - i. Priorities
    - ii. Goals
    - iii. Objectives
3. Proposed Programs

Mr. Charlie Hill, Chair of the Strategic Plan Advisory Sub-Committee, indicated that the Strategic Plan was in a pretty good place and thanked everyone for their input. Mr. Hill also indicated that he did not get the report early enough and could not give a full report because he didn't have all of the parts, due to changes made to the strategic plan. He wants everyone to understand what is in the report.

The following questions and concerns were raised:

- What are we going to do about enrollment and quality of enrollment?
- The report must address enrollment.
- Does this address the concerns that we started out with?
- Goal was to be full throated by next meeting.
- Would like to know what has been removed and added since the last draft.
- Let us be clear about where we are going.

Dr. Palm thanked the Board of Visitors for the opportunity to address the Strategic Plan draft, to answer questions, and proceeded to explain why the adjustments were made. Dr. Palm indicated that we have been reaffirmed and are already working on the next Reaffirmation (2028). He talked about the process engagement, strategic plan development process and looked at the life cycle of the plan.

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Dr. Palm gave an overview of the process and how information was collected through town halls, surveys, and spot analysis; came up with 94 Themes through collecting data and narrowed them down; developed a Vision and came up with 9 Themes; developed Bold Steps which we will call our Priorities to achieve the Vision; aligned those goals with the Virginia Plan for Higher Education; State and particular goals for higher education; and Governor SMART Action Plan.

Actions taken by the Strategic Planning Committee:

- Looked at our Mission and developed a Vision, but didn't change the Mission
- Some areas in Priority #7 were redundant
- Elevated Vision to include a statement of Public Land Grant University
- The word "Elite" was added (forward thinking)
- It was recommended that an asterisk be used to separate different pieces
- Some things are happening now and must happen simultaneously

**Word Sensitivity**

Board members raised concerns on some of the wording used.

- What do you mean by **Recognized**? Recognized by whom?
  - Want an acknowledgement as to who do we want to be recognized by (*i.e. nation, region, state, and university to produce scholars to the world*)
- Word change from "achieved" to "**sustained**" academic excellence
- Not certain if **Diversify** transfers into increase
- Granular must be clear

Dr. Palm went over each of the priorities and addressed questions as he went along. Below are questions and recommendations from the Board and President Abdullah.

**Priority 1: Increase student opportunity and access to higher education**

- No changes were made to Priority 1
- Not only want to attract students but keep them at VSU
- Implement Summer Bridge Programs to develop skillset and to help prepared students accelerate in college
  - Opportunity to introduce students to culture of the institution
  - Expectations of a college education
  - Support
  - Socialization
  - Makes it easy to retain students
  - Gives students a strong foundation

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- Will there be a financial aspect for Summer Bridge Programs?
- We will look at creative and innovative ways to get students to enroll at VSU for Summer Bridge Programs
- Want to make sure every student has an internship experience
- How will the employment success rate be measured?
  - track graduates, report salary and employment
- Advisement process needs to improve at VSU (Best Practices – SCHEV 300 to 1)
  - We had an Advisement Workshop for faculty during Opening Conference
  - Developed an Advisement Handbook for faculty
- We want to be effective in what we are doing to achieve the results
  - It's holistic because advisors are not teaching the classes

**Questions and Recommendations**

- Would like to see a 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 target not just 2025
- Identify the problem, who's the problem, and fix it
  - How can we move forward to change the trend?
  - Concerned that we do not have targets or measurements and how to move forward
- We must be nimble and flexible because things change
  - Change can be significant in a 5 year period
- Must be fluid, on-going and monitored to keep up with the demands of education
  - According to statistics almost everything a student learns in 5 years will be obsolete.
  - Do you feel the plan creates the best opportunities for VSU?
  - Are we focused on what matters most for VSU?
  - Need recognition to get things done but don't want to be rigid
- Some things are buried in the plan and should not be publicized such as low failure rates, but must find a way to fix
- Take a look at the metrics
  - Where we are, and how we are going to get there
  - Make sure employment data is there
  - Get Benchmarks together to move forward
- Missing some specifics

**Note:** Valerie Brown recommended that everyone read: "*Adaptive Space*" by Michael Arena to learn how to build agility into your organization to keep it healthy.

**Enrollment**

- What are you doing to fix **enrollment issues since 2014**?
  - What actions did you take?

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- We need to fix things or will have to do another Strategic Plan
- Take a look at how circumstances change
  - Things were great for HBCU's until 2010 (Pell grants, etc.)
- Set a target for enrollment
  - What size does VSU want to be?
    - Are we a 6,000 or 10,000 student size school?
  - Should there be an enrollment number attached to the Strategic Plan? (i.e. 4,000 students)
  - Don't want the budget adjusted because of low enrollment
  - Losing Accounting students because they can't get 150 credits here at VSU and they go elsewhere (before or after graduation)

**Programs**

- What are you moving toward?
- Some modeling should be done (can lose what known for)
  - Cost
  - Programming
- Decide what programs do we want to be known for and what student population
  - What other degree offerings are students looking for that need to be setup
  - These could help with enrollment
- What GPA or income of parents are we looking for?
- Don't want students to go to college and be poor
- How do we make these signature programs?
- What can we do to make sure these students get jobs?
- What are the core offerings – programs?
  - Can't be everything to everyone
  - Define box and model
  - Determine size of the institution
  - What are our strengths and how do they align with other institutions?
- What are the three most important things we need to be doing?
- Need to do scenario planning

**Priority 2: Sustained Academic Excellence**

- Identify new faculty for new programs
- First online school will be offered this fall

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- Each college will have their own Strategic Plan that will filter down from the University's Strategic Plan
- Once the Strategic Plan is approved the colleges will align their Strategic Plan
- The items discussed today will be in the operational plan
- Working with Deans regarding new programs to attract students

**Concerns**

- Cost to start a new program
- Limited funds
- How many new degrees can we reasonably expect to launch in the upcoming year?
  - MBA is the most affordable degree
  - Already have qualified faculty and number of resources in place
- Some degree programs may be costly (\$200,000 to \$300,000) while others aren't
- Struggling to fill existing faculty positions with current budget
- How can we fill vacancies?
- Look at programs and prioritize
- Can reposition faculty from one area to another

Dr. Palm explained that new programs have to go through a process for approval and it takes time. If you wait 2 to 3 years to go to SCHEV there is a lag. For example the Nursing Program is scheduled to begin in fall 2019. The Dean must submit a proposal for any new program to include funding. The program must be approved by the Board and then submitted to SCHEV for approval. There may be competing programs and we must be able to identify a need and our niche. Others in the approval process include: SACSCOC and Faculty Senate. The nursing faculty stayed on after the 2 year program ended, and we still have the budget and rooms.

**Questions**

- Why isn't nursing in the plan if it is a priority?
- How do you want to grow the program?
- How do you get from 20 to 50 students in a year?
- Why are we looking at new programs instead of looking at new tracks (i.e. Biology with a Medical track)?
  - Only takes a few extra classes
  - Deans were asked to look at programs to benchmark them and see where we need to be

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**Recommendations**

- Transparency, urgency and clarity is needed
- Have a six year plan to request funding
- Deans and chairs are working on combining other programs that may not cost money
- Look at current state of students
  - Some majors increased while others decreased

**Priority 3: Provide a transformative VSU student experience that supports the holistic development of students**

**Recommendations**

- “Civic engagement” was added to Priority 3
- It was recommended that ACE be added to the metrics to include the number of students visiting and not visiting the center
- Develop Leadership Minors
  - Needs to be a specific action
  - Refer to 3.1 (servant-leadership)

**Note:** President Abdullah suggested that being specific limits other possibilities for example: a leadership major or certificate program. We don't want to be too prescriptive. This a part of QEP and BOLT to develop Leadership Minors (refer to Priority 2).

**Priority 4: Define the VSU Brand and tell our story**

**Changes Made**

- Added Goal 4: Effectively “demonstrate and communicate” the value of Virginia State University
- Added 4.3: Elevate VSU's contribution and economic impact to the region

**Recommendations**

- Will help with defining a brand and initiative
- Public or private partnership sends a message
- Must have various processes available and adopted by the Board

**Priority 5: Diversify financial resources and enhance operational effectiveness**

This priority was combined together.

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**Questions and Recommendations**

- If we increase alumni giving it would increase our brand
- Is 5.7 about student experience or being in a more competitive setting?
  - Look at long-term growth
  - Members of the university community want to look at revenue prospective versus the student prospective
- Are we considering changing athletic divisions?
  - We will research to see if feasible and implications behind it
- The BOV should evaluate athletic programs
  - How are we doing?
  - What are we doing?
  - How do we encourage folks and students to participate in our programs?
  - Must put people in seats at the games
- Want to highlight where they fall into the plan

Mr. Hill wanted to know if there were any outstanding concerns for meeting your goal. February 8, 2019 is the date for approval or rejection. Dr. Palm indicated that the plan is comprehensive and some details are within the plan. The plan will guide the University and some of the details will come out from the Colleges itself. The Colleges have been given their numbers to hold them accountable.

- ACE – retention, progression, and retention rates
- Plan in place to address issues (refer to Priority 1)
- Do we have time to make material adjustments on what the Board will see on February 8<sup>th</sup>?

**Questions and Concerns from the Board**

- What are the metrics and want to see them broken down
- You have a draft plan that is not complete
- Some tweaking would help
- Highlighting the Land Grant Mission (or elevated in the program) removing from earlier draft is interpreted as not important
- Would want to say to the Alumni that we just approved the Strategic Plan and have implementing a nursing program, MBA, etc.
- Strategic Plan should be a plan to communicate to the Alumni
- Wording changes are needed in some areas
- Be specific and send a message to the alumni and show that we are growing
- Have a point of view and put a stake in the ground to get it done (i.e. April 2020)
- This is the enrollment plan and how it will come to life
- There is a lot of metrics there but need to determine what matters most



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- Clear vision where VSU is headed and what area need to focus on
- Can colleges get an Advisory Board?
- Funding resources
- Time line and year-long priorities matter
- The Strategic Plan is very close to being ready
- Will speak to what alumni do and how they give
- Excellence in every customer service and interaction (i.e. speaking to students)
- Our plan has to see forward and must be an intentional plan (i.e. graduates, majors, etc.)
- What are 10 things we are going to do that tie into the plan?
- Want excellence in every manner (i.e. flowers, interactions, etc.)
- How many students are graduating, enrolling, etc.?
- Be able to tell why numbers are going up and down
- Specific department plans
  - Faculty, staff, administrators
  - How many do we have?
- Strategic Plan is not focused enough
- Don't get marching orders (specificity)
- Too many metrics
  - Who will track or manage all of this?
- Establish priorities
- Specific goals trying to achieve on a timeline
- Buy in of stakeholders
- Establish which school has the priority (i.e. Nursing because...)
- Look at money you are working with
- Want to get faculty excited about writing a curriculum
- Have we put the responsibility on the schools to recruit students to meet the targeted goal?
- Deans should have a goal for their school
- Look at top 3 things we can accomplish in a year
- How do you see them in terms of reaching the goal?
- Offer programs that make students want to come to VSU
- Look at the wording: "exploring, considering, and experimenting"
- Setting an enrollment goal (i.e. When – 1 year)
- Strategic Plan management – identify a person, persons, group to be responsible for and their role in the Strategic Plan
  - Who would be the go-to-person?
- Colleges connection to the Strategic Plan
- Give specifics and forward actions to give sense of where going
- Want alumni to feel good going forward

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- How you make the presentation, sale and buy-in need to be more conversational
- Focus on the goal for each department
- Have a target number of students for each area
- Look at tracks we have versus creating new programs
- Focus on the emotional side
- Establish relationships with students to make them want to come and stay at VSU
- This plan should be something that guides the university starting February 8<sup>th</sup>
- Everything that happens with the Board
- Need clarity, transparency, and urgency
- Pull information and have something ready for February 8<sup>th</sup>
- A full throated plan
- Will the BOV get the quality conversation?
- Is this how you want to share the information?
- This is what we set out to do...
- This is who we talked to... (i.e. 500 people)
- This is what we heard...
- This is more transactional versus narrative on how the Strategic Plan is going to get us there


Rector Winstead thanked everyone for their participation and asked what the Board should expect at the February Board meeting. Dr. Palm indicated that the Board can expect forward thinking, and that he did not think a lot of tweaking needed to be done to the Strategic Plan.

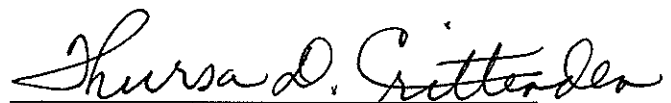
President Abdullah requested that the Board consider a two-step approval process wherein the administration would present the overarching plans with the ability to add benchmarks and metrics on a timeline. He also stated that Dr. Tia Minnis, Associate Vice Provost/Executive Director, Office of the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, will be responsible for managing the Strategic Plan.

Dr. Palm indicated that the steering committee would take all of the Board comments and concerns and revise the document by Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup>.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mr. Winstead adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

  
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Huron F. Winstead, Rector

  
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Thursa Crittenden, Board Secretary

2.8.19  
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Date

2.8.19  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date