

**OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF VISITORS**

**Wednesday, September 15, 2021**

**MINUTES**

The Board of Visitors of Old Dominion University held its annual retreat on Wednesday, September 15, 2021 at The Cavalier Hotel in Virginia Beach, Present from the Board:

R. Bruce Bradley, Rector  
Yvonne T. Allmond  
Carlton F. Bennett  
Robert A. Broermann  
Robert S. Corn  
Unwana B. Dabney  
Peter G. Decker, III  
Jerri F. Dickseski  
Alton J. Harris  
Larry R. Hill  
Kay A. Kemper  
P. Murry Pitts  
Maurice D. Slaughter  
Lisa B. Smith  
Armistead D. Williams, Jr.

Absent from the Board: Toykea S. Jones  
Ross A. Mugler

Also present: Brian O. Hemphill, President  
Donna Meeks  
Ashley Schumaker  
Allen Wilson

**CALL TO ORDER AND ACTION ITEM**

The Rector called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and noted the need for the Board to take action on

"The purpose of this retreat is for us to begin to think more strategically as a Board of Visitors.

"As you will recall this was one of the key areas of deficiency raised in the recent Board of Visitors survey. Obviously, as a board, we should be more about helping set strategy with Brian and less about involving ourselves in the day-to-day operations of the University.

"Now is the perfect time for us to be adjusting how we spend our time. We have a new president in Brian and if you missed his presentations in the Monarch Nation Tour I can tell you he energized and excited the two audiences I was there for. We are coming off of 13 years of innovation and progress under John Broderick's leadership and we are ready to go to the next level. Brian is the dynamic leader we need to take us there.

"I want to begin this meeting by priming the pump a little with regard to transitioning us to thinking and acting more strategically. Jeff Selingo's book, "College Unbound," is a great way to start. You will hear from Brian and Jeff shortly.

"I am going to pose a few questions and thoughts about issues I believe to be worth consideration as we think more strategically. You may or may not agree and that's fine. The purpose again is to prime the pump. To that end I will give you a copy of these remarks so you can use them to consider areas you believe require our attention.

"Over the summer I read Jeff's book as well as another book entitled, "The Innovative University," by Clay Christianson. From these two books it became clear that the business model for the successful university is changing. COVID, the impending enrollment cliff, tuition inflation and student debt are but four game changers which require our attention.

"Fundamental questions worth considering are:

What do we want Old Dominion to be known for?

How do we want to distinguish ourselves from other universities?

"We can answer these questions at least two ways. First, we can answer by identifying the areas of study in which we seek to be known for our excellence. You will hear about some of these possibilities this afternoon – maritime, public health/health sciences, coastal resilience, wind energy. Some or all of these are natural areas for us to become nationwide exemplars in.

"Here is another way for Old Dominion University to be distinguished from other universities: We can be known as the preeminent university for educating first generation college students. Of course we have a huge head start in this area. If we were to pursue this path it would impact many other aspects of our strategy, like pricing. We would need to keep tuition pricing low. On the other hand this strategy including low tuition pricing might make us more attractive to Virginia's General Assembly to provide ODU greater funding. It is consistent with Virginia's strategy to have Virginia be the best educated state in the United States. This Virginia strategy requires a higher percentage of college graduates which could play to the strength of ODU.

"This approach may require more creative pricing as well. For example, who says we have to

our cost to educate the student. For example, it probably costs us more to educate a Chemistry or Physics major than an English major. And perhaps a part of this pricing formula should be the earning potential for each major. We could begin by answering the question – What does it cost us to educate a student by area of discipline?

"Here is another possible area for consideration. Successful businesses have 5-7 key metrics. More than that is too many to keep track of and work to improve upon. We currently have too many. One of the books I referenced suggested these key metrics:

- Acceptance Rate
- Matriculation Rate
- Retention Rate
- Graduation Rate
- Tuition Discount Rate

Obviously, as important as the numbers themselves are, equally important is to examine how each area is trending over the past 5-10 years.

"Another potential area for exploration is how we balance the attention given instructing students vs. research. Students come to Old Dominion to receive excellent instruction. They are less concerned withi Td[2 (ne)4 ( oc4(c)4 (s)-1 (. M)-1 ((en)-4 (t)-)6 (tTw T[\*])-2 .01 Tw 0.26 0 Td )TjE-2 (ude)4 (

the percent that grade you 0-6. The average score for American businesses is 5-10. But there are some including Apple, USAA and Harley Davidson who score 60-70. At our company we used this survey at all of our newspapers for readers, advertisers and employees. When I was an adjunct I asked this question of the students in my leadership class to illustrate how to use the tool. After a person provides the score there is one follow-up question if the score is 0-6 - what is the one thing most causing the low score? If the score is 7-8, what is the one thing we could do to move you to a 9-10? If the score is 9-10, what is the most important thing driving the high score? Again, this is seven years ago but a common theme semester after semester for my students was the unsatisfactory experience they had with student advisors. My point is that we might consider using such a tool regularly to measure satisfaction of students, faculty and administrators. And then address those areas needing attention, like the student advisor example with my students.

"To conclude and to be clear, these themes I have just reviewed are not meant to be a strategic planning roadmap. In fact some of these or all of them may be lousy ideas. I am simply trying to prime the pump for us to begin thinking more strategically. I am giving you a copy of these remarks to spark your thinking about what you see as the strategic planning areas needing our focus over the next few years.

"At future Board meetings we will carve out some time to focus more on strategic isisng rTw 36.61 0 Td





## **WRAP-UP**

President Hemphill expressed his appreciation to the Board members for their time and attention throughout the day's discussions and suggested that future retreats be held for a day and a half. He welcomed their feedback and asked for their support as they move forward.

Rector Bradley thanked the President for a very informative retreat. He suggested that guest speakers continue to be invited to future retreats and books that will enable the Board to stay ahead