

BOARD OF VISITORS
Student Affairs Committee
Board of Visitors Conference Room
December 10, 2004
10:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

MINUTES

Mrs. Madison-Foreman, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:05 a.m. Roll call indicated that the following Committee member was in attendance and that a quorum was not present. These minutes are informational only.

Committee Member Present:

Mrs. Viola Madison-Foreman, Chair

Committee Members Absent:

Ms. Virginia M. Board

Dr. Jacquelyn Y. Madry-Taylor

Mr. B. Rod Rodriguez

Other Board Members Present:

Mr. Jack Ezzell

Mr. Colvin Gibson

Members of NSU Staff Present:

Mr. Larry Curtis, Vice President for Student Affairs

Mrs. Michelle Marable, Director of Admissions

Mr. Orby Moss, Director of Athletics

Mrs. Terricita Sass, Executive Director for Institutional Research & Enrollment Management

Dr. Alvin J. Schexnider, Acting President

Mrs. Deloris H. Smith, Recorder

Member of Student Body Absent:

Mr. Robert Looper, President of the Student Government Association

1. Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Madison-Foreman motioned, seconded and approved the minutes of the September 3, 2004 meeting.

2. Discussion Items

a. New Student Center

Mr. Curtis provided the following update on the new student center:

- A model of the building is being developed and will be put on display for viewing by students.
- A meeting will be held with the architects next Tuesday. The university is pleased with the design. The drawings are in Richmond awaiting approval.
- The new facility is scheduled to open in 2008. The current facility will be renovated.
- Construction costs have risen due to increases in the cost of steel and plywood.

3. Admissions Report

Mrs. Marable reported the following regarding the three admissions charts she developed:

- There were 4,243 students who actually completed the admissions process. Of that number, 3,116 received admission offers, resulting in a yield rate of 73%.
- A total of 4,243 students applied for admission. Of that number, 1,015 enrolled after deregistration had taken place, resulting in a yield rate of 23%.
- Of the 3,116 freshmen who were accepted, 1,015 enrolled, resulting in a yield rate of 32%.
- Mr. Curtis indicated that the above numbers are based on final census figures. He said that before census and class cancellations, we were shy 131 students from our goal of 1580. After census, we were shy 191 of our goal, and we ended up with 1300 admission deposits. These figures include transfer students. Mr. Curtis also indicated that we maintained our student profile. Our GPA remained at 2.6. Our SAT was 889 (a slight decline but still above the national average for African Americans, which is 857). Some of this decline is attributed to a drop in out-of-state students, who typically have higher SAT scores.

Mr. Gibson inquired about our recruitment efforts in Hampton Roads in Hampton Roads. Mrs. Marable and Mr. Curtis provided the following information:

- Beginning this month, the Admissions Office, in collaboration with the Financial Aid Office, will start a series entitled NSU Roundup. One Saturday each month, sessions will be held with local students to provide onsite admission, assistance with filling out financial aid forms, and information regarding payment options. The NSU Roundup is being advertised on local as well as the campus radio stations, and with local high school counselors and students. Current students may

attend the Roundup to obtain assistance with filling out their financial aid forms in a timely manner.

- A fall open house was held in November, and approximately 900 students attended.
- Mr. Pace, of the NSU Marketing Department, has developed a beautiful poster for Are You Ready Magazine, which is distributed to 100,000 high school students. A Norfolk State ad will be placed in this magazine. A poster of the ad will be developed and distributed to local high schools and some of our feeder schools nationally. The poster will also be emailed to all prospects.
- Current recruitment efforts will continue. They include purchasing names, making multiple trips to schools, hosting a luncheon for local high school counselors, sending birthday cards to prospects, and sending multiple emails to prospects throughout the recruitment season.

Mr. Gibson asked if we are aware of what our competitors are doing to attract students, where is the greatest impact to us, and how are we responding to what they are doing.

Mrs. Marable responded that our greatest challenge from competitors rests with scholarships. The best students seem to be more attracted to schools that offer better financial packages. This is something we really need to work on in order to be competitive.

Mr. Curtis added that another of our biggest challenges is out-of-state enrollment, which has declined over the last two years due to costs. This past year, \$250,000 in Board of Visitors Scholarships was available for distribution to out-of-state students. However, \$98,000 went undistributed because our offer to prospects was not enough, so they went elsewhere. The university is exploring the possibility of redistributing its scholarship dollars and increasing the amounts offered to out-of-state as well as blue-chip students. More than 500 honor students were admitted to the university, but we were able to make offers to only 166 of them.

Mr. Gibson asked if we know how out-of-state schools are dealing with this issue and if we can obtain information from institutions similar to Norfolk State to find out how they are handling problems where funds are inadequate. Mrs. Sass indicated that this is information that other schools are reluctant to disclose. Bringing in outside consultants who have worked with other schools is beneficial to us with reference to this issue. We know who our competitors are, and we are doing some additional things with what is called geomarket research. She explained what this involves. Restructuring the financial aid package has been discussed. It needs to be consolidated under one umbrella. We do have information from other schools as to how they are penetrating. It involves not only money but programs, image, and facilities as well. Mr. Curtis indicated that we also get a very comprehensive report from the College Board that shows where a student's SAT scores are sent, the schools they applied to, your feeder schools, etc. This information assists with recruitment concentrations and lets you know the markets your competitors are using.

Mrs. Marable indicated that the idea of aid offers going out earlier has been discussed. Efforts

will be underway to get the offers out by April 1.

Mr. Gibson applauded the recruitment efforts being made and encouraged the staff to do more repackaging because it is an excellent idea.

c. Enrollment Report

Mrs. Sass gave a PowerPoint presentation on Class Cancellations and Enrollment Management. Highlights from her presentation are as follows:

Class Cancellation Update

- Classes were cancelled for 1,423 students in August. A total of 367 students were lost due to the deregistration process for various reasons (233 instate and 134 out-of-state). Most were undergraduates.
- Of the 367 students who were lost, 150 of them had a GPA of 2.0 and higher. Twenty-two percent (22%) had GPAs of at least 3.0.
- Unexpended funds from various university scholarships, including the \$98,000 remaining in the Board of Visitors Scholarship fund, have been combined to assist the 150 students with at least a 2.0 GPA with their financial obligations. Letters were sent to them this week encouraging them to come back. Mr. Curtis' and his administrative staff will talk with them regarding their return to Norfolk State. Some have already responded. We will do all that we can to get these students back in school. This is key for a lot of our freshmen because the freshmen from last fall who were not able to come back this fall will impact our freshman retention rate and our subsequent graduation rate.

In order to reduce student frustration and long lines, Mrs. Madison-Foreman asked if there is one place where students can go to get registered, do their financial aid, etc. Mrs. Sass responded that there is a systemic problem with how we do business. There has been no remapping of processes. The system is trying to do things the old way. It is not focused on the students and the maze they have to go through from start to finish. Conceptually, this has not been looked at under one umbrella until this year. Today's students are very consumer oriented. They want to be able to conduct university business online, they want things to be right, and they want to receive consistent answers. One of the things we have done for this fall is develop an appointment program with students to reduce the long lines. The lines will be triaged so that different stations will handle specific problems. There will be individuals on the first floor to make sure that students are in the correct line and are receiving accurate information.

- The Improvement Plan reviewed all aspects of the class cancellation process. Mrs. Sass indicated that she personally talked with many students and parents, people in the community, staff, deans, department heads, and members of the

Cabinet in order to develop this plan. Mr. Looper, President of the Student Government Association, worked with her and provided input. The plan outlines what went right, what must be improved, and specific next steps. She reviewed highlights from the plan and explained some of the initiatives that have taken place to improve some of the processes. She has copies of the plan and will provide a copy for those who would like to have one.

- Mr. Gibson asked for an approximate figure of what it costs the university when students are deregistered. The figure was not available. Mrs. Sass will provide this information this afternoon.
- In the last Board meeting it was indicated that there had been numerous complaints from students and parents that they had trouble getting through the telephone lines in the Student Financial Services area. Mrs. Sass informed the committee that there is a new telephone system in place in Student Financial Services to appropriately reroute telephone calls.
- Mr. Gibson inquired about student email. He indicated that he had received information from a department head that a number of students would prefer that the university use their personal rather than their university email addresses to communicate with them because they do not check their university email. Mrs. Sass explained the problem with using personal email addresses. Norfolk State has adopted a policy to stick with one email address. It has been communicated to students through various means that they are responsible for reading the information sent to them at the Norfolk State University email address. This is common practice at other institutions. New students coming in will also be given a Norfolk State email address.
- Email use is being monitored. Almost 4,000 individuals have been checking their email. Mr. Curtis added that the Office of Information Technology had a contest to encourage students to go online and use their NSU email. The winner of the contest received a laptop computer.
- Mrs. Sass emphasized that established deadlines would be adhered to. Deadlines will no longer be changed or extended.

Mrs. Sass concluded the class cancellation report with a brief review of the action teams for the improvement of the class cancellation management process. She said that involvement by the school deans and associate deans has been very helpful with communicating information down the line.

Mr. Gibson asked if it would be unrealistic to expect that we will not have lines. Mrs. Sass responded that at this point it would until we move to web. She said that a lot of information is sent to students in the mail, but for various reasons

they do not receive it; thus, they come in to inquire about things they need to know about. That is

why we want to triage the lines until we get web up in May and they can go online to find out what they need to know. E-Commerce is also a must so that students can pay online.

Mr. Gibson inquired about triaging the lines and how it will be implemented. Mrs. Sass explained that for various reasons, we are confined to using the Administration Building. However, we are exploring the possibility of using the Wilder Center and returning to an arena style registration where everything can be done in one large room. This idea is being looked at for the fall. However, many of the facilities do not have wiring—a prerequisite for conducting an arena style registration. The Office of Information Technology is looking at the wiring situation.

Enrollment Update

- Fall enrollment reached 6,165.
- The Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) was 5,110--a 10% decline from the fall of 2003 and an 8.7% decline in the full-time enrollment.
- There was a fall freshman decline
- Residence hall occupancy is 1,824--down 4% from last year.
- Several factors contributed to the enrollment decline. Mrs. Sass reviewed the reasons listed in her report. The class cancellation process is a part of it but is not the only reason. Enrollment reflected a 5% deficit prior to the deregistration process. Substantial increases in tuition without increases in financial aid was another factor. Negative publicity impacted incoming freshmen as well as returning students with safety concerns. Mrs. Marable indicated that a number of prospective students and parents have expressed to recruiters their concerns about campus safety.

Mr. Curtis advised the committee that today, we are dealing with a very educated consumer. Parents obtain information about schools (crime rate, graduation and retention rates, facilities, etc.) from various sources and make comparisons before selecting a school. Almost 5,000 students on bus tours visit Black campuses on the East Coast each year in the spring. They compare the schools they visit. New amenities such as the residence hall and the student center will help attract new students.

- The freshman profile numbers are much the same except that some of the numbers went down.
- Graduate student enrollment increased from 584 in 2003 to 624 in 2004.
- The fall 2003-2004 retention rate is 63%. Four hundred five (405) of these students did not return. Two hundred five (205) of these students had a GPA of

less than 1.7. The 1.7 GPA is significant because it is a requirement that must be met for a student to continue receiving financial aid.

Mr. Ezzell asked what the gender mix overall is for the student population. Mrs. Sass responded that it is 64 female vs 36 male. She said that African American males are highly underrepresented. This is a nationwide trend, and something needs to be done to improve this situation. Mrs. Marable stated that our enrollment trends for a five-year period show that males have higher SAT scores but not higher GPAs. Mrs. Sass said that one of the things that the President's Leadership Fellows worked on dealt with the peer mentoring process and what to do with Black males.

Mr. Ezzell requested that male students be a special interest item for the next Board meeting. Mrs. Sass said that it would be.

Mrs. Sass reviewed the reasons for non-persistence. She said that most students gave no reason for leaving. They just walked away without talking to anyone

- Without deregistration, the retention rate would have been 67%.
- If we continue with the 63% retention rate and do not regain those freshmen to come back and graduate in six years, we will revert back to a 21% graduation rate. Currently we are at 28%. Mr. Curtis said we have to find out what the problem is because we are not trying to move forward—not backwards. This could impact our recruitment efforts because this is one of the topics that parents and students inquire about.

Mr. Curtis and Mrs. Sass have been working on getting the freshmen that we lost back in school and making sure that summer school is structured so that those who missed this past fall have a chance to graduate in six years and what we can do to help them. We have to invest more in our retention efforts.

Mr. Ezzell indicated that it is very important that this message be heard because he always defends the graduation rate. There was a discussion regarding graduation rates. Mrs. Sass reminded the committee that the only students who can be counted are those who come in first time, full time, degree-seeking, and get through the system in six years.

Mrs. Sass gave a brief overview of the retention strategies listed in her report. We know that students who reside on campus do better than those who do not, and she indicated some of the reasons why they do better. For the residence halls, we are looking for some residual benefits--not just bringing in more students but also increasing their ability to be able to stay in school.

We are looking at the high school profile of non-returning students. It is very difficult to get any feedback from them. They do not respond to surveys or telephone calls. Mrs. Sass said she has been working with Dr. Barnes, Dr. Cuevas, and Dr. Azeke of the First-Year Experience Program to avoid repeating any past

mistakes made with retention issues.

Mrs. Madison-Foreman thanked Mrs. Sass for an excellent report. She invited her to attend the full Board meeting today to answer any questions they might have regarding her report and to let them know some of the things that are being done. Mrs. Sass indicated that she would be present.

4. Information

a. Student Government Report

Mr. Looper, President of the Student Government Association, was not present at the meeting. Mr. Curtis gave a brief summary of the SGA report, indicating the various activities they have already sponsored as well as activities that are planned for next semester. He stated that thus far they have had a successful year.

b. Athletic Department Status Report

Mr. Moss began his report by stating that a number of the issues provided by Mrs. Sass (retention, graduation rates, surveys and information that prospective students can find on the website about individual institutions) have been athletic issues for the past 10 years. The NCAA instituted them several years ago. He said that the new residence hall as well as the new student center would greatly enhance athletic recruiting.

Highlights from Mr. Moss's report are as follows:

- Kevin Talley, a Norfolk State All-American football player, was highlighted in Hobson's Magazine. He is graduating tomorrow in 4½ years. He is a great success story. Mr. Moss distributed copies of the article to the committee.
- The Athletics Department has done something about the graduation rate of student athletes. Mr. Moss indicated that when he came to the university in 1999, the graduation rate was in the twenties. As of last year, it has gone up to 35%. In 1999-2000, the department instituted a Fifth-Year Program. This program took care of student athletes who came in on scholarships, did not complete their graduation requirements in four years, and exhausted their eligibility. The decision was made to pay their scholarship for a fifth year. This has impacted the graduation rate (43% this year).
- The men's cross country team continues to excel in the conference. This was their fifth year of winning the MEAC championship, and Coach Giles was named MEAC Coach-of-the-Year.
- During the past week there have been several significant changes in football. Mr. Moss indicated that he has talked with players and the coaching staff and made observations. He has submitted some recommendations to the President. She will

review all of the issues that need to be addressed and provide direction on the next steps to take regarding the football program.

- There will be a training table for the student athletes next year.
- The weight training room continues to be an issue. It has created an image problem. Renovations are being made to the facility to improve its image.
- The athletic program is experiencing some serious financial problems. Part of the problem stems from the stadium debt, which is nearly a million dollars that is paid off the top. Another issue is the annual increases in tuition and fees (8% last year); however, the department's ability to keep track with adding new money was only 5%. This past year the tuition and fees went up again, which directly affect scholarship costs. There was no increase in the athletic fee. Decisions must be made to either decrease the number of scholarships we offer, which means we become less competitive, or decrease expenses in other areas—the way we travel, the equipment we buy, etc. A last resort would be to reduce staff.
- Norfolk State joined the MEAC without being totally ready, and we are still playing catch-up. In 1999, Norfolk State was in a position to be competitive. Our facilities were some of the best in the MEAC. But since that time, other schools have taken significant steps to upgrade their athletic facilities. We need to do something to stay abreast.
- During the past week, the conference voted to make bowling not only a fall sport but a spring sport as well. This means that we will have to find additional funds for the bowling team to enable them to operate in the spring.
- There is talk in the conference for adding women's golf as early as the fall of 2006 and soccer. If that happens, we will have to find money for two additional sports in order for Norfolk State to stay abreast of the rest of the conference.
- Scholarship funds have increased in the MEAC. Five years ago Mr. Moss believed we could be very competitive with the scholarship funds available,-- specifically the amount in our football scholarship budget. But during the past five years, schools like Delaware State, which was at a similar funding level as Norfolk State, have increased their football scholarships to the maximum that the NCAA allows (63). Six of the schools in the conference have 63 full rides in scholarships. Norfolk State is one of three schools that are still playing catch-up. If we equate budgets, our football scholarship budget is a little over \$700,000. The schools with the maximum number have over a million dollars in their scholarship budgets. The cost for Norfolk State to bring a student in from out of state is more than \$22,000. At some of those other schools, it is less than \$20,000. There is a significant need in the area of scholarships.

- This past week the MEAC distributed a survey to all eleven member schools that will detail all of the budget and financial resources of each school. The results will be brought to the next Board meeting.

Mr. Gibson asked how our budget compares with the budgets at the other schools. He indicated that it looks like we are not going to be competitive with other schools, based on where we are, unless there is a substantial infusion of money. He asked Mr. Moss for his opinion of our fate.

Mr. Moss responded that when we entered the MEAC, we were lacking in staff. New staff had to be added at significant costs. That probably contributed to some of the issues faced in late 1999. More than \$50,000 is raised yearly to pay for football game programs, the small schedule cards, calendars, and the media guides. These funds are obtained from sponsorships and ads out in the community. All of the hardware additions in the stadium were added to increase our image at no cost to us. They are generating large amounts that go towards paying off their costs. The department will not get any of those funds until these items are paid off. Mr. Moss said that the only area where he can see a possible increase in revenue is in football ticket sales, where we are greatly lagging behind. There was more than \$400,000 in ticket sales last year. This year's sales are significantly lower. Student attendance at basketball games this year has increased, but that is directly correlated to winning and losing. The team has shown that they are competitive. Ticket sales from ll and basketball could also increase revenue. Mr. Moss stated that the department would be in much better standing financially if it did not have the large stadium debt. This debt will not be retired until the year 2018.

Mr. Gibson asked if we are likely to be at the bottom in the conference practically speaking. Mr. Moss responded that in 1999, Norfolk State had the best facilities in the conference. Since then, other schools have made improvements and additions to their facilities. This poses a recruitment problem. We have been very fortunate in that we have gotten some very good coaches who have been able to stay at the top. We finished one point away from receiving the All Conference Championship Award in male sports last year. We are somewhere in the middle right now with our resources.

Mr. Ezzell asked if we have ever taken a serious look at making the stadium a revenue generating enterprise and if we are actually marketing this idea. Mr. Moss responded that we have done so, but the costs involved for using it deter prospective clients. The Associate Athletic Director is in charge of marketing and promotions and also serves as Executive Director of the Athletics Foundation. The Junior Olympics will be returning next summer. Talks are underway with the Athletics Director for the City of Norfolk to bring some of the state playoffs and regional games to the stadium as well as Echols Hall. Talks are also being held with local high school wrestling coaches about bringing one of their big tournaments to Echols Hall. In the past two weeks the City of Norfolk was

allowed to use the stadium for their peewee football championships as a community service. They paid for the expenses and cleaned up after themselves. The Battle of the Bands was a successful activity held in the stadium. The Band made money from that.

Mr. Ezzell asked if the department had considered outsourcing as an option. Mr. Moss responded that it has not. Mr. Ezzell suggested that as an option.

Dr. Schexnider made reference to Mr. Moss's implication about the need to raise fees. From information provided by Mr. Curtis, he compared Norfolk State's tuition rates with those of Virginia State University. He noted that Virginia State's in-state rate is half of what Norfolk State charges; their out-of-state rate is \$5000 less than what we charge. He said that we have almost maxed out on raising fees. An alternative source of revenue must be sought in order to be competitive because from an enrollment management point of view, this would not be helpful to the institution.

Mr. Ezzell asked how Norfolk State compares to the other MEAC schools in size of staff. Mr. Moss responded that we are generally the same except in the area of sports medicine. There is a shortage of trainers. We have been able to augment that with graduate students through a partnership with Old Dominion University.

Mrs. Madison commended and thanked everyone for their reports.

4. Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Larry Curtis
Vice President for Student Affairs

Viola Madison-Foreman, Chair
Chair