

BOARD OF VISITORS
Student Affairs Committee
President's Conference Room
December 12, 2008
10:10 a.m. to 11:10 a.m.

MINUTES

Mrs. Viola M. Madison, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m. Roll call indicated that a quorum was present.

Committee Members Present

Mrs. Viola M. Madison, Chairperson
Mrs. Virginia M. Board
Mr. Stanley Green, Jr.

Committee Members Absent

Mr. Donald W. Seale

Other Board Members Present

Mr. Bobby N. Vassar, Rector
Mr. Henry D. Light

Members of NSU Staff Present

Dr. Carolyn W. Meyers, President
Ms. Pamela Boston, University Counsel & Special Assistant Attorney General
Mr. Ernest Ellis, Director, Internal Audit
Mrs. Faith Fitzgerald, Director, Residential Life/Housing
Dr. Joseph C. Hall, Interim Vice President for Research & Economic Development
Mrs. Sharon B. Hoggard, Interim Executive Director, Communications & Marketing
Mrs. Sharon B. Lowe, Vice President for Student Affairs
Mr. Marty Miller, Director of Athletics
Dr. Jannie W. Robinson, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs
Mrs. Terricita Sass, Interim Executive Director of Enrollment Management
Dr. Yatish T. Shah, Provost
Ms. Lisa Paige Tommaso, Assistant to the University Counsel
Mrs. Paula C. Thompson, Legislative and Community Liaison
Dr. William F. Ward, Legislative Liaison

Members of Student Body Present

Mr. Brandon C. Brown, President of the Student Government Association

Members of the Press Present

Ms. Denise Watson-Batts

1. Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Board motioned, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve the minutes of the August 29, 2008 meeting.

Mrs. Madison announced that the meeting would begin with a video of some of our students that was provided by Mrs. Lowe. She said that she wanted the committee to view this video so that they would know what our students are doing and how proud we are of them. Mrs. Lowe explained that the video shows participants in the Mr. and Miss Norfolk State University Pageant responding to questions they were asked at the pageant. The questions they answered focused on (1) what they liked most about Norfolk State; and (2) the first thing they would do if they were elected President of the United States. Mrs. Lowe said that Bobby Bennett was crowned “Mr. Norfolk State University,” and Allison Blackburn was crowned “Miss Norfolk State University.” Mrs. Madison commented that the University is all about students, and that is why we are all here. She said she was able to attend all of the student Homecoming events, and they did a wonderful job. She encouraged other members of the Board to attend student activities held on campus.

2. Discussion Items

Weapons Policy

Mrs. Lowe asked the committee to view the Weapons Policy that was co-authored by Dr. Jannie Robinson, and asked if there were any questions. She asked Dr. Robinson to answer any questions regarding the policy.

Mrs. Madison asked for an explanation of the policy. Dr. Robinson responded that the Weapons Policy is designed to reiterate the fact that Norfolk State has a zero tolerance towards weapons on campus by students, staff, and visitors. Persons found with weapons will face the university’s judicial process. The sanction for having a weapon depends on the kind of weapon that is found. The sanction includes suspension, and in some instances expulsion from the university. The policy does define what weapons are. Visitors to the campus who are licensed to carry weapons are expected to announce their coming to the campus to the Police Chief and obtain his permission to have a weapon on the campus. This refers to the FBI or persons traveling with the governor when he makes a visit. Otherwise, a weapon is not permitted.

In response to a question by Mr. Green, Mrs. Lowe said that the Cabinet and the university’s legal counsel have approved the policy.

Mrs. Lowe asked if there were any further questions. There were none. Mr. Green motioned, seconded by Mrs. Board, and unanimously approved by the Student Affairs Committee to approve the Weapons Policy and present it to the full Board for approval in open session.

Enrollment Management Report/Census Update

Mrs. Sass gave a PowerPoint presentation and reported the information that follows.

Fall 2007 Enrollment Summary

- The fall 2008 headcount of 6,325 was an increase of approximately 3% (up from 6,155).
- In-state students have increased by 6%, and out-of-state students declined by 10%.
- Affordability is a problem for out-of-state students. For the spring and fall of 2009, efforts will be made to make school more affordable for them. Dr. Shah said that the problem is that the State of Virginia requires these students to pay 100% of their costs, which is twice the cost for in-state students. Other states try to bridge this gap with financial aid; however, the State of Virginia has placed restrictions on using financial aid. Only a certain percentage of it can be used.
- The FTE, at 5,273, is an increase of 5%. This increase indicates that more students are enrolling full time.
- There has been no change in the male/female enrollment overall.
- In 2003 the freshman cohort retention rate was 63%. The 2007 students returning in the fall of 2008 increased to 72%--a record high. Our retention rate target is 83%.

In response to a question by Mr. Green regarding out-of-state applications, Mrs. Sass said that we are receiving applications, and the acceptance rate for them is good.

Freshmen Retention and Progression

- Our growth strategy is to enroll 9,000 students by 2013. We expect 1000 of these students to come from the School of Extended Learning.

Dr. Shah said that if we can increase the retention rate from 72% to 82%, and the graduation rate from 31% to 62%, which is about the highest percentage for HBCU's, that would have enormous implications on our image as well as our resources.

Mrs. Sass said that we have seen an increase in the number of students who remained freshmen. There has also been a higher increase in the number who have progressed from freshmen to sophomores.

After a brief discussion of national graduation rates and those of HBCU's and NSU, it was determined that we must work more aggressively to improve the graduation rates.

Dr. Meyers commented that many of the private schools with the high graduation and retention rates screen on the front end. The best students apply to these schools, many of them can afford it, and they come well prepared; thus, the private school rates are going to be inherently different. If they look at preparation and performance, like the University of North Carolina and the University of Virginia do, they give students a "free ride" from their endowment funds.

Dr. Meyers mentioned an article in the *baltimoresun* newspaper. This article stated that the legislature has acknowledged that the low graduation and retention rates at HBCU's are a consequence of the population they serve and socioeconomic status. She said that the state of Maryland has committed \$400 million to the four HBCU's in that state to give them extra money to address this issue. Dr. Meyers said that a copy of the article she just mentioned is included in the Board binders and she read a portion of the article. Dr. Shah said that our target is to be the best of the HBCU's because we can not compete with the IVY Leagues.

Mrs. Board asked about the role of community colleges in preparing students to come to the university. Dr. Shah said that community college enrollment is growing rapidly. Currently, the enrollment at Tidewater Community College (TCC) is 39,000. This huge increase can apparently be attributed to two factors: (1) they can provide help to those less prepared, and (2) they cost less. He said that we need to be more aggressive with our transfer student marketing. We also need to form partnerships and build bridges with the community colleges.

Mrs. Sass said that the transfers who actually enroll are not included in the graduation and retention rate numbers but support overall enrollment growth. Transfer students want to know the classes that will transfer and financial assistance that will be provided to them.

Freshmen Admissions Data 2005-2008

- Applications and acceptances increased.
- We enrolled 1,188 freshmen.
- The acceptance rate for applications was 68%. Four-year public schools average about 70%.
- Our yield rate is thirty-seven per cent (37%)—the highest found on record. Our target is to exceed the public school average (42%) by one per cent; thus, our goal is 43%.

Freshmen Profile

- There was an increase of 19% (1,188 first-time freshmen)
- The high school gpa was about the same (2.7 mean). Attention was focused on the SAT scores. Our inability to enroll higher profile out-of-state students brought our number down from last year. Out-of-state students traditionally bring a higher profile to our freshman class. We are losing that diversity and what they bring to the campus.

Mrs. Madison asked about the percentage of out-of-state students we enrolled this year. Mrs. Sass responded that it was 19% overall and 27% for freshmen). Dr. Shah commented that the state of Virginia, because of its financial aid and tuition policies, does not encourage us to go out of state to get students. They want us predominantly to serve the state population—not out-of-state students. On the other hand, a long-term strategy for the university would be to bring in not only out-of-state students but international students as well in order to build the kind of diversity that we want. One

advantage of this strategy is that it would allow us to capture the best students with the brightest minds. One of the bad statistics for the state of Virginia is that the African American high school graduation rate is dropping. If we just focus on that, then we are trying to grow from a shrinking market, and that's a very tough call. We have to try to expand our market base to help with our growth potential.

- During the past two years, efforts have been underway to increase black male enrollment. That number increased from 40% last year to 42% this year.
- Seventy-five per cent (75%) of freshmen reside in campus housing. This is actually a decrease due to the fact that the demand exceeded the capacity.
- Freshman Virginia residents residing on campus increased from 72% in 2007 to 73% this year.
- All of the students who were temporarily housed in a local hotel at the beginning of the semester were moved to campus housing by the last class cancellation date.

Dr. Shah said that if we do reach our enrollment goals, we would need additional campus housing.

Unmet Need for Undergraduates

- For in-state students the unmet need is 12 million dollars—an average of about \$3,015 per student. The number decreased from last year because students have to borrow more in order to stay in school. This will be a major metric in a couple of years because we have competing forces; i.e., governmental agencies want us to provide access and keep the borrowing limit low, but students have to borrow because the influx of resources are not coming in. We want students to stay out, of debt but we do not have the funds to keep them out of debt. Financial aid is another concern when debt goes up too high because if the institution's default rate is too high, we run the risk of not being able to provide financial aid. Thus, we have to educate students to pay back the money that they borrow.
- For out-of state students the unmet need is \$5.8 million—an average of \$6,598 per student. These students are borrowing a lot of money.

Mr. Green asked if we have focused attention on what students owe if they stay here four or five years. Mrs. Sass responded that the average amount owed when a student graduates from Norfolk State is about \$15,800. This does not include the debt that they might borrow from third-party agencies

Transfer Students

- We are aggressively seeking transfer students from the community colleges. Our goal is 400 per year. We are focusing on Tidewater, Thomas Nelson, J. Sargeant Reynolds, and Paul D. Camp Community Colleges. Over the next two months we will try to re-establish our partnerships and work to increase our articulation agreement.
- In 2006 we established a permanent position for a community college liaison because we did not have an ongoing presence to recruit the students. That person's role was to

work with recruiting students from the Virginia community college system. We have seen some small increases. We have had TCC to commit to increasing their transfer population by 350 students for us over the next three years. We visit all of the area community college campuses every week. ODU actually has a person for each one of the TCC campuses who is there all day. We have only one person for all of them. Next semester we plan to work with persons in various offices and some advisors to be on those campuses so that we can have office hours on each campus every day—especially at TCC

Mrs. Sass called to the attention of the committee the last page of her report that included an overview of some of the metrics and increases that we had over the last year that were discussed today. She emphasized that we have received great increases in customer service satisfaction with some of the areas on the first floor and on the campus overall. Our fall registration satisfaction rate has increased to 96%, and the courteous staff rating has increased to 92%. We are striving for 99% ratings in these areas.

Mrs. Board inquired about our diversity numbers. Mrs. Sass responded that adult learners help our diversity rate greatly on this campus, and the absence of those students really impacts our diversity. She said that we are striving for more diversity on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. She recalled that Virginia once offered funds to undergraduate white students as an incentive for them to come to Norfolk State in order to increase diversity. That program ended and had a tremendous impact on our diversity. Mrs. Sass said that she will provide information about plans for improving diversity at the March meeting.

Dr. Shah said that he is hoping that we can improve our diversity through distance education. He said that he wants to set a target of 1000 students. He said he believes we can improve diversity by pursuing the military population and non-traditional students. In addition, he said that we are aggressively pursuing transfer students because they tend to have a very high retention rate.

Mr. Brown asked about the Reclamation Program and wanted to know if students in the program have added to the numbers. Mrs. Sass responded that they have but in very small amounts. She said that this program pertains to students who have been out of school for at least five years and want to return and complete their degrees.

Mrs. Lowe said that another target audience will be the veterans. With the passage of the Webb Bill, we anticipate a significant increase in that population and will work aggressively to get them. Mrs. Sass said that she will provide more about this at the March meeting.

Residence Life/Housing

Mrs. Faith Fitzgerald reported the following information:

Honors Residence Hall

- The Midrise Residence Hall was selected to be the honors residence hall, and it will be a coed facility.
- The Midrise has six floors. The first floor will house a scholar in residence--a Norfolk State faculty member, study rooms, computer labs, and common rooms for programming. The upper floors will consist of DNIMAS, science, technology, mathematics and engineering majors (STEM); living/learning communities, to consist of an artist colony for music and arts majors, an emerging leaders community for management and business majors, a nursing community, and those students in the honors residential scholars program. A 3.0 or above average is required to live in the honors residence hall.
- Lee Smith, our current honors residence hall, is now a coed facility but will revert to being a residence hall for females only.

Mrs. Lowe added that Dr. Page Laws, Dean of the Honors College, will provide \$500,000 from Title III funds to renovate the first floor of the Midrise. In addition to the architectural renovation plans, the furniture and the landscaping will be changed and upgraded. We will have 300 honor students under one roof. Dr. Shah said that this is all a part of the strategy to promote the Honors College.

Mr. Brown said that the different majors getting their own space is very important to the liberal arts students. He said that it is good that they will be getting some of the same kinds of things that the DNIMAS students have traditionally been getting.

Guaranteed Freshman Housing

Mrs. Fitzgerald said that her office surveyed eight different schools to ascertain whether or not freshmen are guaranteed housing and to see how we might implement some of their policies at Norfolk State. The survey results revealed that we are already doing some of the same things the other schools are doing. She said that due to increased enrollment, we are going to have to add more spaces. We have been able to accommodate students who apply for housing by May 31. However, this year we saw a tremendous increase in on-campus housing requests, which was also a national trend. A number of schools had to use hotels for housing or turn students away. It is very expensive to use a hotel because there are additional costs (i.e., university live-in staffing and shuttle bus service to and from campus) associated with hotel housing that we do not have with on-campus housing.

Mrs. Fitzgerald said that freshmen do not have the benefit of being able to apply for housing early because, unlike returning students, they are not here. Therefore, in order to meet the housing demands for the freshmen, the number of spaces available to returning students will be lowered. Freshmen will reside in Babbette Smith North and South Towers, Rosa Alexander Hall, and Samuel Scott Hall. Those freshmen who are honor students will be housed in the Midrise Residence Hall.

Dr. Shah said that he, Mrs. Lowe, and Mr. Ralph Johnson have had discussions about building an additional residence hall so that we can accommodate more students because it impacts our growth. Mrs. Fitzgerald said that we currently have 2,462 beds; we received more than 3000 applications for housing.

Mr. Green asked for the definition of “squatters rights.” Mrs. Fitzgerald responded that it is a room reservation process that many schools use. The purpose of the program is to let Housing know how many students we can guarantee to be here to pay the mortgage on our buildings. It also enables us to free up spaces for freshmen. We have always reserved spaces for freshmen, but this year we will increase the number of reserved spaces for them to 900. Next year, as a result of the guaranteed housing study, we want to reserve 1,208 spaces.

Mrs. Lowe said that we lost approximately 250 freshmen that we could not offer on-campus housing to. This does not include the number of upper class students who were denied housing. There was a wait list as well. She said that we are hoping that a new residence hall comes to fruition because we certainly need it.

Mrs. Madison asked if we are guaranteeing that freshmen have first preference to housing. Mrs. Fitzgerald responded that we are restricting four (4) residence halls for them to make sure that if they want to come in, they can. She said that the only problem we foresee is with disabled students because with our older buildings we are limited in what we can do. Schools like the University of Virginia have funds to modify building and rooms to make that accommodation, but we are unable to do that. Legal counsel is assisting Housing with the language for the marketing piece to students with reference to guaranteed housing. We project that we will be able to house everyone with reasonable accommodations.

Mrs. Lowe said that the deadline for applying for housing is May 31. Even so, we are inundated with housing requests from all over the country in June, July, and August. Those spaces are going to be set aside beyond the deadline until we fill them up, and if the need arises, add more spaces. Mrs. Madison asked where we would get the spaces from. Mrs. Lowe responded that because the upperclassmen would have gone through squatters rights, they would have already been assigned a space. There will be some additional spaces that the upperclassmen traditionally are wait-listed for. As spaces become available for various reasons, we would still probably use some of those spaces for freshmen. Mrs. Fitzgerald added that this year, three people were placed in some of the large suites. In addition, some of the two-bed rooms were transformed into triples. Students were also housed with the resident assistants to accommodate as many on campus as possible. Mrs. Lowe added that the students’ bills are adjusted accordingly.

Mr. Green asked if we have contracts with residents around the campus to house students. Mrs. Fitzgerald responded that we do not because of liability issues with that. She said that the Housing Office maintains an off-campus housing list. Landlords who have rooms or apartments for rent can publish that information so that students can come in and pick it up or go online to the Residence Life/Housing website and get the list. There is a

disclaimer there that has gone through legal counsel to say that Norfolk State is not responsible and that any type of binding contract is between the landlord and the student only. Students do use this service, and they appreciate it.

3. Other Information

Student Government Report

The following are highlights from Mr. Brown's report:

- The Executive Branch of the SGA meets weekly to discuss student concerns and actions to be taken regarding the same. Senators are assigned to the four classes and the residence halls to hear student concerns and voice the same to the appropriate university administrators. The senators have made an impact in resolving issues regarding the residence halls and food service by meeting with these administrators
- The Judicial Branch of the SGA includes The Student Court. The Court has heard a number of cases this semester because students have chosen that option. The Court is unbiased and fair, and they decide cases just as a hearing officer would. The court cases provide a great experience for those hearing the cases. For example, the Chief Justice wants to be a criminologist; thus it gives him experience in the field he is pursuing.
- Student involvement with the SGA has increased this year. One initiative that was added to increase student involvement is establishment of the SGA Step Team so that students would not have to be members of fraternities and sororities to participate in a step show. The team performed for the Admissions Office First View activity in November and did an excellent job.
- The Residence Hall Committee works with Residence Life/Housing. This group is working very hard to implement events such as charity drives and respond to student concerns. This committee currently has six members, and interest is increasing. Working with this committee provides our students with valuable leadership skills.
- The Student Activities Committee is responsible for many of the day-to-day activities of the SGA, one of which was the excellent Homecoming 2008. Mr. Brown thanked everyone who came out to support the Homecoming events.
- Mr. Brown praised Ms. Valerie Holmes, the SGA Advisor, for working with them and helping them to plan and implement various activities, programs, and initiatives. They also commended Mrs. Lowe for sharing the vision of the SGA and helping them with student leadership and student involvement initiatives.

Upcoming Events

- Three general assemblies and a town hall meeting will be held during the spring semester.
- The SGA will obtain gift certificates for books to raffle off to students at the first SGA meeting as an incentive to increase student attendance at the meetings. Other ideas to increase attendance are also being explored.

- The SGA will support all of our athletic events and will continue to encourage students to do the same.
- An Obama Inauguration Day Watch Party will be held on January 20.
- “For Real Talk,” an informal SGA meeting, will be held in Babbette Smith Residence Hall. This session will give students an opportunity to talk informally about some of their issues and concerns and other topics without going to the general assembly meetings.
- Game Night will be held for students returning early from the winter break.
- Other activities and events planned for the spring semester will be reported at the March meeting. Photos of activities held will also be shown at that time.

Mrs. Lowe added that per a request by Dr. Carol Pretlow, her office has provided funding for two busses to take students to the Presidential Inauguration on January 20.

Athletic Department Report

Mr. Miller reported the following information regarding the Athletics Department.

- The Athletic Department’s recertification process was excellent. We were extremely proud of the positive exit interview responses that we received. Mr. Miller thanked all of the committee members who worked with the recertification process. They were able to provide the data needed to justify what athletics actually accomplished at the university.
- There was only one point that we had to follow up with—a plan for improvement that addressed discrepancies between graduation rates of certain sub-groups of student-athletes and their counterparts in the general student population. That report was due to the NCAA on December 19; however it was completed and submitted to the NCAA on November 7. We are expecting final approval from the NCAA when all certification applications are reviewed at their spring meeting.
- The graduation rate for student athletes has increased from 55% to 56 %. Over the last four years, our graduation success rate climbed from 40% to 56%. We are very proud of these achievements.
- Our student-athletes and coaches continue to win honors and awards. The men won the MEAC Cross Country Championship for the eighth time in the last nine years.
- The basketball season has begun. While we have not started out as well as we would like, we want to finish the season strong and win the championship at the tournament.
- For the first time, we generated game guarantees (\$34,000) for the women’s basketball team. The department is always exploring ideas to generate additional revenue for its sports.
- Our football team finished 5-7 this year. We did not finish as well as we wanted to but some positives came out of that. Out of five home games, it rained at four of them. Even so, we were still ranked number 22 in average football game attendance out of 117 schools for the 2008 season.

Mr. Green commented that he is very pleased with the academic growth of our student-athletes.

Adjournment

Mrs. Madison asked if there were any further questions or comments. There being none, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon B. Lowe
Vice President for Student Affairs

Viola M. Madison
Chairperson