



**Student Advisory Committee Minutes**  
**Friday, September 27, 2019**  
**Patrick Henry Building**  
**East Reading Room**

**Members Present:** Margaret Ahmes (Paul D. Camp Community College), Ellie Brasacchio (University of Virginia), Ethan Crouson (Old Dominion University), Emmy Dunnivant (Christopher Newport University), John Fansler (The University of Virginia's College at Wise), Amelia Graves (Longwood University), Caleb Harris (Richard Bland College), Joshua Hines (Virginia State University), Lilliauna Hopkins (Norfolk State University), Sarah Izabel (Virginia Commonwealth University), Lillian Lester (University of Mary Washington), Aquila Maliyekkal (University of Richmond), Morgan McKinney (Lord Fairfax Community College), Adia McLaughlin (George Mason University), Aaliyah McLean (James Madison University), Mary Obeng-Boampong (Bryant & Stratton), Abigail Segrest (Radford University), Clara Waterman (William & Mary), Chenelle Williams (J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College).

**SCHEV Staff Present:** Tom Allison, Melissa Benavidez, Jean Huskey, Wendy Kang, Laura Osberger, Paula Robinson, Beverly Rebar, Felix Sam, Kristin Whelan and Michael York.

**SCHEV Council Present:** Katharine Webb

**Others Present:** Michael Maul, Atif Qarni, Kelvin Rachell, Lauren Zion.

- Paula Robinson, SCHEV's Assistant Director of College Access & PK12 Outreach, brought the meeting to order, welcomed attendees to the first meeting of the 2019-20 Student Advisory Committee. She introduced Virginia Secretary of Education, Atif Qarni.
- Secretary Qarni introduced himself to the committee and provided them an overview of education in the Commonwealth. He encouraged the students to seek careers in state government and to investigate the Governor's Fellows program to further their professional development. He also spoke to the group about the Governor's goals for education in the state and then prompted the students for questions. The group inquired about financial aid, tuition increases and student support systems.
- Council member, Katharine Webb, spoke to the Student Advisory Committee (SAC) about the work of the SCHEV Council members. She explained how the work and discussions of the SAC are used to inform Council deliberations. Ms. Webb also spoke about the ongoing Graduate Outcomes Survey and some of the preliminary findings.
- Wendy Kang, SCHEV's Director of Finance Policy and Innovation, provided the group with more specifics on Virginia's higher education system and how much the state invests in it. She explained who the stakeholders are and whom SCHEV works with at the institutions.
- Isabella Aquino read a public comment form the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium. (written comments posted separately)
- Campus updates and introductions were provided by each member. All introduced themselves and provided information about their institutions with the following highlights:

- Longwood University (LU) – Amelia Graves – Graves reported that LU has begun a pilot program which will provide free feminine hygiene products in the main areas of the campus. The SGA passed a measure to put a clause in the syllabi of all classes stating the availability of a food pantry. Students who staff the pantry are required to sign a confidentiality statement to protect the privacy of those who use the pantry.
- Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) – Morgan McKinney –McKinney reported that there are large construction projects on the LFCC Warrenton campus. She added that a program to provide free feminine hygiene products and a food pantry are new on her campus.
- Norfolk State University (NSU) – Lilliauna Hopkins – Hopkins listed Nursing, Business, and Social Work as the most popular programs at NSU. The relatively new transfer center is booming and there are many students transferring in from VSU. There is a new residential unit with another set to open in the spring. They are looking for strategies to help NSU deal with off-campus housing. There have been changes to the parking policies at the school and the confusion is upsetting the students. There was a 1619 Summit which recognized the 400 year anniversary of the first slaves brought to the United States. The NSU band was chosen Best Band in the Region.
- Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) – Sarah Izabel – Izabel shared that the two strongest programs at VCU are the art and engineering schools. The art school has a location in Qatar. Parking continues to be an issue on campus. The administration is trying to find the best course of action for dealing with off-campus groups coming on campus to campaign. Students struggle to deal with the financial aid office, but there have been some changes. Hopefully, the service will improve. Ms. Izabel hopes to work with SCHEV on this issue. The VCU Ram Pantry (food pantry) hopes to demystify the use of the pantry by making it open to all students. The pantry has created grab and go snack packs for students in a hurry. VCU is also working on having diversity programming throughout the year. VCU would also like to be recognized for the large number of Virginians it serves.
- Bryant & Stratton – Mary Obeng-Boampong – Obeng-Boampong described how her institution caters to students with varying lifestyles. The mix of on-line and in-person classes at night and on the weekends help students who are working or who have families. Parking is free and career services helps students and alumni with resume and interview skills. She also mentioned the high pass rate in the nursing program.
- George Mason University (GMU) – Adia McLaughlin – McLaughlin spoke about her dismay after learning that GMU was voted 11<sup>th</sup> “most unhappy college campus.” The ongoing construction, the resulting noise and unpopular faculty recruitment are all reasons behind the dissatisfaction. To fight back against this image, GMU is focusing on student well-being. Through an orientation program, they are hoping to keep students engaged through all four years. They are also working on partnerships to build a better relationship with the community surrounding GMU. The institution is currently searching for a new president and is holding listening sessions with students as part of the process. The University One project aims to expand student housing options. The transfer project, an agreement with community colleges in northern Virginia, contributes to the 40% of the GMU student population joining the school as a transfer.
- Old Dominion University (ODU) – Ethan Crouson – Crouson described some of the challenges facing ODU. Students are concerned about rising tuition rates and parking shortages. They are also concerned that academic and career advising is not effective in assisting with class planning and job search. There is a lot of new construction on campus with a new academic center and new residence halls. ODU is trying to make the shift from a commuter school to a residential institution. There are new degree programs including a computer gaming design degree and a certificate offered in the College of Education related to addressing the opioid crisis.
- William & Mary (W&M) – Clara Waterman – Waterman shared with the group that W&M’s current priority is to diversify its faculty hiring. Currently, only 12% of W&M’s faculty are people of color.

They are finding it difficult to attract a more diverse applicant pool to the Williamsburg area. It is thought that the higher cost of living is part of the challenge and the school is looking for ways to lower the cost of living for students and faculty. W&M is expanding their computer and data science majors. They have a newer leader in President Katherine Rowe who has been popular. There is also a new Provost who is looking to expand W&M's modern language offerings beyond offerings from western European languages. W&M has very strong orientation and academic advising programs. They are expanding mental health access and revamping the Title IX process. Part of this effort is the introduction of the "Let's Get Consensual" program.

- University of Richmond (UR) – Aquila Maliyekkal – Maliyekkal shared with the group that UR is technically two separate, but coordinated, traditionally men's and women's colleges. Currently on campus, parking is an issue. The student government and administration are working together on increasing diversity within the student body. The school is undertaking the Race & Racism project to explore archives in an effort to uncover and address their unsettling history. UR has uncovered, but not confirmed, a likely site of slave burial grounds on campus. UR opened a dedicated multi-cultural space on campus. Student government is working to get the administration to build more reading days into the academic calendar before exams. As a private college, UR doesn't have the same constitutional free-speech guarantees which public institutions must adhere. To that end, the school is working on creating speech guidelines and policies and has assigned a task force to work on an official speech code.
- Richard Bland College (RBC) – Caleb Harris – Harris explained the connection between RBC and William & Mary. RBC created a hiring committee including students (and Mr. Harris) to hire the new Athletic Director and women's soccer coach for the new women's team. The annual pecan festival is soon and RBC is creating new traditions with a tree-lighting ceremony at Christmas. All of the efforts are meant to increase student engagement on campus. RBC currently has a record number (415) of residential students this year. RBC has made other improvements to campus including improving the walking surface of the nature trail and running special programs on it, such as a Trail of Terror at Halloween. They are breaking ground on an innovation center scheduled for next year and have given students new parking passes to better secure the campus.
- James Madison University (JMU) – Alia McLean – McLean spoke about how important democracy and free speech is on her campus. JMU has its own voting precinct and they experienced a jump in voter turn-out last fall. There is concern on campus about off-campus housing, because it is very expensive and monopolized by a few management companies. Students feel a great deal of pressure to make quick decisions about living arrangements. JMU has started a new campaign called, "Wait Before You Sign the Lease" to take some of the pressure off. With over 300 student groups on campus, students struggle with the "busy culture" and stress. To address this, there is an effort to have more groups collaborate. JMU is the "most innovative school" in the south according to U.S. News and World Report. With a decline in enrollment, JMU is striving to be more inclusive. JMU's Center of Multi-Cultural Student Services is hoping to address these issues. The ribbon-cutting for a new residence hall named after Paul Jennings, a slave of James Madison, is happening in a couple of weeks. JMU intends to announce a new diversity initiative at that time. A food pantry is opening on campus and a campus closet that will offer clothes for interviews is in the works.
- J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (JSRCC)– Chenelle Williams – Williams shared with the group that JSRCC has three campus, the newest named the Kitchens at Reynolds located in the Church Hill neighborhood in Richmond. The Kitchens houses JSRCC's culinary program. President Pando has started a program called Minding the Gap to address the achievement gap for minority students. It is a professional development program for students of color. There is also a program called Great Expectations to provide support for students who have aged out of foster care. There is a space on campus called the Student Stop which houses, in one place, information on local, state and federal government resources and a food pantry. This initiative has helped mitigate other issues students are facing. The goals are to help students with their work, life and study

balance, manage stress and to give students the confidence to go to their advisors and faculty for help. JSRCC continues to try to address low-retention rates and transportation issues.

- University of Mary Washington (UMW) – Lillian Lester – Lester described UMW’s efforts to rebrand itself and improve its image. She stated that she’d like to share and hear ideas for improving campus engagement, it is a concern at UMW. Even though there has been a drop in student on-campus activity participation, there is a big interest in civic engagement and political involvement. There is a move to make Election Day a school holiday. Senator Tim Kaine was a guest on campus for the opening of the James Farmer Multi-Cultural Center. UMW is exploring ways to improve the school’s relationship with the City of Fredericksburg in hopes to improve off-campus housing choices and alleviate parking issues. UMW recently received a large grant to help fund their Eagles in Recovery program, which assists students struggling with addiction. The new Eagle Resource Closet collects food, clothing and other supplies to make available to students. There are concerns around campus safety after a sexual assault in a freshman residence hall and after white supremacist literature was posted on campus. There are also concerns around the dining system. Three of six on-campus dining locations have closed and there is only one open on the weekends. UMW is proud of their First in the Family Program for first generation college students and the Coordinated Care peer mentorship program which is part of orientation.
- Virginia State University – Joshua Hines – Hines shared concerns about the efficiency of wi-fi on campus. Student engagement appears to be down but civic engagement has increased. National Voter Registration Week was just held on campus which included a social where those registered could enter a VIP area. Students hosted a hygiene drive for the Bahamas Hurricane Dorian survivors. Donations in exchange for free haircuts/shampoo. Effort to make more electronic documentation, i.e. transcripts. Retention and completion for juniors and seniors is doing well; however, there are concerns about financial aid and SAP for freshman and sophomores. The University hosted its first town hall meeting with students and leadership.
- Paul D. Camp Community College– Margaret Ahmes – Ahmes described the special programming that Paul D. Camp Community Colleges offers to their students. There is free tutoring for students who need extra help, free school supplies and one per month student information sessions about transfer and study habits. Students who attend these sessions are eligible for a scholarship tied to their attendance. Student campus engagement is a struggle. There is a new Harvest Festival this year and there are also outings for students to visit Busch Garden’s Hallow Scream. There is a food pantry and clothing closet on campus available to students. They are also sending students to a leadership conference and students will be working with Rise to Hunger to package meals for aid.
- University of Virginia’s College at Wise (UVA-WISE) – John Fansler – Fansler shared that UVA-WISE has recently been named a good college for serving students with economic struggles. The school is also searching for a new provost. Similar to other schools, UVA-WISE wrestles with parking problems, safety and food quality. To address these problems, the school has hired a new chef, received grant money to install security cameras and opened a free clinic. Students have spear-headed a fundraising campaign to advertise and solicit funds for additional parking. UVA-WISE is facing enrollment decline, but has joined ARC and will be able to offer in-state tuition to all students who come in from Appalachian region states (North Carolina – New York.) Through the UVA –WISE program named “Innovate to Elevate” every student, faculty and staff has received at no cost an iPad, keyboard and stylus. Students continue to be concerned about tuition increases and even though they have a large endowment, they are seeking a replacement for the money they once received from the coal industry.
- University of Virginia (UVA) – Ellie Brasacchio – Brasacchio to the group and to UVA. She explained how the student government body at UVA conducts many of the tasks some may consider to be the responsibilities of sponsors/staff on other campuses. At UVA, the student council allocates the funds (around \$1 million annually) for student groups. She also reported that President Ryan’s strategic plan has been approved. Items approved as part of the plan include: housing for

all first and second year students, more financial aid and an improved relationship with greater Charlottesville. Other concerns on campus include the high cost of textbooks, advising, counseling shortages and expensive off-grounds housing. The campus and town are also still grappling with the violence of the riots of 2017.

- Radford University (RU) – Abigail Segrest – Segrest shared that the RU campus is mourning the loss of two people from the campus family– the chair of the Criminal Justice Department and a freshman student. Both passed away in the first weeks of classes this semester. The merger of Radford and the Jefferson College of Medicine is now complete. The new name is Radford University Carillion. The school continues efforts to change its image as a party school. Students are concerned about tuition costs. There is a sustainability effort on campus called “Fill it Forward” to encourage students to use refillable bottles instead of disposable ones. RU purchased some off-campus housing units to house sophomores.
- Christopher Newport University (CNU) – Emmy Dunnavant – Dunnavant reported on what is happening on the CNU campus. CNU recently signed an agreement to make its Community Captains programs official. Community Captains will serve 70 high school sophomores from Newport News high schools. High school students will enroll in several specific classes at CNU, and be eligible for admittance and scholarship money if they maintain the required GPA. If successful, CNU plans to expand to Hampton City and York County public schools. CNU is transitioning to paper to-go boxes as part of a sustainability effort, which has also included more recycling bins. There is a lot of new construction on campus. There are concerns about parking and over-enrollment. All students at CNU are guaranteed housing for three years.
- Lunch was served.
- Michael Maul, Associate Director of the Department of Planning and Budget presented to the Student Advisory Committee about the budget process, especially with regard to education funding. He spoke specifically about the differences between General Fund and Non-General Fund and why Higher Education funds are cut before other types in the budget.
- Paula Robinson discussed the SAC’s purpose and introduced the students to the originating language in the Virginia Code. She discussed FOIA policies and the procedure and policies governing the SAC meetings. She reviewed the SAC section of the SCHEV website, and compiled resources there for reference. She also summarized the common themes heard from the students’ reflections which all fell loosely around student life concerns - mental health, food insecurity, off-campus housing, parking, diversity and access. These will serve as topics of discussion at the next meeting, as the group begins to define their common concerns and develop recommendations to be shared in the spring with Council and college presidents.
- Students were invited to participate in the SCHEV Board of Visitors Orientation on October 23, 2019. There was also a discussion about scheduling future meetings. A Doodle Poll will be sent out to schedule the next SAC meeting before winter break and final exams.
- After a brief discussion and vote, Sarah Izabel and Aquila Maliyekkal were chosen as the 2019-2020 SAC co-chairs. Both Izabel and Maliyekkal are returning members from 2018-19.
- The meeting was adjourned at 3:07 PM.