

Budget, curriculum, & more

By Karla K. Bruno

WILLIAMSBURG
Hanging out with the William & Mary Board of Visitors is a not only test of endurance, it is also instructive.

For example, at last week's three-day meeting, when asked for an update on the recommendations for budget

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cuts as requested at the Board of Visitors retreat by the president and provost, Taylor Reveley revealed that no cuts were made. Indeed, no evidence of any suggestion or implementation of a suggestion for budget rearrangement appeared in three days. That leads me to suspect the whole exercise was pointless. Good leadership requires such exercises be meaningful at least, fruitful if possible — and always accountable.

Other developments:

1. The Curriculum Review committee, headed by Michael Lewis and Teresa Longo, has two more years to work on its study and review, and the Board of Visitors will not be entertaining a vote on any changes in this academic year.

Noting that Provost Hal-leran announced last February that the faculty would vote in May and the Visitors would have it this fall, I presume they don't like the proposed changes and asked for the committee to perhaps think some more. Two years more.

2. The college is considering hiring an independent company to establish a "Whistle Blower Hotline" for the reporting of unethical or illegal actions on campus. The anonymous part is troubling, as it was when the college had an anonymous bias reporting system (now defunct).

3. The proposed Arts Complex has been reduced to a rehab of PBK to house music and theater only. No donors came forward for the massive project.

4. A hue and cry for bigger and better development efforts was much touted, but of course that is not news. What the college needs are transformative gifts, and those take personal effort on the part of the president and rector, wooing alumni with strong emotional ties to the college who see the college's current mission as something worth supporting in a big way.

5. The 5-Year Strategic Plan remains weak and stuck in a just-getting-by rut.

Some board members noted that neither goals nor objectives were identified in the report, despite being cited as part of the process. Taken as a whole, the plan seems to have the college looking for a group hug more than anything else. The college appended "New Ventures" to the Strategic Plan so that it is next to but not part of it. It's as if someone recognized that the future should be included after all, but didn't quite know where to put it.

6. Visitor Michael Tang sits on a medical school board in Chicago, and Visitor John Littel works in the health insurance industry, so they will be hugely helpful as the college works through the process of considering a merger with EVMS.

7. Laura Flippin resigned, without an apology of any kind — not to the governor whom she embarrassed nor to the college whose Honor Code she does not respect.

Karla K. Bruno holds two degrees from the College of William & Mary.

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