

MINUTES OF A RETREAT OF THE
BOARD OF VISITORS OF
VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
November 16, 2001

A Retreat of the Board of Visitors of Virginia Commonwealth University was held on Friday, November 16, 2001, at 12:30 p.m. at the Virginia Crossings Conference Resort located at 1000 Virginia Center Parkway.

Present were Messrs. Flippen, Gresham, Long, Markel, Plymale, Pyon, Slater and Rigsby; Drs. Perkinson, Smith and Wootton; and Mesdames McMichael, Petera and Riddick. Messrs. Axelle and Baldacci were absent. Also present were Drs. Huff, Kontos, McDavis, Mattauch, Sesnowitz, Sneden and Torr; Messrs. Ross, Timmreck and Wyeth; and Mesdames Balmer, Messmer and Price.

Mr. Flippen called the meeting to order. A report on the Measures of Faculty Productivity and Effectiveness in Teaching, Research, and Service in Academic Units with Undergraduate Programs was presented. A presentation was made followed by discussion. The typical faculty load for most faculty is three courses per semester with about 25% of time allotted to research and service. All faculty are evaluated in writing each year, based on the individual annual work plans in teaching (including student feedback), research and service.

A report on Measures of Undergraduate Student Outcomes was presented. Student learning outcomes:

- Need to exist for each degree program major, minor, track and concentration
- Can be set only by faculty
- Are easier to set and assess in "professional" programs
- In many disciplines, are national standards or expectations

- Are sometimes dictated by external forces, e.g., programmatic accreditation or standards
- Differ from departmental goals

Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning are:

- The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
- Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
- Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
- Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
- Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.
- Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives across the educational community are involved.
- Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions people really care about.
- Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.
- Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

A look at how assessments of student learning outcomes are now and in the future was presented on each of VCU's schools.

A report on Building Community in Academic Units with Undergraduate Programs was presented. Faculty members discussed each school's involvement in creating a sense of community among the students and the academic units. Schools and programs represented in the discussions were:

- College of Humanities and Sciences
- School of Business
- School of Engineering
- Life Sciences

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m. and will reconvene on Saturday, November 17, 2001, at 9:30 a.m.

Edward L. Flippen, Rector

Lindley T. Smith, Secretary