



THE RECTOR AND VISITORS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

December 7, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Ad Hoc Committee for Innovation in Curriculum and Curriculum Support

Jeffrey C. Walker, Chair
Thomas A. DePasquale
Barbara J. Fried
Robert D. Hardie
Babur B. Lateef, M.D.
Tammy S. Murphy
James B. Murray Jr.
James V. Reyes
Frank M. Conner III, Ex Officio

and

The Remaining Members of the Board:

Robert M. Blue	John A. Griffin
Mark T. Bowles	Maurice A. Jones
L.D. Britt, M.D.	John G. Macfarlane III
Whittington W. Clement	Margaret F. Riley
Elizabeth M. Cranwell	Bryanna F. Miller

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee for Innovation in Curriculum and Curriculum Support on December 7, 2017

The Ad Hoc Committee for Innovation in Curriculum and Curriculum Support of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in open session, at 9:15 a.m. on Thursday, December 7, 2017, in the Board Room of the Rotunda. Jeffrey C. Walker, Chair, presided.

Present: Frank M. Conner III, Barbara J. Fried, Babur B. Lateef, M.D., Tammy S. Murphy, and James B. Murray Jr.

Absent: Thomas A. DePasquale, Robert D. Hardie, and James V. Reyes

John A. Griffin, Margaret F. Riley, and Bryanna F. Miller were also present.

Present as well were Teresa A. Sullivan, Patrick D. Hogan, Thomas C. Katsouleas, Melody S. Bianchetto, Susan G. Harris, Donna P. Henry, Ronald R. Hutchins, Patricia M. Lampkin, W. Thomas

Leback, Mark M. Luellen, Melur K. Ramasubramanian, Debra D. Rinker, Nancy A. Rivers, and Robert M. Tyler.

Archie L. Holmes Jr. and Kelsey E. Johnson were the presenters.

Mr. Walker opened the meeting and gave the floor to Mr. Holmes.

Transitioning a Large Lecture Classroom in the College of Arts & Sciences to an Active Learning Environment

Mr. Holmes introduced Ms. Kelsey Johnson, Associate Professor of Astronomy and Director of the Echols Scholars Program. Ms. Johnson reviewed the premises she uses for the teaching of large classes in an active learning environment:

1. Students are more invested when they cannot feel anonymous.
2. Peer interactions strengthen and create knowledge, understanding, and teamwork.
3. It is not possible to put knowledge or understanding into a student's brain; all that can be done is to create the environment where students learn it themselves.
4. Natural attention spans for college students are less than 20 minutes.
5. Learning is enhanced if students enjoy it.
6. Feeling psychologically/socially safe is a prerequisite for learning.

She said it is virtually impossible to address these premises in traditional large lecture-based courses. She divides her large classes into groups of 8 to 10 students. This erases anonymity, creates both a peer network and a sense of social safety, and enables group-based projects. She also intersperses student activities into her presentations. This breaks up the class period, provides students with opportunities to synthesize information, and gives them a sense of ownership of the learning process. There is resistance among some faculty to the interactive teaching style. Most learned in traditional lecture classrooms and are not familiar with or comfortable with an interactive format. Redesigning courses from lecture formats to interactive formats also takes time.

The chair said the committee's role is to support both online education efforts and innovative classroom efforts. The committee should work with the Buildings and Grounds Committee to make sure facilities support a range of teaching formats.

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 a.m.

SGH:wtl

These minutes have been posted to the University of Virginia's Board of Visitors website:

<http://www.virginia.edu/bov/advancementandcommunicationsminutes.html>