

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF VISITORS  
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
Friday, June 4, 2021

MINUTES

A special meeting of the Governance Committee of the Board of Visitors of Old Dominion University was held on Friday, June 4, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. The meeting was held electronically via the Zoom application pursuant § 4-0.01(g) of Chapter 1289 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly. Present from the Committee were:

Jerri F. Dickseski, Chair  
Yvonne T. Allmond, Vice Chair  
Kay A. Kemper, Rector (*ex-officio*)  
R. Bruce Bradley (*ex-officio*)  
Robert S. Corn  
Lisa B. Smith

Absent from the Committee            Peter G. Decker, III

Also present from the Board:        P. Murry Pitts

Also present:                            Austin Agho  
    Alonzo Brandon  
    Greg DuBois  
    Dan Genard  
    Annie Morris Gibson  
    Velvet Grant  
    Casey Kohler  
    Donna Meeks  
    Harry Minium  
    September Sanderlin  
    Amanda Skaggs  
    Don Stansberry  
    Cecelia Tucker  
    Jay Wright  
    WTKR News

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to receive a briefing from Provost Austin Agho on the work to date of the University’s naming task force. She indicated that this was a non-decisional meeting to guide the Board’s renaming process. She recognized the importance of the work that has been done so far and the individuals who were involved.

Provost Agho shared a flowchart overviewing the work of the task force. He noted that the central question presented to the task force was, regardless of their contributions to ODU and the

Commonwealth, should persons known to have publicly embraced segregationist views or supported massive resistance to integration of schools during their careers be honored with their names affixed to a building or college at the University. He reviewed the membership of the Task Force, which was co-chaired by Vice President Alonzo Brandon, and the reports, documents and policies the task force reviewed. These included Board Policy, 1810, Naming of Campus Buildings and Spaces, Board minutes going back to 1981 and 1886, and noted books and articles on massive resistance and the civil rights movement.

The task force also conducted interviews and discussions with noted experts and historians including Dr. James Hershman, Professor of Liberal Studies at Georgetown University, The Honorable Jerrauld Jones, Chief Judge of the Norfolk Circuit Court, Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Norfolk State University, Dr. James Sweeney, ODU Associate Professor Emeritus of History, and Mr. Noah Fort, a junior history major at ODU.

The task force was in the process of summarizing its draft recommendations that it had planned to present to the President, Rector and Dr. Unwanna Dabney as chair of the University Advancement Committee for their feedback on the the formulation of a recommendation to the Board. So at this point there is no report to share with the Board until a process for further deliberations is established.

The chair thanked Provost Agho and the work the task force. She stressed the importance of the members of the Governance Committee to have this background as it moves forward, noting that a lot of good work has been done by the task force that will be used by the Governance Committee as it continues the process. The Governance Committee will continue to work with the Provost on developing a process and methodology and language for inclusion in the Board's Bylaws for approval by the full Board. This will also include the formation of a task force that may involve many of those who served on this initial task force and will also include different stakeholders so everyone has a voice in this important process. While the desire of the Board is to do this as quickly as possible, it is equally if not more important for it be done correctly.

Ms. Allmond asked if the dates of the Board minutes noted from 1981 to 1986 are the only years there have been any conversations on this subject. Provost Agho said that Ms. Meeks keeps an archive of minutes from all past board meetings. Mr. Wright indicated that the University entered into a consent order with the courts in 1986 that relate to diversity, so it would be a good period to look through.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 a.m.