

University Budget Advisory Committee

Minutes – 3/18/2021 meeting

Prepared by Michelle Pickham

Voting members present: Nabil Al-Tikriti (Chair, At-large)
Liane Houghtalin (CAS)
Chris Garcia (COB)
Suzanne Sumner (At-large)
Laura Bylenok (At-large)
Kyle Schultz (COE)

Voting members absent: Stephen Davies (At-large)

Non-voting members present: Michelle Pickham (Secretary, University Staff Council President)
Patrick Catullo (Athletic Director)

Guests: Dave Fleming (Assistant Dean for Residence Life and Housing)

1. Mr. Fleming began the presentation with the mission of Residence Life and Housing to build and sustain a developmentally-based, socially just, and research-informed program that will encourage students' growth and development, build interpersonal relationships and integrate student learning opportunities across their college experience. Students who live on campus are more likely to graduate on time and have higher GPAs than their off-campus counter-parts. It's a value added to their academic success to live on campus.
2. Facilities overview: housing inventory: 18 residence halls with 2817 beds (2508 are available for use) with about 1569 are UMW beds and 939 owned by the Foundation.
 - a. 140 avg beds/UMW residence hall while Eagle Landing holds 600.
 - b. Only 5 residence halls are ADA accessible: Randolph, Mason, Willard, Arrington, and Eagle Landing.
 - c. There are three types of units: traditional, suite, and apartment units.
 - d. Alvey and Virginia are currently offline, the former indefinitely and the latter is under renovation. Marshall, Custis, South, and Bushnell halls are being used currently for isolation and quarantine spaces.
 - e. The last 5 years have included residence hall renovations included in the master plan which was created in 2016. After the Virginia project is completed there are no planned renovations due to the state of the University's budget.
3. How we model our occupancy:
 - a. We house about 88-89% of the freshman class. The rest meet the exemption requirements of living within 30 miles to the University.
 - b. Targeted marketing since 2017 saw an average of 5% increase year over year for returner housing applications. Occupancy typically over the last 5 years has been 2400 for the fall and around 2100 for the spring semesters.
 - c. Projecting forward for the next decade:
 - i. We factor in a multi-year recovery period due to COVID
 - ii. We found patterns in freshman to returner ratios and returner to total occupancy ratios regardless of the on-campus population size each year.
 - iii. We are anticipating a decline in on-campus freshman from 800-850 to 650-700 based on the enrollment projections.
 - iv. What if we considered changes to the residency requirement to 3 years?
 - v. Our forward projections include a reduction in revenue from about 10 Million in 2016-2018 per year to \$6.7 Million beginning in 2023 per year assuming a 650 FY class; a loss of \$3.3 Million a year. Or 1.8 Million loss (\$10 Million from 2016-2018 to \$8.2 Million/year in 2023) if we have 700 first year class and adding a 3rd year residency requirement.
 1. Ms. Pickham asked if there was a projection for 650 first year class + 3-year

requirement option?

- a. Mr. Fleming responded the projections for those parameters would result in just over \$7 Million, a loss of \$2.8 Million from 2016-2018.
2. Dr. Houghtalin mentioned that almost every college has a freshman residency requirement, and 2 years is less common, but 3 years could be a challenge and prohibitive. Has anyone looked at what that could do to recruitment for students who might not want to go here because of the residency requirement?
 - a. Mr. Fleming responded that we tend to see higher year residence requirements with private schools rather than public schools. He mentioned his preference would be to maintain the current residency requirement and would rather recruit students to live on campus due to the benefits and products/services we can provide them as residential students.
 - b. Dr. Houghtalin mentioned that the cost of on-campus residency is expensive; equivalent almost to renting a 2-bedroom house in the area.
 - i. Mr. Fleming responded that the only other VA state institution with significantly lower room rates is JMU. Where we lose is when you compare our room rates to off campus locations.
- d. Facility conditions and concerns:
 - i. Aging infrastructure: Ball, Custis, Madison, Alvey, Framar are in the worst condition. Any major system failure could result in a catastrophic building failure.
 - ii. Dr. Al-Tikriti mentioned the figures in how much it cost to renovate (\$18M for Virginia \$24M for Willard) seemed high considering it costs around \$40M to build new buildings. Mr. Fleming attributed the high renovation cost of these two structures to their age and historic preservation profile.
 - iii. Ms. Pickham asked what factors go into us not building vertically on top of existing residence halls to be able to get rid of some of the existing residence halls and use the buildings a bit more strategically? Is it the building height requirement imposed by the city? And why do we have so many residence halls when we only house an average of 140 beds in each?
 1. Mr. Fleming responded that height requirement comes into play a little, but we wouldn't be building that high up anyway. The 2016 plan called for the demolition of some of the buildings and building higher occupancy buildings. The benefits to the number of small buildings is the ability to create a stronger and more intimate community. The challenge is to limit the inefficiencies while still achieving strong communities in the buildings.
- e. Recent facility failures: mold in Alvey and Arrington, flood in Eagle Landing, rusted plumbing stacks in UMW appointments, steam pipe rupture under Willard, and steam pipe rupture under Westmoreland porch column all resulted in reactionary repairs.
- f. Accessibility is a major issue – 6 of 18 residence halls are ADA accessible. Even these structures that are accessible are not necessarily accommodating.
 - i. ADA requires that all students have access to educational programs and services, regardless of ability. We need to improve accessibility within living-learning at UMW, including FSEMS, themed living, LGBTQ+ community, and all-female hall. It's more than just a ramp - updating existing buildings is a costly venture and not feasible in some cases. For some of our past/current students, only one or two rooms in our inventory meet all of their accommodation needs and often these are not in the preferred communities/residence halls.
 - ii. Ms. Pickham asked if the inaccessibility of buildings was a factor in retention of students on campus?
 1. Mr. Fleming responded that we attract a lot of students with physical and

emotional disabilities, but the way the staff and faculty engage with them and their willingness to work with them turn them on to UMW.

4. Additional Budget Implications:
 - a. Only about 9% of the current housing revenue goes back to the Residence Life and Housing Budget. (professional staff salaries, student staff wages, in-hall programming, move-in/move-out expenses, training, housing management software, and furniture. Reductions in on-campus occupancy will impact the RLH department some, but it will have more significant impact on deferred maintenance and other student services.
 - b. There's an insufficient budget to repair and replace furniture as it reaches end of life. Some halls have dressers and desks that are over 20 years old.
 - c. RA stipends continue to be a priority. Housing rates continue to rise but RA stipends have remained the same since 2014.
5. Immediate challenges due to COVID:
 - a. Diminished occupancy – we took a flexible approach to contract cancellations; as we were more willing to approve housing contract petitions with COVID.
 - b. Limited student engagement – significant restrictions on in-person interactions, such as no guests permitted in residence halls, has affected satisfaction, program effectiveness, and student retention.
 - c. Staff fatigue – three frozen/eliminated full-time positions from 13 to 8 since 2017. RLH staff has been going non-stop since March 2020.
6. A lot of the budgetary pieces for RLH stem out of Paul Messplay's office and his area makes the decisions on where the revenue goes.
7. Dr. Al-Tikriti asked if you have a shrinking pool of residents then maybe now is the time to have a program to house a faculty mentor in each dorm, which could then be a marketing strategy?
 - a. Mr. Fleming mentioned it's something that has been on the back-burner for RLH. There has to be learning outcomes and professional housing accommodations associated with a program like this, and we haven't seen much return or engagement with that in past years. But we'd want to figure out what would we want to achieve and how we would build that program out.
 - b. Dr. Al-Tikriti added that it could be attached to the FSEM project, and might prove attractive to new out of state faculty moving to Fredericksburg,
8. Dr. Sumner asked "what's keeping you up at night?"
 - a. Mr. Fleming responded that what occupies his mind is his newborn and any thoughts of a mass displacement of students, whether that's due to a fire, a system failure, etc. which completely changes their experience and could negatively impact retention.
9. Dr. Al-Tikriti asked if Mr. Fleming was aware of any other programs at other institutions to address deferred maintenance
 - a. Mr. Fleming responded that some schools have moved to the private public partnership model to front the investments that have a ground lease that they will own the building for 50 years and then it will be turned over to the institution, where the company may manage them for a period of time. The challenge for UMW is that the housing revenue is tied in other services. Going to a PPP, we would lose the revenue we do get, which flows to other services.
10. Mr. Fleming approved the committee to share the attached presentation.