

June 21, 2012

The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell
Office of the Governor
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Thomas Jefferson considered the founding of the University of Virginia to be one of his most significant contributions to the American Republic. The University, he wrote, would be “based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind to explore and to expose every subject susceptible of its contemplation.” UVa is one of the nation’s most distinguished public universities. Here we teach, create knowledge, and train future leaders. We are bound to uphold the principles upon which Mr. Jefferson founded this University: “For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it.”

The forced resignation of Teresa Sullivan represents the most serious threat to the academic integrity, intellectual reputation, and national standing of the University in modern history. We agree with the Honor Committee that the failure of the Board of Visitors to provide a full and clear explanation of its decision has “created an environment that is inconsistent with the value of trust that runs through the very fabric of our University.”

As members of the faculty who are also loyal alumni of the University, our role as stewards gives us a special obligation to speak out when we believe this institution’s core values are at risk. We call upon Rector Helen Dragas to follow the Vice Rector’s lead and resign immediately. We also call for President Teresa Sullivan’s reinstatement. The Board has failed to follow proper procedures and has shown an utter disregard for the institution’s commitment to shared governance. President Sullivan was selected after a rigorous national search process that incorporated input from stakeholders across our community. She is beloved by faculty, students, staff, and alumni. She understands the financial challenges facing public higher education today – as well as the enduring values of honor, openness, and trust that cannot be compromised at any cost. Dean Carl Zeithaml is an enormously talented and highly respected academic leader, but we disagree with the Board’s decision to approve an interim president without faculty consultation. We call upon the Board of Visitors, our fellow alumni, and the people of the Commonwealth to restore the values that define our great University.

Sincerely,

Eric M. Patashnik (College, 1987)
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy
Professor of Public Policy and Politics

Maurie McInnis (College, 1988)
Associate Dean of Undergraduate Academic Programs, College of Arts and Sciences
Professor of Art History

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Jeanine Braithwaite (College, 1982)
Professor, Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy

Jennifer L. Geddes (College, 1987, GSAS, 1995 and 1999)
Research Associate Professor of Religious Studies
Permanent Faculty & Director of Publications, Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture
Co-Principal, Brown College at Monroe Hill

Christopher Krentz (GSAS, 2002)
Associate Professor of English

Margaret E. Mohrmann (GSAS, 1995)
Emily Davie and Joseph S. Kornfeld Foundation Professor of Biomedical Ethics
Professor of Pediatrics
Associate Professor of Religious Studies

Laurence G. Mueller (College, 1989, Darden 1993, GSAS 2002)
Assistant Dean for the Global MBA for Executives
Executive Director for the Center for Global Initiatives
Darden School of Business

Victoria Olwell (College, 1989)
Associate Professor of English

Ricardo Padron (College, 1989)
Associate Professor, Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese

Jahan Ramazani (College, 1981)
Edgar F. Shannon Professor of English

R.K. Ramazani (Law, 1954)
Edward R. Stettinius Professor Emeritus of Government and Foreign Affairs
Department of Politics

Caroline Rody (GSAS 1995)
Professor of English

Micah J. Schwartzman (College, 1998; Law, 2005)
Associate Professor of Law
University of Virginia School of Law

Andrew Stauffer (GSAS 1998)
Associate Professor of English

Stephen K. White (College, 1970)
James Hart Professor of Politics