



December 1, 2025

Dear Members of the UVA Board of Visitors (BOV),

We write to you as deans of UVA schools and as the academic leaders charged with upholding University values and executing our teaching, research, engagement, and patient care mission. In our previous letter to the Board (July 4, 2025), we expressed our “interest in working with the Board to foster trust, communication, and effective governance.” It is that same objective that motivates this message.

The past several months have been challenging for many in our UVA family, owing to unusual federal involvement in higher education, a traumatic leadership transition, and conflict between the accounts of BOV actions surrounding Jim Ryan’s resignation. Trust in leadership remains low and emotions are high as we wind up the fall semester and roll into our nation’s semi-quincentennial year.

Among the reasons for mistrust are concerns about an appointment of a new president with inadequate vetting and due diligence and without a clear foundation of institutional legitimacy. The statement from the Special Committee on the Nomination of a President (November 21) mentioned an “extraordinarily impressive group” of candidates as well as the need for “additional due diligence,” “further interviews” and “internal deliberations.” The Committee statement made clear that the Committee is “not yet at the point of selecting finalists.”

In light of related faculty senate resolutions, multiple letters from concerned faculty and alumni, the November 12 letter to the BOV from Governor-elect Spanberger, the November 13 letter in response from Governor Youngkin, plus our own conversations with hundreds of university stakeholders and Virginia policy makers, we believe the risks of a quick appointment far outweigh any benefits.

The University of Virginia has the opportunity to recruit and empower an outstanding president to lead through changing times. That person will have the credibility to select an excellent provost. It is critical to recognize, however, that a president appointed amidst the current swirl of unresolved governance questions would start their tenure under a cloud. Their legitimacy would be questioned by many within and beyond our community, and their mandate and effectiveness would be compromised. This would be to the detriment of UVA.

For the good of this wonderful University, now and into the future, we recommend that the selection of the 10th President be postponed until such time as the BOV has established the conditions of trust necessary for a president’s success. We are confident that the BOV can leverage the quality work already completed by the Special Committee and the search firm while deepening the integrity of due diligence and avoiding any appearance of impropriety.



UVA's continued excellence stems from our devoted faculty, staff, students, alumni and families, and other supporters within the Commonwealth and across the world. If we proceed with patience and transparency, we can, as the Special Committee has written, ensure our "next chapter can be one of strength, purpose, and renewed trust."

We reiterate our offer to meet with you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Christa Davis Acampora  
Buckner W. Clay Professor and Dean  
College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences

Marianne Baernholdt  
The Pew Charitable Trusts Dean and Professor  
School of Nursing

Philip E. Bourne  
Stephenson Founding Dean and Professor of Data Science  
School of Data Science  
(former member of the Special Committee on the Nomination of a President)

Malo André Hutson  
Dean and Edward E. Elson Professor  
School of Architecture

Leo Lo  
University Librarian and Dean of Libraries

Melissa M. Lubin  
Dean and Professor  
School of Continuing & Professional Studies

Stephanie Rowley  
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