MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Center for Teaching and Learning Advisory Team
    Ann Marie Stock, Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs, co-chair
    Paul D. Heideman, Professor of Biology, co-chair
    Mark J. Brush, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, VIMS
    Kurt A. Carlson, Associate Dean for Faculty & Academic Affairs, Mason School of Business
    Carrie L. Cooper, Dean, University Libraries
    Sarah G. Glosson, Director of A&S Graduate Center
    Mark Hofer, Professor of Education
    Stacy E. Kern-Scheer, Kelly Professor of Teaching Excellence and Professor of the Practice of Law
    Heather Macdonald, Chancellor Professor of Geology
    Dania Matos, Deputy Chief Diversity Officer
    Michael T. Murphy, Director of Academic and Technology Support Services
    Christine T. Nemacheck, Associate Professor of Government
    Gene A. Roche, Executive Professor of Higher Education
    Nicole M. Santiago, Associate Professor of Art & Art History

FROM: Michael R. Halleran, Provost

DATE: August 31, 2018

SUBJECT: Team Charge

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a member of this learning and teaching advisory team. W&M prides itself on the excellence of its teaching and commitment to student learning. Our particular blend of research and teaching is a distinctive characteristic and a competitive advantage for us. In several areas, especially in our focus on research-based learning, we have been in the lead, and in recent years we have begun to engage more fully with digital modalities.

Despite our commitment to enhancing student learning, we do not at present have a dedicated locus for refining, modifying, improving, and innovating in our teaching. This lack makes us a notable outlier among our peers and, more significantly, does not allow us to take full advantage of our distinctive commitment to student learning and innovative teaching. A confluence of elements suggests that this is an opportune moment to consider establishing such a dedicated operation.
One recommendation from the Charles Center review conducted in spring 2017 was to set up a stand-alone center (or the like) dedicated to teaching and learning. The University Teaching Project (UTP), coordinated through the Charles Center for many years, has constituted the only university-wide initiative dedicated to improved teaching. Effective with the current academic year, the UTP (let’s call it UTP 2.0) will operate independently.

The last five years have seen real growth in e-learning across the university, in whole-scale programs, individual fully online courses, hybrid courses and other adoption of digital technology. The workshops and year-end showcase held in Swem reinforced that e-learning is a subset of learning; online and face-to-face pedagogy are informed by each other and face similar issues. With Michele Jackson’s departure as the associate provost of university e-learning initiatives, I have asked Adam Barger to serve as the interim director of that group while we consider possible fuller integration of those efforts with teaching and learning more broadly.

The Center for the Liberal Arts (CLA) has shown what focused attention to pedagogy can accomplish. Its emphasis, however, is not university-wide but only on the COLL courses.

The BOV has on its approved “Six-Year Capital Plan” a major renovation of the ground floor of Swem Library, which includes (along with other items) a space dedicated to innovation in learning and teaching. Swem already has a state-of-the-art media lab and the possibilities of combining those resources and expertise of its staff are inviting.

As we head into the home stretch of the For the Bold Campaign and have established a new baseline for philanthropic support, I believe that we will be able to secure private funds (in return for naming rights) to seriously augment what we will be able to invest with E&G dollars.

In short, the time is ripe for our collective best thinking on this subject, and I am asking the members of this group to advise on how to best structure our efforts to advance our excellence in student learning. Teaching effectiveness and innovation is a university priority and collaboration across schools plays to our advantage. Among the issues for you to consider are:

- What are the perceptions and needs of faculty in the area of strengthening and innovating in pedagogy?
- What programming would be most effective and have the widest appeal?
- What are the characteristics of such centers at our peers that we might imitate and adapt for W&M?
- What structure(s) might work best at W&M?
- In what ways might graduate students benefit?
- How would the e-learning group (APeL) best operate within this structure – or independently?
- How might the resources of the Reeder Media Center be incorporated?
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- What synergies might exist with other units, programs or initiatives (e.g. CLA, Reveley Fellows, etc.)? What suggestions do you have for affiliations and collaborations?

The working assumption is that this center/studio would be located in a renovated space on the garden level in Swem Library. Lisa Nickel, Associate Dean of University Libraries, and Gene Roche, Executive Professor of Higher Education, will co-chair a team of stakeholders who will help build cohesion between the many groups that already support teaching, learning and research. Please make sure that you coordinate with that Integrated Faculty Support Working Group.

In the course of your work, you should canvass broadly, hold forums, and determine other ways to solicit input. I leave to the co-chairs and the committee how to organize your activities. To facilitate and stimulate your thinking on these important topics, my office will make funds available for you to attend a conference or workshop related to these issues and/or to bring speakers to campus. Please direct your requests to Ann Marie Stock, Vice Provost of Academic & Faculty Affairs, who is representing the Provost’s Office in this effort.

I would ask that you submit your recommendations and advice to me by Thursday, February 14, 2019. President Rowe and I will then confer, and I will communicate with you regarding our deliberations and conclusions.

I hope you find this assignment, as I do, exciting and engaging. I greatly appreciate your willingness to serve as part of this advisory group and look forward to the results of your efforts.

MRH/cef

c: Katherine A. Rowe, President
    Kate Conley, Dean, Faculty of Arts & Sciences
    Davison M. Douglas, Dean, William & Mary Law School
    Lawrence B. Pulley, Dean, Mason School of Business
    Spencer G. Niles, Dean, School of Education
    John T. Wells, Dean, School of Marine Science and Director, Virginia Institute of Marine Science