



# WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

## MEMORANDUM

To: Katherine Rowe, President

From: Henry Broaddus, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives & Public Affairs  
Michael R. Halleran, Provost  
Janice Zeman, Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Cc: Jeremy Martin, Chief of Staff

Date: April 15, 2019

Subject: Summer Semester Tiger Team's Report

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Our team was charged with developing a robust, feasible, undergraduate summer-term proposal; characterizing its benefits and challenges; and evaluating the model operationally and financially in order to identify implementation challenges, potential costs and potential benefits. It should be remembered that the prime driver for exploring an enhanced summer term is to increase net revenues. Although creating a model for a viable summer term is the focus of this group's work and this preliminary report, it is worth noting at the outset that we concluded the success of a summer term relies on its ability to facilitate two related matters that are not intrinsically reliant on a summer term:

- Grow the undergraduate enrollment at William & Mary in a way that is financially beneficial and mission enhancing without doing harm to the high impact pedagogical practices that are a hallmark of a William & Mary education, or taxing the physical infrastructure or class size to a degree that does harm to the student experience. Enrollment growth is possible, albeit to a smaller degree, without a more robust summer term.

- Decrease the number of students on campus during the fall or spring semester in a way that mitigates any negative impacts of overall enrollment growth. One way to pursue this that does not rely on summer would be to explore ways to increase participation in study abroad in the fall and spring. Currently only 40% of those who study abroad do so during one of those two semesters, and study abroad in the fall semester is especially low.

In addition to our frequent meetings, our team consulted broadly across campus and beyond (Washington Center, other universities) in gathering information and receiving feedback on these nascent ideas.

### **The committee**

Henry Broaddus, Vice Pres. for Strategic Initiatives & Public Affairs, *ELT Co-Sponsor*

Michael R. Halleran, Provost, *ELT Co-Sponsor*

Janice Zeman, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, *Team Leader*

David Feldman, Professor of Economics

Sallie Marchello, Associate Provost and University Registrar

Kathleen Powell, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs for Career Development

Marc Sher, Professor of Physics

Tim Wolfe, Associate Provost for Enrollment and Dean of Admission

### **Benefits**

There would be many benefits to a more robust summer term that are independent of the items above, including, but certainly not limited to the following:

- Internship opportunities in the fall or spring may offer a more meaningful experience than what a student can do in the summer.
- Students would be able to switch majors or add a minor more easily with the option of a robust summer term.

- Athletes could benefit from the ability to reduce course loads in semesters when their sport is in season and make up those credits during the summer. They may also be able to complete their degree in 3.5 years and allow them the opportunity for a more extensive work-related or athletics-related opportunity after their December graduation.
- Summer would present an opportunity for departments to offer unique academic experiences not possible during the fall or spring, such as the existing archaeological field methods course that requires an intensive five-week experience currently offered in summer.
- Non-tenure-eligible faculty could use summer to increase earnings, and tenure-track faculty could use it to create more flexibility to do research in the fall or spring while teaching more in the summer.
- The expansion of certificate programs for non-degree-seeking students also would be easier within the structure of a more robust summer term.
- The W&M Washington Center could potentially significantly expand course offerings to provide another venue for students who are away for a fall or spring semester.

Ultimately, while these and other potential benefits are very appealing, our team concluded that in order to be worthwhile and to generate sufficient revenues to cover the overhead, a robust term must enable enrollment growth and distribution of a larger student body over three full academic terms instead of the two semesters and the two shorter academic sessions currently offered for undergraduates in the summer. This underscores the fundamental, if perhaps obvious, issue: since the object of an expanded summer program is to increase revenues through a more efficient operation, an expanded summer term must be attractive to students.

## **Challenges**

The simplest way to accomplish both of these objectives would be to require all students to be enrolled for at least one summer session. Indeed, this would be akin to the requirement of

the so-called sophomore summer at Dartmouth, which ensures that at least a quarter of the student body is on campus during the summer quarter and takes a leave term during a fall, winter or spring term. Our consideration of a summer requirement at William & Mary revealed numerous challenges, including but not limited to the following:

- Focus groups with current students suggest that a summer term requirement would be unattractive. We intend to test this more thoroughly with prospective students through a survey instrument being developed by SimpsonScarborough. If a mandatory summer term proves to fail this market test, it has nothing to recommend it.
- A summer requirement could create an unintended impediment to summer study abroad, which currently accounts for 60% of the study-abroad activity by W&M undergraduates.
- Certain course sequences that are required, especially within the sciences, would be disrupted if a student were expected to take a non-summer leave term. While not impossible to recreate these sequences as summer-fall or spring-summer, there would be considerable expense and complexity involved. Additional concerns exist about the availability of federally funded research opportunities needed for graduate school and clinical experiences needed for medical school at any time of year other than summer.
- Initial analysis suggests that facilities use would not be a problem, although inevitable adjustments would be required.
- Internships typically are structured and offered for cohorts of students during summer sessions. Significantly fewer opportunities are readily available, particularly for business students, in the fall and spring semesters.
- Significant challenges for Athletics emerge due to NCAA rules regarding eligibility should athletes be away from campus for a fall or spring semester.
- Voiced by both faculty and students, concerns were raised about the loss of family and vacation time if a summer session were required.

Although the predictability of enrollment patterns would be greatest under a summer requirement, our team concluded that at least initially, a summer term would work best with incentives instead of as a requirement. For example, stipends could be offered to students who pursue unfunded internships in the fall or spring and enroll in the summer in order to stay on track for graduation. Additionally, William & Mary might be able to build larger not-for-credit externship programs with industry partners in Virginia who are excited by the idea of having access to undergraduate talent during a time of year when few undergraduates are available.

### **Broad Conclusions**

In broad strokes, after consultation with stakeholders across campus, our team's initial conclusions that have informed the work that follows are these:

- Incentives for students to be off-campus during the fall or spring are preferable to a requirement for students to be enrolled in the summer. A more robust summer term would be part of what facilitates an incentivized absence in fall or spring, not what compels it.
- Substantial investment would need to be made in incentives for students not to enroll in an on-campus fall or spring semester. Some incentives also may be needed for faculty to teach in the summer. The financial benefits of prospective enrollment growth must be discounted by the costs of these incentives.
- Reinvention of the academic calendar as a quarter system creates more tumult than benefit, especially since our early analysis indicates that tweaking the current calendar can increase full-term courses, to be offered alongside those in the two shorter academic sessions already available to students in the summer. We could elevate the summer term for undergraduate courses to be viewed as parallel to the fall and spring terms, as is already the case for some of our graduate programs.
- While not within the scope of this team's work, expansion of opportunities at

the W&M Washington Center and other domestic locations in the fall and spring, as well as pursuing ways to grow study abroad opportunities in fall and spring, should be explored as additional ways to accomplish the primary objectives of enabling enrollment growth and avoiding overcrowding in the fall and spring.

### **Next Steps/Major Issues to Resolve**

- A key next step is to assess the attractiveness of expanded summer term to students and faculty. This is the most important determination, and the SimpsonScarborough work will provide invaluable information about student opinion on this question.
- Preliminary analysis suggests that the net revenue from an expanded summer could be very significant. A critical and still unresolved issue is the mix of IS and OOS students. The recently approved Institutional Partnership Performance Agreement (IPPA) legislation does not offer a quick answer to this question but we will have a better sense of what will be possible under this legislation in a few months; a fuller answer will, we suspect, play out over several years. Once we know the answer to the question of attractiveness to prospective students and have at least a preliminary answer on the possibilities of the IPPA, a fuller budget analysis should be carried out.
- An expanded summer session can take many forms, each one being a point on a spectrum. Our initial foray should be a pilot that expands summer offerings and opportunities over a two- to three-year period.
- A steering committee should be formed by the provost to continue this work. The possibilities are exciting; the cost-benefit analysis still unknown.