



GOOD MORNING BOARD,

I am glad to see you all today! As I mentioned last month, our ability to meet in person speaks to our success. This has certainly been a rocky ride, but the good stewardship of students, faculty, and staff towards our commitment has kept us here. Students, you are integral to our success. Thank you for continuing to act safely. Thank you for wearing your masks, and wearing them properly. Thank you for holding others accountable. Our community--all of us--have successfully adhered to the Healthy Together Commitment and have spread that commitment beyond our campus walls. The Williamsburg from August is unrecognizable to Williamsburg now. We need to keep this energy through November, we cannot let up now. Student Assembly, through its 6ft of fun newsletter, working with other student organizations, and administration will continue to devise and promote ways for us to continue to safely engage with one another in person.

The Student Assembly is continuing to work with the administration to respond to our issues with diversity & inclusion. Our Plan to tackle systemic racial injustice will close this Sunday and we are excited to invite students beyond SA into this mission. Specifically, we look forward to creating a Student Advisory Group with Chief Cheesebro, using reports from cities across the country based on goals presented in former President Obama's 21st Century Task Force on Policing. We will give a status report on our various Plan projects and initiatives by the end of October and present them to the Board in our November meeting.

Furthermore, administration, thank you for acts of smart leadership. We successfully completed a round of additional testing for all students on campus and our numbers are surprisingly reassuring. Students are very appreciative of this and the prevalence testing, and even encourage another round of full testing in October. It is no secret that it is not the job of a university to have such a robust testing service, and we appreciate the countless hours you all have spent to make William & Mary and the Greater Williamsburg area as safe for us as possible.



However, as much as I would like to take the moment to relish in our fortune, there are recent events that undermine our success and even make it negligible. What threatens the fragile stability that we have created really falls into three domains: transparency, communication, and accountability. From the onset of the anewed racial reckoning in this country to the various COVID-19 decisions, we have elevated student requests to improve in these areas time and time again, but to no avail.

The current tragic predicament of the 118 student athletes whose teams were cut is another horrid instance of our failures in these domains. I hope all of you had time to listen to the Listening Session on Wednesday and the passionate remarks made by my fellow students, faculty, alumni and friends. I will do my best not to repeat what they eloquently said, but will pull some language from a resolution from the Student Assembly that was passed Tuesday, titled "For the Bold". This was the product of many weeks of talking with student-athletes and deliberating on language. I recognize that some of the language within the resolution may seem without context to you, but it reflects the lack of clarity students currently have, which falls upon us... Simply put, students do not know what the truth is.

Essentially, the resolution asks for the administration to urgently improve its communications to the student body. It explains how student-athletes received different information regarding their sports and how they feel lied to. It critiques the way that they were given the news and how so much time has passed without answers. It also critiques the open-letter that was sent out and how it undermines our Honor Code and our social fabric. There is a lot of misinformation out there, and the Student Assembly feels that, up till now, there has not been enough effort to explain clearly, to apologize for frustrating confusion, and work with student-athletes to design a new way forward. Student-athletes are now another group that feels alienated by the university they love, and we, as their chief advocates, **vehemently** oppose how this was handled.



Nonetheless, above all, despite the criticism, the resolution reaffirms your statement Madame President: that we need to urgently rebuild trust, improve communication—clear communication—own our past failures, and chart a new path forward that involves everyone proactively, not retroactively. This is what accountability looks like, not just an apology, but apologetic action. In these challenging times, we need to lead with our Values, particularly :

Belonging.

Respect.

And Integrity.

And Board, preserving and improving our Values starts with us. For instance, when we announce that we will have a listening session, primarily for students, we should first release that information to students. We do not actively read the Daily Press or the Gazette.

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I know and want to believe that you are all good intentioned. I have worked with most of you in this room and know you always put William & Mary first, that you put students first. But those good intentions need to last beyond this hall, beyond our conversations, beyond the words we put in announcements and emails. It needs to be followed through by action, and in this instance, urgent action. The integrity of our university is being questioned. It seems as if my reports to you become increasingly difficult to deliver, but part of my responsibility is to share what is on the minds of students and they feel that their concerns are not being adequately addressed.

And it is in that spirit I compassionately criticize and further request you all to reaffirm our partnership, between the Student Assembly and the administration. We can provide context to decisions that are being made and how to successfully communicate them to the student body. As the closest people to the ground, we can provide you a sense of what the campus is feeling and candid feedback. We ask you, we urge you, to use us now. After all, we all desire the same thing: for William & Mary to be successful in one of the most challenging moments in her history. Call on us, and we will rise to the occasion.

Thank you.

Anthony 'AJ' Joseph
Student Assembly President