

Beth.

OCTOBER 18, 1956

Copy of Letter to:

Mr. Francis L. Berkeley, Jr.
Secretary, Board of Visitors
Alderman Library Building
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

Dear Frank:

Thank you for your letter of October 6. Not having the whole picture, I can well see how you could be impressed by the presentation of the sub-committee on the branch site.

However, you asked for it, so here it is.

First off, you should thoroughly understand what the sub-committee of the Board of Visitors evidently was not told, or if told, ignored:

One: When the University decided to come into Northern Virginia and develop an Extension Center, a group of citizens, including myself, were asked by the University to act as an Advisory Council to (a) interpret the community and its desires to the University, and (b) assist in creating a climate of demand for the educational services offered. This Council has functioned as an official body and agent of the President of the University ever since. It is not, as the report of Judge Bryan's sub-committee appeared to infer, just another pressure group favoring this or that particular site. The Council has labored for two years trying to find a site suitable to the purpose of a branch institution, and in conformity with the changing estimates by the University of what might be needed. Its members have spent days and days physically inspecting every suitable parcel of real estate over 25 acres available. We spent untold hours talking to owners and real estate agents. As you describe the efforts of Judge Bryan and his committee, it was also on our part "an arduous and thankless task." The Council made a unanimous recommendation in favor of the Ravensworth site. It unanimously rejected the Bowman offer.

Two: The University, through President Darden, advised the Council time and again that the matter of a site was the Council's responsibility; that "the selection and acquisition of a site rests in the hands of the localities"; that the University did not wish to get caught in the middle of an argument over sites (hear! hear!); that any site we recommended would be submitted to the Board of Visitors for approval or rejection. Now we are faced with this special committee not only rejecting the site unanimously recommended by the University's own Council, without even paying us the courtesy of notifying us it was going to do so, but in face of previous commitments by the President substituting its own judgment for that of the Council. If the University was going to do that in the first place it should not have imposed upon the time and efforts of the busy people who comprise the Council.

Three (and perhaps the most important from a practical standpoint): The sub-committee quite evidently made its study and decision without any clear idea of its function, nor the framework of the policy of the State of Virginia, within which they should have worked. They had never even seen the resolution of the General Assembly authorizing the establishment of the branch and the limits on that authorization. Perhaps they were never told about it. If they

weren't, they should have been. Here is the exact wording of the resolution:

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION No. 5

Authorizing the establishment of a branch of the University of Virginia to be located in Northern Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 6, 1956
Agreed to by the Senate of Virginia, February 24, 1956

Whereas, there is a great need for the establishment of facilities for higher learning in Northern Virginia, and

Whereas, the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council has recommended that a branch of the University of Virginia be established in Northern Virginia; now, therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Delegates of Virginia, the Senate concurring, That the University of Virginia is hereby authorized to establish a branch institution in Northern Virginia, offering two years of collegiate instruction, which branch shall provide instructional facilities only.

* * *

It is likewise equally important for these gentlemen, as well as the whole Board of Visitors, to understand how this authorizing resolution came about and the legislative intent behind it.

Here is the history: Shortly after the establishment of the Extension Center, it was suggested to the Advisory Council that we should consider the eventual desirability of the establishment of a branch institution and, if it were found desirable, to help create the public sentiment necessary to its establishment.

For this reason, and because I was concerned about the tremendous future problem of expansion faced by our institutions of higher learning, I introduced in the 1954 session of the General Assembly a resolution directing the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council to the Governor and the General Assembly to make a study "with the view of determining whether such extension services can and should be developed to meet the higher education needs of those who cannot afford to attend the State universities and colleges. The Council shall consider the relationship of the various extension programs now being offered in relation to the overall education requirements of the State; their curriculum and accrediting of courses for the purpose of conferral of degrees by the institutions of higher learning."

A sub-committee of the General Assembly studied the problem for 18 months, which study resulted in a report entitled "The Crisis in Higher Education in Virginia and a Solution." The report was adopted unanimously by the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council and reported to the General Assembly. You (and the Board of Visitors) would find this report very enlightening, and I do not hesitate to recommend it as required reading.

After discussing various institutional alternatives among other things the report said:

"The branch is less expensive, both to the State and to the student, than would be comparable education at a four year institution. To secure full accreditation it must build or lease its physical facilities, which precludes the use, during off hours, of public school buildings, but if it is located in an area with sufficient population, it need have no dormitory facilities, thus

eliminating one of the major costs at the usual four year college. To some extent also the administrative and supervisory costs of a separate institution can be minimized insofar as the branch is concerned. Tuition costs can be higher at the branch than at the central institution and yet result in a lower overall cost to the student since he can live at home and be spared the costs of board and lodging. Therefore the operations of the branch can be more nearly self-supporting."

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"The establishment of branch institutions offering only two years in a college curriculum will have two considerable advantages which will lessen the costs and strengthen the program offerings at the four year institutions..."

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"The most economical way of providing higher education for the greatly increased number of students requiring it, and at the same time maintaining standards comparable to those of our present educational plant, is the organization, in densely populated communities, of branches of existing institutions offering the first two years of college education..."

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"In order to meet additional needs which are not now being taken care of by existing facilities, it is recommended that the present university center in Arlington County be developed into a branch of the University of Virginia offering two year courses, both in the field of liberal arts and in other subjects for which there is sufficient demand."

The VALC made it very clear that it wanted to establish urban branches where students could live at home, and where the total costs to the state could be kept at an absolute minimum. It was also made very clear in the sub-committee and the VALC that in adopting this report it did so to provide an economical solution because it was recognized that the State is not now adequately supporting the institutions of higher learning it now has. In other words, the General Assembly did not want to embark on the establishment of any new institution or institutions that would require large new appropriations.

When I introduced the resolution in the 1956 General Assembly to authorize the University to establish a branch in Northern Virginia, it had no limitations as to the type of institution. The clause, "offering two years of collegiate instruction, which branch shall provide educational facilities only", was not a part of the resolution. The House Education Committee refused to report out the resolution until it was worded in such a manner as to assure the fact that it was to be a 2-year, non-dormitory type of institution ONLY. After the measure passed the House, two Senate committees considered the measure and hesitated to report it out even with the House amendments. All members of the committee made it very evident that they did not want to authorize the establishment of a new institution in addition to the 10 state institutions for which they were now appropriating. It was only after I pointed out that the type institution contemplated by the resolution would be nearly self-supporting from student fees, and was to be a non-dormitory institution, that the Senate reported the measure.

It is very evident from the report of the Visitors sub-committee and the location which they selected that they contemplate some type of institution other than that contemplated by the General Assembly. The Bowman site obviously envisions a full scale dormitory type institution. It is located far from the

The measure was to establish a branch in a densely populated urban area.

At that time it was made plain that the purpose

center of population of the urban area, completely to one side of the area to be served, and is so far removed that students from the populous areas cannot conveniently attend it on a commuting daytime basis. (It was never intended that this branch would serve Loudoun, Clarke, Frederick, Fauquier, except on an extension basis).

It should be pointed out that the only hesitancy that some of us had with respect to the Ravensworth tract was that it was located on the edge of the perimeter of the heavy concentration of population, and was not as conveniently located, as far as access was concerned, as we would have liked.

I regret to be so brusque about it, but it is ridiculous for such busy men as Judge Bryan, Mr. McWane and Dowell Howard to spend their valuable time on the making of a futile recommendation when they were apparently not made aware of the objective or the scope of their study. And, I might add, waste the time and efforts of the people who comprise the Advisory Council.

I regret even more the fact that this miscarriage should jeopardize the best offer of free land in a relatively convenient place that has or will be made available. It cannot be reasonably expected that those who offered the Ravensworth tract will keep this offer open indefinitely. Meanwhile, the local communities stand to lose what is approximately equal to \$350,000 in the way of a gift. Naturally there is considerable resentment by local officials because of this fact, and because they, too, weren't even consulted about the matter which so vitally affects the development of the community. It is to be remembered that officials representing all governing bodies were on the Advisory Council which selected the Ravensworth tract.

I suggest that the Board and its sub-committee can do a real public service for the University and Northern Virginia if they will get a clear conception of what they desire to accomplish within the framework of policy already specifically laid down by the General Assembly.

If they think the General Assembly policy is incorrect and feel that the Board of Visitors should have the responsibility of establishing a new institution of higher learning for Northern Virginia, they should then attempt to change the present General Assembly policy and so advise their Advisory Council up here so we can direct our efforts to better purposes.

As far as I am personally concerned, as long as I am an official of the State, I expect to adhere to state policy until that policy is changed. I would presume that as State officials this would also be the duty of the Board of Visitors.

As an alumnus of the University, should the Board of Visitors feel it is incumbent upon it to establish the type of institution not contemplated by the General Assembly, then I would protest the action vigorously. I do not wish to see substantial amounts of the University's appropriations from the General Assembly jeopardized or diverted, when appropriations for the University are not now even making adequate provision for salaries of the professional staff at the University.

Please forgive the length of the foregoing, but some education on this problem is long past due. I am equally sure, as you expressed it, that "none of the people at the University or on the Board have any interest at all in this complicated matter except from the point of view of the needs of Northern Virginia and the welfare of the State of Virginia as a whole." Given the facts and an opportunity to thoughtfully review them, I have no doubt that they will reach a sensible conclusion. I just hope they reach that conclusion before the very substantial gift that has been offered is frittered away.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) HARRISON MANN

HM/ds

Copy to - Colgate Darden