

MEMORANDUM

TO: CNU Faculty and Staff  
FROM: Paul Tribble  
DATE: December 12, 2002  
RE: Newport News School Board Resolution

Yesterday at 4:00 p.m., I attended a work session of the Newport News School Board and was asked to respond to the following resolution. The resolution was unanimously approved by the School Board last evening

*A RESOLUTION URGING THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF VISITORS  
OF CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY TO RETAIN  
ITS TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM*

*WHEREAS, Christopher Newport University, an institution that is to be commended for its enrichment of the intellectual, professional, artistic and business life of the Peninsula community; and*

*WHEREAS, the University's President, Board of Visitors and the University's Budget Advisory Committee have chosen to eliminate a number of degree programs to meet the upcoming budget shortfall; and*

*WHEREAS, the programs to be eliminated include long-standing and highly successful undergraduate and graduate certification programs as well as the Master's of Arts in teaching in all concentrations; and*

*WHEREAS, for the 2002-2003 school year Christopher Newport University provided 61 teachers or nearly 20 percent of the newly hired teachers for the Newport News Public Schools; and*

*WHEREAS, the University's education faculty has been instrumental in the school division's continuing effort to improve teacher performance and participate in a number of key project; and*

***WHEREAS,** Newport News Public Schools and Christopher Newport University established model programs, such as the innovative Teacher Academies at McIntosh Elementary, Gildersleeve Middle and Woodside High schools, which provided on-site teacher education and state-of-the-art technology to help University students make a smooth transition from pre-service preparation to quality teaching as an employee of the school division; and*

***WHEREAS,** Christopher Newport University education students have played a vital role in working with our students as mentors and tutors; and*

***WHEREAS,** the impact of the decision to eliminate programs that have graduated hundreds of highly qualified teachers will be felt immediately and profoundly as our school division moves toward full state accreditation of its schools and the added requirements of President Bush's No Child Left Behind program; and*

***WHEREAS,** a healthy and viable public education system is the vehicle by which a community strengthens its intellectual and professional infrastructure by training the children who will become its citizens and leaders; therefore*

***BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the School Board of Newport News asks the leadership of Christopher Newport University consider the following options:*

- ◆ restore all undergraduate teacher licensure programs so that as partners in education we may not only sustain the civic and economic health of our community but continue to support our most valuable resource – our children, or*
- ◆ establish joint programs with local colleges and universities that enable the University's students to fulfill requirements for teacher licensure before graduation, or*
- ◆ establish a five-year program for students to earn their bachelor's degree in conjunction with a master's degree in education that qualifies them for teacher licensure for employment in Newport News Public Schools and other school divisions in the Commonwealth.*

Here is the response that I gave the Newport News School Board at the work session yesterday.

Over the next 18 months – that is two academic years –CNU will teach out our seniors and juniors, providing an uninterrupted stream of teachers for this community. CNU will provide teacher education courses this spring and next summer and will provide student teaching opportunities throughout the next academic year.

Moreover, CNU will continue to offer the content courses that future teachers will require in 14 academic disciplines: biology, chemistry, English, fine arts, music, theater, history mathematics, French, German, Spanish, physics, computer science and early childhood psychology. These content courses and a CNU baccalaureate degree will prepare our students for graduate study and certification.

Fortunately, a number of fine schools in our area provide these programs – William and Mary, Hampton University, Norfolk State, Old Dominion and Virginia Wesleyan. William and Mary and Old Dominion have peninsula centers.

I have read the draft resolution which has been prepared for your consideration and appreciate the kind words relative to the contributions that CNU graduates have made – and continue to make – to the well being of public education in our City. Moreover, I am very grateful for the positive tone of the resolution and the constructive options that you have asked us to consider.

Regrettably, we are unable to sustain our present education programs because of the budget crisis. Last Friday the Board of Visitors reiterated that this difficult and painful decision was unanimously arrived at and is final.

So let me comment then on options 2 and 3.



CNU students who are now seniors and juniors will complete their undergraduate teacher certification programs in May, 2003 and in May, 2004.

For prospective teachers who graduate in May, 2005 and thereafter, CNU is already working to develop acceptable ways through which these graduates can enter the teaching profession by taking their professional and certification courses at one or more of our sister institutions. If these arrangements cannot be developed, and in the future financial circumstances permit, I will ask our faculty and the Board of Visitors to investigate the possibility of establishing a five-year program for students to earn their bachelor's degrees in conjunction with an appropriate master's degree and teacher licensure. In either case, CNU will continue – albeit in a different format – its historic tradition of preparing valued teachers for the Newport News Public Schools and for other school divisions of the Commonwealth.