

MOODY'S

INVESTORS SERVICE

Rating Action: Moody's assigns Aa3 to Liberty University (VA) Series 2019; outlook stable

12 Nov 2019

New York, November 12, 2019 -- Moody's Investors Service has assigned a Aa3 rating to the Liberty University, VA proposed \$100 million Taxable Bonds, Series 2019. At the same time we have affirmed the Aa3 rating on the university's \$100 million of prior bonds as well as the P-1 rating on its Extendable Commercial Paper program. The outlook is stable.

RATINGS RATIONALE

The Aa3 rating acknowledges Liberty's sustained revenue growth up to \$1.1 billion and very strong operating performance. That operating performance combined with a very low debt burden has fueled a rapid accumulation of unrestricted cash and investments which ended fiscal year 2019 at June 30 with \$1.7 billion. Cash flow from operations has allowed the university to invest \$882 million in property plant and equipment over the prior five years with little reliance on debt, leaving it with manageable capital needs and limited financial leverage.

Offsetting challenges include high reliance on tuition and auxiliaries at 83% in 2019 combined with increasing competition attracted especially to Liberty's online market. Concentrated governance and management control also limits credit quality. That concentration manifests itself in several ways including business transactions involving related parties. In the university's 2016 IRS 990 form, for example, Liberty disclosed 30 transactions involving interested persons. While the disclosure of these transactions is favorable, we believe the leadership's decision to engage in the number of and range of these transactions indicates the closely held scope of governance. Additionally, while the university's particular Christian and political identity solidifies its position with a self-selected pool of students, reflected in a very strong 45% yield on accepted applicants, that same identity limits the university's market breadth and potential.

The short-term P-1 rating affirmation reflects Liberty University's market access as well as its own very strong liquidity profile. The extendable commercial paper allows for a minimum 180 day extended period in the event of a failed rollover. This period provides ample time, when combined with management's procedures, to refund the commercial paper with long-term debt or ensure liquid assets are available to pay off the commercial paper.

RATING OUTLOOK

The stable outlook reflects our expectations of continued ability to generate stable to growing student revenue supporting strong operating performance and excellent unrestricted liquidity. Limited borrowing needs also support our forward view that financial leverage will remain relatively low.

FACTORS THAT COULD LEAD TO AN UPGRADE

- Strengthened governance profile with enhanced diversity of control and decision making
- Ongoing gains in revenue diversity including increased philanthropic support
- Substantial growth in financial resources combined with demonstrated ability to maintain market strength in the face of increasing competition

FACTORS THAT COULD LEAD TO A DOWNGRADE

- Weakening of student demand for either residential or online segments
- Material reduction in operating performance
- Marked increase in financial leverage or contraction of liquidity

LEGAL SECURITY

The bonds and commercial paper note are unsecured general obligations of the university. Currently the university has no commercial paper outstanding.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Proceeds of the Series 2019 bonds will be used to refund the Series 2010 bonds for debt service savings.

PROFILE

Liberty University is a private, non-profit university with a clear brand identity aligned with Evangelical Christians. Founded in 1971 as Lynchburg Baptist College, the young university has achieved remarkable growth with operating revenue over \$1 billion in fiscal year 2019. Aided by its online program growth, it has become one of the largest private universities in the US. In college sports, Liberty competes primarily in the Atlantic Sun (ASUN) Conference and in football, competes as an Independent Football Bowl Subdivision member.

METHODOLOGY

The principal methodology used in the long-term ratings was Higher Education published in May 2019. The principal methodology used in the short-term rating was US Bond Anticipation Notes and Related Instruments Methodology published in October 2019. Please see the Rating Methodologies page on www.moodys.com for a copy of these methodologies.

REGULATORY DISCLOSURES

For ratings issued on a program, series, category/class of debt or security this announcement provides certain regulatory disclosures in relation to each rating of a subsequently issued bond or note of the same series, category/class of debt, security or pursuant to a program for which the ratings are derived exclusively from existing ratings in accordance with Moody's rating practices. For ratings issued on a support provider, this announcement provides certain regulatory disclosures in relation to the credit rating action on the support provider and in relation to each particular credit rating action for securities that derive their credit ratings from the support provider's credit rating. For provisional ratings, this announcement provides certain regulatory disclosures in relation to the provisional rating assigned, and in relation to a definitive rating that may be assigned subsequent to the final issuance of the debt, in each case where the transaction structure and terms have not changed prior to the assignment of the definitive rating in a manner that would have affected the rating. For further information please see the ratings tab on the issuer/entity page for the respective issuer on www.moodys.com.

Regulatory disclosures contained in this press release apply to the credit rating and, if applicable, the related rating outlook or rating review.

Please see www.moodys.com for any updates on changes to the lead rating analyst and to the Moody's legal entity that has issued the rating.

Please see the ratings tab on the issuer/entity page on www.moodys.com for additional regulatory disclosures for each credit rating.

Dennis Gephardt
Lead Analyst
Higher Education
Moody's Investors Service, Inc.
7 World Trade Center
250 Greenwich Street
New York 10007
US

JOURNALISTS: 1 212 553 0376
Client Service: 1 212 553 1653

Susan Fitzgerald
Additional Contact
Higher Education
JOURNALISTS: 1 212 553 0376

Client Service: 1 212 553 1653

Releasing Office:

Moody's Investors Service, Inc.

250 Greenwich Street

New York, NY 10007

U.S.A

JOURNALISTS: 1 212 553 0376

Client Service: 1 212 553 1653



© 2022 Moody's Corporation, Moody's Investors Service, Inc., Moody's Analytics, Inc. and/or their licensors and affiliates (collectively, "MOODY'S"). All rights reserved.

CREDIT RATINGS ISSUED BY MOODY'S CREDIT RATINGS AFFILIATES ARE THEIR CURRENT OPINIONS OF THE RELATIVE FUTURE CREDIT RISK OF ENTITIES, CREDIT COMMITMENTS, OR DEBT OR DEBT-LIKE SECURITIES, AND MATERIALS, PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND INFORMATION PUBLISHED BY MOODY'S (COLLECTIVELY, "PUBLICATIONS") MAY INCLUDE SUCH CURRENT OPINIONS. MOODY'S DEFINES CREDIT RISK AS THE RISK THAT AN ENTITY MAY NOT MEET ITS CONTRACTUAL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS AS THEY COME DUE AND ANY ESTIMATED FINANCIAL LOSS IN THE EVENT OF DEFAULT OR IMPAIRMENT. SEE APPLICABLE MOODY'S RATING SYMBOLS AND DEFINITIONS PUBLICATION FOR INFORMATION ON THE TYPES OF CONTRACTUAL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS ADDRESSED BY MOODY'S CREDIT RATINGS. CREDIT RATINGS DO NOT ADDRESS ANY OTHER RISK, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO: LIQUIDITY RISK, MARKET VALUE RISK, OR PRICE VOLATILITY. CREDIT RATINGS, NON-CREDIT ASSESSMENTS ("ASSESSMENTS"), AND OTHER OPINIONS INCLUDED IN MOODY'S PUBLICATIONS ARE NOT STATEMENTS OF CURRENT OR HISTORICAL FACT. MOODY'S PUBLICATIONS MAY ALSO INCLUDE QUANTITATIVE MODEL-BASED ESTIMATES OF CREDIT RISK AND RELATED OPINIONS OR COMMENTARY PUBLISHED BY MOODY'S ANALYTICS, INC. AND/OR ITS AFFILIATES. MOODY'S CREDIT RATINGS, ASSESSMENTS, OTHER OPINIONS AND PUBLICATIONS DO NOT CONSTITUTE OR PROVIDE INVESTMENT OR FINANCIAL ADVICE, AND MOODY'S CREDIT RATINGS, ASSESSMENTS, OTHER OPINIONS AND PUBLICATIONS ARE NOT AND DO NOT PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO PURCHASE, SELL, OR HOLD PARTICULAR SECURITIES. MOODY'S CREDIT RATINGS, ASSESSMENTS, OTHER OPINIONS AND PUBLICATIONS DO NOT COMMENT ON THE SUITABILITY OF AN INVESTMENT FOR ANY PARTICULAR INVESTOR. MOODY'S ISSUES ITS CREDIT RATINGS, ASSESSMENTS AND OTHER OPINIONS AND PUBLISHES ITS PUBLICATIONS WITH THE EXPECTATION AND UNDERSTANDING THAT EACH INVESTOR WILL, WITH DUE CARE, MAKE ITS OWN STUDY AND EVALUATION OF EACH SECURITY THAT IS UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR PURCHASE, HOLDING, OR SALE.

MOODY'S CREDIT RATINGS, ASSESSMENTS, OTHER OPINIONS, AND PUBLICATIONS ARE NOT INTENDED FOR USE BY RETAIL INVESTORS AND IT WOULD BE RECKLESS AND INAPPROPRIATE FOR RETAIL INVESTORS TO USE MOODY'S CREDIT RATINGS, ASSESSMENTS, OTHER OPINIONS OR PUBLICATIONS WHEN MAKING AN INVESTMENT DECISION. IF IN DOUBT YOU SHOULD CONTACT YOUR FINANCIAL OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL ADVISER.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS PROTECTED BY LAW, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, COPYRIGHT LAW, AND NONE OF SUCH INFORMATION MAY BE COPIED OR OTHERWISE REPRODUCED, REPACKAGED, FURTHER TRANSMITTED, TRANSFERRED, DISSEMINATED, REDISTRIBUTED OR RESOLD, OR STORED FOR SUBSEQUENT USE FOR ANY SUCH PURPOSE, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, IN ANY FORM OR MANNER OR BY ANY MEANS WHATSOEVER, BY ANY PERSON WITHOUT MOODY'S PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT.

MOODY'S CREDIT RATINGS, ASSESSMENTS, OTHER OPINIONS AND PUBLICATIONS ARE NOT INTENDED FOR USE BY ANY PERSON AS A BENCHMARK AS THAT TERM IS DEFINED FOR REGULATORY PURPOSES AND MUST NOT BE USED IN ANY WAY THAT COULD RESULT IN THEM

BEING CONSIDERED A BENCHMARK.

All information contained herein is obtained by MOODY'S from sources believed by it to be accurate and reliable. Because of the possibility of human or mechanical error as well as other factors, however, all information contained herein is provided "AS IS" without warranty of any kind. MOODY'S adopts all necessary measures so that the information it uses in assigning a credit rating is of sufficient quality and from sources MOODY'S considers to be reliable including, when appropriate, independent third-party sources. However, MOODY'S is not an auditor and cannot in every instance independently verify or validate information received in the rating process or in preparing its Publications.

To the extent permitted by law, MOODY'S and its directors, officers, employees, agents, representatives, licensors and suppliers disclaim liability to any person or entity for any indirect, special, consequential, or incidental losses or damages whatsoever arising from or in connection with the information contained herein or the use of or inability to use any such information, even if MOODY'S or any of its directors, officers, employees, agents, representatives, licensors or suppliers is advised in advance of the possibility of such losses or damages, including but not limited to: (a) any loss of present or prospective profits or (b) any loss or damage arising where the relevant financial instrument is not the subject of a particular credit rating assigned by MOODY'S.

To the extent permitted by law, MOODY'S and its directors, officers, employees, agents, representatives, licensors and suppliers disclaim liability for any direct or compensatory losses or damages caused to any person or entity, including but not limited to by any negligence (but excluding fraud, willful misconduct or any other type of liability that, for the avoidance of doubt, by law cannot be excluded) on the part of, or any contingency within or beyond the control of, MOODY'S or any of its directors, officers, employees, agents, representatives, licensors or suppliers, arising from or in connection with the information contained herein or the use of or inability to use any such information.

NO WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, AS TO THE ACCURACY, TIMELINESS, COMPLETENESS, MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PARTICULAR PURPOSE OF ANY CREDIT RATING, ASSESSMENT, OTHER OPINION OR INFORMATION IS GIVEN OR MADE BY MOODY'S IN ANY FORM OR MANNER WHATSOEVER.

Moody's Investors Service, Inc., a wholly-owned credit rating agency subsidiary of Moody's Corporation ("MCO"), hereby discloses that most issuers of debt securities (including corporate and municipal bonds, debentures, notes and commercial paper) and preferred stock rated by Moody's Investors Service, Inc. have, prior to assignment of any credit rating, agreed to pay to Moody's Investors Service, Inc. for credit ratings opinions and services rendered by it fees ranging from \$1,000 to approximately \$5,000,000. MCO and Moody's Investors Service also maintain policies and procedures to address the independence of Moody's Investors Service credit ratings and credit rating processes. Information regarding certain affiliations that may exist between directors of MCO and rated entities, and between entities who hold credit ratings from Moody's Investors Service and have also publicly reported to the SEC an ownership interest in MCO of more than 5%, is posted annually at www.moodys.com under the heading "Investor Relations — Corporate Governance — Director and Shareholder Affiliation Policy."

Additional terms for Australia only: Any publication into Australia of this document is pursuant to the Australian Financial Services License of MOODY'S affiliate, Moody's Investors Service Pty Limited ABN 61 003 399 657AFSL 336969 and/or Moody's Analytics Australia Pty Ltd ABN 94 105 136 972 AFSL 383569 (as applicable). This document is intended to be provided only to "wholesale clients" within the meaning of section 761G of the Corporations Act 2001. By continuing to access this document from within Australia, you represent to MOODY'S that you are, or are accessing the document as a representative of, a "wholesale client" and that neither you nor the entity you represent will directly or indirectly disseminate this document or its contents to "retail clients" within the meaning of section 761G of the Corporations Act 2001. MOODY'S credit rating is an opinion as to the creditworthiness of a debt obligation of the issuer, not on the equity securities of the issuer or any form of security that is available to retail investors.

Additional terms for Japan only: Moody's Japan K.K. ("MJKK") is a wholly-owned credit rating agency subsidiary of Moody's Group Japan G.K., which is wholly-owned by Moody's Overseas Holdings Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of MCO. Moody's SF Japan K.K. ("MSFJ") is a wholly-owned credit rating agency subsidiary of MJKK. MSFJ is not a Nationally Recognized Statistical Rating Organization ("NRSRO"). Therefore, credit ratings assigned by MSFJ are Non-NRSRO Credit Ratings. Non-NRSRO Credit Ratings are assigned by an entity that is not a NRSRO and, consequently, the rated obligation will not qualify for certain types of treatment

under U.S. laws. MJKK and MSFJ are credit rating agencies registered with the Japan Financial Services Agency and their registration numbers are FSA Commissioner (Ratings) No. 2 and 3 respectively.

MJKK or MSFJ (as applicable) hereby disclose that most issuers of debt securities (including corporate and municipal bonds, debentures, notes and commercial paper) and preferred stock rated by MJKK or MSFJ (as applicable) have, prior to assignment of any credit rating, agreed to pay to MJKK or MSFJ (as applicable) for credit ratings opinions and services rendered by it fees ranging from JPY100,000 to approximately JPY550,000,000.

MJKK and MSFJ also maintain policies and procedures to address Japanese regulatory requirements.