

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS
FULL BOARD MEETING**

9:00 A.M., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2026

Gateway Dining & Events Center
(No Public Comment Period Scheduled)

DRAFT AGENDA

Rector Victor K. Branch, Presiding

Call to Order Mr. Victor K. Branch, Rector

Roll Call.....Ms. Verndell Robinson, Secretary

Invocation (*Rev. Thomas Wynn, Director of Campus Ministries*)

Rector's Remarks

Approval of Agenda

Minutes from Previous Meetings:

- December 13, 2025 Full Board Minutes

President's Report Dr. Makola M. Abdullah

Closed Session (if any)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Academic & Student Affairs Committee
 - Approval Item(s):
 - Resolutions for Approval of Honorary Degrees and Special Awards
 - Information Item(s):
 - Summary of Updates
 - Reports from the Faculty and Student Representatives to the Board
 - Dr. Kenneth Lewis, Chair of the Faculty Senate
 - Marquis Mason, President of the Student Government Association

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- Facilities & Finance Committee
 - **Approval Item(s):** None

 - **Information Item(s):**
 - Summary of Updates

- Institutional Advancement Committee
 - **Approval Item(s):** None

 - **Information Item(s):**
 - Summary of Updates

- Personnel, Compensation & Governance Committee
 - **Approval Item(s):** None

 - **Information Item(s):**
 - Summary of Updates

Report of Affiliated Foundation(s) Legal

Counsel Update (*if any*)

Board Self-Assessment of its Performance

Announcements

Note: The Audit & Compliance Committee did not convene during February 5-6, 2026

**FULL BOARD MEETING
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6**

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS
DRAFT FULL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

Rector Victor K. Branch called the meeting of the Virginia State University (VSU) Board of Visitors to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. in the Gateway Dining & Events Center. He announced that the Full Board meeting was available to the general public via livestream, in accordance with the Commonwealth of Virginia's open meeting laws.

ROLL CALL

A quorum was present.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Victor K. Branch, Rector
Dr. Valerie Brown (*Absent*)
Dr. Joseph A. F. Chase, Jr.
Mr. Thomas Cosgrove (*arrived @ 9:47 am*)
Dr. Robert Denton, Jr. (*Virtual from Blacksburg, VA – Personal reasons*)
Dr. Harold Green, Jr.
Dr. Leonard Haynes, III (*Virtual from Silver Springs, MD – Medical reasons*)
Ms. Daphne Meeks (*Absent*)
Mr. M. Peter McPherson
Ms. Morenike Miles
Mr. Jon Moore
Ms. Verndell Robinson (*Virtual from Triangle, VA – Personal reasons*)
Mr. Kishore Thota
Mr. Robert Thompson
General Dennis L. Via

BOARD APPOINTEES:

Dr. Kenneth Lewis, Faculty Representative (*Absent*)
Mr. Marquis Mason, Student Representative

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, President
Dr. Tia A. Minnis, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
Mr. Kevin Davenport, Senior Vice President for Finance & Administration/CFO

**FULL BOARD MEETING
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6**

Dr. Alexis Brooks-Walter, Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management
Dr. Willis W. Walter, Interim Vice President for Advancement and External
Engagement
Dr. Annie C. Redd, Chief of Staff/Director, Board of Operations & Relations

INVOCATION

Reverend Thomas Wynn was invited to give the invocation.

RECTOR'S REMARKS

The meeting commenced with a moment of silence in remembrance of Dr. Gladys B. West, a VSU Alum. Rector Branch expressed his appreciation to all attendees, remarking that “the best is yet to come” and affirming that the University continues to embody its tagline. He also extended thanks to Dr. Abdullah for his leadership.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Rector called for the approval of the agenda. The Board approved the agenda by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The Rector asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes. The Board approved the previous meeting minutes from December 13, 2025, by voice vote.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Abdullah provided an update on several items. He reviewed the proposed 2.5% increase in tuition and fees and the 5% increase in housing rates. He also shared a photograph from the newly formed Virginia HBCU Caucus, as well as an image from the event “Out of the Shadows,” which was attended by Governor Spanberger.

Dr. Abdullah reported that the campus experienced significant challenges due to recent icy weather conditions. He commended Dr. Minnis and Dr. Brooks-Walter for their effective management of student and staff needs throughout the incident.

Three Fulbright Awards were recently granted to VSU staff members. He noted that Buddhist monks participating in a Walk of Peace visited campus and engaged with approximately 100 students during the first event held in the Black Box Theatre. President Abdullah expressed gratitude for his ten years of service, offering special thanks to Dr. Denton, who was on the Board at the time he was hired.

Dr. Abdullah also recognized Dr. Gladys B. West for her profound impact on VSU and the world through her pioneering contributions to GPS and other scientific advancements. He reminded the Board that VSU had previously awarded Dr. West an honorary doctorate in acknowledgment of her achievements. He announced that a resolution in her honor would be presented later in the meeting.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6**

BOARD APPROVALS

- Resolution To Approve A Posthumous Earned Doctor Of Education Degree In Educational Administration & Supervision To Ms. Kim Gordan.
- Resolution To Approve The Renaming Of The Honors College To The Charlie Hill, Jr. Honors College.
- Resolution To Approve Honoring The Life And Legacy Of Gladys B. West, PH.D.
- Resolution To Approve To Confer Professor Emeritus Status To Dr. Rita Dandridge.
- Resolution To Approve An Award The Honorary Rank Of Distinguished Professor Upon Dr. Emmanuel O. Omojokun.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

President Abdullah presented the resolution honoring Dr. Gladys B. West, Ph.D., for approval. The motion to approve the resolution was properly seconded, and the Board approved it by roll call vote. Dr. Brown and Ms. Meeks were not present for the vote. President Abdullah noted that the resolution will be delivered to her family as soon as possible.

Academic and Student Affairs

Mr. Cosgrove provided the Academic and Student Affairs summary, noting that enrollment numbers have increased. He reported that student success initiatives have been implemented and are performing well. He presented three individuals for honorary degree consideration: Dr. Rita Dandridge, Dr. Emmanuel Omojokun, and Ms. Kim Gordon; and a policy for cleaning up posthumous cases. The motion to approve these recognitions was duly made, properly seconded, and approved by roll-call vote. Dr. Brown and Ms. Meeks were not present for the vote.

Student Government Association President Mason presented an update from the Student Government Association. He reported that overall student morale remains high and shared updates on upcoming student-led events. President Mason noted that a leadership conference has recently returned to campus and referenced the use of Premier Notes and the Trojan Low Down as communication tools. He further reported on 'Black 82,' a program commemorating Black History Month from February 1 through the end of the month.

Dr. Kenneth Lewis presented an update from the Faculty Senate on Thursday, February 5th, due to his absence from the Full Board Meeting.

Facilities and Finance

Mr. Cosgrove, Vice Chair for Facilities and Finance, gave an overview of the Division of Finance and Administration's updates on behalf of the committee. He shared that the Committee held a Public Comment Period during its meeting to receive comments on the University's proposed increase in tuition and mandatory fees for 2026-2027. The public has until one week (7 days) to submit comments before the Board's scheduled vote on March 20, 2026.

**FULL BOARD MEETING
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Institutional Advancement

On behalf of the committee, Mr. Robert Thompson, Vice Chair, recommended approval of the resolution naming the Honors College after Dr. Charlie Hill. The motion was properly seconded and approved by roll call vote. Dr. Brown and Ms. Meeks were absent for the vote. Mr. Thompson also provided a summary of updates from the Division of Institutional Advancement and introduced Mr. Ernest Bazemore, the new Chair of the Board of the VSU Foundation.

Personnel, Compensation, and Governance

On behalf of the committee, Mr. McPherson, Chair, provided a summary of updates from the Personnel, Compensation, and Governance Committee. The committee was charged with reviewing the current procedure for evaluating the President and determining the compensation and bonus for the upcoming year.

The Board Assessment of its Performance

Rector Branch asked Board members to comment on the Board's performance at the board meetings.

General Via expressed his appreciation to President Mason for his service and leadership. Dr. Chase remarked that the Wednesday dinner has become an excellent fellowship opportunity and extended his thanks to Rector Branch for initiating the idea.

Mr. Cosgrove reminded the Board of Raymond's recent retirement and noted that he will be greatly missed. He also stated that although he was disappointed that Visitor Verndell Robinson did not win her campaign, the outcome is a benefit to VSU, as her election would have required him to leave the Board. Dr. Denton reflected on the significant transformation he has observed on the Board since his previous appointment. He commented that the University had previously faced leadership challenges, financial issues, and other concerns, and he expressed admiration for the progress that has since been achieved. Visitor Moore stated that he was pleased to see the resolution honoring Dr. Hill, describing him as a remarkable individual with exceptional talent. Mr. Thota commented that ongoing developments at VSU have generated widespread excitement both within the University and across the campus community. Dr. Green thanked President Abdullah for his outstanding leadership.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Rector Branch called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was received and properly seconded, and the Committee voted by voice vote. The Rector adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:00 noon.

Victor K. Branch, Rector

Verndell Robinson, Secretary

Date

Date

**FULL BOARD MEETING
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6**

**RESOLUTION OF
THE VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS TO AWARD
THE HONORARY RANK OF DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR UPON
DR. EMMANUEL O. OMOJOKUN**

February 6, 2026

WHEREAS, the Board of Visitors is authorized to “appoint all professors, teachers, and agents and fix their salaries and generally direct the affairs of the University” pursuant to Virginia Code § 23.1-2702(A); and

WHEREAS, Dr. Emmanuel O. Omojokun has served Virginia State University with distinction for more than three decades, advancing the mission of the University through exemplary teaching, scholarship, service, and academic leadership; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Omojokun has provided transformative leadership as Dean of the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business, and Professor of Computer Information Systems, guiding the College through successful accreditation reviews, contributing to the establishment of new academic programs, including the University’s Master of Business Administration (MBA), and fostering a culture of student success and academic excellence; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Omojokun has made significant contributions to curriculum development and academic innovation, including the establishment of the Computer Science program, the development of a Cybersecurity and Forensics minor, and the integration of industry-recognized certifications, thereby strengthening students’ professional preparation; and

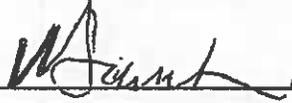
WHEREAS, Dr. Omojokun has led and contributed to numerous externally funded projects and applied research initiatives, including work that has enhanced the University’s technological infrastructure and demonstrated Virginia State University’s economic and educational impact on the region and the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Omojokun has demonstrated a sustained record of service to the University through mentorship of faculty, leadership on key institutional committees, and representation of Virginia State University at state and national levels; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Omojokun’s outstanding contributions to Virginia State University clearly merit recognition at the highest level of honorary faculty distinction; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors of Virginia State University hereby confers upon Dr. Emmanuel O. Omojokun the honorary rank of Distinguished Professor, in recognition of his exemplary and longstanding service to the University; and

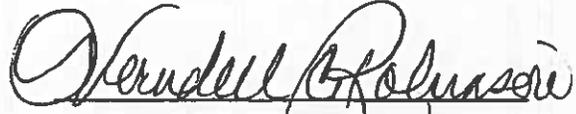
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be spread upon the official minutes of the Board of Visitors of Virginia State University, and that a suitably framed copy be presented to Dr. Omojokun, as a testament to the University's appreciation for his distinguished career and lasting impact on the institution.



Victor K. Branch, Rector

2/6/26

Date



Verndell Robinson, Secretary

2-6-26

Date

**RESOLUTION OF
THE VIRGINIA STATE BOARD OF VISITORS TO
APPROVE THE RENAMING OF THE HONORS COLLEGE TO
THE CHARLIE W. HILL, JR. HONORS COLLEGE**

February 6, 2026

WHEREAS, pursuant to Virginia Code § 23.1- 2705, the Virginia State University Board of Visitors "... may take, hold, receive, and enjoy any gift, grant, devise, or bequest to the board or to or for the benefit of the University. Any such gift, grant, devise, or bequest shall be used for the purposes designated by the donor, or if no purposes are so designated, for the general purposes of the board;" and

WHEREAS, on February 2, 2026, Virginia State University received a cumulative gift commitment of **\$1,512,725.00** from alumnus Dr. Charlie W. Hill, Jr. and his associated trusts and estate. This donation is being made for the intended purpose of supporting The Honors College, located on the campus of Virginia State University, and the furtherance of the already established Hill Leadership Fellows program and its endowment fund; and

WHEREAS, the donation of **\$897,895.00** includes funds already received by the University during the 2025 calendar year, with the remainder to be delivered in installments and received in full before December 31, 2030, from Dr. Hill and the Hill Estate, respectively; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Hill, a 1966 graduate of Virginia State College, now Virginia State University, who, through prior philanthropy directed to the University, has supported such initiatives as the Hill Leadership Fellows program, the ROTC program, and The Honors College and its associated Academic Center for Excellence; and

WHEREAS, the funds are intended to be apportioned across the University as well as the Virginia State University Foundation as appropriate, with a portion of said gift to be reserved for continuous maintenance and upkeep of the named space as well as for the purchase and placement of a commemorative plaque on site; and

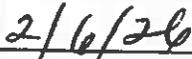
WHEREAS, the funds are intended to be for the purpose of providing financial aid to students enrolled at Virginia State University and will be governed by the guidelines set forth in the memorandum of understanding to be drafted post haste; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors of Virginia State University directs that the specific gift be noted and filed with the permanent records in the Office of Development; and

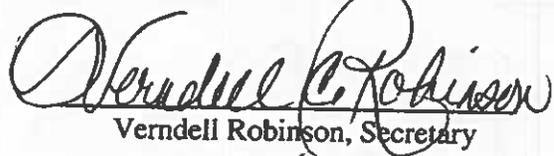
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this gift will be invested with the Virginia State University Foundation and, upon investiture, serve as the catalyst to rename The Honors College as the Charlie W. Hill, Jr. Honors College and funding used to further the efforts of that initiative and related efforts.



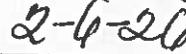
Victor Branch, Rector



Date



Verndell Robinson, Secretary



Date

**RESOLUTION OF THE
VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS
HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF
GLADYS B. WEST, PH.D.**

February 6, 2026

WHEREAS, the Virginia State University Board of Visitors pauses with profound sadness to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Gladys B. West, a distinguished Virginia State University alumna whose extraordinary achievements advanced global understanding of science, technology, and the world itself; and

WHEREAS, Dr. West began her pioneering career in 1956 at what is now known as the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division, becoming only the second Black woman hired at the base and one of merely four Black employees at the time; and

WHEREAS, throughout her 42 years of federal service, she made groundbreaking contributions to the development of the Global Positioning System (GPS), a technology that today guides billions of people around the world through their phones, vehicles, and critical navigation systems; and

WHEREAS, during the 1960s, Dr. West conducted advanced astronomical studies, analyzing the relationship and movement of distant planets such as Pluto and Neptune. Her work expanded to sophisticated satellite data analysis that enabled the creation of more accurate mathematical models of the Earth, laying scientific groundwork for modern geospatial technologies; and

WHEREAS, as part of the Seasat radar altimetry project, Dr. West developed methodologies allowing satellites to perform remote sensing of the Earth's oceans. In the 1970s and 1980s, she programmed early computers to model the true shape of the Earth—efforts that led to the development of the geoid and formed the essential computational basis for today's GPS accuracy and reliability; and

WHEREAS, Dr. West was rightfully recognized for her transformative contributions to science, including her 2018 induction into the Air Force Space and Missile Pioneers Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, due to her extraordinary work, she is celebrated among the "Hidden Figures" whose brilliance and dedication propelled U.S. military, scientific, and national advancements long before their achievements were publicly acknowledged; and

WHEREAS, Dr. West exemplified academic excellence, earning a Bachelor of Science degree from Virginia State College (now Virginia State University), a Master of Arts degree

from the University of Oklahoma, a Master of Science degree from Virginia State University, and a Ph.D. from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech); and

WHEREAS, in recognition of her generation-altering contributions, Dr. West was awarded an honorary doctorate from Virginia State University, and the Dr. Gladys West "Constellation" Scholarship was established in her name; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gladys B. West's life reflects the highest ideals of Virginia State University—excellence, integrity, perseverance, and service to humanity. Her legacy will continue to inspire generations of scholars, scientists, and students across the globe; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Virginia State University Board of Visitors expresses its deepest sympathy at the passing of Dr. Gladys B. West and extends heartfelt condolences to her family, friends, colleagues, and all whose lives were touched by her extraordinary spirit and accomplishments; and

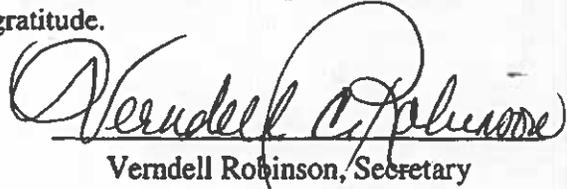
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be spread upon the official minutes of the Board of Visitors of Virginia State University, and that a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Dr. Gladys B. West as an expression of the University's respect, admiration, and enduring gratitude.



Victor K. Branch, Rector

2/6/26

Date



Verndell Robinson, Secretary

2-6-26

Date

**RESOLUTION OF
THE VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS TO AWARD
A POSTHUMOUS EARNED DOCTOR OF EDUCATION DEGREE IN
EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION & SUPERVISION TO
MS. KIM GORDON**

February 6, 2026

WHEREAS, the Board of Visitors is authorized to confer degrees pursuant to Virginia Code § 23.1-2702(B); and

WHEREAS, Ms. Kim Gordon faithfully served Virginia State University for many years as an Instructor of Mathematics in the Mathematics and Economics Department, College of Engineering and Technology, where she was widely recognized by colleagues and students for her intelligence, diligence, innovative pedagogy, and strong commitment to student success and retention; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Gordon, a Virginia State University alumna holding the Master's degree in Mathematics from VSU, was admitted to the Employee Degree Attainment Program and subsequently enrolled in the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Administration & Supervision program at Virginia State University, with the goal of further advancing her scholarship and enhancing her contributions to educational leadership and to the University community; and

WHEREAS, as documented in the academic record submitted to the Provost and President, Ms. Gordon had, at the time of her passing, satisfied all criteria for eligibility to receive a posthumous earned doctoral degree from the University; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Gordon's institutional merit is evidenced by her more than twenty-five years of teaching and research experience, her sustained and positive service to Virginia State University students and colleagues, her leadership as a course coordinator, her participation in grant and scholarly activities, and her consistent record of mentoring and supporting students in mathematics and related fields; and

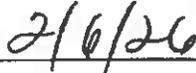
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors of Virginia State University hereby approves the award of the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Administration & Supervision, *posthumously*, to Ms. Kim Gordon, in recognition of her substantial academic progress toward the degree, her exemplary institutional service, and her enduring contributions to the Virginia State University community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Registrar is directed to record this posthumous earned doctoral degree on Ms. Gordon's official Virginia State University transcript with the notation "Degree awarded posthumously," and to ensure that all internal records and external reporting treat this award as an earned degree; and

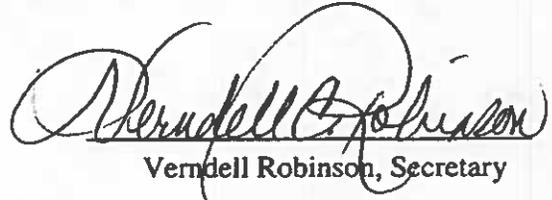
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be presented to Ms. Gordon's family as a formal expression of the Board's profound sympathy and of Virginia State University's deep appreciation for her life, her scholarship, and her many years of dedicated service to the students and mission of Virginia State University.



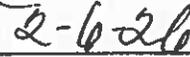
Victor K. Branch, Rector



Date



Verdell Robinson, Secretary



Date

**RESOLUTION OF
THE VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS TO CONFER
PROFESSOR EMERITUS STATUS TO
DR. RITA DANDRIDGE**

February 6, 2026

WHEREAS, the Board of Visitors is authorized to “appoint all professors, teachers, and agents and fix their salaries and generally direct the affairs of the University” pursuant to Virginia Code § 23.1-2702(A); and

WHEREAS, Virginia State University recognizes the meritorious and dedicated service of its faculty members who have demonstrated sustained excellence in teaching, research, and service; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Rita Dandridge, Professor of English, has met or exceeded these criteria, having rendered outstanding service to Virginia State University and contributed significantly to the advancement of knowledge and the education of students; and

WHEREAS, the University President, upon the recommendation of the Faculty Emeritus Committee, the Dean, the Provost, and the President’s Cabinet, has endorsed the nomination of Dr. Rita Dandridge for the honorary title of Professor Emeritus; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Visitors of Virginia State University does hereby confer the title of Professor Emeritus upon Dr. Rita Dandridge, with all rights, honors, and privileges pertaining thereto, in recognition of a career of dedicated service and academic distinction; and

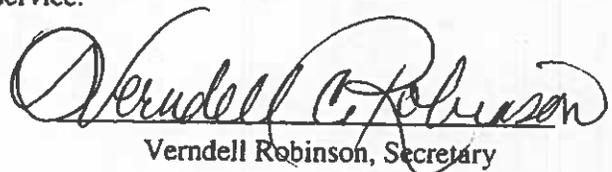
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be spread upon the official minutes of the Board and that a formal certificate of this designation be presented to Dr. Rita Dandridge as a token of appreciation for her distinguished service.



Victor K. Branch, Rector

2/6/26

Date



Verndell Robinson, Secretary

2-6-26

Date

Posthumous Degrees & In Memoriam Recognition

Category: *Academic Affairs*

Policy Number: *4010*

Policy Manager: *Office of the Provost*

Current Revision Approval Date: *2/6/2026*



PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear, consistent standards for: (1) awarding posthumous earned degrees when a student dies before conferral; (2) awarding posthumous honorary degrees; and (3) providing In Memoriam recognition when degree criteria are not met, while upholding academic integrity and maintaining accurate institutional records and reporting.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This policy applies to academic departments/programs, Deans, the Graduate School, the Office of the Registrar, the Provost, and the President.

AUTHORITY

- A. The University's Board of Visitors, pursuant to Virginia Code § 23.1-1301, may delegate administrative authority to the University President, who may, in turn, delegate authority to other university personnel.
- B. The University's Provost, through presidential delegation, shall oversee the development and implementation of policies related to the University's academic affairs.

DEFINITIONS

In Memoriam Recognition: A formal, non-degree acknowledgement for students who do not meet the thresholds for a posthumous earned degree.

Posthumous Earned Degree: An academic credential awarded after death to a student who has substantially completed degree requirements.

Posthumous Honorary Degree: An honorary distinction (not an earned credential) awarded by the Board of Visitors in recognition of extraordinary achievement, leadership, or service.

Virginia State University – VSU or University

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Posthumous Earned Degrees — General Standard

The University may award a posthumous earned degree to an otherwise eligible student when the student meets (a) baseline eligibility criteria and (b) the substantial completion threshold for the applicable degree level as stated in this policy.

Program-level policies that establish more stringent academic requirements remain in effect.

1.1 Baseline Eligibility (All Degree Levels)

A student is eligible for consideration for a posthumous earned degree only if all of the following conditions are met:

- **Enrollment Status:** The student was enrolled at the time of death, or had been enrolled within the preceding twelve (12) months, or was on an approved leave of absence.
- **Academic and Conduct Standing:** The student was in good academic and conduct standing with no unresolved disciplinary sanctions or administrative/financial bars.
- **Academic Unit Support:** The academic department/program supports the award based on the student's academic record and progress toward completion of degree requirements.
- **External Requirements:** Awarding the degree does not violate applicable accreditation, licensure, residency, or statutory requirements.

2. Substantial Completion — Degree Level Thresholds

2.1 Doctoral Degree Programs (Ed.D., Ph.D.)

A posthumous earned doctoral degree may be awarded only when the student:

- Meets all baseline eligibility criteria in Section 1.1; and
- Has completed at least fifty percent (50%) of total required program credits or program milestones, as documented in the student's academic record; and
- Meets doctoral program requirements sufficient to support a determination of substantial completion under this policy.

If the doctoral criteria are not met, a posthumous earned doctoral degree shall not be awarded.

2.2 Master's Degree Programs

A posthumous earned master's degree may be awarded when the student:

- Meets all baseline eligibility criteria in Section 1.1; and
- Has completed at least seventy-five percent (75%) of required program credits; and
- Where applicable, has an approved thesis or capstone plan.

2.3 Bachelor's Degree Programs

A posthumous earned bachelor's degree may be awarded when the student:

- Meets all baseline eligibility criteria in Section 1.1; and
- Has completed at least ninety (90) semester credit hours; and
- Has completed at least seventy-five percent (75%) of major requirements.

3. In Memoriam Recognition (Non-Degree)

When a student dies while enrolled or recently enrolled but does not meet the criteria for a posthumous earned degree, the University may provide In Memoriam recognition.

In Memoriam recognition:

- Is not an academic degree;
- Is not recorded as a conferred credential on the transcript; and
- Is not counted as a degree in official reporting.

Examples of in memoriam recognition include a certificate or a commencement program notation.

4. Posthumous Honorary Degrees

Posthumous honorary degrees are awarded only by action of the Board of Visitors, following the same standards and review process used for honorary degrees awarded to living recipients.

5. Records and Notation (Policy Requirements)

- For posthumous earned degrees, the student's transcript will include a notation indicating that the degree was awarded posthumously.
- In Memoriam recognitions and posthumous honorary degrees are not recorded as earned degrees on the transcript.

6. Governance

Academic units submit recommendations through the academic governance chain. The Provost reviews recommendations and forwards eligible recommendations to the President. The President transmits approved recommendations to the Board of Visitors. The Board of Visitors confers degrees by formal resolution.

RELATED PROCEDURES

See Attachment A, Posthumous Degrees & In Memoriam Recognition Procedures

RELATED MATERIALS/REFERENCES

N/A

APPROVED BY:



Board of Visitors



Date

REVISION HISTORY

This policy supersedes the following archived policies:

None

ATTACHMENT A
Posthumous Degrees & In Memoriam Recognition
Procedures



1. Purpose

This procedure implements the University's Posthumous Degrees & In Memoriam Recognition Policy by describing required documentation, evaluation steps, routing and approvals, communications, and records practices.

2. Initiating a Case

- A case may be initiated when the University is notified that a currently enrolled or recently enrolled student has died.
- The academic department/program typically initiates the academic review and coordinates with the Dean's office and the Office of the Registrar.

3. Documentation Requirements

3.1 Department/Program Certification (Written)

The department/program prepares a written certification summarizing:

- Enrollment status (enrolled at time of death; enrolled within last 12 months; or on approved leave).
- Academic and conduct standing (including any unresolved sanctions/bars).
- Degree progress (credits completed and/or milestones completed).
- Recommended action (posthumous earned degree or In Memoriam recognition).
- Any applicable accreditation/licensure/residency constraints relevant to awarding.

3.2 Registrar Record Verification

The Office of the Registrar verifies and documents:

- Official credit totals and accepted transfer credit applied to the program of study.
- Degree audit information needed to confirm percentage thresholds (master's/bachelor's).
- Administrative/financial bars that may affect conferral processing.

4. Evaluation Steps (Operational)

4.1 Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programs (Checklist Review)

- Confirm baseline eligibility per the policy.

ATTACHMENT A

Posthumous Degrees & In Memoriam Recognition Procedures



- Confirm degree-level thresholds: bachelor's (≥ 90 credits and $\geq 75\%$ major completion); master's ($\geq 75\%$ credits and approved thesis/capstone plan if applicable).
- Prepare department recommendation memorandum for the Dean's review.

4.2 Doctoral Programs (Feasibility Narrative)

For doctoral programs, the department prepares a brief feasibility narrative documenting:

- Evidence of at least 50% completion of credits and/or program milestones.
- A reasonable expectation the student would have completed remaining requirements within approximately 12 months, based on documented progress and milestones.
- Confirmation that awarding would not conflict with accreditation/licensure/residency/statutory rules.

If doctoral criteria are not satisfied, the department prepares an In Memoriam recommendation instead.

5. Routing and Approvals

- Department/Program → Dean: Submit certification, supporting documentation, and recommended action.
- Dean → Provost: Review for policy consistency and forward recommendation (approve/deny/return for more information).
- Provost → President: Review for academic affairs compliance and forward eligible recommendations.
- President → Board of Visitors: Transmit approved recommendations for action by formal resolution.

6. Communication and Family Engagement

- Communications should be coordinated through appropriate University channels and handled with sensitivity and privacy considerations.
- After Board action, the University notifies appropriate stakeholders and coordinates with the family as needed regarding recognition and any ceremony participation.

ATTACHMENT A
Posthumous Degrees & In Memoriam Recognition
Procedures



7. In Memoriam Recognition Options (Operational)

In Memoriam recognition may include:

- Issuance of an In Memoriam certificate to the family; and/or
- A notation in the commencement program or a brief moment of recognition at a ceremony.

8. Records, Coding, and Reporting (Registrar SOP)

8.1 Transcript Notation

For posthumous earned degrees, the Registrar applies the approved transcript notation indicating the degree was awarded posthumously.

8.2 Coding/Reporting Controls

Operational coding and reporting instructions maintained by the Registrar are applied to ensure:

- In Memoriam recognition is not recorded as an earned credential.
- Posthumous honorary degrees are not recorded as earned degrees.
- Official reporting excludes non-degree recognitions from degree counts.

9. Records Retention

Units retain documentation supporting recommendations and actions in accordance with University records retention requirements.

Last Review: 2/4/2026

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Date: 5 February 2026 - ~1205 pm, eastern time.
From Dr. Kenneth W. Lewis
Associate Professor of Statistics/Data Analytics in Psychology
VSU Faculty Senate Chair
Remarks made at the VSU Board of Visitors Meeting and Public Hearing Regarding Proposed Tuition Increase for VSU Students

Good afternoon:
For the public record, I am Dr. Kenneth W. Lewis, Associate Professor of Statistics/Data Analytics in Psychology, and Chair of the VSU Faculty Senate for this academic year. I bring you greetings. Regarding this matter of tuition increase for the Virginia State University students, I am neither for it nor against it. I suspect the Board of Visitors will vote in favor of the request to increase the VSU tuition per the evidence-based presentation made by the VSU Vice President of Finance – Mr. Kevin Davenport. I trust that Mr. Davenport thinks it is a necessary action to take to secure the survivability of Virginia State University.

I only ask that you, Mr. President and the Board of Visitors, will create an effective campaign that will convince the VSU academic consumer that it is a good idea to pay more and that VSU will have greater added value because of it. At the end of the day, the VSU academic consumer is looking at this situation as a price increase for a VSU academic product.

I ask you to consider this phone that I am holding in my hand and think of it as a VSU academic widget. I want you to imagine that for several years I have been paying 10 dollars per year to use this academic widget and now all of a sudden you are asking me to pay 12 dollars or more to use this same academic widget. My initial questions are "WHY? And What benefit do I derive from paying more money for a product that used to cost me less money?" I see three possible reasons for this financial increase.

- Reason 1: VSU is greedy and is only interested in increasing its profit margin for its academic widget. I doubt that is the reason for asking for an increase.
- Reason 2: VSU is faced with a situation of realizing increased costs of operations of its academic widget and must increase its fees to cover those costs. That is a logical reason for asking for an increase.
- Reason 3: VSU has been altruistic to a fault at holding costs down to ensure that students can afford to take advantage of the VSU academic widget and after multiple years, it has become cost prohibitive to continue to keep the fee structure at its current position. It will do no good to anyone to hold the fee structure constant and not taking any action could put VSU in a disastrous operational situation. This appears to be the most likely reason for asking for the increase.

I only ask that you, VSU President and Board, will create a campaign that will convince VSU academic consumers to feel that there is a value added proposition that will benefit them and make it worth their while to pay more money and that the added value is real and not just empty hype.
But I also ask that you, VSU President and Board, will try to find more funding from other sources that will help cover the costs of increased tuition for VSU students.

We have students who struggle to pay their tuition and fees at the current rate that they are being charged and they are having difficulty satisfying that requirement. I currently have students who can't get registered for Spring 2026 courses because they have financial holds on their accounts. So you can imagine what that will feel like if they have to pay even higher fees. Remember to look at this situation as a consumer looks at the cost of a product and then you can hopefully understand what I am saying. What is the benefit derived from my paying more for your VSU academic widget? What's in it for me?

Good afternoon, Mr. Rector, members of the Board of Visitors, President, cabinet, faculty, staff, and fellow students watching. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. For the record, my name is Marquis Mason, The 52nd Student Government Association President here at Virginia State University.

I want to begin by acknowledging the reality that this Board and the administration are navigating. Inflationary pressures are real, persistent, and largely outside of the university's control. Over the past decade, Virginia State has made a deliberate choice to keep tuition increases below inflation, and as a result, we now face an inflationary gap, particularly in room and board, while remaining one of the most affordable public institutions in the Commonwealth. I want to be clear that students recognize and appreciate that commitment.

I also want to thank Mr. Davenport and the finance team for presenting data that is thoughtful, transparent, and rooted in sustaining the long-term health of this institution. The proposed increases are measured, and the intent to pair them with proportional increases in financial aid reflects a genuine effort to minimize student impact while keeping Virginia State competitive and operationally sound.

At the same time, my role today is to speak from the lived experience of our students.

Even modest increases, \$25 to \$75 a month, can be significant for a student who is already balancing tuition, housing, food, transportation, and family responsibilities. For many of our students, there is no financial cushion. An increase that looks manageable on paper can be the difference between staying enrolled and stopping out.

With that in mind, I want to offer a perspective that seeks balance rather than disagreement. One option worth considering is limiting the application of these increases to incoming students, beginning with the Fall freshman class, while holding current students harmless. This approach allows the university to move forward responsibly while signaling to our current students that we are equally committed to seeing them through to graduation without shifting the ground beneath them mid-journey.

However if not, possible I believe equally important is communication. Time and time again, students return to campus unaware that an increase has occurred, how much it is, or why it happened in the first place. When students do not understand the “why,” the increase feels arbitrary, even when it is not. Clear, repeated, and proactive communication—well before bills are due—must be a priority anytime costs change in any area.

Pairing that communication with visible efforts to identify alternative funding sources, expanded aid conversations, and creative solutions for both in-state and out-of-state students will help students receive these decisions in the spirit they are intended.

In closing, students understand that prices rise and that increases are sometimes necessary to keep our institution’s doors open and its standards high. Supporting the university’s financial stability and supporting students are not opposing goals. If we can protect our current students, communicate more effectively, and continue seeking solutions beyond tuition alone, we show our students that Virginia State is not only investing in buildings and operations—but in their successful path to graduation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.