

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS**  
**FULL BOARD MEETING**  
**11:00 A.M., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2021**  
**The Gateway Dining & Event Center**  
**(On the campus of Virginia State University)**  
*(No Public Comment Period Scheduled)*

**DRAFT AGENDA**  
**(As of 1.27.22)**

**11:00 a.m. FULL BOARD MEETING CONVENED**

**Rector Valerie K. Brown, Presiding**

- Roll Call (*Dr. Christine Darden, Board Secretary*)
- Invocation (*Rev. Delano Douglas*)
- Approval of Agenda
- Rector's Remarks
- President's Remarks ..... Dr. Makola M. Abdullah

**BOARD APPROVALS**

- Full Board Meeting Minutes, November 19, 2021
- Resolution of Exemplary Service to James J.L. Stegmaier (awarded posthumously)

**CLOSED SESSION (if any)**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- **Academic & Student Affairs Committee**
  - **Information Item(s):**
    - Summary of Updates from Covid-19 Task Force, Enrollment Management, Academic & Student Affairs Division, Technology Services
    - Reports from the Faculty and Student Representatives
      - Dr. Ceslav Ciobanu, Faculty Representative
      - Mr. Kameron Gray, Student Representative

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS (Continued)**

- **Academic & Student Affairs Committee**
  - **Information Item:**
    - Remarks from the Staff Senate
      - Ms. Fran Y. Thomas, Chair
  - **Facilities, Finance & Audit Committee**
    - **Information Item(s):**
      - Summary of Updates the (Division of Finance/Administration, Internal Audit, Office of Compliance)
- **Institutional Advancement Committee**
  - **Information Item:**
    - Summary of Updates (Government Relations, Communications, Institutional Advancement)
- **Personnel, Compensation & Governance Committee**
  - **Information Item(s):**
    - President's Annual Performance Process/Timeline

**Report of Affiliated Foundation(s)**

- Ms. Brenda Stith-Finch, Chair, VSU Foundation Board

**Legal Counsel Update (if any)**

**Closing Remarks: Board Members' Assessments**

**Announcements**

**Adjournment**

*\*\*All start times for committees are approximate. Meetings may begin after the posted approximate start time as committee members are ready to proceed. The Board reserves the right to change its schedule as needed.*

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS**  
**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**February 4, 2022**

*The Full Board Meeting was held in the Gateway Dining & Event center  
on the campus of Virginia State University*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Valerie Brown, Rector, called the meeting of the Virginia State University (VSU) Board of Visitors (Board) to order in the Gateway Dining and Event Center at approximately 11:00 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

A quorum was present.

*Board Members Present:*

Dr. Valerie Brown, Rector

Mr. Glenn D. Sessoms, Vice Rector (*electronic communication*)

Dr. Christine M. Darden, Secretary

Ms. Thursa Crittenden

Ms. Pamela A. Currey (*absent*)

Mr. Michael Flemming

Ms. Shavonne Gordon

Mr. Raul Herrera

Mr. Charlie W. Hill (*electronic communication*)

Mr. Jon Moore (*absent*)

Mr. William L. Murray

Mr. Edward Owens

Mr. Xavier Richardson

Mr. Wayne Turnage

Dr. Ceslav Ciobanu, Faculty Representative to the Board

Mr. Yousif Omer (sitting in for Kameron Gray, Student Representative to the Board)

*Administration Present:*

Dr. Makola Abdullah, President

Dr. Donald Palm, Provost/Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Kevin Davenport, Senior Vice President, Finance & Administrative

Tonya Hall, Vice President for External Relations

Shawri King-Casey, Senior Advisor, Institutional Ethics, Equity, and Compliance

Dr. Annie C. Redd, Special Asst to the President/Director, Board Governance, Operations, & Relations

Maurion Edwards, Chief Information Officer/Technology Services

Chief David Bragg, Associate Vice President, VSU Police Department

Regina Tyler-Barnett, Associate Vice President, Student Success & Engagement

Dr. Alexis Brooks-Walter, Asst. Vice Provost/Enrollment Management

Dr. Gwendolyn Dandridge, Associate Vice President/Director, Communications

Eldon Burton, Director of Government Relations

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*Administration Present (continued)*

Tanya Simmons, Associate Vice President, Human Resources  
 William C. Sawyer, Institutional Advancement  
 Franklin Johnson, Jr., Alumni Relations/Institutional Advancement  
 Adrian Petway, Associate Vice President/Finance/Budget  
 Dr. Tia Minnis, Vice Provost for Academic Success, Planning & Institutional Effectiveness

*Legal Counsel Present:*

Cynthia Norwood, Assistant State Attorney General

*Other Attendees:*

Reverend Delano Douglas  
 Travis Edmonds, Technology Services  
 Derrick Jennings, Technology Services  
 Yourdonus James, Office of Conference Services  
 Danette Johnson, President's Office  
 Debbie Jefferson, President's Office  
 Ri'Shawn Bassette, Office of Communications  
 Tasha Owens, Internal Audit  
 Tiffany Gullins, Alumni Relations  
 Joseph Lyons, Student Success & Engagement  
 Danny T. Giles, Staff Senate

The following Board members participated by electronic means from remote locations identified below. The Board members participated by Cisco WebEx virtual meeting.

- Mr. Hill located in Hampton, VA; unable to attend due to personal reasons because of a conflict.
- Mr. Sessoms located in Cordova, TN; unable to attend due to personal reasons because of a conflict.

**INVOCATION**

Rector Brown invited Rev. Delano Douglas to offer the invocation. Rev. Douglas also paid tribute to board member, Jay Stegmaier by sharing board members' reflections about him and his service on the Board. Rev. Douglas also acknowledged President Abdullah who celebrated his sixth anniversary as President of Virginia State University on February 1st.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Board approved the agenda by voice vote.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Board approved the minutes from the November 19, 2021, meeting by voice vote.

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**RECTOR'S REMARKS**

Rector Brown expressed appreciation to each board member for their contributions to the work of the Board to ensure the University moves forward. The Rector acknowledged Dr. Charlie Hill on his exemplary service, philanthropy, and in receiving the honorary doctorate degree at the VSU Fall Commencement Ceremony in December 2021. The Rector also shared that she spoke with Ms. Stegmaier at the Celebration of Life for Jay Stegmaier. Lastly, the Rector acknowledged President Abdullah on his sixth anniversary as President.

**PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**

President Abdullah expressed appreciation for the time and energy they offer to help steward VSU. The President stated that we have had much success over the past 6 years, the highest graduate rate, the highest retention rate, the highest enrollment increase, the 30-million-dollar donation, and the largest amount of funding from the General Assembly. So, it is time to look forward and begin to think about how we create an environment or culture of success at VSU. The President presented brief updates regarding the death of a VSU student, fall 2021 commencement, COVID-19, Enrollment, General Assembly, Altria. The President acknowledged the current Mr. and Miss VSU, Isaiah Matthews-Braxton and Ashley Gray who addressed the Board. The gallery congratulated Mr. Isaiah Matthews-Braxton who recently won the title of the 18<sup>th</sup> Mr. HBCU, 2021-2022, in a national competition.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The Rector asked for a motion to convene a closed session at approximately 11:22 a.m. for Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body, pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7), specifically to discuss legal issues. The motion was made and properly seconded. The motion passed by voice vote. The Rector invited President Abdullah, Cynthia Norwood, Assistant Attorney General, Dr. Annie C. Redd, Shawri King-Casey to remain for the closed session.

The Board re-convened in opened session with a roll call of voting members that the Committee discussed or considered only those public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and only such public business matters as were identified in the motions by which the closed meeting was convened.

**BOARD APPROVALS**

- Full Board Minutes, November 19, 2021
- Resolution of Exemplary Service to James J.L. Stegmaier (presented posthumously)
- Establishment of the James J.L. Stegmaier Scholarship Fund in honor and memory of his service to the Board from 2016-2022.

The Board discussed and approved that if a current board member passes and it is possible to do so, that a resolution from the Board would be prepared and presented at the celebration of life service. The Board also voted to establish a scholarship in memory and honor of Mr. James Stegmaier who served on the VSU Board of Visitors so proudly and with distinction. The scholarship will go to the Tuition Assistance Fund. Board members would be encouraged to contribute to the scholarship on an annual basis.

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

In the absence of Chair Pamela Currey, Dr. Palm presented the summary of the Committee's meeting held on Thursday, February 2, 2022. Dr. Berkita Bradford provided an overview of the Department of Hospitality Management, which is housed in the College of Agriculture and is heavily focused on strategic plan priority three to provide a transformative VSU experience that supports the holistic development of our students. Dr. Bradford provided a comprehensive overview of the Department and the success stories of our graduates from the Hospitality Management Program. Dr. Bradford also noted the work being done to create an on-line option for the program.

To a standing ovation from the Committee, Chief Bragg introduced the VSU Police leadership and staff members to recognize and acknowledge the tremendous work the VSU Police Department does every day to keep the campus community safe and acknowledge the tragedy at Bridgewater College. Chief Bragg gave an update on the 2021 campus crime report, including the Homicide Investigation into the death of Mr. Daniel Wharton that occurred in December 2021 at the University of Ettrick Apartments. He provided a summary of additional security measures being undertaken for the University Apartments at Ettrick. Chief Bragg also communicated his strategy to recruit new, and retain current, high performing quality officers and security guards. The committee heard about the extensive professional development undertaken by the VSU Police leadership and their recognition by the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association (FBI-LEEDA) Committee members asked Chief Bragg what the protocol was for officers wearing vests. Discussion ensued about moving forward to provide vests for security officers.

Dr. Corley provided an update on efforts to protect the campus community from COVID-19 and the University's strategy for the Spring 2022 Semester. Over the past year, VSU has created a campus culture of safety and compliance utilizing evidence-based practices to respond to COVID-19. Because of the University's collective commitment, we celebrated less than a 1% positivity rate and 89% overall campus vaccination compliance rate last year. For the spring 2022 semester, VSU has a 4.2% positivity rate in a region that has decreased from 36% to now 25.5%. Now that we are back on campus, the committee noted that we may well see higher rates with the extreme transmissibility of the Omicron variant – even in vaccinated communities. Dr. Corley acknowledged Governor Youngkin's New Executive Order which rescinded the COVID-19 vaccine mandate for all state employees which was followed by Attorney General Miyares' legal opinion that Virginia's state institutions of higher education could not require the COVID-19 vaccine as a general condition of students' enrollment or in-person attendance. VSU is compliant with both actions.

Dr. Brooks-Walter provided an update on Spring enrollment. As of January 2022, applications for fall 2022 is up 75% compared to fall 2021. A new Admissions system was successfully implemented in January 2022 which allows automated acceptance as well as seamless engagement with prospective students. The Admissions Transfer Office continues to grow, and they have launched the major improvements to VSU's transfer office and the transfer experience for prospective students. The Orientation Office has released a new interactive tour of the campus that includes a panoramic virtual

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reality experience for visitors. The VCAN program continues to provide a positive experience for students, and it was noted that Dr. Coleman testified about the program and the expansion of the geographic area from 25 miles to 45 miles to the Senate Finance Committee. Her comments were well received.

Mr. Edwards (Chief Information Officer) provided an update on Technology Services. Technology Services is currently procuring services to complete a thorough I.T. Assessment. Mr. Edwards discussed the work with VITA to facilitate the ability of VSU to transition to a Level 2 institution in IT. He noted the magnitude of infrastructure and governance necessary to be in place prior to such designation. New staff have been hired to address process and service gaps between Technology Services, Administration, and Academics. New services have also been procured to address spikes during peak times. Last semester, the student experience was impacted by Wi-Fi issues. Steps have been taken to address this concern and Technology Services is providing weekly updates to the SGA President and Provost for transparency.

Visitor Turnage stated that he wanted to go on record as a board member that he does not understand the wisdom of the decision by the attorney general to conclude that public institutions do not have the legal authority to mandate the booster or vaccines. He stated there are public high schools, public elementary schools, public middle schools that require a series of boosters to attend school; he does not understand how the attorney general could conclude that another public institution does not have legal authority to require such. Visitor Turnage stated that this decision puts lives in jeopardy; boosters work for people with underlying health conditions, which some of our students may have. If any students decide not to get the booster because the state does not require them to do so, they could get sick and die. He stated that this message needs should be conveyed to the attorney general's office.

*Remarks from the Faculty and Student Representatives to the Board*

Dr. Ceslav Ciobanu, Chair of the Faculty Senate, made remarks on behalf of the Faculty Senate. Mr. Yousif Omer, a member of the Student Government Association (SGA) Executive Board, brought remarks and an overview of the SGA activities.

Dr. Palm also invited Mr. Danny Giles, Treasurer, to bring remarks and updates on behalf of the Staff Senate. President Abdullah thanked Dr. Ciobanu, Mr. Omer, and Mr. Giles for their comments and for their service.

Facilities, Finance and Audit Committee

Mr. William Murray, Vice Chair, presented a summary of the committee meeting. Mr. Murray expressed thanks to the Division of Finance for the user-friendly nature of the financial tables and schedules provided to the board. The Committee saw a very robust and encouraging short-term cash position and financial position with the important caveat that this reflects the one-time gift from MacKenzie Scott as well as short-term federal funding. The committee had closed session with the VSU Real Estate Foundation, and in open session Mr. Herrera expressed thanks to the Foundation and reiterated the importance of alignment, which we have always enjoyed with the Foundation. The Committee received

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an uplifting and collegial audit and compliance report that gives the board a sense that things are moving in a good direction toward resolution and completion.

Mr. Murray addressed the required public comment session about the proposed increase in mandatory fees held on February 2. The session starts a 30-day window before the board can formally adopt the proposed increase of \$500 in the technology fee for next year. The sense of the Committee is that members would be comfortable with, at least in a pro forma, tentative way administration can reflect the increase in planning or draft materials.

Institutional Advancement Committee

Chair Shavonne Gordon presented a summary of the Institutional Advancement Committee. In Governor Ralph Northam's last budget proposal, he included an additional \$297 Million in funding for Virginia's HBCUs. Virginia State University would receive \$113 million in this proposal which would make for an 87% increase in funding for HBCUs across Virginia for the entirety of Northam's term. For VSU specifically, the current budget proposed, would establish new degree and online programs, a VSU Advanced Manufacturing Logistics Institute, expand VSU's Virginia College Affordability Network (VCAN) and fund other student support services. The budget also includes four infrastructure projects, a significant increase in maintenance reserves, and detailed planning to construct the BOLT Leadership Building (Building Outstanding Leaders for Tomorrow) and renovate Virginia Hall. The General Assembly Session for this year convened January 12, 2022. It will meet for 60 days to amend the outgoing Governor's budget and consider bills with a range of topics. President Abdullah has testified on behalf of VSU and the VA Council of Presidents both in the House Education Committee and the Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee. VSU continues to work closely with our local, state, and federal legislators to conduct the mission and vision of our institution.

The VSU Office of Communications continues the work of ensuring that we meet Strategic Plan Priority Four by "defining the VSU Brand and telling our Story by effectively demonstrating and communicating the value of Virginia State University." The University had the very unfortunate news story of the tragic death involving one of our students, Daniel Wharton which dominated headlines in early December. The staff worked to control the narrative of that story and limit its connection to VSU and to limit the shelf life of the story. We initiated projects that streamline our internal communications. Our newly introduced employee intranet allows us to centralize communications and it eliminates the abundance and redundancy of emails. We continue to push our social media brand. We initiated a fun and successful project for commencement that involved personalized social media photo frames. We have a plethora of new branding initiatives on campus to include new lighting, signage, equipment, and branding of structures on campus. Chair Gordon asked that the minutes reflect Dr. Gwendolyn Williams Dandridge said she will moon walk on University Avenue when the mural "Greater Happens Here" is painted there.

As evidenced by the FY22 dashboard report, philanthropic support to VSU totals \$3,109,029.62 from 1,303 donors as of January 28, 2022. Currently, we are 21,913.61 dollars under total raised this same time last year or 99%. Currently, we are 911 donors under total this same previous year or 58%. Currently, we are at 76% and 112,924.73 dollars under last year's final total dollars raised. The Giving



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Tuesday Match It Challenge was an immense success, and as of December 3, 2022, we have raised \$99,679.45. The Annual Global Day of Giving is November 30, 2021; Institutional Advancement expects alumni donor count to increase. The Institutional Advancement team has developed a robust pipeline of potential corporations and individuals such as Mary Macon Trenholme Endowed Fund, JP Morgan Chase Northrop Grumman, M&T Bank, The Fulton Forward Foundation, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield, Florence Wilson Estate, Daniel Thompson – Tuckahoe Plantation, Bank of America, and P2R Management. There have been three pending proposals: Deloitte -\$11,700,000, Completed College American - \$215,000, and AMB - \$40,000, which we received in February. We have received from Altria - \$500,000 and \$40,000 (STEM) from Capital One.

Chair Gordon issued a call to the Board members that if they have contacts with corporations to create connections with the IA staff for VSU.

### Personnel, Compensation, and Governance Committee

Chair Herrera shared an update from the Office of Human Resources (OHR) which included recruitment efforts underway in the OHR. A Business Analyst has been hired to support the office to digitize the processes for greater efficiency. In addition, the new payroll system will go live in March 2022. The climate survey was launched in earlier in this semester, and the salary equity study will be completed soon as well.

We now have the final board matrix which is current in that it reflects the removal of characteristics of four colleagues (3 who are retiring, one who is deceased). The matrix shows different areas where we could use expertise and experience on the board. The Committee met in closed session to discuss the president's compensation for 2021-2022 as well as for next 2022-2023.

### **REPORT FROM THE VSU FOUNDATION**

Ms. Brenda Stith-Finch expressed appreciation for the opportunity to inform the Board about its work it is doing to support the University. The Foundation is pleased with the management of its portfolio, and as requested by the Board, it created a subaccount for the McKenzie Scott funds allocated to the Foundation. This will allow the Board to see the earnings from the investment of those funds. Ms. Stith-Finch elaborated on the Foundation's role as a pass through to facilitate donors who want to work with the University. She also shared information on the Foundation's new initiatives for succession planning that focus on training VSU students to become future trustees.

- Foundation Fellows Program, which will bring 6 VSU graduates since 2000 as non-voting members of the board
- Selection of a current VSU student to serve as non-voting Student Representative
- Selection of student interns in accounting through the University's work-study program

Ms. Stith-Finch stated that the Foundation will contribute \$2,500 to the new James Stegmaier Scholarship Fund. President Abdullah expressed appreciation for the work of the VSU Foundation and the commitment of its leadership.

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**LEGAL COUNSEL**

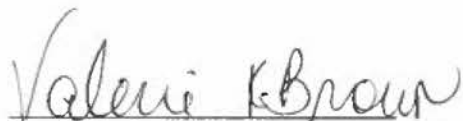
There were no updates from Legal Counsel.

**CLOSING REMARKS: BOARD MEMBERS' ASSESSMENTS**

Mr. Herrera, Chair of Personnel, Compensation & Governance asked each board member to make comments on this board meeting and offer suggestions for improvement.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the Rector adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:36 p.m.

  
Dr. Valerie K. Brown, Rector

  
Dr. Christine M. Darden, Secretary

4/22/22  
Date

4/22/22  
Date