

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS
COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT**

1:30 P.M. THURSDAY, September 10, 2026

**Gateway Dining & Events Center
(on the campus of Virginia State University)**

(No Public Comment Period Scheduled)

DRAFT AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER.....Mr. Robert Thompson, Chair

ROLL CALL

INVOCATION (Reverend Thomas Wynn, Director of Campus Ministries)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

- April 23, 2026, Committee Meeting

PRESIDENT’S REMARKS..... Dr. Makola M. Abdullah

CLOSED SESSION (if any)

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

External Relations Communications.....Dr. Gwen W. Dandridge

Advancement Services.....Dr. Willis W. Walter

Development ServicesDr. Joscelyne M. Brazile-Evans

Alumni Engagement..... Dr. Franklin Johnson-Norwood

Widening VSU’s Circle of Influence for the Comprehensive Campaign.....Dr. Willis W. Walter/
Dr. Joscelyne M. Brazile-Evans

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS
COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT
1:45 P.M. THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026
Gateway Dining & Events Center
(on the campus of Virginia State University)**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Robert Thompson, Chair, called the Institutional Advancement Committee meeting to order at 1:30 pm. The meeting was held at the Gateway Dining & Events Center.

ROLL CALL

A quorum was present.

INVOCATION

Reverend Thomas Wynn, Director of Campus Ministries

LEGAL COUNSEL:

Mr. Nathan Moberley

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Robert Thompson, Chair

General Dennis L. Via (Vice Rector)

Dr. Robert Denton, Jr.

Ms. Verndell Robinson

Mr. Robert Thompson

Mr. Kishore Thota

Mr. Victor K. Branch, Rector (ex-officio)

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ms. Morenike Miles

Mr. Jon Moore

Mr. M. Peter McPherson

Dr. Joseph A.F. Chase, Jr

Dr. Harold Green, Jr.

Mr. Thomas Cosgrove

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, President

Dr. Tia A. Minnis, Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost

Ms. Joyce Wilkins, Associate VP for Budget & Finance/Interim CFO

Dr. Willis W. Walter, VP of External Relations /Institutional Advancement

Dr. Alexis Brooks-Walter, COO/Sr.VP for Student Success & Administration

Dr. Annie Redd, Chief of Staff/Director, Board of Operations & Relations

COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026
PAGE 2

BOARD APPOINTEES:

Dr. Kenneth Lewis, Faculty Representative
Mr. Zin Cambridge, SGA Representative

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair called for the approval of the agenda. The Committee approved the agenda by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The Chair requested a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on April 23, 2026. The Committee approved the minutes from the last meeting by voice vote.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

President Abdullah thanked the committee members for their attendance, engagement, and continued commitment to advancing fundraising and alumni engagement efforts at Virginia State University. He noted strong Board participation across all committee meetings and commended the Board for its dedication and active involvement throughout the sessions.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

EXTERNAL RELATIONS UPDATE

Dr. Willis W. Walter, Vice President for External Relations and Institutional Advancement, reintroduced himself to the committee and acknowledged the leadership and contributions of Dr. Krystal Moore-Clemons, as well as presenters Dr. Gwen Williams Dandridge, Dr. Jocelyn Brazil Evans, and Dr. Franklin Johnson Norwood. He outlined the presentation agenda, which included a review of fiscal year 2026 fundraising results, external outreach initiatives, development efforts, the new online giving portal, alumni engagement activities, and strategies to expand the University's sphere of influence.

Dr. Walter reported that Virginia State University closed Fiscal Year 2026 with \$6.6 million in philanthropic contributions, representing a significant increase over the previous year despite a lower number of donors. He noted that the average gift amount increased, while efforts will continue to expand the donor base to enhance overall fundraising results. Alumni contributions totaled approximately \$1.5 million, an increase of approximately \$400,000 from the prior year. Corporate giving experienced substantial growth, increasing by nearly \$2 million over the previous year. He further reported that faculty and staff giving increased considerably and highlighted ongoing strategies to maintain and expand support from faculty, staff, friends, and individual donors. Additionally, advancement staff has begun engaging the Student Government Association and student leadership to strengthen the culture of philanthropy and giving among current students.

COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026

PAGE 3

EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND ADVANCEMENT SERVICE UPDATE

Dr. Gwen Williams Dandridge, Assistant Vice President for Communications, provided an overview of the University's communications and branding efforts, emphasizing the strategic priority of promoting and sharing the Virginia State University story through the "Greater at VSU" brand. She highlighted the annual Impact Report as a key communications tool that showcases the University's achievements, notable individuals, and institutional accomplishments during Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Dr. Dandridge noted that the Impact Report features several distinguished members of the Virginia State University community, including Kimberly Pope Adams, Dr. Latorial Faison, Dr. Charlie Hill, and Dr. Emmanuel Omojokin, recognizing their contributions and achievements. She reported that the University had raised \$110 million toward its \$150 million comprehensive campaign goal, generated \$1 million through the scholarship gala, and raised more than \$500,000 during Giving Tuesday. She also highlighted that the University served more than 5,000 undergraduate students during the reporting period.

In response to committee discussion regarding media coverage, Dr. Dandridge highlighted a recent positive news story featuring the Virginia State University Trojan Explosion Marching Band, including its record number of band members and tuba players. She reported that the story was distributed to media outlets and shared through the University's social media channels, where it had received nearly 48,000 views.

GIVECAMPUS

Dr. Walter provided an update on current advancement initiatives and fundraising activities for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. He reported that the University has launched a new online giving portal that supports multiple simultaneous fundraising campaigns, improving the institution's ability to manage and promote various initiatives concurrently. He noted that the Tuba Campaign has generated more than \$3,000 through the new portal, in addition to approximately \$11,000 previously raised.

Dr. Walter highlighted the launch of the "30 for 30" campaign, which encourages donors to contribute \$30 in support of the Class of 2030. He explained that the initiative is designed to serve as a teaching tool that promotes philanthropy among current students while expanding the University's donor base and increasing engagement among new and existing supporters.

COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

PAGE 4

Dr. Walter also provided an update on technology-driven fundraising efforts, noting that the University's virtual philanthropy officer, Vanessa S. Upshaw, generated more than \$326,000 in fundraising revenue during the past year, including a \$100,000 gift. These efforts focused on re-engaging lapsed donors and increasing contributions from existing donors, resulting in more than 1,000 donor outreach contacts and approximately \$35,000 in gifts from previously inactive donors. He further reported that current donors increased their giving by approximately \$256,000 and that net new revenue generated through these efforts totaled approximately \$29,000 in Fiscal Year 2027.

Additionally, Dr. Walter reported that President Makola Abdullah encouraged faculty and staff participation in charitable giving during the University's Opening Conference, resulting in more than \$100,000 in pledges, including recurring monthly contributions. He noted that the response demonstrated strong institutional support and highlighted the importance of continued engagement opportunities involving University leadership and prospective donors.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Dr. Jocelyn Brazil-Evans provided an update on the University's corporate and foundation relations strategy in support of the \$150 million comprehensive campaign. She reported that Virginia State University has entered into a partnership with Bank of America, which includes strategic advisory services focused on growth and revenue, leadership and learning, culture and communications, and strategy and impact. Through this partnership, the University is reviewing fundraising strategies, donor communications, case statements for support, major gift opportunities, and planned giving messaging.

Dr. Evans also highlighted the University's partnership with Live Alumni, a platform that integrates with LinkedIn to provide real-time information on alumni employment, promotions, and professional achievements. She reported that the platform has identified 28,819 alumni profiles, including 9,937 profiles that match the University's internal constituent relationship management system. The platform has also identified more than 3,000 alumni serving in C-suite executive roles.

Using the platform's data, the University has identified significant alumni representation across several organizations, including Virginia State University, Capital One, Amazon, Lockheed Martin, Bank of America, Dominion Energy, Altria, Microsoft, Wells Fargo, Verizon, Newport News Shipbuilding, Deloitte, Northrop Grumman, and UPS. Dr. Evans noted that this information is being used to develop targeted engagement strategies, strengthen corporate and foundation partnerships, and expand opportunities for philanthropic investment in support of the University's campaign goals.

Dr. Evans concluded by encouraging Board members to leverage their professional networks to help facilitate

COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

PAGE 5

introductions and strengthen relationships that may lead to new corporate partnerships and philanthropic investments for Virginia State University.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Dr. Franklin Johnson-Norwood, Director of Alumni Engagement, provided an update on alumni engagement initiatives and strategies designed to strengthen alumni connections and support the University's fundraising goals. He reported the launch of the "Legacy Spotlight" series, which will recognize notable alumni and be distributed at least twice monthly. The first featured alumnus was Senator Benji Waverly. The initiative was developed in response to alumni feedback requesting increased communication and engagement with the University.

Dr. Johnson-Norwood highlighted the University's alumni recognition programs, including the Trojan 10 Under 10 program, which honors outstanding young alumni. He reported that nominations are currently being accepted for the 2027 cohort and that discussions are underway to bring together past honorees to establish an endowment supporting Virginia State University.

Dr. Johnson-Norwood also discussed collaborative engagement efforts with VSU Athletics, including participation in South Carolina State University's Ag Fest and related alumni activities surrounding the upcoming football game. He noted that these partnerships provide opportunities to increase alumni engagement while strengthening institutional relationships.

In preparation for Homecoming, Dr. Johnson-Norwood reported the introduction of a new alumni event, "Bonfire on the Hill," developed in partnership with VSU Athletics and alumni partners. The event received all required approvals and safety clearances and is projected to generate approximately \$50,000, with proceeds designated for tuition assistance and support of VSU Athletics.

Dr. Johnson-Norwood further reported on the continued growth of the President's Tailgate. As of the meeting date, 691 tickets were sold, generating approximately \$38,000. He noted that all proceeds from ticket sales support student tuition assistance and that sponsorship support from Thompson Hospitality enables all ticket revenue to be treated as direct philanthropic support. He emphasized that these engagement activities contribute to both increased donor participation and overall fundraising revenue for the University.

COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

PAGE 5

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Chair called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was received, properly seconded, and the Committee voted by voice vote. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 2:26 pm.

APPROVED:

Chair

Date