

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS
COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT
1:30 P.M. THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026
Gateway Dining & Events Center
(on the campus of Virginia State University)
(No Public Comment Period Scheduled)**

DRAFT AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER..... Dr. Valerie Brown, Chair

ROLL CALLMs. Verndell Robinson, Board Secretary

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES (if any)

- o November 21, 2025 Committee Meeting

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

CLOSED SESSION (if any)

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Approval Items: (if any)
- Information Items: Dr. Willis Walter, Jr.
Interim Vice President for External Relations
 - o Fall 2025 Advancement Update
 - o President’s 10th Anniversary Gala Update
 - o Comprehensive Campaign

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Robert Thompson called the meeting of the Institutional Advancement Committee 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 Moberly

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

General Dennis L. Via (Vice Rector)

Dr. Robert Denton, Jr. (*virtual from Blacksburg VA due to personal reasons*)

Ms. Verndell Robinson (*virtual from Triangle VA due to personal reasons*)

Mr. Robert Thompson

Ms. Morenike Miles

Ms. 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

Dr. Leonard Haynes, III (*virtual from Silver Springs, MD due to medical reasons*)

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

Dr. Willis W. Walter, Interim Vice President For Advancement and External Engagement

Dr. Alexis Brooks-Walter, Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management

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

BOARD APPOINTEES:

Dr. Kenneth Lewis, Faculty Representative

Mr. Marquis Mason, SGA Representative

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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 from the previous meeting, held on November 21, 2025. The Committee approved the minutes from the last meeting by voice vote.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Dr. Abdullah expressed his appreciation and commended Dr. Willis Walter for his outstanding service over the past several months in fulfilling the responsibilities of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr. Willis Walter, Vice President for Advancement and External Engagement, presented an action item requesting approval of a resolution to name a facility in honor of former Board member Mr. Charlie W. Hill, along with a proposal to rename the Honors College. Dr. Walter read the Resolution into the record. The Chair then called for a motion to forward the Resolution to the Full Board meeting scheduled for February 6, 2026, for approval. The motion was duly made, properly seconded, and approved by roll call vote.

FALL 2025 ADVANCEMENT UPDATE:

Dr. Walter shared key portfolio activities, fundraising, progress, major gifts, and highlighted partnerships and campaign trajectory as they move toward the public phase of the Comprehensive campaign. Dr. Walter reintroduced Ms. Vanessa S. Upshaw, the University's virtual fundraiser, who is currently managing a portfolio of approximately 997 constituents. He reported that 92% of those constituents have received four or more engagement touchpoints, resulting in contributions totaling roughly \$59,000 to date—reflecting both activity prior to her assuming responsibility for the portfolio and the progress achieved under her leadership. Dr. Walter emphasized that the broader significance of this initiative is its ability to free other philanthropy officers to increase their direct engagement with additional constituents, thereby enhancing the University's overall advancement outreach.

Dr. Walter noted that the positive trajectory of the University's advancement efforts is further demonstrated by the significant increase in major gifts. To date, the University has secured 17 donor contributions in excess of \$25,000, representing an increase of approximately 20% compared to the previous year. He added that this momentum positions the institution to reach a record number of donors overall—more than at any previous point in its history.

Dr. Walter also reported that alumni giving has already exceeded \$1 million, a milestone typically reached later in the fiscal quarter. He emphasized that he would be remiss not to acknowledge the advancement team's exceptional performance during Giving Tuesday, during which they achieved an impressive fundraising total of approximately \$278,000.

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PRESIDENT'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY GALA UPDATE

Dr. Walter noted that he wished to ensure that members marked their calendars for the President's 10th Anniversary Scholarship Gala—a milestone celebration honoring presidential leadership while raising critical scholarship funds. He reported that the University anticipates strong attendance, increased sponsorship participation, and elevated philanthropic support, noting that more than 30 tables have already been sold.

COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN

Dr. Walter provided an update on the University's comprehensive campaign. He explained that the planning phase, initiated in 2021, began with an extraordinary \$30 million gift. During the quiet phase, spanning 2023 to 2025, the University secured an additional \$10 million in commitments. As shared with the Board in the fall, the University has now entered the public phase of the campaign. Dr. Walter reported that the campaign has reached nearly \$107 million to date. With the unexpected major gift received earlier this year, the University is well-positioned to meet its \$125 million goal.

He further noted that the completion and follow-up phase, scheduled for 2027–2028, will focus on ensuring that all donor commitments are fulfilled and that stewardship efforts remain strong. Dr. Walter concluded by stating that the University is currently tracking ahead of benchmark expectations and is building toward a historic milestone that will significantly advance its mission and impact.

REPORT OF AFFILIATED FOUNDATIONS

Dr. Chase provided a brief overview of the affiliated foundations. He reported that the Board had approved the procurement of the general liability and excess coverage insurance policies, with a request to explore the possibility of consolidating coverage under a single insurer to reduce administrative burdens. The primary topic of discussion was the process for adding new members to the foundations, including considerations and recommended approaches for moving forward.

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 2:30 pm.

APPROVED:

Chair

Date