

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS
NEW BOARD ORIENTATION & ANNUAL RETREAT
Virginia Museum of History & Culture (VMHC)
428 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd., Richmond, VA 23220
August 7, 2025**

DRAFT AGENDA

Theme: “Charting the Future: AI, Insight, and Impact”

Presiding: Mr. Victor K. Branch, Rector

Day 1: Thursday

8:30 AM – 9:15 AM – Byrd Meeting Room
Arrival & Breakfast

9:30 – 10:00 AM – Reynolds Leadership Center

- Welcome and Opening Remarks Victor K. Branch, Rector
- Roll Call (*Ms. Verndell Robinson, Board Secretary*)
- Invocation
- Welcome Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, President

10:00 – 11:15 AM

- Introduction of Officers, Chairs, Liaison
- Introduction of New and Continuing Board Members

11:15 – 11:30 AM Break

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Governance 101

- Roles, Responsibilities, Board Documents
 - Gen. (Ret.) Dennis L. Via, Vice Rector
 - Committee Chairs
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)..... Nathan Moberly, Asst. State Attorney
- Scenario Activity: What Would You Do?

12:30 – 1:20 PM – Byrd Meeting Room

Networking Lunch

Roundtable Discussions - Reynolds Leadership Center

1:30 – 2:30 PM

- “The Higher Education Landscape” President Makola M. Abdullah

2:30 – 2:45 PM Break

2:45 – 3:45 PM

- “Understanding and Governing in the Age of AI” Dr. Daniel Greenstein
Manager Director, Bakertilly
<https://www.bakertilly.com/contact/directory/daniel-greenstein>

4:00 – 4:30 PM *

Leadership Beyond the Gates: Supporting the President’s External Engagement
Led by Mr. Peter McPherson

4:30 – 5:30 PM

Special Tour, Virginia Museum of History and Culture

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Dinner at the Amuse Restaurant (*adjacent to the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, 3-minute walk*)
Located in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 3rd floor
200 N Arthur Ashe Blvd, Richmond, VA 23220

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS
NEW BOARD ORIENTATION & ANNUAL RETREAT
9:00 A.M.; THURSDAY, August 7, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Victor K. Branch, Rector, called the meeting of the Virginia State University (VSU) Board of Visitors to order in the Reynolds Leadership Center at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, 428 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd., Richmond, VA 23220, at approximately 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

A quorum was present.

Board Members Present:

Mr. Victor K. Branch, Rector
General Dennis Via, Vice Rector
Ms. Verndell Robinson (Secretary)
Dr. Leonard Haynes, III
Mr. Thomas Cosgrove,
Dr. Robert Denton, Jr. (*Virtual*)
Ms. Daphne Meeks
Mr. Peter McPherson (*Virtual*)
Ms. Morenike Miles
Mr. Robert Thompson
Mr. Kishore Thota
Mr. Jon Moore

Board Members Absent:

Dr. Valerie K. Brown
Dr. Joseph A.K. Chase, Jr.
Dr. Harold Green, Jr.

Board Appointees:

Dr. Kenneth Lewis, Faculty Representative
Mr. Marquis Mason, Student Representative

Legal Counsel:

Mr. Nathan Moberly

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 Walter, Interim Vice President for Advancement and External Engagement
Ms. Shawri King-Casey, Vice President for Institutional Integrity and Compliance
Dr. Alexis Brooks-Walter, Vice President for Student Affairs/Enrollment Management
Dr. Annie C. Redd, Chief of Staff/Director, Board of Operations & Relations

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WELCOME

Rector Branch welcomed all attendees and expressed appreciation for their participation in the Board of Visitors (BOV) orientation and retreat. He provided an overview of the retreat's goals and structure, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, engagement, and strategic planning for the upcoming term. The orientation aims to familiarize new members with university governance, policies, and key initiatives, while the retreat offers an opportunity for deeper discussion and alignment on institutional priorities. Rector Branch gave a brief history of the museum where the retreat was being held. He highlighted the museum's significance in preserving and showcasing Virginia's rich cultural and historical heritage. His remarks provided context for the venue choice, underscoring its alignment with the university's mission to honor and reflect on the past while planning for the future.

INVOCATION

Rector Branch invited Dr. Tia A. Minnis to offer the invocation.

INTRODUCTIONS

The Rector asked continuing/returning board members to introduce themselves, followed by the new board members, including the SGA and Faculty representatives, who shared their backgrounds, experience, and expectations. Rector Branch then proceeded to introduce President Abdullah, who welcomed the new and returning board members,

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

Mr. Kevin Davenport, Senior Vice President for Finance & Administration/CFO

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

Ms. Shawri King-Casey, Vice President for Institutional Integrity and Compliance

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

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

GOVERNANCE

General Via, Vice Rector, presented an overview of the Board structure, the roles and responsibilities of the board officers, and governance documents (Bylaws, Code of Ethics, Statement of Governance). He then introduced the committee chairs, who presented an overview of their respective committees.

Academic and Student Affairs – Dr. Leonard Haynes, III

Audit and Compliance - Mr. Jon Moore

Executive Committee - Mr. Victor K. Branch

Facilities and Finance – Ms. Daphne Meeks

Institutional Advancement – Dr. Valerie K. Brown (absent)

Personnel, Compensation, and Governance – Mr. M. Peter McPherson

VSU Foundation Liaison – Dr. Joseph Chase, Jr (absent)

VSU Real Estate Foundation Liaison – Dr. Joseph Chase, Jr.

FOIA

Mr. Nathan Moberly, Legal Counsel, explained that the Attorney General appoints the University Counsel and serves as legal advisor to the university and its Board of Visitors. The Board, as a collective entity, is considered the client—not any individual member. Legal Counsel provides legal guidance during closed

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sessions and other official matters. Communications with Counsel are protected under the attorney-client privilege, which belongs to the institution and ensures confidentiality in legal discussions.

Mr. Moberly provided an overview of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), emphasizing its role in ensuring transparency in the conduct of public business. He noted that one of the most significant aspects of FOIA is its requirement for open meetings. Compliance with FOIA is essential, as failure to adhere to its provisions may result in actions taken by the board being deemed null and void.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

President Abdullah shared the story of the founding of Virginia State University, which is the fourth-oldest public institution in Virginia. He then shared his perspectives on the current higher education landscape—Virginia State University today.

Dr. Daniel Greenstein, Manager Director, Baker Tilly, guest speaker, was invited to provide insights on understanding and governing in the age of artificial intelligence, helping Board members and the Leadership team gain a deeper awareness of the challenges and opportunities presented by AI technologies. At Baker Tilly, Greenstein leads initiatives that enable universities and colleges to respond effectively to the rapidly evolving needs of students, their communities, and the nation, and to successfully navigate significant and mounting reputational, political, demographic, financial, and other headwinds.

The Board members had an afternoon session led by Mr. Peter McPherson, “Leadership Beyond the Gates: Supporting the President’s External Engagement”.

CLOSING REMARKS/WRAP UP

Rector Branch made closing remarks and commended the VSU leadership team for the presentations and the information shared with Board members during the orientation Session I.

APPROVED:

Chair

Date