

**VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS
FULL BOARD MEETING
9:00 a.m., Friday, March 22, 2024
Gateway Dining & Events Center
(on the campus of Virginia State University)
(No Public Comment Period Scheduled)**

DRAFT AGENDA

Rector Valerie K. Brown, D.M., Presiding

CALL TO ORDERRector Valerie K. Brown

ROLL CALLMs. Pamela Currey, Secretary

INVOCATION..... Pastor Seth Ahmad-McQueen, Director of Campus Ministries

RECTOR’S REMARKS

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING: FEBRUARY 8, 2024

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

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Resolution for Approval of Tuition & Fees for Fiscal Year 2025 presented by Mr. Kevin Davenport, Senior Vice President, Finance & Administration/CFO

LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE (IF ANY)

BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT OF ITS PERFORMANCE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS
FULL BOARD MEETING
MARCH 22, 2024
DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Rector Shavonne Gordon called the meeting of the Virginia State University (VSU) Board of Visitors (Board) to order in the Gateway Dining and Events Center on the Campus of Virginia State University at approximately 9:06 a.m. The Vice Rector informed the Board and others present that this meeting was being live streamed per the Commonwealth of Virginia open meeting laws and conducted in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Vice Rector also informed viewers how to contact the VSU Helpdesk if there was a technical interruption in the live stream.

ROLL CALL

A quorum was present

Board Members Present:

Dr. Valerie Brown – *(Participated electronically due to professional business)*

Mr. Victor Branch

Dr. Joseph A.F. Chase, Jr.

Mr. Thomas Cosgrove

Ms. Pam Currey

Dr. Robert Denton, Jr.

Ms. Shavonne Gordon *(Vice Rector)*

Dr. Leonard Haynes, III

Ms. Daphne Meeks

Mr. Jon Moore

Mr. William Murray

Mr. Edward Owens *(Absent)*

General Dennis L. Via *(Absent)*

Board Appointments:

Dr. Tracy Jackson, Faculty Representative *(Sitting in for Dr. Leonard Githinji)*

Ms. Kailyn Haye, Student Representative

Administration Present:

Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, President

Dr. Tia Minnis, Interim Provost/Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs

Mr. Kevin Davenport, Senior Vice President for Finance & Administration/Chief Financial Officer

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

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Ms. Tonya S. Hall, 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 Operations and Relations

Legal Counsel (*Absent*)

INVOCATION

Vice Rector Gordon invited Pastor Seth Ahmad-McQueen to offer the invocation.

RECTOR'S OPENING REMARKS

Rector Brown congratulated VSU on its 142nd Founders Day, which was celebrated on March 21, 2024. In addition, Rector Brown expressed gratitude to the BOV members who attended the ceremony.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Vice Rector called for approval of the agenda. The motion was received, properly seconded, and approved by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Vice Rector called for approval of the previous minutes from February 8, 2024, Full Board Meeting, Motions were received, properly seconded, and approved by voice vote.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Dr. Abdullah extended his thanks to Visitors Chase and Ms. Meeks for their participation in the 2024 Founder's Day celebration. Additionally, he expressed gratitude to Mr. Davenport and SGA President Kailyn Haye for their work on tuition and fees.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Davenport began by noting that he and Ms. Haye had reached an agreement on a \$35 fee to fund SGA projects. This fee would provide roughly \$156k in annual funding to the SGA.

A Visitor inquired about the state budget's current status. The incompleteness of the state budget was confirmed by both Mr. Davenport and Dr. Abdullah.

A Visitor inquired on how the University is expected to fare in this year's state budget. Dr. Abdullah described a dual amendment for HBCUs, including a capital amendment. He stated that there have been some big adjustments from the House to the Senate, and we are still waiting to see what happens at the Governor's level. The Visitor then inquired whether state budget decisions will have an impact on what VSU should do regarding tuition and fees. Dr. Abdullah stated that the state budget could have an impact on how the university handles tuition and fees. The trustee also inquired about the university's tuition and fee decision-making deadline. Dr. Abdullah said that the practical deadline is June 30th, but there is no actual deadline.

The Finance Committee Chair suggested that it could be beneficial to have a finance and budget briefing in April and suggested delaying the tuition and fees resolution until then. The board approved this motion.

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A Visitor inquired as to how the FAFSA update was going. In an update, Dr. Brooks-Walter listed a number of difficulties that have arisen since the Department of Education (DOE) updated the FAFSA form. She cited many technological, logistical, and practical obstacles that have resulted in the VSU student FAFSA completion rate falling 49% behind where it was at this time last year. Dr. Brooks-Walter mentioned that three major improvements to VSU's Banner system would need to be made to support the new form. Only one of these modifications has been handled, while the remaining two are awaiting information from the Department of Education.

Dr. Abdullah added, "The HBCU community is very concerned about the FAFSA update." He expressed gratitude to the Visitor for asking. He mentioned that there will be an update in April about this matter.

The Visitor then stated that the DOE was caught off guard by the complexity of this adjustment. The Vice Rector stated that the DOE is working around the clock to resolve the issue, but they are still behind schedule.

A Visitor inquired about the statement on freedom of speech that was issued, specifically whether the contents of this statement would be codified as official university policy. Dr. Abdullah stated that he will speak with the Faculty Senate to ensure that people understood the significance of the statement. He also stated that he will seek clarification on the extent to which the content of the notice is reflected in official policy.

A Visitor highlighted the positive comments she received following presentations by Regina Barnett-Tyler and Dr. Brooks-Walter at this year's Generation Hope Conference. The Visitor emphasized the significance of VSU faculty and staff having a large representation at external events like this conference, both in terms of maintaining strong enrollment and improving the university's reputation.

The Finance Committee Chair asked that the upcoming Finance Committee be scheduled in such a way to maximize attendance. The Vice Rector stated that it would be good if all board members would attend the upcoming Finance Committee meeting.

The Vice Rector and Visitor Branch, Chair of the Personnel, Compensation, and Governance Committee, reminded board members to complete the President's Evaluation Tool, which is due today, March 22nd. They also noted the importance of including comments in each category as feedback to the President. Vice Rector requested that BOV members follow VSU on social media if they haven't already, emphasizing the excellent content, which includes newly posted information on future debates and a land grant conference.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice Rector Gordon called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was received, and properly seconded, and the Committee voted by voice vote. The Vice Rector adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:38 A.M.

Valerie Brown, Rector

Pamela A. Currey, Secretary

Date

Date