

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

**9:00 A.M.; FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2022**

**Gateway Dining & Event Center**

**(on the campus of Virginia State University)**

*(No Public Comment Period Scheduled)*

**DRAFT AGENDA**

**(as of 4.7.22)**

CALL TO ORDER ..... Ms. Shavonne Gordon, Chair

ROLL CALL

INVOCATION (*Pastor Graham*)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES (if any)

- Minutes from the February 4, 2022 meeting

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

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government Relations Update ..... Mr. Eldon Burton  
Asst. Vice President, Government Relations

- **General Assembly Updates**

- Budget Update
- VSU Day @ the General Assembly
- Massey Cancer Basketball Game

- **Campus Visits**

- Attorney General Miyares (Executive Speakers Series)
- Tom Barkin (Richmond Federal Reserve)
- Petersburg City School Board Meeting
- Northern Virginia Regional Commission

- **Presidential Board of Advisors**

- Office of Communications ..... Dr. Gwendolyn Williams-Dandridge  
Asst. Vice President, Communications

- **VSU in the News**

- Dr. Ceslav Ciobanu on the Ukraine Conflict
- Media Contact List
- VSU Online Degrees
- Hiring of the first Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging – Dr. A.C. Fowlkes
- COACH Donation
- Mental Health Walk

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- **VSU in the News** (*continued*)
  - President Abdullah Appointed to the U.S. President’s Board of Advisors on HBCUs
  - VSU Race Car at the Richmond VA Raceway
  
- **Marketing Initiatives**
  - Contract with Media Firm
  - Centralized Location for Marketing
  - Billboards, Ads, Social Media
  - Promo Video for VSU & Spanish Version
  
- Institutional Advancement ..... Ms. Tonya S. Hall  
Vice President for External Relations
  
- **Approval Items**
  - Resolution to Name the Academic Commons Building
  - Acknowledgement of the Alumna of the Year
  
- **Information Items:**
  - **Fundraising Dashboard Review**
  - **FY22 Fundraising Activity Update**
    - Measuring Success
    - Setting Individual and Team Metrics
  - **Corporate and Individual Engagement Strategy**
  - **Alumni Update**
    - CIAA Basketball Tournament Recap
    - Founder’s Day Celebration Recap
    - Virtual Book Club
    - Oral History Project
    - Upcoming events
    - Update from the National Alumni Association ..... Dr. Michael Rainey  
President
  - **Mission Moment**
  
- Economic Development Joint Venture .....President Makola Abdullah

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

*\*All start times for committees are approximate. Meetings may begin after the posted 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  
INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT (IA) COMMITTEE  
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES  
Friday, April 22, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Shavonne Gordon, Chair, called the meeting of the Institutional Advancement Committee to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. at the Gateway Dining and Event Center.

**ROLL CALL**

A quorum was present.

*Committee Members Present:*

Ms. Shavonne Gordon  
Mr. Edward Owens  
Ms. Thursa Crittenden  
Ms. Pamela Currey  
Dr. Christine Darden  
Mr. Glenn Sessoms  
Dr. Valerie Brown, Rector (ex-officio)  
Ms. Brenda Stith-Finch; Chair, VSU Foundation

*Administration Present:*

Makola M. Abdullah, Ph.D., President  
Dr. Donald Palm, Executive Vice President/Vice President/Provost  
Kevin Davenport, Senior Vice President, Finance/Administration/CFO  
Tonya Hall, Vice President for External Relations  
Eldon Burton, Asst. Vice President/Director, Government Relations  
Shawri King-Casey, Senior Advisor to President, IEEC  
Dr. Gwendolyn Dandridge, Asst. Vice President/Director, Communications  
Dr. Annie C. Redd, Special Asst. to President/Board Liaison  
Maurion Edwards, CIO/Technology Services  
Dr. Alexis Brooks-Walter, Associate Vice Provost, Enrollment Management  
Regina Barnett-Tyler, Associate Vice Provost/Student Success & Engagement  
Adrian Petway, Asst. Vice President, Budget & Finance

*Legal Counsel Present:*

Cynthia Norwood, Senior Assistant State Attorney General

*Others Present:*

Ri'Shawn Bassett, Office of Communications  
Tasha Owens, Internal Audit

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*Others Present:*

Yourdonus James, Director, Conference Services  
Pastor Graham, Director of Campus Ministries  
Malika Blume, President's Office  
Travis Edmonds, Technology Services  
Derrick Jennings, Technology Services

**INVOCATION**

The Chair invited Pastor Graham to offer the invocation.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Committee approved the agenda by voice vote.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

The Committee approved the minutes from the February 4th meeting by voice vote.

**PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**

Due to the full agenda and time constraints, President Makola M. Abdullah simply stated greater happens here at VSU.

**REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Government Relations**

Mr. Eldon Burton presented updates in the Government Relations area. Mr. Burton shared that February 28, 2022 was a notable day for VSU. On that day, Virginia College Affordability Network (VCAN) Scholars, leaders from the Student Government Association (SGA), Faculty, and Administrators met at the Capitol to attend VSU's Day at the Virginia General Assembly. After meeting with legislators, VSU was greeted by Del. Mike Cherry and Sen. Joe Morrissey in both chambers. During their remarks, Del. Cherry highlighted notable alumni from the institution (including Board member Dr. Christine Darden), and Sen. Morrissey acknowledged every student and administrator in attendance by name while sharing the importance of expanding our VCAN program.

On the same day, President Abdullah attended a Black History Month Celebration at the White House with U.S. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. Subsequently, President Biden's office announced that President Abdullah was appointed to serve on the U.S. President's Board of Advisors for White House Initiatives on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Later that evening, President Abdullah played in the 14th Annual Capitol Square Basketball Classic held in Richmond, VA. In this event, the Governor's team plays against the lobbyists, and the House and Senate compete against each other to raise money for cancer research.

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On February 28<sup>th</sup>, VSU also hosted Petersburg Public Schools for their School Board meeting on campus in the Gateway Center. This was a fantastic opportunity for the students who attended to witness VSU deliver updates and learn more about being engaged in the civic process. VSU plans to host more local School Board and City Council Meetings here on campus and will continue to show that "Greater Community and Educational Partnerships Happen Here" at VSU.

Mr. Burton informed the Board that the General Assembly adjourned on March 12th without reaching an agreement on a biennial budget that will take effect on July 1st. There was a \$3 billion gap between the competing budgets in the House and Senate, primarily surrounding tax cuts. They are currently in recess after reconvening for a Special Session called to reconcile their broadly different spending proposals. They will likely release a finalized budget as we move closer to the "veto session" on April 27th.

On April 4th, members of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) visited the campus to discuss the potential for a VSU and NSU satellite campus in Northern Virginia. The NVRC is comprised of 13 local elected officials from various municipalities in Northern Virginia, and this was the first time that both administrations met with them in person. VSU alumna and Chair of the NVRC, Cydney Neville, recently published an op-ed highlighting the need for an HBCU presence in Northern Virginia. "It's not even just the institution itself... It's its presence and how that uplifts the community around it, and Northern Virginia will be better off with it." Neville stated.

Three of our federal legislators visited the local area to highlight projects that received federal funding and will impact VSU. Many of our students utilize the Ettrick Train Station, which received \$1 million to revitalize the station and the surrounding vicinity. VSU has already connected with the County to discuss how VSU can market and create more visibility for passengers commuting to and through the station. Two million (\$2M) were secured to support the Ashland to Petersburg Fall Line Trail, which connects seven localities in Central Virginia. The trail ends with a project connecting VSU with a pedestrian walkway in the City of Petersburg.

The final project announced was upgrades to the Petersburg Pharmaceutical Park. VSU is currently a part of the Advanced Pharmaceutical Cluster Growth Project. This Economic Development Administration grant proposal aims to develop and scale the Advanced Pharmaceutical Industry in the Richmond/Petersburg region. As VSU continues to enhance its economic development efforts, we will look to establish deeper partnerships with regional developers that will assist us in securing direct federal funding for future projects.

**Communications**

Dr. Gwendolyn Williams Dandridge presented updates from the VSU Office of Communications, which 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."

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Dr. Dandridge shared some of the news stories and press releases that occurred since the Board meeting in February. The communications team has worked to keep the VSU name in the media in a positive light. Several VSU faculty and staff have been contacted by media as subject matter experts; for example, Dr. Ceslav Ciobanu, Dr. Wes Bellamy, and Dr. Zoe Spencer. The teams has continued to share other important events with good coverage; i.e., The VSU mental health walk; VSU students offering tax assistance; hiring of the first VSU Director of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging – Dr. A.C. Fowlkes; the sponsorship of Rajah Caruth, an HBCU student who drove the VSU car in the NASCAR race at the Richmond Raceway; and national coverage about Dr. Abdullah’s appointment to the White House Advisory Board on HBCUs.

Dr. Dandridge shared information about the episode of *Unsung* featuring Das EFX filmed on the VSU campus; the episode aired on Sunday, April 10, 2022. VSU has erected a new entrance welcome sign/score board for softball on River Road, and work has begun on the mural along University Avenue. Other projects include redesigning the Trojan card as a keepsake for our students/employees, considering a marketing team to handle an advertising blitz to promote VSU in the fall of 2022, and new branding initiatives on campus.

**Institutional Advancement & Alumni Relations**

Ms. Tonya Hall presented updates on behalf of the offices of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Relations. According to the Voluntary Support of Education survey conducted in 2020-2021, voluntary support of higher education institutions in the United States increased by 6.9%. These findings are modest, given that support to VSU has risen by 25% despite the ongoing pandemic and inflation levels across the US. In addition, unrestricted contributions typically increased by 7.4% at other institutions of higher learning, while VSU can report that unrestricted contributions increased by 28%. Donor-advised funds have emerged as an increasingly significant donor category, one that we will begin to track as a separate category.

As we sprint through the fourth quarter, the Office of Institutional Advancement has already begun implementing a new strategy for Corporate and Foundation that will engage various constituents campus-wide. We will also implement three fundraising strategies; All In for State: Day of Giving, Tuition Assistance Spring Mailing, and a targeted Text to Give, a campaign for students, as well as a Virtual Book Club and Oral History Project that will help us to identify, invite, inform, interest, involve and ultimately leveraging investment from newly identified VSU alums. Ms. Hall shared that the James Stegmaier Scholarship Fund which the Board established at its February 4, 2022 meeting has a current balance of \$7500.

Ms. Hall introduced Dr. Michael Rainey, President of the VSU National Alumni Association (NAA), who shared information on the overall NAA activities of its fifty-five chapters. The NAA supports the VSU through various means including alumni giving to fund scholarships and endowments, working with the Admissions Office to recruit top students, and community service in areas surrounding VSU. Dr. Rainey also announced the Alumna of the Year, 2022-2023, Ms. Holly Conrad Jackson.

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Ms. Hall shared that the University has planned a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Academic Commons Building, which the Board is invited to attend at 11:00 a.m.

Chair Gordon presented two action items to the Committee. First, a resolution to name the Academic Commons Building after Founder Alfred W. Harris. Ms. Gordon asked for a motion to recommend approval of the naming to the full Board. The motion was made and carried by voice vote.

The National Alumni Association annually selects the Alumni of the Year but asks the Board of Visitors to formally acknowledge the recipient. Ms. Gordon asked for a motion to recommend acknowledgement to the full Board. The motion was made and carried by voice vote.

**Economic Development Joint Venture**

President Abdullah informed the Committee that the University is seeking to establish an economic development joint venture with a firm that exist in the Tri-Cities area. The President stated that he looks forward to feedback about the idea before he presents a proposal at the next committee meeting.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:20 a.m.

Approved:

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Chair

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Date