



**External Engagement Committee**

**12:30 p.m.**

**September 11, 2025**

**Kyle Hall, Room 340**

**Radford, VA**

**DRAFT**  
**MINUTES**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ms. Betsy D. Beamer, Chair  
Mr. George Mendiola Jr., Vice Chair  
Mr. William C. Davis  
Ms. Mary Anne Holbrook  
Mr. Anthony Moore

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mrs. Jennifer Wishon Gilbert, Vice Rector  
Mr. Dale S. Ardizzone  
Ms. Jeanne S. Armentrout  
Ms. Joann S. Craig  
Dr. Betty Jo Foster  
Mr. David A. Smith  
Mr. Jonathan D. Sweet

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mr. Tyler W. Lester, Rector  
Ms. Callie M. Dalton  
Mr. James C. Turk

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Dr. Dannette Beane, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Strategic Communications  
Ms. Karen Casteale, Secretary to the Board of Visitors and Special Assistant to the President  
Dr. Matthew Close, Faculty Representative  
Ms. Lisa Ghidotti, Executive Director for Government Relations and Strategic Initiatives  
Dr. Robert Hoover, Vice President for Finance and Administration  
Dr. Angela Joyner, Vice President for Economic Development and Corporate Education  
Ms. Susan Richardson, University Counsel  
Dr. Bethany Usher, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Ms. Penny Helms White, Vice President for Advancement and Alumni Relations

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Betsy D. Beamer, Chair, formally called the External Engagement Committee meeting to order at 12:46 p.m. Kyle Hall in Room 340, Radford, Va.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Betsy D. Beamer, Chair asked for a motion to approve the June 5, 2025, agenda, as published., Mr. George Mendiola Jr., Vice Chair made the motion and Mr. William C. Davis seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Betsy D. Beamer, Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2025, meeting of the External Engagement Committee meeting, as published. Mr. George Mendiola Jr., Vice Chair the motion. Mrs. Jennifer Wishon Gilbert seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CORPORATE EDUCATION**

Vice President of Economic Development and Corporate Education Angela Joyner shared that through the RPED grant funding, the IMPACT Lab will present a specially designed cybersecurity track at the Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Emerging Technology Conference being held October 29 – 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Economic Development**

Vice President Joyner shared that CoWorks@ The Hub has successfully filled two of its three available private office memberships, with both now occupied by small businesses. Dr. Joyner provided an update on the Certification Center at the HUB, noting that it has broadened its services through new partnerships with the Virginia Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (“VDDHH”) and Certiport, a Pearson VU business. These partnerships have resulted in the center now proctoring up to 200 exams.

Two interns contributed significantly to operations during the summer months. Jonas Miller served as Social Media Content Creator and successfully expanded the EDCE LinkedIn page’s audience reach while maintaining consistent engagement with partners, alumni, and students through regular posting. Mary Parniagua-Ugarte played a key role as Assistant Program Coordinator, helping to launch CoWorks while ensuring member satisfaction and support. She also provided valuable assistance to the Certification Center by managing exam taker check-ins and serving as a proctor for exams.

The second annual Radford Community Fest took place on August 23<sup>r</sup> and featured participation from more than 100 vendors and 45 community service organizations serving as volunteers.

### **Partnerships**

Dr. Joyner announced several exciting new initiatives, including a partnership with Cardinal News that will give students hands-on experience covering Southwest Virginia's Town & Gown issues, local elections, and Student Beat stories from a regional perspective. The division has also established sponsorship opportunities through a banner program designed to strengthen messaging coordination and foster deeper collaboration with the City of Radford.

Additionally, efforts are underway to expand student opportunities through increased internship programs, project-based learning experiences, partnerships with the outdoor recreation and wellness center, and collaborative initiatives with academic programs throughout Pulaski County.

## **GOVA Region 2:**

Dr. Joyner was recently appointed to the GOVA Region 2 Council, providing an opportunity for Radford University to have dedicated representation on this important regional body.

## **UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT REPORT**

Ms. Penny Helms White, Vice President of Advancement and Alumni Relations provided an update on the two-year strategic updates reporting a 10% increase in web traffic and social media engagement, a 10% increase in unique volunteers with 1,601 volunteers, 22.3% of whom also donated. With a target rate of 40% in donor retention by December 2025, the current rate is 34.2%. Next steps to improve this is enhanced donor recognition, impact reporting, and responsive communication. Alumni giving increased contributing \$2.1M while donor numbers declined focus on growth in this area remains a priority. The TOGETHER campaign successfully completed on time, exceeding the goal with more than \$100M raised. The target of 30% in planned giving annually was surpassed with 40.5% of FY25 fundraising coming from planned giving. Lastly, the Huron|GG+A meetings concluded, and the athletics feasibility study has been concluded and report finalized, results will be shared soon.

Moving forward with the new vision “A future where every Highlander is engaged, connected, and proudly invested in Radford University” the division has identified five priorities to guide current and future efforts:

- Athletic Fundraising
- Donor Growth and Retention
- Planned Giving
- Volunteer Solicitation
- Young Alumni

Additionally, a new stewardship and recognition plan was introduced with emphasis on donor retention. More details will be presented at the December board meeting.

In FY25 fundraising updates. An annual goal of \$6M was exceeded, with \$9.3M secured. In fiscal year FY26 fundraising as of August 31, 2025, totaled \$1.46M.

### **Highlighted Events:**

- October 9–11, 2025 – Homecoming and Highlander Festival
- November 14, 2025 – Day of Gratitude
- December 2–3, 2025 – Highlander Giving Day (beginning at 8:00 a.m. on December 2 and concluding at 5:10 p.m. on December 3)

In closing, Ms. White encouraged Board members to support Highlanders during these upcoming events.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,