



Radford UNIVERSITY

External Engagement Committee
11:30 a.m.
December 4, 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

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Dianne Beane, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Strategic Communications
Mr. Ryan Bowyer, Chief of Staff
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
Mr. Derek Neal, CEO Radford University Foundation
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 11:57 a.m. Kyle Hall in Room 340, Radford, Va.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Betsy D. Beamer, Chair asked for a motion to approve the December 4, 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 September 11, 2025, meeting of the External Engagement Committee meeting, as published. Ms. Mary Anne Holbrook made the motion. Mr. George Mendiola Jr., Vice Chair seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CORPORATE EDUCATION

Dr. Angela Joyner, Vice President of Economic Development and Corporate Education, provided an update on the Joint Commission Development Initiatives. Multiple collaborative projects are underway including Wicked Festival's student research on homelessness solutions with the City's Homeless Outreach Taskforce, East Main Street corridor revitalization efforts (featuring a bike trail connecting Tyler Avenue to Bisset Park and a planned retail study), and the amphitheater project which will be in the request for proposal phase for design and planning in early 2026.

Dr. Joyner further presented Economic Development's involvement in community-based projects such as the Pulaski County Experience Center and the Town of Pulaski Theater project. Economic Development has partnered with Erika Tolbert to provide students with opportunities to work on the Pulaski County historic theater. Two students are currently working on the project, with five additional interns planned to become involved.

The HUB@ Radford University continues to thrive, maintaining 35 CoWorks memberships and having administered 150 certification exams since February, with 106 of those in IT and cybersecurity. The facility has successfully hosted workshops including the Radford City Chamber's Business Over Breakfast and the New River Regional Commission Annual Dinner. The IT Talent Connect Summit held in September 2025 connected students with three major employers—Blue Sky AI, MC Dean, and Food City—in an effective small-group format, with plans to repeat the event in Spring 2026.

Adventure Works is an Outdoor Economy Summit being hosted at Radford University, celebrating the institution's designation as Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine's Top Adventure College. This inaugural event will bring together regional stakeholders to explore how outdoor recreation drives economic growth, particularly in Virginia's rural communities.

The Emerging Technology Conference drew significant interest, with close to 100 attendees participating in the designated cybersecurity track and over 30 Radford University students, staff, and faculty attending the conference overall. Several Radford University faculty members served as presenters or participated on industry panels as well.

UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

Ms. Penny Helms White, Vice President of Advancement and Alumni Relations provided an update to the committee on the work regarding progress on several initiatives. The division continues to operate in alignment with Top Five Priorities to include athletic fundraising, donor growth and retention, planned giving, volunteer cultivation, and young alumni. These priorities remain the driving framework for all advancement, engagement, and fundraising initiatives across the division. In fundraising progress, the division has secured \$4.3 million toward the \$6 million annual goal.

An overview was provided on Homecoming 2025, which delivered a full schedule of signature events as well as newly introduced offerings. Attendance and engagement indicated strong participation from alumni, students, and community partners, reflecting continued enthusiasm for this event.

To enhance professional development and collaboration. Deans and Advancement frontliner fundraisers attended a CASE Conference held in Washington, D.C. in November. Participation supported enhanced professional development, stronger peer networking, and expanded collaboration within the division.

It was reported that the Athletics Feasibility Study has progressed into the Architecture & Engineering (A&E) phase. More detailed findings, along with projected next steps, are anticipated for presentation in early 2026.

Ms. Penny Helms White shared the results from Highlander Giving Day, which opened Tuesday, December 2 at 8:00 AM and concluded Wednesday, December 3 after 1 day, 9 hours, and 10 minutes.

Key outcomes included:

- \$83,885 raised
- 424 total donors
- 60% increase in dollars raised compared to the prior year
- Nearly 30% increase in total donors
- High faculty and staff participation
- Nearly 65% increase in alumni donors
- Over \$35,000 secured through challenges and matching gifts

Hunter Gresham, Senior Director of Advancement Communications and Donor Relations presented on her progress in implementing a comprehensive divisional communication plan and donor stewardship plan in alignment with the five divisional priorities.

Ms. Gresham reported that the University Magazine is now on a twice-yearly publication schedule, which is expected to enhance consistency and institutional visibility. Additionally, *The Wayfinder* electronic newsletter continues to be distributed monthly on the third Tuesday, ensuring timely communication with stakeholders.

An overview of the newly established donor recognition structure was provided, which introduces the following societies:

- Red Brick Society
- New River Society
- Society of 1910

- Moffett Circle
- McConnell Circle
- Tartan Fellows

These societies are designed to expand recognition pathways and strengthen engagement across giving levels. Moffett Circle donors and induction ceremonies for the Society of 1910, McConnell Circle, and Tartan Fellows took place on November 14 as part of the Day of Gratitude. Upcoming recognition for the Red Brick Society and New River Society is scheduled for the Volunteer Summit on January 24.

In closing, Ms. White recognized all the hard work of the Advancement and Communications team.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,