

External Engagement Committee

September 2026



Radford
UNIVERSITY



External Engagement Committee
1:10 p.m.**
September 17, 2026
Kyle Hall, Room 340, Radford, VA

DRAFT
Agenda

- **Call to Order** Ms. Betsy D. Beamer, *Chair*
- **Approval of Agenda** Ms. Betsy D. Beamer, *Chair*
- **Approval of Minutes** Ms. Betsy D. Beamer, *Chair*
 - June 4, 2026
- **Economic Development and Corporate Education Report** Dr. Angela Joyner, *Vice President for Economic Development and Corporate Education*
 - Strategic Partnership & Community Engagement
 - Integrated Strategic Framework
 - Student Success and Experiential Learning
 - Academic Achievement and Intellectual Discovery
 - Culture of Care
 - Organizational Excellence & Continuous Improvement
- **Advancement and Alumni Relations Report** Ms. Penny Helms White, *Vice President for Advancement and Alumni Relations*
 - Connection to Impact
 - Divisional Priorities Updates
 - FY26 by the Numbers
 - Opportunities
 - FY27 Fundraising
 - Upcoming Events
- **Other Business** Ms. Betsy D. Beamer, *Chair*
- **Adjournment** Ms. Betsy D. Beamer, *Chair*

**** All start times for committee meetings are approximate. Meetings may begin either before or after the listed approximate start time as committee members are ready to proceed.**

Committee Members

Ms. Betsy D. Beamer, Chair

Ms. Mary Anne Holbrook, Vice Chair
Ms. Stacey Brayboy
Mr. William C. Davis
Ms. Nancy Rice

Meeting Materials



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Economic Development and Corporate Education

Mission in Motion

Angela Joyner, Ph.D.

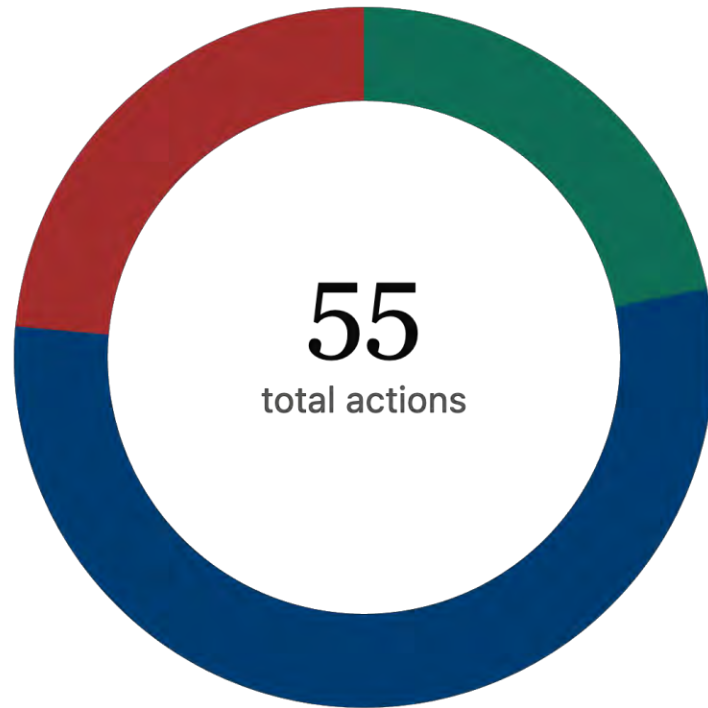
September 17, 2026





"Our mission is to help communities thrive by bringing people together, connecting them to opportunities and serving as a trusted partner."

Strategic Plan Progress



- **12 Achieved**
22% of total
- **30 On track**
55% of total
- **13 Not started**
24% of total — mostly gated on
CE Director onboarding

The pillars guiding our strategic roadmap



**Strategic Partnerships and
Community Engagement**



**Student Success and
Experiential Learning**



**Academic Achievement
and Intellectual Discovery**



**Organizational Excellence and
Continuous Improvement**



Communication and Collaboration



Culture of Care

Strategic Partnerships & Community Engagement

Bringing people together and connecting them to opportunities in our region



Roots in the Region





Joint Commission

Annual Impact Report 2025-26



Integrated Strategic Framework

Vision Statement:

Together, Radford University and the City of Radford will create a welcoming community where people thrive. By combining our strengths, sharing resources, and supporting each other, we'll build a place where people want to live, learn, work, and visit. Our partnership will show what's possible when a university and city care about each other's success.



Economic Development
& Innovation



Community Vibrancy &
Placemaking



Outdoor Recreation &
Tourism Development



Knowledge Exchange &
Community Engagement



Collaborative Governance
& Sustainability



Amphitheater



- 1000-1500 seating capacity
- Diverse programming
- Experiential learning opportunities

Riverside music and cultural venue





AN OUTDOOR ECONOMY SUMMIT

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE DRIVES IMPACT

SEPTEMBER 8-9, 2026 · RADFORD, VIRGINIA

HOSTED BY



Buffalo Mountain Ziplines

Curated Outdoor Experiences



AN OUTDOOR ECONOMY SUMMIT



Huckleberry Park



Mill Creek Falls



Claytor Lake Boat Ride





Buffalo Mountain Ziplines



Huckleberry Park



Mill Creek Falls



Claytor Lake Boat Ride



Setting the Stage: The State of the Outdoor Economy

MODERATOR



Angela Joyner, Ph.D.
Vice President,
Economic Development
& Corporate Education
Radford University

PANELISTS



Cassidy Rasnick
Chief Operating Officer
Virginia Dept. of Housing
& Community
Development



Maribel Castaneda
Deputy Secretary of
Natural & Historic
Resources
Commonwealth of
Virginia



Katie Conner
Director of Destination
Development
Virginia Tourism
Corporation



Katie Boswell
Executive Director
Onward New River Valley

From Operators to Outcomes: Running Outdoor Businesses in the Real World

MODERATOR



Catherine Fox
Director of Regional
Destination
Development
Friends of Southwest
Virginia

PANELISTS



Cora Gnegy
Tourism & Economic
Development Director
Giles County/Visit NRV



Pete Eshelman
Director
Roanoke Outside
Senior Director of
Creative Designs
Roanoke Regional
Partnership



Allison Mays
Director
Virginia Tech Southwest
Center



Beyond Recreation: Leveraging Outdoor Assets for Community and Economic Growth

MODERATOR



Heather Fay
Executive Director
Greater Roanoke
Region & New River
Valley SBDC

PANELISTS



Steve Pike
Spearhead Trails
St. Paul, Virginia



Michael Valach
Owner
Mountain 2 Island



Jessica Bowser
Host & Producer
Virginia Outdoor
Adventures Podcast



Jay Waide
Owner
Roanoke Angler

Find Your Next Adventure: How Universities & Brand Builders Shape Place and Opportunity

MODERATOR



Ryan Bowyer
Chief of Staff
Radford University

PANELISTS



Kent Sanslow
Assistant Director of
Outdoor Programs
Emory & Henry
University



Michael Clark
Deputy County
Administrator
Franklin County



Joshua Carroll, Ph.D.
Professor, Recreation,
Parks, and Tourism
Radford University



AN OUTDOOR ECONOMY SUMMIT



Community Fest 2026



Riverside music and cultural venue



Economic Development and Business Leaders Luncheon



Carrie Chenery
Secretary of Commerce and Trade



Katie Boswell
Executive Director, Onward NRV



Kevin Byrd
Executive Director,
New River Regional Commission





Economic Development and Business Leaders Luncheon

Student Success and Experiential Learning



Next Generation



Keeping Talent in the Region



Kyleigh Mills
EDCE Intern

“I am very likely to stay here after graduation, because I have learned so much about the community that is here. I love the outdoors and all the things to do here.”



Caleb
Strategic Marketing &
Communication Intern

“I have always planned to stay in the NRV, but the internship program has shown me so many new things to do here.”



Desi Yopp
EDCE Intern

“Very likely, and my favorite excursion was Mountain Lake Lodge.”



Academic Achievement and Intellectual Discovery

Knowledge in Service



2026 Summit Selection



CoWorks@The HUB: University-Led
Co-Working Spaces as Regional Talent
Connectors



**Community-Based Learning as
Economic Infrastructure:** Building
Talent Pipelines Through Place-Based
Projects



Culture of Care



The people behind the mission



Jeanne Symanoskie, Ph.D.
Director for Continuing Education



Cor Blevins
Program Coordinator



Ben Kramer, Ph.D.
Assistant Program Coordinator



Building what's next

2027 Economic Impact Study



Partnership Model Strategy



Continuing Education Roadmap



Discussion

Board of Visitors Report

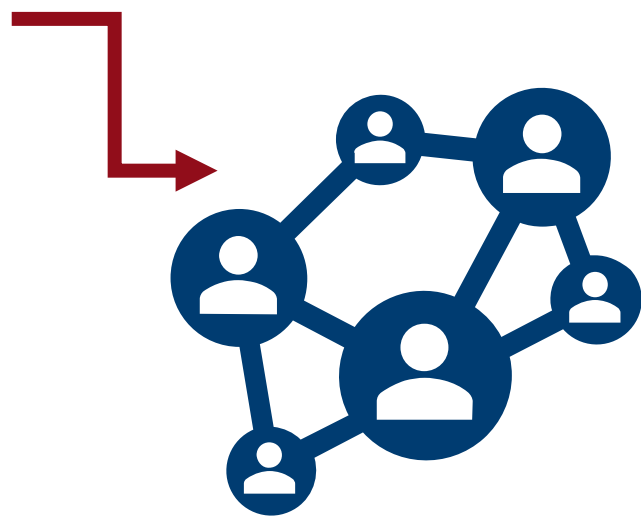
Penny Helms White '85, MBA '87

Advancement and Alumni Relations

September 17, 2026

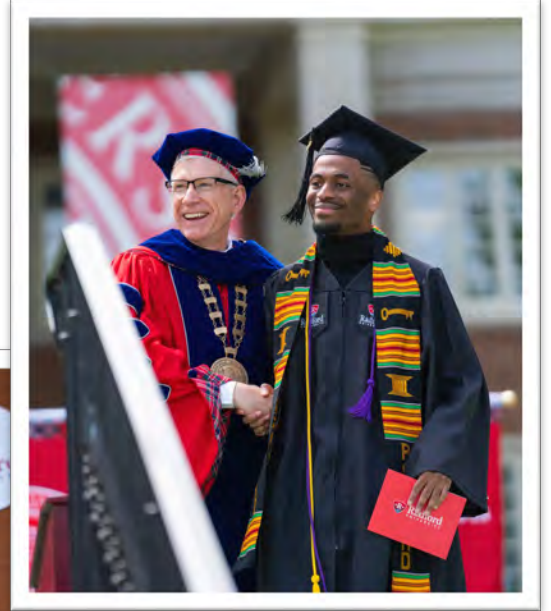


Turn Connection to Impact



Turning Connection into Impact

FY26 In Review

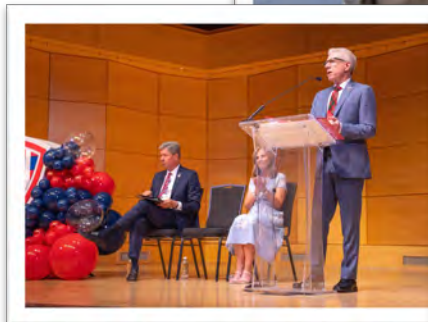


Mission: To champion Highlander pride, build meaningful connections, and inspire philanthropic giving that shapes Radford University's future.

RECENT SUCCESS

➤ Priority 1: Athletics Philanthropy and Engagement

- Held Highlander Athletics: The Next Chapter
- Launched new Stewardship plan and Athletic Giving Society
- Recruited members of the new Athletics Philanthropy Council
- Hired an athletic fundraiser



RECENT SUCCESS

➤ **Priority 2: Donor Growth, Retention and Stewardship**

- Launched 5 new giving societies and held donor events to honor each
- Launched the Tartan Blazers
- Completed 30 ThankView campaigns for stewardship initiatives
- Utilized communication vehicles to highlight donor impact



RECENT SUCCESS

➤ Priority 3: Planned Giving and Legacy Engagement



- Relaunched the Society of 1910 and held the first induction ceremony.
- Continued biannual postcard series
- Included strategic messaging in the Radford University magazine and Wayfinder
- Retiree engagement expanded

RECENT SUCCESS

- **Priority 6: Divisional Infrastructure, Collaboration and Trust**
- Continued work with Huron
- Contracted Mary Grace Theodore
- 17 team members attended professional development conferences
- Launched team Lunch and Learn opportunities
- Implemented Naming and Commemorative Tributes Policy
- Momentum and Almbase implemented



FY26 by the Numbers

\$11,295,258

total raised

2,764

Donors

\$3.3 Million

in Scholarships Awarded

\$2.1 Million

in Planned Gifts

2,498

Volunteers

1,213

Scholarships awarded



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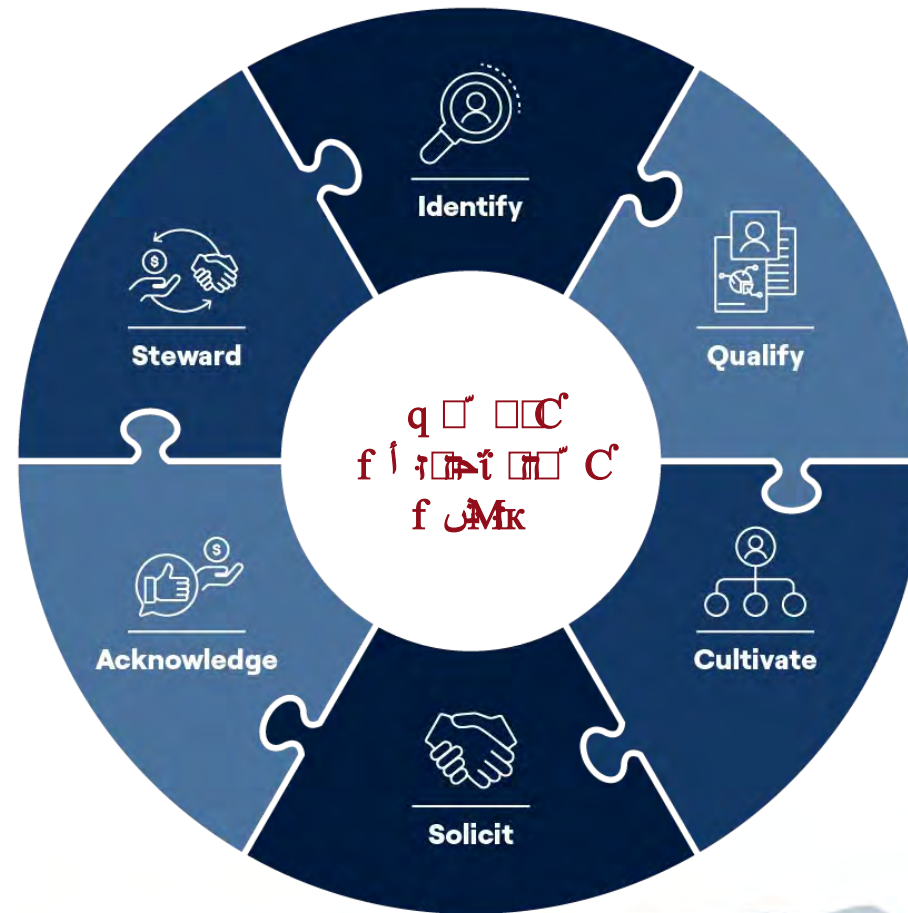
RADFORD
HIGHLANDERS

FY26 Athletics

\$4.5 Million
total raised

1,422
Donors

Opportunities for Improvement





FY27 Fundraising
\$1,050,671



Upcoming Events

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| September 17 | Virginia Credit Union Financial
Success Center Dedication |
| September 18 | Richmond Chapter Alumni and
Friends Golf Tournament |
| September 22-23 | RAD Giving Day |
| October 22-24 | Homecoming |
| November 5-7 | Gratitude Week |

Minutes



Radford
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External Engagement Committee

1:00 pm

June 4, 2026

Kyle Hall, Room 340

Radford, VA

DRAFT
MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Betsy Beamer, Chair
Mr. George Mendiola Jr., Vice Chair
Mr. Dale S. Ardizzone
Ms. Mary Anne Holbrook
Mr. Chris Settle

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Tyler W. Lester, Rector (Via Zoom)
Mrs. Jennifer Wishon Gilbert, Vice Rector
Ms. Jeanne S. Armentrout
Dr. Betty Jo Foster
Mr. David A. Smith
Mr. Jonathan D. Sweet
Ms. Callie M. Dalton
Mr. James C. Turk
Mr. William Davis

OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Dannette Beane, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Strategic Communications
Mr. Ryan Bowyer, Chief of Staff
Ms. Lisa Ghidotti, Assistant Vice President 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
Ms. Laura Turk, Executive Director of Alumni Relations
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 Beamer, Chair, formally called the External Engagement Committee meeting to order at 1:01 pm, Kyle Hall in Room 340, Radford, Va.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Betsy Beamer, Chair, asked for a motion to approve the June 4, 2026, agenda, as published. Mr. William Davis made the motion and George Mendiola, Jr., Vice Chair, seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Betsy Beamer, Chair, asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2026, meeting of the External Engagement Committee meeting, as published. George Mendiola, Jr., made the motion. Mrs. Jennifer Wishon Gilbert, Vice Rector, seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CORPORATE EDUCATION

Dr. Angela Joyner delivered a presentation entitled *Mission in Motion*, a narrative-based divisional update organized around the core commitments of convening community members, expanding access to opportunities, and strengthening the university's role as a trusted regional partner. The presentation addressed six strategic focus areas.

Strategic Partnerships & Community Engagement

Dr. Joyner announced that a series of regional community town halls is scheduled for August–October, designed to identify local needs and cultivate trust through direct engagement. The Joint Commission Impact Report functions as an integrated strategic roadmap, documenting measurable outcomes and mutual accountability. A five-year strategic plan for Downtown Radford is currently in development, addressing economic vitality, policy, design, and tourism. The story of BT's Restaurant – a 40-year community institution now operated by RU alumni – was highlighted as a compelling illustration of this work in practice.

Dr. Joyner announced that AdventureWorks! is being held September 8–9 and will bring together leaders from local government, small business, higher education, and tourism and advance regional economic development priorities.

Student Success & Experiential Learning

Two team members, multimedia assistant Desi Yopp and intern Kyleigh Mills (BBA/Management), were spotlighted as the division's commitment to developing talent from within its own community.

Academic Achievement & Workforce Education

Dr. Svetlana Filitreau represented the division on the CCI Southwest Virginia Panel at UVA Wise. The division was honored with the **2026 CCI Impact Award**.

Communications

The Exchange, a new comprehensive communications platform and newsletter, launched May 1st. It is designed to deliver transparent, timely information to both on-and off-campus stakeholders.

Culture of Care

The presentation concluded with an emphasis on team development and organizational culture. Recent graduates Jonas, Mady and Mary – each a former student employee of the division – were recognized as living examples of the university's mission carried out.

Board Engagement

Dr. Joyner invited Board members to consider where they can best amplify impact, identify partners or resources that could strengthen existing initiatives, and share their vision for what Mission in Motion should look like as the division enters its third year.

UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

Ms. Penny Helms White, Vice President of Advancement and Alumni Relations reported that FY26 fundraising totaled \$9.8 million dollars as of the end of April, reflecting strong donor relationships and dedication of the Advancement and Alumni Relations team.

As athletics remains a key area of growth in advancement efforts. A search is underway for a Director of Advancement and Revenue Generation for Athletics. In addition, an Athletic Philanthropy Council is being formed to strengthen volunteer engagement and increase support for Radford Athletics, including attendance and event participation. A pilot initiative is also underway to reconnect former student-athletes with current scholar-athletes. Stewardship and retention also continue to be a priority focus. In April, members of the Red Brick and New River Societies were recognized for their ongoing generosity and commitment to the university.

Planned giving efforts continue to expand, including features in the Spring 2026 university magazine highlighting three donor legacy stories. New spring and fall planned giving postcards are being distributed for outreach, and planning is underway for a retiree engagement event scheduled for August 12.

Efforts to strengthen engagement with students and recent graduates continue to build momentum. The Senior Block Party engaged more than 400 students, while over 500 exit interviews were conducted to support post-graduation outreach. The second annual Tartan Toast, held in conjunction with a Highlander Baseball game, with 150 graduating seniors in attendance. A new Assistant Director of Student Philanthropy and Engagement has joined the team to further support early engagement strategies.

Advancement and Alumni Relations led commencement planning, marking the beginning of graduates' lifelong connection to Radford University. Eugene Naughton served as keynote speaker, and a surprise video message from Dolly Parton generated significant national attention, enhancing the university's visibility.

Laura Turk, Executive Director of Alumni Relations, provided an update on Volunteer Pathways to Philanthropy. It was reported that Radford engages 3,832 volunteers, including 2,498 unique individuals serving in 221 roles across eight decades and thirty-five states. Volunteer engagement continues to strengthen alumni connection, advocacy, and philanthropic support, with personal referrals playing a key role in expanding participation and fundraising opportunities.

A video featuring student Shannon Herrity '27 was shared, reminding us that the impact of the work we do across Advancement and Alumni Relations reminding us why this work matters.

In closing, Ms. Penny Helms White shared several upcoming events including Highlander Athletics: The Next Chapter, the National Capital Region Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament on June 25, Radford Night at Nationals Park on August 7, the Radford University Retiree Event on August 12, and Radford Night at Party in Elmwood Park on August 13.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the committee, Ms. Betsy Beamer, Chair adjourned the meeting at 2:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

End of Board of Visitors Materials

