

**BOARD OF VISITORS
BOARD RETREAT
ELECTRONIC MEETING**

May 13, 2021

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Ms. Wilmer, Rector, called the NSU Board of Visitors meeting to order at approximately 9:10 a.m. A quorum was established with an 8-0 Roll Call vote. Below is a list of individuals that joined the webinar.

**Present for the Fireside Chat*

Participants – Board Members

Ms. Joan G. Wilmer, Rector*
Mr. Devon M. Henry, Secretary*
Dr. Terri L. Best*
Ms. Mary L. Blunt*
The Honorable James W. Dyke, Jr.*
Mr. BK Fulton*
Mr. Larry A. Griffith*
Dr. Harold “Harry” L. Watkins, II*

Non Participants – Absent Board Members

Dr. Deborah M. DiCroce, Vice Rector
Mr. Dwayne B. Blake
Bishop Kim W. Brown

Participant – Faculty Representative to the Board

Dr. Ashley N. Haines, Faculty Senate President and Associate Professor, Biology*

Participant/Presenter – Student Representative to the Board

Mr. Jeremiah O’Bryant, SGA President*

Participant – Counsel

Ms. Pamela F. Boston, University Counsel and Senior Assistant Attorney General*

Participants – Panelists/Presenters

The Honorable Robert C. Scott, U.S. Congressman
The Honorable L. Louise Lucas, Virginia State Senator
Mr. Louis Carr, President of Media Sales, Black Entertainment Television
Dr. Cynthia Burwell, Professor & Dir., Center of Excellence in Minority Health Disparities*
Mr. Glenn Carrington, Dean, NSU School of Business*

Participant – Moderator (Fireside Chat)

Mr. Eric W. Claville, J.D., M.L.I.S., Director, Center for African American Public Policy, Adjunct Professor of Political Science*

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Participants – Students (Roundtable Discussion)

Dy'Mon Blaze, Junior, Nursing*

Mr. Aaron Hawkins, Graduate Assistant – Urban Education K-12 Counseling Graduate Program*

Mr. Nicholas Josshua, Fall 21 Graduate - Mathematics/Teacher Licensure in Secondary Education*

McKinley Lowery, III, Junior, Business Finance*

Mr. Maleik Watkins, Junior, Political Science*

Participants – Additional Students/Others

(see attached list for Spartan Showcase Performers)

Participants – NSU Administrators and Staff

Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston, President*

Dr. Justin L. Moses, Vice President for Operations and Chief Strategist for Institutional Effectiveness*

Dr. DoVeanna Fulton, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Dr. Gerald E. Hunter, Vice President, Finance and Administration*

Dr. Leonard E. Brown, Vice President, Student Affairs*

Mr. Clifford Porter, Vice President, University Advancement*

Mr. Ericke S. Cage, Senior Advisor to the President and University Ombudsman*

Ms. Melody Webb, Athletics Director*

Ms. Tanya S. White, Chief of Staff*

Ms. Derika L. Burgess, Chief Audit Executive*

Dr. Dawn M. Hess, Chief Compliance Officer*

Ms. Stevalynn Adams, Assistant Vice President, Communications and Marketing*

Ms. Yelena A. Arishina, Special Assistant to the Provost

Mr. Steven Opher, Social Media Manager, Communications and Marketing

Ms. Kimberly Gaymon, Scheduler/Financial Services Specialist*

Mr. Rasool A. Shabazz, Project Engineer, OIT*

Mr. Marvin D. Prince, Information Technology Specialist, CSET

Mr. Christopher M. Gregory, Information Technology Specialist, OIT

Mrs. April T. Allbritton, Office Manager/Board Liaison*

Observers – NSU Administrators and Staff

Mr. Stan Donaldson, Director, Media Relations*

Ms. Tonya Gardner, Counselor

Dr. Karen H. Pruden, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources*

Ms. Meshea Vann, Director, Transfer Admissions

Dr. Ernestine Duncan, Professor, Psychology

Dr. Bertha Escoffery, Adjunct Professor, Professor Emerita

Dr. Lamiaa S. Youssef, Professor and Special Assistant to the Provost*

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Observers – NSU Students

Ms. Jaylin Drewry, SGA President-Elect*

Ms. Octavia Johnson, Graduate Student Association, Historian

Observers – Others

Mr. Joe Barden, Alumnus

Mr. Leon Carter, Editorial Director, The Athletic Media Company

Ms. Sheri Clayborne, President

Mr. David Dailey, Chief of Staff for Congressman Scott

Ms. Jane Harris, Alumnus, Central VA Chapter

Mrs. Danielle Smith Mathis, CEO, Danielle Mathis, Inc.

Ms. Sherrie Mitchell, Lecturer, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, ODU

Ms. Kota Mizutani, Staff to Congressman Scott

Mr. Kenneth Pritchett, Privacy Officer, Central State Hospital

Ms. Lakisha Speller, Director of Grants Accounting, Eastern Virginia Medical School

Ms. Desira Stearns, Strategic Diversity Outreach Director, Leidos

Mr. Frank Threatts, III, Parent

Mr. Michael Wood, COO, Jones Barnes and Wood

Additional Participants

(see attached Fireside Chat list)

2. **Welcome** – Rector Wilmer shared the perspective of the two previous Retreats that laid the foundation for future strategies for the institution while strengthening operations for both the university and the Board. The current Retreat is structured to identify partnerships and to connect with the campus after being separated due to COVID. In essence, a Homecoming.
3. **The Higher Education Policy Landscape in A Post Pandemic World** – Mr. Cage and Mr. O'Bryant moderated the session with Congressman Scott and Senator Lucas.

Congressman Scott spoke to the importance of HBCUs and how Congress has approved more funding than ever in support of HBCUs through the CARES Act, the Omnibus Bill, and the American Rescue Plan. Another key victory includes the discharge of capital loans under the HBCU Capital Financing Loan Program. He noted that elections will play an important role in the future of higher education, as this is reliant upon those who have a commitment to the adhering to the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Senator Lucas stated that the Commonwealth of Virginia has provided increased funding to its HBCUs over the last two to three years. Universities were provided increased flexible funding because of COVID.

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A joint resolution introduced by Senator Lucas directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the impact of COVID-19 on education. This will provide a summary of where Virginia stands relative to the future of higher education.

Senator Lucas added that the creation and operation of a joint school of public health to deal with post pandemic traumatic stress is an excellent opportunity for NSU.

There was a brief discussion on the historical lack of level funding for Virginia's HBCUs and the approval of a restitution bill for the State of Maryland. Congressman Scott informed the Board of an upcoming hearing he will host on equity. Congressman Scott will share the date and time with Mr. Dyke.

Mr. Dyke asked for the Congressman's support as the Board plans to request that the Governor provide restitution funding to Virginia HBCUs targeted toward programs that will grow the economy.

Action Items:

Congressman Scott asked the University Counsel to forward him information on the decree that was signed many years ago for Virginia.

President Adams-Gaston will provide Congressman Scott with information on whether ODU's Cybersecurity program is a duplication.

4. Transforming Higher Education and HBCUs Through Corporate Partnerships – President Adams-Gaston introduced Mr. Carr. His comments included:

- Corporate America has awakened to the role of addressing the African American community. Now is the best time to develop the strategies to secure partnerships for the long term.
- To establish successful partnerships, a staffer would have to take on the additional duties and responsibilities of securing these partnerships, or the university needs to invest in someone to make it their specific job to build out a team that every single day makes some type of contact with corporate America about investing in Norfolk State and its students. The university must build this paradigm that becomes a part of the fabric of the university.
- Position the university and your students as an asset to corporate businesses both to their brand and to their products. Make the ongoing "asks." Each business should have a presence on your campus – building, upgrading, servicing, engaging, etc.
- Fundraising should also be a part of the Board's responsibility. This should be on the agenda 365 days a year. Do not be afraid to ask members of your Board to give.

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- The university should push internships and adding this as an academic requirement, if possible. Teach students to know what goals and objectives they want from an internship. Instill pride of the historical significance of the university and inform students of the key people who graduated from the university. This helps them to build confidence in their own narrative.
- Storytelling and positioning can help promote success. A visionary looks around the corners to begin addressing the workforce needs of the future now.

Mr. Carr will put President Adams-Gaston in touch with the individual at Proctor and Gamble in charge of the “Widen the Lens” branding.

Action Item – President Adams-Gaston, Mr. Griffith, and Mr. Carr will work together with NSU as host to bring industry executives to campus to have real conversations about the work environment. Executives who have the experience, understanding, and in a space in their career where they can be blatantly honest, and executives who are looking for honest feedback on the student’s internship experience.

Recommendation – The onboarding process for freshmen can be a little more in-depth and intentional to help students understand the importance of having a good relationship with professors, the rules regarding academic life, etc. There also should be additional preparation on the front end in high school so that students will know what to expect from the college experience.

5. Spartan Showcase – The NSU Jazz Combo performed the following songs:

- Strasbourg St. Denis by Roy Hargrove
- All of Me by Gerald Marks and Seymour Simmons
- Footprints by Wayne Shorter

Performances by the NSU Theatre Company included:

- Trezure Coles as Diana Ross from *A Tribute to Motown*
- Xavier Andrew as Caesar from August Wilson’s *Gem of the Ocean*
- Tajleed Hardy as Romeo from *Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet*
- Candunn Jennette as Rose from August Wilson’s *Fences*
- Katelan Corprew as Dorothy from *The Wiz*

The NSU Choral sang the following three songs. The last was a solo by Olivia Cooper.

- Gloria Fanfare by Jeffery L. Ames
- Ballade to the Moon by Daniel Elder
- Happy by Tasha Cobbs

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- 6. Faculty Research and Innovation** – The Provost introduced the two faculty members presenting on COVID-19 Research and the NSU Innovation Center.

Dr. Burwell provided an overview of the COVID-19 Research being done in Norfolk that was expanded to include the seven cities in Hampton Roads and into Richmond, Virginia. The work addresses low-income house residents' mistrust of COVID-19 Guidance. The team consists of faculty from EVMS, Hampton University, with Dr. Burwell representing NSU. The amount of the grant is \$1.18M.

Next steps include participant recruitment in focus groups. Results to be provided to the Community Advisory Board (CAB) for strategy development and implementation of a social marketing campaign that targets special community concerns.

Dean Carrington outlined the mission of the NSU Innovation Center and provided the five goals to achieve success through 1) training and connecting to the entrepreneurial community; 2) providing an incubator program; 3) creating a network of professionals; 4) partnering and collaborating with other universities and organizations, and 5) fostering a virtual community of entrepreneurs.

Five individuals in the entrepreneurial program have been successful in establishing a startup. One is a bacterial cleaning mat invention by Ricardo Patten.

Action Item – Dean Carrington to contact BK Fulton regarding NSU's interest in a venture with Ralph Sampson that includes other universities in the Commonwealth.

- 7. Roundtable Discussion with NSU Students** – Dr. Brown moderated a very candid session with five students, who are a cross-section of the student body.

Takeaways

- The university should create a professional development boot camp for students.
- More students should be given the opportunity to participate in an internship.
- There is a lot of underrated talent amongst the student population that needs to be cultivated.
- Students look to leaders and executives to train or share what is expected of them.

- 8. Public Comment** – One individual registered for public comment; however, during the time for public comment the individual was not present on the webinar.

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9. **Tours** – Individual Board member tours were led by members of the President’s Cabinet. During this time, there was a meeting break for webinar panelists and attendees.
10. **Fireside Chat with President Javaune Adams-Gaston** – Mr. Claville served as the moderator for the Fireside Chat. President Adams-Gaston spoke candidly about her favorite job as a lifeguard that fundamentally taught her that people sometimes need to be guided and given the right opportunities to blossom. She and her husband agreed that NSU is her calling. Her work at The Ohio State University with H1N1 provided preparation for the COVID pandemic. She has a wonderful leadership team, Board, faculty, staff, and students of whom she is extremely proud.

Mr. Gaston responded to a question from the moderator on the secrets to a successful marriage.

Mr. Griffith made a very passionate statement about the context of Dr. Adams-Gaston’s presidency and the unique challenges she experienced being a first time president and a new president during a worldwide pandemic. He is deeply proud of the choice the Board made in her hire.

On behalf of the Board, Ms. Blunt thanked Rector Wilmer for her leadership and the progress the Board had made over the last few years.

The event was well attended. President Adams-Gaston provided special thanks to staff in Facilities for ensuring everything was in place.

11. **Adjournment** – The Retreat concluded at approximately 4:37 p.m.

A private event hosted by President Adams-Gaston was held at the University House. No business was discussed.

Respectfully submitted,

Inda Walker, Board Liaison

Devon M. Henry, Rector
Board of Visitors

ATTACHMENT A
SPARTAN SHOWCASE PERFORMERS
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NSU Jazz Combo

(Under the direction of Stephanie, K. Sanders, Assistant Professor of Music) – Jazz

Jacobi Easter – Flute
Samantha Butler – Trombone
Caleb Fields – Hill – Alto Saxophone
DeShawn Threatts – Tenor Saxophone
Joseph Abiakam – Piano
Natshawn Charity – Bass
Roderick Williams – Drums

Norfolk State University Theatre Company

(Led by Dr. Anthony Stockard)

Trezure Coles as *Diana Ross from A Tribute to Motown*
Zavier Andrew as *Caesar from August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean*
Tajleed Hardy as *Romeo from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*
Candunn Jennette as *Rose from August Wilson's Fences*
Katelan Corprew as *Dorothy from The Wiz*

Norfolk State University Concert Choir

(Led by Dr. Harlan Zachery, Director of Choral Activities and Mr. Terry Butler, Assistant Director of Choral Activities)

Gloria Fanfare by Jeffrey Ames
Terry Butler, Piano
Dr. Harlan Zackery, Conductor

Ballad To the Mood by Daniel Elder
Dr. Harlan Zackery, Piano
Terry Butler, Conductor

Happy by Tasha Cobbs
Olivia Cooper, Soloist

NSU Concert Choir Participants

Ahmyah Ajasin
Damon Alexander-Vazquez
Latron Baker-Pierce
Madison Barkley
Cameron Butts
Samuel Carrington
Olivia Cooper
Savanna Daniels
Kaeleb Donaldson
Brielle Farrow

Emir Hardy
Javon Hitson
Jeriah Johnson
J. Christian Kelley
DeVonnea Leyes
Lavender Moore
Michael Quarles
Symone Seay
Kyndal Turnbow
Madison Washington

ATTACHMENT B
ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS FIRESIDE CHAT
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*(Note: *Other participants previously listed above)*

Alisha Bazemore, Assistant Vice President for Operations
Bobbie Berger, Payroll Manager
Martha Bissah, Student-Athlete
Shakehna Bonney, Work Study Coordinator, Financial Aid
Dr. Andrew Carrington, Assistant Vice President, Finance
Noelle Cook, Assistant Director of Annual Giving
Elizabeth Dungee-Anderson, DSW, Interim Dean, School of Social Work
Dr. Colita Fairfax, Professor, Honors College
Robert Jones, Head Men's Basketball Coach
Anton Kashiri, Associate Vice President, Facilities Management
Dr. Michael Keeve, Dean, College of Science, Engineering, and Technology
Dr. Ebenezer Kolajo, Interim Vice Provost for Academic Effectiveness
Paula Lassiter, Gen. Admin. Supervisor, College of Liberal Arts
Richard Law, University Architect
Michelle Marable, Dean of Students
Savan Matthews, Student Executive Council Member
Dr. George Miller, Dean, Graduate Studies & Research
Dr. Khadijah Miller, Interim Dean, Honors College
Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Shareen Nicholson, Diversity Initiative Coordinator, Housing & Residence Life
Dawson Odums, Head Football Coach
Ivana Rich, Associate Athletics Director/Academics
James Robinson, Executive Director, Institutional Equity
Tytianna Smith, Senior, Biology
Symone Thomas, Student Executive Council Member
Alisha Tucker, Associate Athletics Director/Compliance
Dr. Denelle Wallace, Interim Dean, School of Education
Terry Woodhouse, Director, Capital Planning