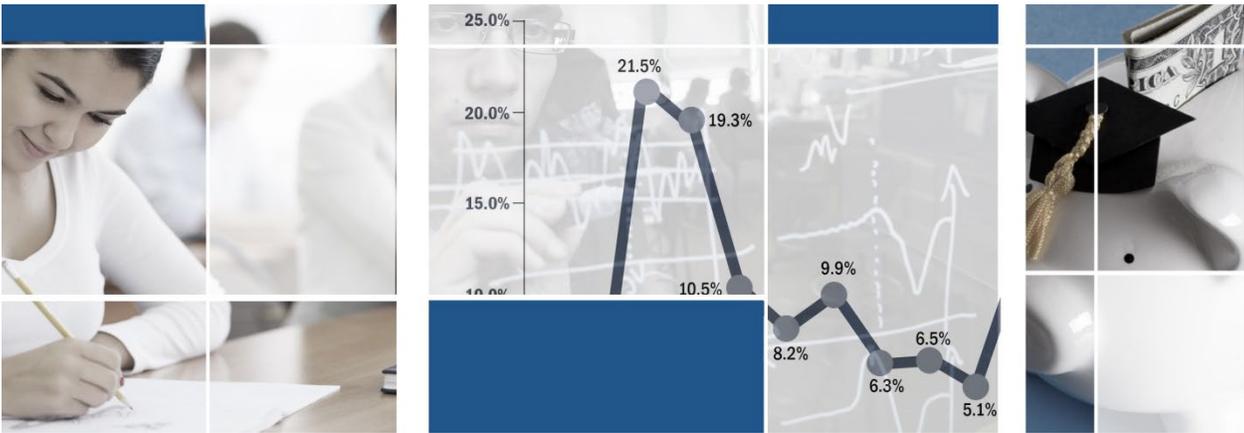


February 23, 2026



# Boards of Visitors Orientation: Report of the 2025 Event

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## OVERVIEW

Section 23.1-1304 of the Code of Virginia requires that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia “develop, in consultation with public institutions of higher education and members of their governing boards, and annually deliver educational programs for the governing boards of such institutions” and “submit to the General Assembly and the Governor an annual executive summary of the interim activity and work of the Council pursuant to this section no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly.” A 2013 amendment to the Code stipulated that new board members “shall participate in an orientation session at least once during their first two years of membership.” In 2015, the statutory language was amended to provide boards a process whereby members who do not participate may be removed.

In accordance with this requirement, SCHEV staff held a mandatory orientation session for newly appointed board members on November 12-13, 2025. A copy of the agenda summarizing the topics covered in these meetings is included with this report.

### **Planning Group**

To comply with the mandate to develop the orientation “in consultation with public institutions of higher education and members of their governing boards,” SCHEV created an eight-member planning committee that included two Council members, two college representatives, one board professional and one member of an institutional Board of Visitors. The Secretary of Education, Deputy Secretary of Education and the Secretary of the Commonwealth also participated in the planning sessions.

For the 2025 orientation, the administration invited all boards of visitors to attend. The event was held in Richmond.

## Attendance

New board member attendees	54
Returning board member attendees	36
Rectors	1
Presidents	1
Board professionals	13

There were 16 new members who were unable to attend the 2024 orientation. They understand that they will be required to attend the 2025 orientation session. The date for the 2025 orientation has been scheduled for November 12-13, 2025, in Richmond.

## Survey Results

Following the orientation session, SCHEV staff provided attendees with an evaluation survey. Results of the electronic survey indicate that, of the 19 members who responded, the majority rated the program sessions as extremely valuable, very valuable or valuable.



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## Boards of Visitors Orientation

November 12-13, 2025

The Westin Hotel  
Blue Ridge Ballroom  
6631 W. Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23230

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### NOVEMBER 12, 2025

- 9:00 am**      **REGISTRATION OPENS; INFORMAL NETWORKING**  
Blue Ridge Ballroom Foyer
- 10:00 am**      **Welcome, Overview and Acknowledgements**  
**Scott Fleming**, Executive Director, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)  
**Gen. John Jumper**, Chair, SCHEV Council; former President, Board of Visitors, Virginia Military Institute
- 10:15 am**      **The Art – and Science – of Institutional Governance**  
*Session Objective: Provide an overview of best practices in institutional governance. What constitutes good governance, and how do boards achieve and maintain it? What are the distinctives of a high-performing governing board? Where does governance end and (micro) management begin?*  
Moderator: **Michael Poliakoff**, President of ACTA; Board of Visitors, Longwood University  
Panelists:  
**Todd Haymore**, Hunton Law Firm, Former Rector, Board of Visitors, Virginia Commonwealth University  
**Gen. John Jumper**, Chair, SCHEV Council; former President, Board of Visitors, Virginia Military Institute  
**Christy Tomlinson Morton**, Rector, Christopher Newport University
- 11:15 am**      **Governance 101 – Fundamentals of Service on the Governing Board of a Public Institution of Higher Education**  
*Session Objective: Provide an overview of service on a public board. To whom are Virginia’s public higher-education boards – and individual members – responsible? How do these boards meet their statutory, regulatory, and fiduciary obligations? How do they function internally (committees, retreats, strategic plans, etc.)?*  
Introduction: **Gen. John Jumper**, Chair, SCHEV Council  
Speaker:  
**Armand Alacbay**, Secretary, Boards of Visitors, George Mason University; Chief of Staff & Senior Vice President of Strategy, American Council of Trustees & Alumni (ACTA)
- 12:00 pm**      **LUNCH (Buffet Meal Provided)**  
Students from SCHEV’s Student Advisory Committee invited to have lunch with their respective institutional Board Members

**1:00 pm**      **Virginia-specific Responsibilities (FOIA, Ethics and COIA)**  
*Session Objective: Provide overviews of the requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act (COIA), and institutional ethics generally.*

**Alan Gernhardt**, Executive Director, Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council

**Rob Bell**, Deputy Attorney General

**Nathan Moberly**, Assistant Attorney General

**1:45 pm**      **Dollars and Cents**  
*Session Objective: Explore institutional budgeting, financing, operating, construction, maintenance, and advancement – with a focus on tuition (and fee) setting – by boards who are informed, thoughtful, and accountable stewards of Virginia’s (and families’) assets.*

Moderator: **Michael Maul**, Director, Department of Planning & Budget (DPB)

Panelists:

**Robert Denton**, Former Director of the School of Communication, Virginia Tech; Board of Visitors, Virginia State University

**Marquett Smith**, Regional President, Verizon Wireless; Former Rector, Radford University

**3:00 pm**      **BREAK (Refreshments Provided)**

**3:15 pm**      **Strategic Planning for Institutional and Student Success: Asking Tough Questions, Making Informed Decisions**

*Session Objective: Explore best practices in strategically planning, executing, and assessing institutional and student success. What are the questions that board members should ask, and what should they know/learn in order to understand the answers? How do your boards’ decisions improve the outcomes of students; of graduates (ROI); of the institution; of the state/the taxpayer (ROI)? How do you know?*

Moderator: **Steve Cummings**, Secretary of Finance

Panelists:

**Gen. John Jumper**, Chair, SCHEV Council; former President, Board of Visitors, Virginia Military Institute

**Suzanne Obenshain**, Rector, James Madison University

**4:45 pm**      **Reflections and Preparations for Day Two**

**Scott Fleming**, Executive Director, SCHEV

**5:00 pm**      **Evening Reception (Light Refreshments Provided)**

Governor’s Executive Mansion (Shuttle buses will provide transportation from The Westin Hotel to the Executive Mansion and back)

# NOVEMBER 13, 2025

## 7:00 am **BREAKFAST (Breakfast Provided); INFORMAL NETWORKING**

Blue Ridge Ballroom

## 8:30 am **Call to Order, Introductions and Preview**

**Scott Fleming**, Executive Director, SCHEV

## 8:45 am **National and Virginia Trends, Challenges and Opportunities for Higher Education**

*Session Objective: Provide a review of the latest trends, current and future challenges, and emerging opportunities for higher education in the Commonwealth and the U.S. via a panel discussion and Q&A.*

Moderator: **Preston Cooper**, Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI); Board of Visitors, George Mason University

Panelists:

**Lindsay Fryer**, President & Founding Principal, Lodestone DC SCHEV Council Member

**Steven Taylor**, Director and Senior Fellow, Stand Together Trust; Founder and Principal, ED2WORK; and SCHEV Council Member

**Wendy Kang**, Executive Director, Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE)

## 10:00 am **Boards' Use of Data in Institutional Governance – Data Sources and Strategic Use of Data in Planning and Decision-making (Interactive Exercise)**

*Session Objective: Involve participants in an interactive scavenger-hunt exercise that will provide an immersive deep dive into each institution's fact pack and how it can be used in board decision-making and ROI assessment.*

Moderator: **Scott Fleming**, Executive Director, SCHEV

Speakers:

**John Markowitz**, Deputy Secretary of Finance

**Tod Massa**, Policy Analytics Director, SCHEV

## 12:15 pm **LUNCH (Buffet Meal Provided)**

**Remarks by Secretary Aimee Guidera: "A Call to Action"**

## 1:00 pm **"Hot Topics" in Higher Education**

*Session Objective: Provide interactive opportunities for attendees to learn about multiple "hot topics" in higher education. During the time, participants may visit as many topic-specific tables as they desire, learning a little about many topics or learning a lot about a few topics, depending on each participant's interests.*

**Table 1: Artificial Intelligence** (Panel Leads: **Reeve Bull**, Director of Virginia's Office of Regulatory Management; **Chrysoula Malogianni**, Senior Associate Vice President for Digital Innovation, Old Dominion University; and **Jeff McClurken**, Professor of History & American Studies, Vice President of Strategy, Chief of Staff to the President, University of Mary Washington)

*Objective: To understand how artificial intelligence is impacting students, faculty, institutions, and higher education generally.*

**Table 2: K-12 Bridge Building** (Panel Leads: **Zach Jacobs**, Deputy Secretary of Education and **Scott Fleming**, Executive Director, SCHEV)

*Objective: To discuss student preparation, readiness, and the talent pipeline, including lab schools, merit admissions, and direct admissions.*

**Table 3: Free Speech/Expression, Civil Discourse and Diversity of Thought** (Panel Leads: **Mary Kate Cary**, Director, Think Again, University of Virginia and **Kara Dillard**, Executive Director, James Madison Center for Civic Engagement; Assistant Professor,

School of Communication Studies; Director, Civic Leadership Minor; and Co-Director, Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue (ICAD), James Madison University  
*Objective: To learn more about how campuses are ensuring and promoting these key underpinnings of free, democratic society and academia.*

**Table 4: Mental Health Issues on Campus** (Panel Leads: **Rose Pascarell**, Vice President for University Life, George Mason University; **Kelly Crace**, Executive Director of the Contemplative Sciences Center at the University of Virginia; and **Emily Salmon**, Assistant Director of Strategic Planning and Policy Studies, SCHEV  
*Objective: To learn about students' mental health challenges and strategies for addressing students' needs.*

**Table 5: Campus Safety** (Panel Leads: **Carl Rowan**, Chief of Police & Assistant Vice President for Public Safety, George Mason University; and **Todd Brewster**, Special Assistant, Virginia Department of Public Safety and Homeland Security  
*Objective: To discuss the many aspects of campus safety and student well-being.*

**Table 6: Deep Dive into Fact Packs 2** (Panel Lead: Deputy Secretary of Finance **John Markowitz**)  
*Objective: To continue the conversation from the 10am session by answering additional questions board members may have, including about the College Outcomes Portal.*

**Table 7: Accreditation** (Panel Leads: **Daniel Harrison**, Vice President of Academic Affairs, University of North Carolina System; and **Cameron Howell**, Staff to the Commission for Public Higher Education.  
*Objective: To better understand the Executive Order on accreditation and how boards can ensure that their efforts are more outcomes oriented.*

**Table 8: Role of Higher Ed in Economic Development** (Panel Leads: **Christy Tomlinson Morton**, Rector, Christopher Newport University; **Carrie Chenery**, Former Member, Virginia Tech BOV & VEDP Board of Directors, and Founder, Valley Pike Partners  
*Objective: To communicate how institutions can and should engage their local and state business communities.*

**Tables 9 & 10: Additional Topics of Interest** (Panel Leads: TBD)  
*Objective: To allow participants to receive information on additional topics that interest them but do not appear overtly on the agenda.*

**2:45 pm**      **Conclusions, Reflections and Appreciation**  
                  **John Littel**, Governor's Chief of Staff  
                  **Scott Fleming**, Executive Director, SCHEV

**3:00 pm**      **ADJOURNMENT**

# 2025 Boards of Visitors Orientation Attendees

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## Christopher Newport University

Jennifer Dunn  
Christy Morton  
Shannon Pierce  
Bryan Stephens

## George Mason University

Armand Alacbay  
Charles Stimson

## James Madison University

Jeff Bolander  
Terri Edwards  
Heather Hedrick  
Kay Coles James  
Joely Mauck  
Nikki Thacker  
Steve Smith  
Nicole Payla Wood

## Longwood University

Ian Bradley  
Charles Fagan  
Jaclyn McCaleb  
Michael Poliakoff  
Ron White

## Norfolk State University

Mike Andrews  
Dwayne Blake  
L.D. Britt  
Katrina Chase  
Teresa McNair Gladney  
James Jamieson  
Darrell Jordan  
Delbert Parks  
Edward Sanders

## Old Dominion University

Will Giandoni  
Kedar Lavingia  
Bob Tata  
Claire Wulf Winiarek  
D.R. Wyatt

## Radford University

William C. Davis  
Jennifer Wishon Gilbert  
Mary Anne Holbrook  
Tyler Lester  
Anthony Moore  
Jonathan Sweet

## Richard Bland College

James Dyke  
Samuel Parham  
Albert Poole  
John Rathbone  
Vicky Schray

## University of Mary Washington

Gregory Chambers  
Virginia Gentles  
Rachel Grezler  
Christopher Newman  
Terris Todd

## University of Virginia

Paul C. Harris  
Stephen Long  
John L. Nau, III  
David O. Okonkwo

## Virginia Commonwealth University

Neil Amin  
Lara Tyler Chambers  
Ellen Fitzsimmons  
Lori Jennings  
Dale Jones  
Randy Reynolds  
C.J. Sailor

## Virginia's Community Colleges

David Elmore  
Sadha Gong  
Mark Hourigan  
Wiley Johnson  
Bruce Meyer  
Anthony Miller  
Althea Robinson  
Jeremy Satterfield  
Terri Thompson  
Brett Vassey  
Joan Wodiska  
Michel Zajur

## Virginia Military Institute

Jamie Inman  
James Ring  
Kate Todd  
Nancy Williams Phillips

## Virginia State University

Victor Branch  
Joseph Chase  
Robert E. Denton, Jr.  
Morenike Miles  
Jon Moore  
Verdell Robinson  
Robert Thompson  
General Dennis Via

## Virginia Tech

Rosa Atkins  
Nancy Dye  
Theodore Hanson  
Robert Moser  
John Rocovich  
Margaret Ann Smith

## William & Mary

Eric Cantor  
Melissa Ballenger  
Hillary Waldron  
Ardine Williams

## Cabinet Members

The Hon. Stephen Cummings, Secretary of Finance  
The Hon. Aimee Guidera, Secretary of Education  
Zach Jacobs, Deputy Secretary of Education  
John Markowitz, Deputy Secretary of Finance

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## Special Guests

Rob Bell, Deputy Attorney General  
Reeve Bull, Virginia's Office of Regulatory Management  
Mary Kate Cary, University of Virginia  
Carrie Chenery, Valley Pike Partners  
Preston Cooper, American Enterprise Institute  
Kelly Crace, University of Virginia  
Kara Dillard, James Madison University  
Alan Gernhardt, FOIA Council  
Daniel Harrison, University of North Carolina System  
Todd Haymore, Hunton Law Firm  
Cameron Howell, Commission for Public Higher Education  
Wendy Kang, Virginia Office of Education Economics  
Chrysoula Malogianni, Old Dominion University  
Michael Maul, Department of Planning and Budget  
Jeff McClurken, University of Mary Washington  
Nathan Moberly, Assistant Attorney General  
Rose Pascarell, George Mason University  
Carl Rowan, George Mason University  
Marquett Smith, Verizon Wireless

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## State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

General John Jumper, Chair  
Scott Fleming, Executive Director, SCHEV  
Lindsay Fryer  
Jennifer Montague  
Stephen Taylor