



# VCU

## Board of Visitors

### INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 26, 2026

The Honorable Benjamin Lambert III Board Room

1213 East Clay Street,

Richmond, VA

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dr. Clifton Peay, *Chair*

Mr. Anthony Bedell

Mr. P2 Sandhu - *virtual pursuant to Code Section 2.2-3708.3(B)(4) personal matter where the member was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment - Richmond, VA*

Mr. Steven DeLuca, *Vice Rector*

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mr. C.J. Sailor, *Vice Chair*

Ms. Rooz Dadabhoy

#### **OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr. Neil Amin - *virtual pursuant to Code Section 2.2-3708.3(B)(4) personal matter where the member was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment - Richmond, VA*

Dr. Dale Jones

Dr. Kenneth Lipstock

Mr. Randy Reynolds, Jr.

#### **OTHERS PRESENT**

President Michael Rao

Mr. Edward McLaughlin, *Vice President and Director of Athletics*

Dr. Sofia Hiortt-Wright, *Deputy Director of Athletics*

Mr. Greg Burton, *Director of Communication and Engagement, Center for Sport Leadership*

Ms. Chelsea Gray, *Executive Director for Board and Executive Operations*

Ms. Stephanie Hamlett, *University Counsel*

Presidential Cabinet of VCU

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Peay called the meeting to order at 4:19 p.m.

The public was able to view the open session of the meeting via livestream at

<https://mssvideo.vcu.edu/BOV>.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

Chairman Peay mentioned the November 20, 2025 committee minutes were posted online and in BoardEffect and asked the committee if there were any questions or changes. Hearing none, on a motion duly made and seconded the committee approved the minutes. The meeting minutes are posted at <https://bov.vcu.edu/meetings/minutes/>.

### **VICE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS REPORT**

Mr. Ed McLaughlin, vice president and director of athletics provided his report which included an update on the academic success of the student athletes at VCU - including the 3.461 average GPA that was achieved in fall 2025, and that 82 student athletes have a 4.0 GPA. Mr. McLaughlin introduced Dr. Sofia Hiort-Wright, deputy director of athletics . She highlighted a career preparation program that the VCU Athletics program offered & the positive outcomes experienced by student athletes, including preparing them to interview. She discussed the benefits of the university's richly diverse student athlete population including the international student athletes, as well as their academic majors. Mr. McLaughlin then reviewed recent competitive success stories including men's golf, and then provided brief updates on ongoing financial challenges, as well as conference affiliation, NCAA rules enforcement, and the Athletic Village.

Mr. McLaughlin then introduced Mr. Greg Burton, director of communication and engagement from the Center for Sport Leadership, to provide an update on the sports culture of Richmond. He provided a media perspective on the engagement of the sports community in the city - reviewing sports consumption, participation and attendance through the lens of television viewership and live athletic events. He discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the Richmond sports market and highlighted VCU's pivotal role in elevating & growing the athletics culture of the city.

A copy of Mr. McLaughlin's presentation is attached and made a part hereof.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Dr. Peay moved that the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee of the Board of Visitors of Virginia Commonwealth University convene in closed session. Dr. Peay read the motion, which stated that the closed session would be convened under Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act for the discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, related to the development of an athletic village, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, specifically related to real property to be used for Intercollegiate Athletics; and Section 2.2-3711(A)(29) to discuss the award of public contracts, specifically for facilities related services that involve the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders or offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, more specifically related to Department of Intercollegiate Athletics' sports programs, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body; and under Section 2.2-3711 (A)(7) and (8) for the discussion of actual or probable litigation and of matters requiring the provision of legal advice by counsel, relating to an update on potential and current litigation in state and federal courts and other legal matters relating to pending investigations, relating to potential litigation and other legal matters relating to certain contractual matters.

The motion was seconded and was approved unanimously.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND CERTIFICATION**

Following the closed session, the public was invited to return to the meeting. Dr. Peay called the meeting to order. The chair reminded members that the personnel matters discussed in closed session are confidential. Sharing confidential personnel information may give rise to a violation of privacy claim against the university. Similarly, the board should treat all other matters discussed in closed session as confidential. On a motion duly made and seconded the following resolution of certification was approved by a roll call vote:

Resolution of Certification

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee of the Board of Visitors of Virginia Commonwealth University certifies that, to the best of each member’s knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under this chapter were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed session was convened were heard, discussed or considered by the Committee.

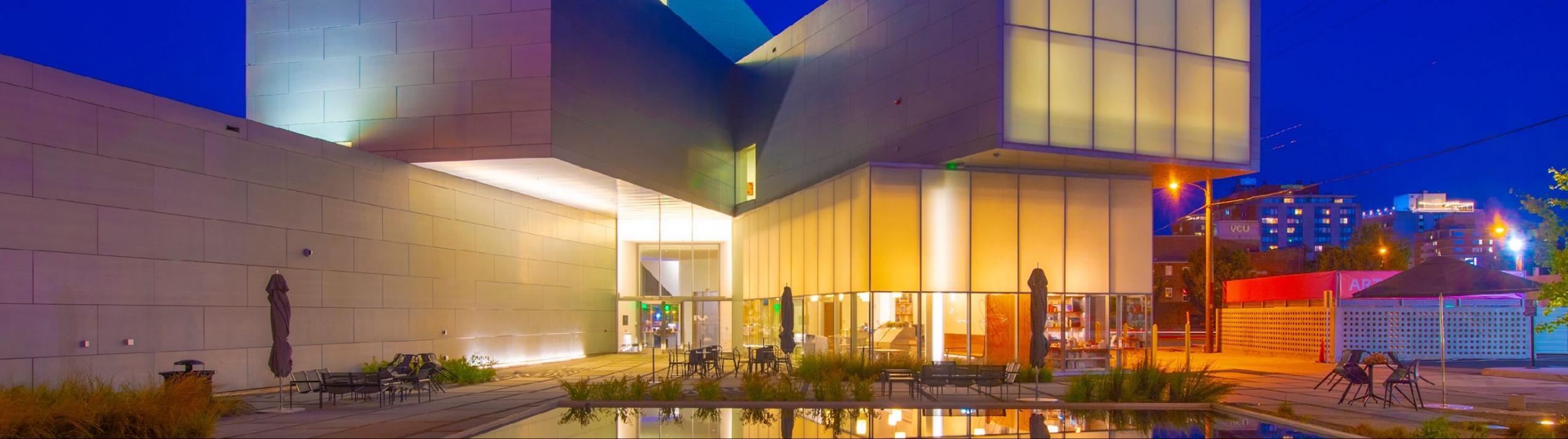
<b><u>Vote</u></b>	<b><u>Ayes</u></b>	<b><u>Nays</u></b>
Dr. Clifton Peay, <i>Chair</i>	X	
Mr. Anthony Bedell	X	
Mr. P2 Sandhu	X	
Mr. Steven DeLuca, <i>Vice Rector</i>	X	

All members present responding affirmatively, the resolution of certification was adopted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Rao asked that at the next meeting Mr. McLaughlin report on the athletics national landscape.

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the committee meeting at 5:02 p.m.



# Intercollegiate Athletics Committee

February 2026



**WE ARE THE UNCOMMON.**

# ACTION ITEMS

- November 20, 2025 Minutes

# INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS UPDATE

- **Academic Success**
- **Competitive Success**
- **NCAA Changes**
- **Future Challenges**
- **Sport Culture in the city**

# Academic Success

- 3.461 Fall 2025 GPA
- 240 student-athletes on AD Honor Roll
- 82 student-athletes with 4.0 GPA
- Women's tennis with the highest GPA: 3.919

# Competitive Success

- **Men's Golf Won Last Two Tournaments**
  - **Monterrey Collegiate Classic**
    - Carson Looney and Braden O'Grady finished 1-2
  - **Bentwater Intercollegiate**
    - Tanner Cadieux finished 1st

# Future Challenges

- Financial Challenges
- Conference Affiliation
- NCAA Rules Enforcement Uncertainty
- Athletic Village Timeline

# NCAA Changes

- No Congressional action on any NCAA initiatives
- Collegiate Sports Commission work on vetting NIL deals outside of revenue sharing
- State AG objections to CSC

# Richmond's Sports Culture



# Consumption Participation Attendance





46	Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem	766,980
47	Oklahoma City	762,700
48	Albuquerque-Santa Fe	708,050
49	Louisville	702,310
50	New Orleans	672,790
51	Memphis	666,300
52	Providence-New Bedford	662,810
53	Fort Myers-Naples	641,850
54	Buffalo	637,090
55	Fresno-Visalia	636,260
56	Richmond-Petersburg	625,380
57	Mobile-Pensacola-Fort Walton Beach	605,340
58	Little Rock-Pine Bluff	590,980
59	Wilkes Barre-Scranton-Hazleton	589,190
60	Knoxville	584,100
61	Tulsa	575,780
62	Albany-Schenectady-Troy	575,590
63	Lexington	517,660
64	Dayton	498,200
65	Tucson-Sierra Vista	497,660
66	Spokane	496,260

**“The Richmond-Petersburg television market over-indexes in sports viewership from NFL to NASCAR to College Basketball.”**

*Source: Scripps Media, Inc.*



## Richmond TV Viewership Rankings

**2024-25 College Basketball Regular Season #19**  
**(CBS, ESPN, ESPN2)**

**2025 NCAA Tournament #18**

*Source: Scripps Media, Inc. & Nielsen Media*

## Richmond TV Viewership Rankings

Super Bowl LIX (Chiefs/Eagles) **#4**

2026 AFC & NFC Title Games **#9**

Sunday Night Football **#14**

Monday Night Football **#22**

*Source: Scripps Media, Inc. & Nielsen Media*

## Richmond TV Viewership Rankings

Army – Navy Game

#7

Daytona 500 (last 3 years)

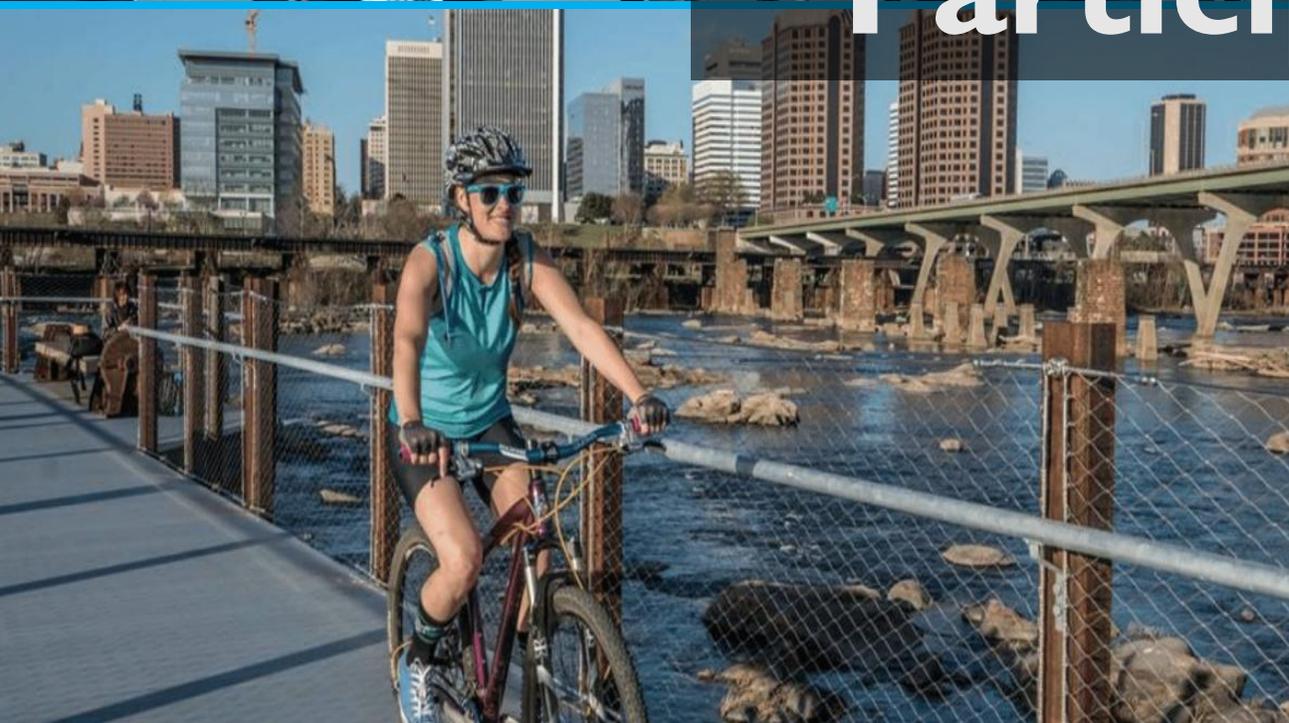
#10-15

*Source: Scripps Media, Inc. & Nielsen Media*

**“Despite Richmond’s moderate overall market size and no professional team, the market continually outperforms larger metropolitan areas.”**

*Source: Scripps Media, Inc.*





# Participation

**YMCA of  
GREATER RICHMOND**







### **Previously Held in Richmond**

- **1994 Women's Final Four**
- **NCAA Men's Soccer Final Four  
1995, 1996, 1997, 1998**
- **NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament – 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Rd  
1990, 1996**





**Sports Tourism ranks #1  
in economic impact in Richmond  
Region.**



**70% of total room bookings in  
Richmond Region for FY 24-25  
attributed to sporting events.**





**Sports & Entertainment  
Authority**



## Top Events in 2025

- National Wheelchair Basketball Championship
- USTAF National Cross-Country Championships
- Atlantic 10 Women's Basketball Tournament
- Jefferson Cup

# Attendance









**That  
School  
7 miles  
away**







# Richmond's Sports Culture Summary – A SWOT Analysis



## Strengths

- ***Local fans love watching sports...on TV.***

RVA is watching their favorite teams and sports on TV – specifically College Basketball - at a rate well beyond similar markets and above many large metropolitan markets.

- ***The Richmond Region is an active community .***

RVA is above average in both youth and adult participation.

Local Sports Tourism efforts are fueling that trend & bringing other sports fans to our region.

- ***The VCU brand is extremely strong in the Richmond Region.***

Ram Nation is embedded throughout our community.

An aerial view of a large, empty arena with yellow seats and a basketball court. The arena is mostly empty, with a few people visible on the court. The seats are arranged in a semi-circle around the court. The court has a basketball hoop and backboard. There are banners hanging from the ceiling, including one for Kroger. The arena is well-lit, and the overall atmosphere is quiet and empty.

# Richmond's Sports Culture Summary – A SWOT Analysis

## Weaknesses

- *No “Major League” sports team & No Power 4 Football*

Richmond has traditionally been viewed as a “minor league” sports town. The decline of NASCAR has hurt Richmond's sports culture.

- *RVA's Signature sporting events are largely participatory*

Monument Ave 10k, Richmond Marathon, Jefferson Cup

# Richmond's Sports Culture Summary – A SWOT Analysis



## Opportunities

- ***New Construction of Sports Facilities***

VCU Sports Village, “New” Coliseum, CarMax Park, multi use facilities and fields.

- ***VCU - Your other favorite sports team***

Recruit alumni of out of state schools to be part of Ram Nation  
***Men's basketball = 13 NCAA Appearances in last 20 years***  
***No losing seasons since 1999***

# Richmond's Sports Culture Summary – A SWOT Analysis

An aerial view of an empty basketball arena. The seats are arranged in a large, tiered bowl, with yellow seats in the front and black seats in the back. The basketball court is visible in the center, with a basketball hoop and backboard. A scoreboard is visible at the top of the arena, displaying "text KROGER to 90501" and "text KROGER to 90561". The arena is surrounded by various banners and advertisements, including "VCU" and "KROGER".

## Threats

- ***At-home viewing experience***

The convenience and variety of watching sports at home is a major factor in preventing local fans from attending more live sporting events.

- ***Media fragmentation***

Sports fans get their news and information from a variety of sources and outlets - both traditional and digital - making it challenging to rally fans around a signature event or team.

- ***Sports & Entertainment Competition***

Consumers have more choices than ever for the discretionary income and recreational time.



# VCU Center for Sport Leadership



- **Ranked # 8 in North America**
- **Ranked #11 in the World**
- **#1 Ranked Alumni Network 2024 & 2025**

**CLOSED SESSION**