

**Virginia Museum of Natural History  
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting  
All – Virtual  
May 12, 2025, 2 PM**



Attending: Dr. Melany Clark (Board of Trustees, Chair)  
Dr. Art Evans  
Ms. Lisa Carter  
Dr. David Furth  
Ms. Cathy Hincker  
Dr. Joe Keiper (ex officio)  
Mr. Zach Ryder (staff)  
Mr. Ryan Barber (staff)  
Mr. Jonathan Martin (staff)  
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (staff)

Not Attending: Mr. Cord Cothran  
Ms. Barbara Truman (VMNH Foundation)

### **Welcome**

In absence of a committee chair, the consensus was that Dr. Melany Clark would chair today's meeting. A new chair for this committee will be established at the next Board meeting, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Clark called the meeting to order at 2 PM.

A motion was made by Ms. Carter and seconded by Dr. Evans to add new Board members Ms. Cathy Hincker, and Dr. David Furth to the Strategic Planning Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Ms. Carter to approve the November 15, 2024 minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee. Dr. Evans seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

### **AAM Process and Expected Timeline**

Feedback from the AAM reaccreditation visit should be available in June. This feedback will be another element to incorporate in strategic plan development. Today's goal is to do a high-level review of the points previously discussed and add any additional feedback. The 2025-2030 Strategic Plan will be voted on by the full board at the November meeting.

### **Overview of Previous Strategic Planning Discussions**

The committee heard an overview of the strategic plan working document from Dr. Keiper. Ms. Carter asked about the language used in the Federal grant for the proposed Early Learning Center and if there were any plans for renaming the Douglas Avenue facility. Dr. Clark suggested including professional development into multiple headings.

Dr. Keiper highlighted incorporating "storytelling" as exhibits are refreshed and developed. Dr. Evans suggested moving the bullet point, "Review Research Associates and update based on contemporary relationships" currently in the Educational Impact section to the Research and Collections section. Other board

members asked about the appropriate timing for proposing a new wing to the Martinsville facility and the potential of purchasing adjoining property.

Dr. Evans spoke about expanding our advisory board to assist in recruiting Board Members and Research Associates, to assist with media presence, and other projects as necessary. Dr. Keiper will bring this to the Board at the next two meetings. The committee also had a general discussion about engaging Trustee members and having additional collaboration opportunities for the Board of Trustees and Foundation Board members.

Dr. Keiper concluded by saying comments made at today's meeting will be incorporated into a revised strategic plan working document which will be presented at the May Board of Trustees meeting. The full Board will have the opportunity for additional comments or suggestions during the meeting. As the plan is refined, specific action items and measures of success will be added. Dr. Evans asked that the 2020-2025 strategic plan be forwarded to the committee.

### **Open Discussion**

Dr. Kieper reminded the Board that we will receive feedback from AAM that will need to be incorporated into the plan, so the next meeting of this committee should be in late July or early August. Dr. Clark also suggested that the Strategic Planning Committee meet in November following the plan's approval by the full Board to discuss the ways in which they can continue to contribute to meeting the goals established by the Strategic Plan.

### **Adjournment**

Dr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 3:00 PM.