

**Education Committee of the Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting**  
**Saturday, May 17, 2025, 9:00 AM**  
**Virginia Museum of Natural History**  
**Fully In-Person Meeting**

**Present:** Mr. Nathan Sanford  
Ms. Lauren Hall  
Ms. Christy Deatherage (ex officio)  
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (staff)

**Absent:** Ms. Emma Ito

Ms. Christy Deatherage opened the meeting at 9 AM with a welcome to the Board members in attendance. It was determined there was a quorum present.

Ms. Hall made a motion to approve February 1, 2025, minutes and Mr. Sanford seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Deatherage reported that the number of students served was lower this quarter due to inclement weather that impacted museum visits and outreach. Many of the visits were rescheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, so all numbers are expected to stabilize. Ms. Deatherage further noted that visits were strategically planned in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to allow our newest educator the opportunity to become acclimated to the museum program format.

Ms. Deatherage also reported that sleepover events at the museum have been gaining in popularity with groups of all ages and interests. A sleepover event begins in the evening and includes a pizza dinner plus 2.5 hours of programming. Following the program, a movie, typically, "Night at the Museum" is shown in the Hall of Ancient Life. In the morning students are served a continental breakfast and certificates of completion.

Ms. Deatherage shared a thank you note from the teacher of the Franklin County Adaptive Education class which praised the museum's facilities and exhibits for those with mobility issues and vision impairments.

Ms. Deatherage reported that educators have completed this school year's programming for the Martinsville/Henry County after 3 programs. Work continues however, as educators will provide summer programs at various sites throughout Henry County and Martinsville.

Ms. Deatherage reported that professional development was provided for two educators, Jordan and Annabelle as they attended an Environmental education conference in Roanoke.

A teacher appreciation event was held at the museum on May 1<sup>st</sup> with over 100 educators attending. The local chamber of commerce solicited prizes for attendees and explained the details of a grant available to teachers. The museum received a lot of positive feedback from this event.

Ms. Deatherage explained that summer education publications and outreach are already in full motion. The summer education guide is ready for publication and the camp in June is already full. Each camp has room for 16 students. As something new, staff are incorporating field trips to Fairystone State Park to study micro invertebrates and to Philpott Dam to study engineering and fluid dynamics.

Ms. Deatherage is recruiting a retired science educator (Rosemary Wagoner) from the Waynesboro area to become our newest outreach educator. Ms. Deatherage has known Ms. Wagoner for many years and is confident with her background and connections, she will be an asset to the program.

Ms. Hall asked about educators in other regions of Virginia to which Ms. Deatherage explained the educators are chosen when relationships are established. Right now, there is an educator in the Charlottesville area and in the Southeastern area of the state.

When asked about funding for programs, Ms. Deatherage replied that the work of seeking grants is continual. Corporate support is also a critical component for all educational programs. Our locality, Henry County provides over \$27,000 in funding and Martinsville City provides over \$10,000 each year in support of the education program. Even with existing funding streams, the program continually pursues grant opportunities.

Ms. Deatherage lastly reported that technology in the three classrooms has been recently upgraded to include three 85-inch flat screen monitors which are linked to the three classroom computers.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45.