



Explore@RC Governing Board Meeting Minutes

Date: September 25, 2025

Time: 3:00 – 4:30 pm

Location: Kime Room, The Colket Center, Roanoke College

The Explore@RC Governing Board meeting convened with Natasha Watts leading the meeting. In-person attendees included Natasha Watts (Explore@RC Executive Director, Roanoke College), Heather Johnson (Sr. Director of Grants and Strategic Partnerships, Roanoke College), Kimble Reynolds (Attorney), Christina Rose (Coordinator of Student Services, City of Salem Schools), Sally Southard (Alumni), Lisa Stoneman (RC-RV Director, Roanoke College), Kathy Wolfe (Dean, Roanoke College), Becca Goldstein (Student Success Coordinator, Roanoke College) and Debbie Carpenter (Administrative Assistant, Roanoke College). In attendance virtually (via Microsoft Teams) was Gary Skeen (ODU, ex officio member). Absent members were Jennifer Dean, Lisa Earp, Curtis Hicks, Karen Sanzo and April Woodward.

Dr. Watts opened the meeting with introductions from everyone in attendance. The group discussed updates as the first official year of operation begins for the Explore@RC program.

There are currently 24 students participating in the program, and we will continue recruiting to grow the Spring 2026 cohort to a maximum of 40 students.

Explore@RC currently has Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Salem and Roanoke County school systems and continue to pursue execution of a MOU with Roanoke City School.

The program purchased a passenger van and has been able to address many transportation needs; however, transportation remains a challenge given the varying direction and distances from campus of participating students and prospective students.

Dr. Watts explained that she and Becca Goldstein advised approximately 50 students this year; however, high school class time and graduation requirements, Roanoke College class availability and transportation issues prevented about 50 % of the students spoken to from continuing with the program. She also reported that the program appeals to homeschooled students, because they don't have as many scheduling limitations. Approximately two-thirds of the participating students for Fall 2025 are homeschooled.

The program recruited 39 Roanoke College faculty to complete the professional development requirements of the Virginia Department of Education, so they could become licensed to teach dual enrollment students.

The program hosted a STEAM camp in June 2025 as a marketing tool, and it was a positive experience. We will continue to promote summer camps going forward.

The remainder of the meeting was dedicated to reviewing and making recommendations for the Governing Board's Bylaws. Dr. Watts shared a template from a peer lab school as a place to begin.

The Board made the following recommendations:

Add page numbers to the final document.

Incorporate the Explore@RC name throughout the document and assure all references to Statutes and the Code of Virginia were properly cited (Article 1, Section 4: 22.1-349.1 and Article II, Section 4: 24.2-230 through 24.2-238).

Article I

Section 2 should be updated to include the location of the program.

Section 3 will be amended to add Old Dominion University as our collaborative partner and reflect their role as fiscal agent. It was also recommended that the Explore@RC mission statement should be added as the overall goal of the program.

Article II

There was discussion about deleting this article to avoid confusion. Gary Skeens, ODU will send examples to Natasha Watts for wording samples.

Article III Governing Board/Membership

Section 1 should list the number of members, and it was recommended that the number should range from 7 – 10.

It was noted that all Explore@RC staff will serve as non-voting members.

Members would include community leaders (voting member), a parent (voting member), Roanoke County Public School representative (voting member), Roanoke College faculty (voting member), Sr. Director of Grants and Strategic Partnerships (non-voting member) and the Administrative Assistant for Explore@RC (non-voting member). It was discussed that ex-officio members (Old Dominion University staff) were not voting members.

Sections 3 and 4 should spell out what the appointment process will be, how vacancies are filled and transition protocol for the end of the 2-year term.

Section 5 should address the ability to meet and vote virtually since this can affect whether a quorum is present.

Section 8 should include the number of members and the terms (in-person or virtual) to represent a quorum. In other words, is a simple majority (greater than 50%) of total membership sufficient.

Article IV Committees

The group decided that a parent advisory and a student advisory committee would be beneficial.

Article V Officers

Section 2 b. Vice-Chair

Consideration will be given to the K-12 designee.

Section 2 c. Clerk

It was determined that the Administrative Assistant for Explore@RC will be the Clerk.

Section 2 d. Treasurer

It was discussed that a Treasurer/Financial Reviewer position should be added with designated duties to oversee the financial aspects of the program. This would include review of the income and expenditures of the Planning, Start-up and Operational grants. It was determined that the Sr. Director of Grants and Strategic Partnerships could not fill this role since it would not achieve checks and balances.

Section 3

The Board should consider the sufficiency of a two-year term and whether staggered terms are better for seasoned continuity.

The final version of the Bylaws should include a statement showing when the bylaws were adopted by the Explore@RC Laboratory School Governing Board at the named meeting date and the number of votes for and against them.

Attachments/Addendum

It was recommended that the Board should maintain a record of the contact information for each Board member, which will include their title, role they fill on the Board, email and other contact information and the expiration of their term.

Dr. Watts stated that an updated version of the bylaws will be circulated to Board members by November 20th, so it could be reviewed prior to voting on the adoption of the document at the next meeting.

The next meeting date will be Thursday, December 4, 2025, from 9 – 10:30 am on the Roanoke College campus. The Governing Board will vote on adoption of the bylaws at that meeting, so in-person attendance is important.