

Saving Virginia Wesleyan, LLC

Timeline

Background

Virginia Wesleyan's Board of Trustees, in a closed meetings, voted in February and May of 2025 to change the name of Virginia Wesleyan University to Batten University. The vote was not disclosed until August. There appeared to be a lack of transparency, fiduciary duties, and due diligence. The name change surprised many of the university's stakeholders. It was difficult to develop dialogue with the administration.

October 2025

A group of concerned alumni organizes Saving Virginia Wesleyan, LLC and retains Durette, Arkema, Gerson & Gill. It was apparent that legal support was going to be necessary to engage the VW administration. Christine Williams, a VW alumnus, takes on responsibility for our case.

October 27, 2025

A letter was drafted to the VW Board of Trustees addressing the concerns of the alumni. The topics included the secret vote, due diligence, fiduciary responsibility, and transparency. There was concern noted for potential breaches of bylaws and formative documents. The objective was to obtain a meeting to engage the administration on the need for a name change. The letter was delivered to every board member, President Miller, along with Jane and Frank Batten.

November 12, 2025

The VW Board of Trustees retains O'Hagan Meyer and sends response to the October 27 document. The President, a group of Trustees, and Daniel Stillman (O'Hagan Meyer) agree to meet with Saving VW, LLC. The meeting is to be held in the law offices of Robert McFarland of McGuire Woods, LLP. They will propose an agenda. VW LLC is permitted to appoint one or two representatives. "Members of the press and media will not be present; nor will they or the public be advised of the meeting beforehand, including social media." Transparency is a consist issue.

November 19, 2025

Christine Williams responds to Daniel Stillman. We requested who would be attending for the VW BOT. We requested that a representative of the Batten family be invited.

Our response includes 8 bullet points of agenda items that we believed were critical to the discussion. This request included rationale for the name change, due diligence and research documentation.

December 5, 2025

Daniel Stillman responds with attendees for VW. “As the decision to rename the University was made by the Board of Trustees, Ms. Batten will not be attending”. Daniel includes a proposed agenda for the meeting. It is designed in such a fashion that the group would be presenting to the LLC members.

December 8, 2025

There is an email exchange between Christine Williams and Danial Stillman. The LLC confirms our member participation. Again, we requested a Batten family representative. We also questioned the need for Dr. Black and Kelly Cordova to attend versus other board members. The format of the meeting will be a “robust” discussion vs. a presentation.

December 11, 2025

Meeting between Saving Virginia Wesleyan LLC (3 attendees) and a group of VW Administrators and BOT Members (7 attendees). President Miller and the board members were not convincing on why a name change was needed. “Batten University is the name”. No other names were considered.

December 22, 2025

Christine Williams sends meeting follow-up letter to Danial Stillman. We were surprised that there was not a mandate for the name change. We were also concerned about the expressed desire to downplay the Methodist affiliation. It was troubling that there was no current due diligence related to the name change. We formally asked the Board to either call a special meeting to reconsider their vote or to do so at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

January 14, 2026

Daniel Stillman sent response to the December 22 communication. “My client disagrees with your characterizations of its actions and its reasons for renaming the University. The Board acted squarely within its authority. There was no support for a reconsideration of the May, 2025 vote.”

