Greetings from Associations of Higher Education
on the occasion of
The Inauguration of President Bradley W. Bateman
Saturday, April 26, 2014

Kenneth P. Ruscio
Chair, Association of American Colleges and Universities and President, Washington and Lee University

It is an honor to be a part of this special day in the life of a truly extraordinary college, one with a rich and complex history. I bring greetings and good wishes from the associations of higher education, an assigned duty I will fulfill in just a moment.

But with the privilege of the podium I shamelessly can’t resist extending a hand from a kindred institution over the mountain, one nestled in the Shenandoah Valley. As an alumnus of that institution and a student back in the days when this college and mine were, shall we say, differently configured, the drive over the mountain this morning was a nostalgic one, a personal reminder of a time when the ties between us were tilted towards the social rather than the academic and athletic.

If that institutional bond has changed over the years, it is today no less meaningful. We look to an even stronger and closer relationship in the years to come, and on behalf of everyone at Washington and Lee University, I wish Randolph College and President Bateman many successful years together.

Colleges like Randolph are part of an extraordinary system of higher education nationally and here in the Commonwealth. Amidst the great diversity of institutions, from community colleges to professional schools to research universities and liberal arts colleges there are ties that bind all of us—a commitment to all our students and a commitment to excellence.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities, whose Board I now chair, is a national voice for liberal learning and inclusive excellence. Founded in 1915, it celebrates its Centennial next year as the organization defining what higher education means for a democratic society.

As a member of AAC&U, Randolph College joins over 1300 other colleges and universities to advance our mutual institutional interests and the interests of the thousands of student we serve. President Bateman’s voice has already been heard within the association. A passionate and articulate spokesperson for the liberal arts, he has reminded all of us during this challenging time in higher education of our deepest purposes. We educate students to be productive citizens—productive, yes, for themselves and society, but citizens also, dedicated to the common good and the well-being of those around them.

Here in the Commonwealth, Randolph College is also deeply involved in the work of both the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges and The Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia, represented today by their extraordinarily effective leaders, Tom Morris and Robert Lambeth. Again, President Bateman’s forceful voice has already been heard on behalf of private higher education here in the
Commonwealth. Virginia is blessed with one of the most effective systems of private higher education in the country, and Randolph College is one of the jewels in that crown.

AAC&U, VFIC, and CICV and the many other associations Randolph supports wish you well, President Bateman. We welcome you warmly to the discussions about higher education here in Virginia and nationally. We congratulate both you and Randolph College and we embrace the promise of your presidency and the future of Randolph College.