

Chamber Education Committee / Business Advisory Council Minutes
April 28, 2026

Location Host: Malone University Brehme Centennial Center, Conference
Center 2600 Cleveland Ave NW, Canton, OH 44709

Attendance

Rick Baxter	Theresa Benzel	Dr. Bryan Boatright	Martin Bowe	Shawn Braman
Scott Campbell	Joseph Chaddock	Matt Cola	Jeff Dafler	Chris DiLoreto
Shaun Eller	Sharla Elton	Robert Gress	Gary Kandel	Jennifer Kessel
John Richard	Tiffany Rogers	Josh Lehman	Brent May	Robert McBride
Touby McCammon	Adam Mckenzie	Dan Swisher	Jeffrey Talbert	Lisa Talbert
Christine Taylor	Stephanie Werren	Matt Whitted	Brett Yeagley	Matt Ziders
Jenna Edwards	Gregory J. Miller	Dr. Jason Courter	Dr. Rebecca Eagle-Malone	Dr. Steve Lane
Kaitlyn Cowley				

1. Call to Order. Welcome and Approval of the Agenda and 3/24 Minutes

Dr. John Richard, President, Stark Education Partnership, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. John requested a motion to approve the 3/24 minutes. Chris DiLoreto made the motion to approve the minutes, and Joe Chaddock seconded. Upon being put to a vote, the motion carried.

2. Malone University Welcome = Gregory J. Miller, Ph. D., President, Malone University.

Gregory J. Miller, Ph. D., emphasized the unique mission of Malone University, focusing on Biblical faith and intellectual maturity while highlighting that enrollment is 22% above last year’s total at this time. Malone University has seen record-breaking giving for four consecutive years, surpassing the annual giving goal by mid-March.

3. Zoo & Wildlife Biology Program Presentation – Dr. Jason Courter, Chair of Natural and Health Sciences, Drs. Rebecca Eagle-Malone and Steve Lane, Co-directors of the Zoo and Wildlife Biology Program

Dr. Jason Courter introduced the zoo and wildlife biology program, emphasizing its focus on organismal biology and rigorous science education. The program has about 80 students, making it one of the largest majors at Malone University. Dr. Courter stated the program is Christian in both name and practice, incorporating concepts of creation care and environmental stewardship. Students receive hands-on animal care experience, with junior and senior students training and

overseeing first- and second-year students. Dr. Courter highlighted mentoring and personal relationships with faculty members, which have contributed to the success of the program with many graduates finding employment in animal care and related fields. Students participate in internships and research projects, gaining valuable experience and networking opportunities.

Dr. Steve Lane discussed the field experiences offered to students, including invasive-species removal and lake-ecology sampling. Dr. Lane stated that the program offers unique opportunities, such as scuba certification and coral reef restoration in South Florida. Dr. Lane explained the importance of hands-on experience and external validation for students and mentioned Malone's research project on the impact of microplastics on plants and insects.

4. Beech Creek Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve Presentation – Kaitlyn Cowley, Executive Director, Beech Creek Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve

Kaitlyn Cowley provided an overview of Beech Creek and its programs at site sitting on 185 acres in Alliance, Ohio. Beech Creek has many offerings, including a butterfly garden, nature playground, four hiking trails, daily field trips, summer camps and special events for students and the community. The garden has a partnership with Malone University, providing opportunities for students to present and conduct research opportunities and internships that enhance their educational experience. Kaitlyn also stated that Beech Creek is open year around.

Canton Regional Chamber Educator Bootcamp Update – Christine Taylor, Vice President, Programs and Partnerships, Stark Education Partnership

Christine gave a quick update that teacher registrations for the Educator Bootcamp filled up in four days and that there is a wait list.

5. Adjourn & Tour Timken Science Hall • Malone Zoo

John Richard requested a motion to adjourn the meeting and offered a tour of the Malone Zoo to attendees. Matt Whitted made a motion to adjourn at 12:41PM.