

## MINUTES

Thursday, November 2, 2023

3:00-4:30 p.m.

A meeting of the University Council was held on Thursday, November 2, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. in the VCU Cabell Library, conference room 303 and via Zoom.

The following members and alternates were present:

**Officers:** President Michael Rao, Meredith Weiss, and Scott Street

**Administration:** Scott Breuninger, Hernan Bucheli, Karol Gray, Aaron Hart, Catherine Ingrassia, and Alison Miller

**Faculty:** Chrisa Arcan, Julie Arendt, Brian Brown, Lisa Brown, Sarah Jane Brubaker, Paul Bukevakis, Amita Chin, Jody Cox, Alexis Crawford, Katherine Dabney, Kostadin Damevski, Hope Ginsberg, Jacob Goffnett, Nancy Husson, Kanako Iwanaga, Cassie DeSena Jacobs, Nancy Jallo, Amie Knapp, Shillpa Naavaal, Bettina Peacemaker, Peter Pidcoe, VaCora Rainey, Maria Rivera, Valerie Robnolt, Michael Rosenberg, Christy Tyndall, and Stacy Wahl

**Postdoctoral Scholar:** Eda Kaseli

**Classified Staff:** Melissa Burton, Holly Dean, Brogan King, Louise Putnam, Hannah Steighner, and Katina Velentzas

**Students:** Mmesoma Azi, Lana Birdwell, Zachary Hodgen, Tobi Ojo, and Sincere Slade-Reading, and Mya Rogers

**Ex-Officio and Guests:** Andrew Arroyo, Faye Belgrave, Rob DiRenzo, David Edwards, James Gahagan, Irene Herold, Grant Heston, Karen Helderman, Cindy Kirkwood, Charles Klink, Pam Lepley, Gabe Lewis, Cindy Martin, Brett Massimino, Bridget McInnes, Sarah Seashols-Williams, Mangala Subramaniam, and Stephanie Walcott

### 1. President's Report

President Rao welcomed Council members to the third UC meeting of the academic year. Dr. Rao discussed recent annual strategic retreats with the VCU Health Board of Directors and the Board of Visitors, noting conversations were really energizing and positive. We have a strong partnership with our boards to advance the missions of the university and of the health system. He told the boards that VCU is having the best year we have ever had, and it is because of the work of our faculty and staff.

Dr. Rao noted that VCU has the most student-centered faculty and staff of any research university that he knows. That is reflected in several milestones, set years ago, that we have crossed in recent months.

We have a record freshman class this fall (4,600) and had a record number of applications (20,435).

- That would not have happened without the work of our faculty and staff, bringing more students to VCU
- At our board retreats, plans and strategies were discussed that will continue attracting this level of student interest.

2023 saw \$465 million in sponsored research funding, an all-time high for VCU – and an increase of 71 percent in just five years.

- Again, that happens because of our dedicated research faculty and staff, as well as students – grad students and undergraduates have opportunities to get involved in research and cross-discipline learning
- Research is a core part of our mission, and increases VCU's economic impact – now \$10 billion
- Top 50 NSF public universities for research last year – we will be higher this year

U.S. News and World Report designated VCU as one of the nation's 20 most innovative public universities.

- This recognition speaks to our mission and identity as an accessible, public national research institution (UIA member)
- It reflects and improves our growing national reputation (ex. Chronicle)
- Also driven by faculty/staff and students

Record fundraising this year (\$271 million)

- Helps us meet our mission of access and excellence, and provide scholarships

Additional milestones:

- VCU Massey comprehensive status
- CHoR (8/10 subspecialties in the top 50)
- VCU's M4ALL has become foundation for a core part of VA's current economy
- Athletics program with a strong national profile (consecutive NCAA appearances) with a national caliber coach.

Dr. Rao noted that all of these accomplishments would not be possible without our faculty and staff. He thanked everyone noting that he gets to report on it and talk about

it, but it is the faculty, staff and often our students who are the ones who make these things happen.

## **2. Minutes**

The minutes of the October 5, 2023 were approved.

## **3. Committee Reports**

The Academic Affairs Committee presented the following Organizational and programmatic changes, and new and revised policy proposals:

- **Proposal to establish a new BS degree program in Digital Forensics and Incident Response**—Dr. Sarah Seashols-Williams, Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director, Department of Forensic Science, College of Humanities and Sciences, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. With 92% “yes” votes, and 8% abstentions, a motion was made and seconded to accept and move the proposal forward for review and approval by the VCU Board of Visitors.
- **Proposal to establish a new MS degree program in Digital Forensics and Incident Response**—Dr. Sarah Seashols-Williams, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. With 81% “yes” votes, 14% “no” votes and 6% abstentions, a motion was made and seconded to accept and move the proposal forward for review and approval by the VCU Board of Visitors.
- **Proposal to establish a new BS degree program in Supply Chain Management**—Dr. Brett Massimino, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Supply Chain Management and Analytics, School of Business, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. With 90% “yes” votes and 10% abstentions, a motion was made and seconded to accept and move the proposal forward for review and approval by the VCU Board of Visitors.
- **Proposal to establish a new MS degree program in Data Science**—Dr. David Edwards, Professor and Chair, Department of Statistical Sciences and Operations Research, College of Humanities and Sciences and Dr. Bridget McInnes, Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director, Department of Computer Science, College of Engineering, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. With 85% “yes” votes, 8% “no” votes and 8% abstentions, a motion was made and seconded to accept and move the proposal forward for review and approval by the VCU Board of Visitors.

#### **4. University Policy Committee**

- Karen Helderman discussed the committee and noted their first meeting is scheduled for November 6, 2023. A general discussion followed.

#### **5. Faculty Affairs Committee**

- Valerie Robholt discussed the committee and noted their first meeting was held on October 19, 2023, and they are scheduled to meet following the UC meeting. A general discussion followed.

#### **6. Staff Affairs Committee**

- Meredith Weiss discussed the committee, noting the committee will be electing a chair soon. A general discussion followed.

#### **7. Student Affairs Committee**

- Aaron Hart discussed the committee and introduced Gabe Willis, associate vice president and dean of student advocacy. A general discussion followed.

#### **8. Constituent Reports**

- Sincere Slade-Reading provided an SGA Report, and a general discussion followed.
- Maria Rivera provided a Faculty Senate Report, and a general discussion followed.
- Brogan King provided a Staff Senate Report, and a general discussion followed.

#### **9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:28 p.m.