**D R A F T**

**MINUTES**

**Thursday, December 3, 2020**

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

A meeting of the University Council was held on Thursday, December 3 at 3 p.m. via Zoom.

The following members and alternates were present:

**Officers:** President Michael Rao, Meredith Weiss and Holly Alford

**Administration:** Peter Buckley, Cathleen Burke, Jay Davenport, Jean Giddens, Karol Kain Gray, Arthur Kellerman, Tomikia LeGrande, Pam Lepley, and Constance Relihan

**Faculty:** Deidra Arrington,Sompop Bencharit,Michael Broda,Brian Brown,Paul Bukaveckas,Jason Callahan,Ross Collin, Mariah Crilley, Rodney Dyer, James Ferri, Josh Galligan, Denia Lee Hing, Aniket Jadhav, Nancy Jallo, Melissa Jamerson, Kim Curry-Lourenco, Hermine Maes, Jacqueline Smith-Mason, Tom McNulty, Edward Millner, Jonathan Moore, Nicole Omecene, Lauren Pamulapati, Carrie Peterson, Mary Pettiette, Christine Remmers, Valerie Robnolt, Scott Street, Dong Sun, Katharine Tibbetts, Christy Tyndall,Matt Wallin, David Webber, Christine Wynd, and Wenli Yan

**Postdoctoral Scholar:** Sean Koebley

**Classified staff**: Brian Artis, Holly Dean, Michelle Hawkins, Pamela Mason, Brian McNeill, Alex McWhorter, and Karen Mullins

**Students**: Dan Buth, Alvin Chang, and William Markle

**Ex-Officio and Guests**: Gypsy Denzine, Miles Gordon, Alex Henson, Kimberle Jacobs, Alison Jones, Jacqueline Kniska, Teresa Knott, Carol Ann Lawson, Beth McCarthy, Karen McIntyre, David Morefield, Aashir Nasim, Carla Nye, Carrie Petersen, Susan Robb, Reuban Rodriguez, Michael Rosenberg, Roy Sabo, Veronica Shuford, Rita Shiang, Julie Tea, and Deborah Noble-Triplett

1. **President’s Report**

President Rao welcomed everyone provided a brief report that included the following highlights:

* He expressed his gratitude for their unwavering dedication to our students. He also thanked everyone for their commitment to our students and ensuring they receive a quality education, no matter the location.
* In terms of research, 1) we developed innovative ways to safely continue with critical research; 2) we reached a record-breaking $335M in funding for sponsored research. The diversity of funded projects illustrates our commitment to advancing the human condition.
* Our students witnessed in real-time the need for accessible healthcare for all of humanity.
* President Rao acknowledged how much has been accomplished while everyone has also been managing disruptions to life away from work. He thanked everyone for their dedication and care for humanity while asking them to continue with the great work in the new year.
* Busy times ahead include: exams; the December 11 BOV meetings (which will be live-streamed); and the celebration of 3,000 new graduates on December 12 (which will include a university-wide celebration to be streamed on-line at commencement.vcu.edu).
* A budget update was provided. VCU has experienced a $23M shortfall due to a decline in enrollment, COVID-related and unavoidable expenses. Strategic cuts were made to schools, colleges and administrative units. The March CARES Act and state funding closed part of the funding gap for students and the university, and made it possible for us to continue to serve our students and patients. Cost saving measures that have been implemented include: 1) bond restructuring; 2) hiring freeze and attrition; 3) employing a new procure-to-pay system; and 4) a travel freeze.
* VCU offered exit testing to students before Thanksgiving break (1,260 students signed up for testing which resulted in 1,258 negative results and 2 positive results). It was noted that testing is required for those returning to residence halls in January. It will be free-of-charge, sent to the residence and include a oral/throat swab. COVID-19 testing will be increased in the new year. Tests will be administered by VCU Health. The ONE VCU site contains detailed information about testing.
* COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout: We are monitoring decisions made by the commonwealth and will keep the VCU community updated.
* VCU Health shared a great piece about health care workers and the mental and physical toll of the pandemic. The story and video can be found on VCU Health’s news site.
* We must continue to follow safety protocols: masking, hand washing, physical distance and health monitoring. If you can and have not already, get your flu shot.
* President Rao thanked everyone for their commitment to education, research, health care, and for serving humanity. He wished everyone a joyful and relaxing winter break.

1. **Minutes**

Minutes from the University Council meeting on November 5, 2020 were accepted.

1. **Committee Reports**

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

* Proposal to create a Graduate Certificate in Media and Culture—Dr. Karen McIntyre, Director of Graduate Studies, Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture, College of Humanities and Sciences, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. A general discussion followed. With 55 “yes” votes and 2 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 create a Post-Professional Certificate in Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner –Dr. Carla Nye, Master’s Program Director, Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, School of Nursing, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. With 55 “yes” votes and 2 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 create a Post-Professional Certificate in Family Nurse Practitioner –Dr. Carla Nye, Master’s Program Director, Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, School of Nursing, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. With 53 “yes” votes and 3 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 create a Post-Professional Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner –Dr. Carla Nye, Master’s Program Director, Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, School of Nursing, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. With 55 “yes” votes and 2 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 reduce credit hours for the Master of Science in Anatomy and Neurobiology—Dr. Kimberle Jacobs, Graduate Program Direcgtor, Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology, School of Medicine, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. With 91% “yes” votes and 9% 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 reduce credit hours for the Master of Science in Biostatistics—Dr. Roy Sabo, Graduate Program Director, Department of Biostatistics, School of Medicine, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. With 53 “yes” 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 create the Center for Biological Data Science—Dr. Michael Rosenberg, Director, VCU Life Sciences, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. With 56 “yes” votes and 5 abstentions, a motion was made and seconded to accept and move the proposal forward for review and approval by the VCU Board of Visitors.

1. **Constituent Reports**

Nancy Jallo provided a Faculty Senate Report. She thanked Kim Case and CTLE for sponsoring the “Thank a Professor” program. She also discussed faculty senate highlights and a general discussion followed.

Alex McWhorter provided a Staff Senate Report. He discussed staff senate highlights and a general discussion followed.

1. **For Information**

Since the announcement of Provost Gail Hackett’s retirement from VCU at the end of the academic year, the search has begun for a new provost. Dr. Kellerman, Senior Vice President of Health Sciences and CEO of the VCU Health System, and Beth Angell, Dean of the School of Social Work, are co-chairing a large and diverse search committee, which is supported by Storbeck Search. Dr. Kellerman discussed the provost search and introduced representatives from the search firm. A general discussion followed and Julie Tea and Beth McCarthy responded to questions.

1. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.