**D R A F T**

**VCU UNIVERSITY COUNCIL**

**MINUTES**

**Thursday, October 7, 2021**

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

A meeting of the University Council was held on Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 3 p.m. on the MCV Campus in the Larrick Center and via Zoom.

The following members and alternates were present:

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

**Administration:** Cathleen Burke, Andrew Daire, Karol Kain Gray, Grant Heston, Art Kellerman, Charles Klink, Tomikia LeGrande, Pam Lepley, Susan Parish, and Constance Relihan

**Faculty:** Sompop Bencharit,Brian Brown,Beth Bukoski, DeniseBurnette, Jason Callahan,Everett Carpenter, Ross Collin, Kimberly Compton, Mariah Crilley, Carla-Mae Crookendale, Marjolein Dewit, Rodney Dyer, Sarah Faris, James Ferri, Josh Galligan, Eric Hazelrigg, Nancy Husson, Catherine Ingrassia, Aniket Jadhav, Nancy Jallo, Peter Kirkpatrick, Joyce Lloyd, Edward Millner, Nicole Omecene, Elizabeth Quamme, Maria Rivera, Valerie Robnolt, Katharine Tibbetts, Christy Tyndall,StaceyWahl,Yi Wen Wei, David Webber,Jeff Wilson**,** Christine Wynd,andWenli Yan

**Postdoctoral Scholar:** Chelsea Sawyers

**Staff**: Elizabeth Dean, Saher Randhawa, Shawn Rosalez, Amanda Simmons, Hannah Steighner, Chris Straus, Jennifer Tennison, Katina Velentzas, and Wren Wyatt

**Students**: Kamal Alhassan, Sydney Biondi, Julia Daum, Chidera Ntiwunka-Ifeanyi, Jordan James, Rena Pidaparti, Singth Nawagamuwage Perera, and Jacob Yim

**Ex-Officio and Guests**: Jihad Aziz, Jason Block, Gypsy Denzine, Teresa Dulaney-Dewald, Karen Helderman, Alex Henson, Irene Herold, Alison Jones, Carly Katz, Denise Laussade, Samantha Marrs, Aashir Nasim, Susan Robb, Reuban Rodriguez, Mary Shall, Deborah Noble-Triplett, John Venuti, and Danielle Wroblewski

1. **President’s Report**

President Rao welcomed Council members to the second hybrid meeting of the academic year.

Dr. Rao noted how the campus community is energized and active which is lifting the spirits of many, but particularly many students who are rediscovering their motivation to learn. He thanked everyone for making our return successful and as safe as possible.

He noted that:

* Much has been learned over the past year about our mission as a one of the state’s three designated public research universities and one of two university medical centers and our ability to adapt and innovate quickly;
* He is inspired by the work of faculty, staff and health system team members to meet student and patient needs;
* Universities must model a more inclusive future through research and tying that research into our teaching; and
* Now is an opportune time to reinvent how public universities can benefit our students, our patients, our faculty and staff, our alumni and communities.

VCU’s spring semester with increased engagement and in-person classes and we will incorporate what we learned during the height of remote learning to continue to strengthen the online experience.

President Rao congratulated Dr. Tomikia LeGrande who was recently awarded the Governor’s Champion of Change award. She was recognized for the VCU Student Financial Services Center, where students receive individual attention that’s focused on financial literacy and academic success.

Dr. Rao discussed leadership searches, to include:

* School of Business dean- First round of interviews are complete. The search committee met with 11 candidates and will review reference feedback next week. Four-five candidates will be sent to the provost, and their CVs will be posted on a protected site for VCU community review. Open forums will take place, and campus visits will take place early-November. The goal is to have an offer extended before the end of the semester.
* School of Dentistry dean- Started over the summer and is being assisted by Issacson, Miller. There is an excellent applicant pool of candidates. On-campus interviews began last week and will conclude later this month. Candidates will have the opportunity to meet with students, faculty, staff, alumni and other individuals.

Dr. Rao thanked Gregory Kimbrell for his service as staff senate president, noting he is leaving VCU to become communications manager at Brown University. He welcomed Saher Randhawa back as staff senate president.

Dr. Kellerman recently announced the opening of the Office of Health Equity. The office is the result of candid dialogue and hard work resulting from the VCU Health Equity Initiative. Our work to introduce and cement health equity into everything we do as educators, researchers, clinicians and patient service professionals is unwavering. The office will prep VCU Health team members and students to incorporate the knowledge and principles of health into everything they do. Increased equity research will serve the public good. We need to expand our abilities to partner with the community to address health inequalities. Dr. Rao thanked the following individuals: 1) Sheryl Garland for leading the office; 2) Marcelle Davis for her partnership and work as Director of VCU Health’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office; and 3) Art Kellerman for housing the office and support.

VCU Massey Cancer Center has been awarded the NCI SPORE grant -- the first ever awarded in the commonwealth. We’re grateful for Dr. Rob Winn’s work to end health disparities. The NCI SPORE Grant (Specialized Program of Research Excellence) funds work to address the disproportionate effects of lung cancer on the Black community. Funding will establish the Translational Research Center in Lung Cancer Disparities. Massey will lead collaboration with the Medical University of South Carolina Hollings Cancer Center and California’s City of Hope. We will engage communities across all three states involved in the research to conduct this groundbreaking research that’s critical to humanity.

VCU recognized VCUarts Dean Murry DePillars’ contributions to VCU and the Richmond community with the renaming of the main fine arts building. Dr. DePillars grew VCUarts to the nationally and internationally esteemed school of the arts that it is today. He was a great educator and uniter whose leadership brought us much of the momentum we have gained with our inclusive mission at VCU. The main building on Broad Street now bears his name.

VCU looks forward to celebrating the accomplishments of May 2020, December 2020 and May 2021 graduates during fall commencement in December. We will continue to work with public health experts on planning.

Along with Dr. Rao and his family, VCU School of Business alum Rabia Kamara got together on campus to give gourmet ice cream to students. Rabia Kamara is a local entrepreneur and owner of Ruby Scoops ice cream shop and was recently named the winner of Food Network’s Clash of the Cones competition.

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the May 5, 2021 and September 9, 2021 were accepted.

1. **Committee Reports**

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

**Revised Interim Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy** —Dr. Jihad Aziz, Interim Assistant Vice Provost and Executive Director, University Counseling Services, discussed the proposal. A general discussion followed and Dr. Weiss and Chief Venuti responded to questions. There was a consensus that this policy would be tabled for further review and discussion at the November University Council meeting.

**Revised Tax-Exempt Debt Compliance Policy** —Ms. Denise Laussade, discussed the policy and responded to questions. With 82% “yes” votes, 2% “no” 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.

**Revised Investment and Liquidity Policy** —Ms. Denise Laussade, discussed the policy and responded to questions. With 85% “yes” votes and 15 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**

Kamal Alhassan provided an SGA Report. He discussed SGA highlights and a general discussion followed.

Valerie Robnolt provided a Faculty Senate Report. She discussed faculty senate highlights and a general discussion followed.

Saher Randhawa provided a Staff Senate Report. She discussed staff senate highlights and a general discussion followed.

1. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.