**D R A F T**

**MINUTES**

**Thursday, September 1, 2022**

**3:00 – 5:00 p.m.**

A meeting of the University Council was held on Thursday, September 1, 2022 at 3 p.m. in the VCU Cabell Library, conference room 303 and via Zoom.

The following members and alternates were present:

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

**Administration:** Scott Breuninger, Cathleen Burke, Jay Davenport, Grant Heston, Karol Kain Gray, Catherine Ingrassia, Art Kellerman, Pam Lepley, Susan Parish, and Gary Tepper

**Faculty:** Andrew Arroyo,Sompop Bencharit,Brian Brown, Lisa Brown, Sarah Jane Brubaker, Beth Bukosi, Denise Burnette, Everett Carpenter, Amita Chin, Kimberly Compton, Alexis Crawford, Carla-Mae Crookendale, Katherine Dabney, Rodney Dyer, Lindsay Evans, Sarah Golding, Nancy Husson, Denia Lee-Hing, Kanako Iwanaga, Susan Kornstein, Bettina Peacemaker, Peter Pidcoe, VaCora Rainey, Maria Rivera, Valerie Robholt, Oliver Speck, Christy Tyndall, Yi Wen Wei, Jeff Wilson, and Erin Zacholski

**Postdoctoral Scholar:** Apurva Tadimari Prabhakar

**Classified staff**: Teresa Dulaney-Dewald, Melissa Burton, Brogan King, Amie Knapp, Amanda Simmons, Jennifer Tennison, and Carletta Wilson

**Students**: Hajera Ahmadi, Mary Barazanchi, Sydney Biondi, Rachel Delgado, Pratyush Narayen, Anne Skelton

**Ex-Officio and Guests**: Kevin Best, Andrew Daire, Chelyen Davis, Jill Gordon, Nathan Hagan, Alex Henson, Irene Herold, Reuban Rodriguez, and Krystal Tang.

1. **President’s Report**

President Rao welcomed Council members to the first UC meeting of the academic year, noting there is so much excitement and energy and unlimited potential. He noted the past weeks have been spent welcoming and celebrating students. He is proud that at VCU, the needs of students and patients come first. That is something that he says, but it was really created and shaped by VCU faculty and staff – a long-held culture here that has truly transformed Virginia and much of the Richmond region.

Students are the center of our mission, and everyone present are committed to their success.

* We are modeling what a truly public research university and health system should be.
* We are focused on being nimble and adaptable to support the *changing* needs of our students and patients.
* This is a foundation that has consistently been built and fostered by a culture of unmatched commitment to students and patients.

VCU is an R1 university, in fact one of the nation’s top 60 public research universities, but there is nothing common about our Virginia Commonwealth University. We are a truly uncommon university, because we see potential everywhere and in everyone. And when we realize that potential, VCU is unstoppable.

While many universities today distinguish themselves in superficial ways fundamentally tied to their histories, VCU is dedicated to the true mission of public higher education: to create opportunities for all students who want to be successful and earn a degree.

It is that mission that he wanted to discuss at this meeting, because VCU is truly a unique place. Our mix of high-performing research and academics, paired with the diversity of our student population, puts us at a unique nexus for a university and health system.

We serve students that many institutions leave behind.

* A third of our students are first generation. A third are also underrepresented minorities.
* And about a third are also Pell recipients.
* We purposely reach for all students, because higher education is missing millions of students (NSF). Excellence needs everyone.
* We graduate almost everyone at higher rates than our peer research universities.
* We are helping shape the next greatest generation of Americans and responsible citizens of the world.

All of this means that we have a great story to tell. He noted that Grant Heston will discuss how our new branding effort really showcases how unique VCU is, and how it is going to help us tell that story in Richmond, in Virginia, and beyond.

VCU has had a record-setting research and fundraising year in support of our mission. This fall, we are launching our revised strategic plan, Quest 2028. Dr. Rao discussed Council members input on Quest 2028 and expressed his appreciation of their work and feedback.

Quest 2028 lays out a pathway to accomplish more. We plan to:

* Enroll and graduate a wide diversity of students,
* Focus on impactful research that tackles society’s greatest challenges, lifts the lives of all people, and invents the future of medicine and clinical care. Research that only VCU is willing and able to do.
* Invent the future of education by providing current and relevant academic – and professional – opportunities that only an institution like VCU can provide.
* Educate the next generation of creative problem solvers, empathetic leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs.
* Ensure our students succeed on every level; learn how to use their knowledge; and graduate in a timely way – four years for a four year degree.

University Council represents faculty, staff, administration, students – every group at this university. Our shared governance structure means that we are vital participants in the mission and the work we do here. Council members’ input and feedback help shape who we are and what we do, and as we start this new academic year, Dr. Rao expressed his thanks for all. He noted he is looking forward to all we accomplish together this year.

Pam Lepley discussed changes to current bylaws, noting they have not been updated for several years. Scott Street asked the standing committees to look at their respective areas and how they have evolved through the years. An email is forthcoming that will include a red line for review, and updates will be made for review/approval at the April 2023 meeting. A general discussion followed.

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the May 5, 2022 were approved.

1. **Constituent Reports**

Anne Skelton provided an SGA Report. A general discussion followed.

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

Brogan King provided a Staff Senate Report. She discussed staff senate highlights and a general discussion followed.

1. **Cabinet Report**

Grant Heston, Vice President for University Relations, provided a Brand Update. A general discussion followed and Mr. Heston responded to questions.

1. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.