

BYLAWS
THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

Article I

Name

The name of this organization shall be the University Council of Virginia Commonwealth University.

Article II

Preamble (Purpose)

Traditionally in an academic community in general and at Virginia Commonwealth University in particular, the faculty, staff, students, and administrators participate in the governance of the University. It is recognized that the legal authority to guide and regulate the University is vested by the Commonwealth of Virginia in the Board of Visitors and the President. It is also recognized that as a corollary of academic freedom, the University community has a collective responsibility for guiding the scholarly pursuits of the University. The University Council, as a representative body of faculty, staff, postdoctoral scholars, students, and administrators, is the deliberative body that has University-wide representation. To that end, the University Council serves to aid communication and understanding among the faculty, staff, postdoctoral scholars, students, and administrators. University Council reviews and offers recommendations regarding University programs and proposed or potential policies to the President of the University.

Article III
Membership

The University Council shall be composed of the President of the University, and of administrators, faculty, staff (UAP and classified), postdoctoral scholars, and student members.

Section 1. Administrators

- a. There shall be eighteen(18) administrative members to include the following:
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Senior Vice President for Health Sciences, Senior Vice President for Finance, Vice President for Administration, Vice President for Research and Innovation, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations, Chief Diversity Officer, Vice President for University Relations, Vice President for Government Relations, Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice President for Strategy, Enrollment Management and Student Success, and Assistant Vice President for Human Resources. Four academic deans and two alternates shall be elected by and from the deans of the colleges and schools. The deans shall select one college/school from the Monroe Park Campus and one college/school from the MCV Campus-from those colleges/schools not represented on University Council by their dean during the academic year. One administrator and an alternate shall be elected by the department chairs and associate/assistant deans in the selected school to serve a one-year term.

- b. The following University administrators shall be ex-officio members of the University Council (with voice, without vote): Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs; Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs; Associate Vice President for Health Sciences; Chief Information Officer, Technology Services; and Dean, VCU Libraries.

Section 2. Faculty

- a. There shall be two (2) faculty members elected from each of the colleges/schools. Of the two (2) faculty members elected per school, at least one (1) shall be tenured, except for in the University College, the Honors College, and in the Graduate School. There shall also be two (2) members elected from the faculty of the VCU Libraries, two (2) from VCU Life Sciences, and four (4) elected by and from the Faculty Senate.
- b. The elected faculty members of the University Council shall be known as the Faculty Caucus and shall elect a chair from its membership.
- c. Each college/school shall elect one (1) faculty member to serve as an alternate on the University Council. The Faculty Senate and the faculty of the VCU Libraries, likewise, shall each elect one (1) faculty member to serve as an alternate. The alternate shall have voice and vote when substituting for a faculty member of the University Council.
- d. Nominations of each college's/school's faculty representative shall be made by a Nominating Committee appointed by the dean of each college/school. This committee shall be composed of faculty eligible to vote. The definition of eligible faculty shall include all full-time faculty members not holding university administrative positions at or above the level of Department Chair. The Nominating Committee shall solicit nominations from throughout their school by mail and email and/or as well as from an open meeting of the school, to which all members of a college/school faculty have been invited two (2) weeks in advance and at which nominations have been indicated to be an agenda item. A secret ballot of the nominees shall be mailed to all faculty eligible to vote and shall be returned to the Nominating Committee. An election shall be by a majority vote of those voting.

Section 3. Students

- a. There shall be eleven (11) student members and four (4) alternates to be proportioned as follows: five (5) students plus two (2) alternates shall be appointed from the Student Government Association representatives for the MCV Campus, and six (6) students plus two (2) alternates shall be appointed by the Monroe Park Campus representatives of the Student Government Association. Of the eleven (11) student members, there shall be at least one (1) graduate student and one (1) undergraduate student selected from each campus and one (1) professional degree student.
- b. Student representatives and alternates shall be selected in accordance with established procedures for representation on University governance bodies as outlined in the respective governance document of the Student Government Association. Alternate student representatives, two (2) from each campus, shall have voice and vote when substituting for a student member.
- c. The Student Government Association, in conjunction with established graduate student groups, shall ensure that the graduate student positions are filled.

Section 4. Staff (UAP and classified)

- a. There shall be ten (10) staff members and two (2) alternates selected by the Staff Senate.

Section 5. Postdoctoral Scholars

- a. There shall be one (1) postdoctoral scholar and one (1) alternate selected by the VCU Postdoctoral Association (PDA). The postdoctoral scholar will be from either the Monroe Park Campus or the MCV Campus and the alternate from the other campus.

Article IV
Terms of Office of University Council Members

Terms of office for all members of the University Council shall begin at the start of the academic year.

Section 1. Administrative Members

- a. Other than the four (4) academic deans and two (2) alternates elected by and from the deans of the colleges/schools, and two (2) representatives and two (2) alternates elected by and from the academic department chairs and associate/assistant deans in the two selected colleges/schools, the administrative members of the University Council named in Article III, Section 1 are members by virtue of their administrative office and there are no specified terms of office. However, the four (4) academic deans and two (2) alternates elected by and from the deans of the schools shall serve for a two (2) year term renewable once for no more than four (4) years. Eligibility for re-election after the completion of two successive terms is allowed after the dean has sat out a full term of two (2) years. The two (2) representatives and two (2) alternates elected by and from the academic department chairs and associate/assistant deans in the two selected colleges/schools shall serve for only one year. The deans shall select a school from each campus each year, preferably rotating schools.

Section 2. Faculty Members

- a. Faculty members, not holding administrative positions at or above the level of Department Chair, elected from the colleges, schools, VCU Libraries, University College, the Honors College, Life Sciences and the Graduate School shall serve on the University Council for a two (2) year term renewable one time for a total of no more than four (4) consecutive years of service while in the same representative capacity. Eligibility for re-election on completion of two (2) successive terms is allowed after the faculty member has sat out a full academic year. Faculty Senate members shall serve on the University

Council for a one (1) year term renewable for three (3) times for a total of no more than four (4) consecutive years of service while in the same representative capacity. Eligibility for re-election of a Faculty Senate member on completion of four (4) successive terms is allowed after the Faculty Senate member has sat out a one (1) year term. If a Faculty Senate President has served on University Council for four (4) years, he/she may continue to serve on University Council for the duration of his/her term of office as Faculty Senate President. A term of less than one-half of an academic year shall not be considered a full term for the purposes of this provision; a term of one-half of an academic year or more shall be considered a full term for the purposes of this provision. There is no limitation on the number of successive terms a faculty member may serve as an alternate.

- b. Faculty representatives from the same school shall serve staggered terms.

Section 3. Student Members

- a. Student members shall serve on the University Council for a one (1) year term and are eligible for re-appointment. No student may serve on the Council for more than four (4) consecutive years while in the same academic program. There is no limitation on the number of successive terms a student may serve as an alternate.

Section 4. Staff (UAP and Classified) Members

Staff members shall serve on the University Council for a two (2) year term renewable once for no more than four (4) years. Eligibility for re-selection on completion of two (2) successive terms is allowed after the staff member has sat out for a full academic year. A term of less than one-half of an academic year shall not be considered a full term for the purposes of this provision; a term of one-half of an academic year or more shall be considered a full term for the purposes of this provision. There is no limitation on the number of successive terms a staff member may serve as an alternate.

Section 5. Vacancies

- a. Should a vacancy occur for any member of the University Council, the alternate chosen by the appropriate representative body shall fulfill the unexpired term. A new alternate shall then be elected or selected.
- b. Administrator vacancies other than Deans shall be filled on an interim basis through appointment by the President of the University.

Article V Officers

Section 1. Officers of the Council

- a. The President of the University shall serve as Chair of the Council.
- b. The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs shall serve as Vice Chair of the Council.

Section 2. Duties of Officers

- a. The President of the University shall serve as Chair of the University Council and shall preside over the Council meetings.
- b. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair.

Section 3. Recording Secretary

The Chair shall annually appoint a Recording Secretary who shall be responsible for preparing the minutes of Council meetings; for ensuring that proper notice is given of Council meetings and sufficient copies of documents or papers pertaining to the actions of the Council are distributed and/or available for review. In addition, the Recording Secretary shall ensure that attendance records are maintained. All records and documents relating to the Council shall be maintained in the President's Office. In the

absence of the Recording Secretary, the Chair shall appoint a temporary replacement to assume the duties of the Recording Secretary.

Section 4. The Parliamentarian

The Chair shall annually appoint a Parliamentarian who shall advise the Chair and be available for consultation by any Council member.

Article VI

Meetings

Section 1. Schedule

- a. Regular monthly meetings of the Council shall be scheduled during the academic year.
- b. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Chair or shall be called upon a written petition of fifteen (15) Council members.

Section 2. Agenda

The agenda for University Council will be set by the Chair and will include any agenda items submitted by members of the Council.

Section 3. Quorum

The quorum for regular and special meetings of the Council shall be a majority of voting members.

Section 4. Observers

Any member of the University faculty, administration, staff, Postdoctoral Association, or student body may attend a meeting of the Council as an observer without voice or vote. Permission to speak may be granted at the discretion of the Chair of the Council.

Section 5. Attendance

Members shall be expected to attend Council meetings. The Recording Secretary shall take attendance at each meeting. If a member is absent and not represented by an alternate for two (2) consecutive

regularly scheduled meetings or three (3) regularly scheduled meetings in one academic year, the Recording Secretary shall inform that member's appointing or electing constituency.

Article VII

Functions

Section 1. Policy Recommendations

- a. The University Council shall receive reports or recommendations from appropriate subunits or an assignment from the President of the University to review and recommend new policies or changes in existing policies on various matters of concern to the University community. Reports, recommendations and/or assignments may be in the areas of University-wide policies such as promotion, tenure, leave, records, and grievances; academic affairs such as new degree proposals, grading and curriculum, curricula plans and policies regarding reorganization, reduction or termination of programs; issues affecting the quality of student life; matters affecting the conduct, climate, and support of scholarly activity; and planning of facilities and programs in pursuit of University goals and objectives. Upon review and recommendation by the appropriate committee of the University Council, the University Council shall review, deliberate, and vote on final recommendations to the President of the University.

- b. In performing its function, the University Council may initiate discussion and review recommendations and reports from other sources. Issues considered by the University Council shall be comprehensive in nature, entailing broad policy or governance principles. In order to ensure that the various University constituencies have adequate time to provide feedback to the University Council on proposed policies, and other matters of concern, the University Council will, except in emergency situations, ensure that the Faculty Senate, the Student Government Association, the Postdoctoral Association, and the Staff Senate receive copies of pertinent reports, policies, and other matters of concern at least one (1) month before the University Council issues any

recommendations or takes any actions on matters of major University concern.

Recommendations or actions of the University Council shall be transmitted directly to the President of the University.

Section 2. College/School Governance

- a. The University Council shall ensure that college/school governance bylaws have been developed and adopted by each college/school. The nature of the college/school governance structure shall be left to the individual college/school.
- b. The Committee on Faculty Affairs shall regularly review the governance structure of each college/school in order to ensure that there is representative governance in each school.
- c. Representative governance shall be defined as the right of participation in the school or college governance structure by all full-time faculty members (including tenure and non-tenure track) who hold appointments or joint appointments in that school or college. Participation includes the right to discuss on the floor and vote on all matters coming before meetings. Part-time faculty members should have the prerogative to take part in meetings of the faculty. Voting privileges for part-time faculty should be decided by each school or college.

Article VIII

Committees

Section 1. Creation and Classification

- a. There shall be two types of committees: standing committees and special committees. There shall be five (5) standing committees of the University Council and a Faculty Caucus:
 1. Committee on Academic Affairs
 2. Committee on University Policies
 3. Committee on Faculty Affairs

4. Committee on Student Affairs
 5. Committee on Staff Affairs
- b. The Chair and/or University Council shall have the power to establish any special committees deemed necessary to the performance of its functions. If it deems it necessary, a special committee may include other VCU employees who are not University Council members.
 - c. All elected members of committees shall serve for a term concurrent with and not to exceed their terms on the University Council.

Section 2. Committee on Academic Affairs

Members of the Committee on Academic Affairs shall include six (6) faculty members selected by and from the Faculty Caucus (three from each campus); two (2) administrators selected by and from the deans serving on the University Council; two (2) students selected by and from the student members of the University Council (at least one shall be a graduate student, and at least one shall be an undergraduate student); and two (2) staff members selected by and from the staff members of the University Council. The postdoctoral scholar member may choose to serve on this committee; he/she is allowed to serve on only one committee in any given year. The chair shall be elected from within the committee membership. The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences, and the Dean of VCU Libraries shall serve ex-officio (with voice, no vote). This committee shall:

- a. Serve as a deliberative and consultative body with authority to study, report and recommend action on matters relating to the curriculum and other academic matters, including academic policies and procedures.
- b. Receive, review, and upon approval, transmit to the University Council proposals for new degrees, termination of degrees, and other pertinent academic matters.

Section 3. Committee on University Policies

Members of the Committee on University Policies shall include four (4) faculty members selected by and from the Faculty Caucus (two from each campus); two (2) administrators selected by and from the deans serving on the University Council; two (2) students selected by and from the student members of

the University Council (at least one shall be a graduate student); and four (4) staff members selected by and from the staff members of the University Council. The postdoctoral scholar member may choose to serve on this committee; he/she is allowed to serve on only one committee in any given year. The chair shall be elected from within the committee membership. The Executive Director of Audit and Compliance Services, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources, the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Administration and Operations, and the Vice President for Research and Innovation shall serve ex-officio (with voice, no vote). This committee shall:

- a. Serve as a deliberative and consultative body with authority to study, report and recommend action on matters relating to the policies of the University.
- b. Receive, review, and upon approval, transmit to the University Council proposals for policies of institutional importance.

Section 4. Committee on Faculty Affairs

Members of the Committee on Faculty Affairs shall include: eight (8) faculty members elected by and from the Faculty Caucus, four (4) from each campus, one (1) of whom must be a faculty senator. The Faculty Caucus shall elect one (1) of its members to chair the committee. This committee shall also include two (2) administrators elected by and from administrators serving on the Council, two (2) students elected by and from student members of the Council and two (2) staff elected by and from the staff members of the Council. The postdoctoral scholar member may choose to serve on this committee; he/she is allowed to serve on only one committee in any given year.

This committee shall:

Serve as a deliberative and consultative body with authority to study, report, and recommend for or against approval by the University Council policies and procedures bearing on faculty concerns, and quality of the work environment related to issues such as recruitment, appointment, promotion, tenure, retirement, educational leave, and fringe benefits.

Section 5. Committee on Student Affairs

Members of the Committee on Student Affairs shall consist of nine (9) students selected as follows: three (3) students from the Monroe Park Campus appointed by and from the student members of the University Council; two (2) students from the MCV Campus appointed by and from the student members of the University Council; four(4) students appointed by the Student Government Association: two (2) Monroe Park Campus representatives and two(2) MCV Campus; two (2) faculty members elected by and from the Faculty Caucus of the Council; and two (2) administrators, the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Vice President for Strategy, Enrollment Management, and Student Success and one (1) administrative member elected by and from the administrative members of the Council; and two (2) staff elected by and from the staff members of the Council; the Dean of Students for the Monroe Park Campus; the Dean of Student Affairs for the MCV Campus, and the student representative to the Board of Visitors shall serve as ex-officio members (with voice, no vote). The postdoctoral scholar member may choose to serve on this committee; he/she is allowed to serve on only one committee in any given year. A student member shall chair this committee.

This committee shall:

Serve as a deliberative and consultative body with authority to study, report, and recommend for or against approval by the University Council policies and procedures bearing on student concerns and the quality of student life.

Section 6. Committee on Staff Affairs

Members of the Committee on Staff Affairs shall consist of six (6) staff members elected by and from the University Council staff members; two (2) faculty elected by and from the University Council faculty members; two (2) administrators elected by and from the University Council administrative members; and two (2) students elected by and from the student members of the University Council. The postdoctoral scholar member may choose to serve on this committee; he/she is allowed to serve on only one committee in any given year. A staff member shall chair this committee.

This committee shall:

Serve as a deliberative and consultative body with authority to study, report, and recommend for or against approval by the University Council policies and procedures bearing on staff concerns, and the quality of the work environment.

Article IX
Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the University Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the University Council may adopt.

Article X
Amendment and Periodic Review of Bylaws

Section 1.

- a. These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the University Council by a two-thirds vote of the Council membership provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting. Such amendments shall not become effective until approved by the President and Board of Visitors.
- b. A review of these bylaws shall occur at least every five (5) years.

Approved by University Council: March 21, 1982
Effective: March 21, 1982

Revised document approved by University Council: May 1, 1986
Revised document approved by University Council: April 6, 1994
Revised document approved by University Council: October 2, 1997
Revised document approved by University Council: May 9, 2002
Revised document approved by VCU Board of Visitors: May 17, 2002
Revised document approved by University Council: May 5, 2011
Revised document approved by VCU Board of Visitors: May 20, 2011
Revised document approved by University Council: April 5, 2012
Revised document approved by VCU Board of Visitors: May 11, 2012

Revised document approved by University Council: May 8, 2014
Revised document approved by VCU Board of Visitors: Sept. 18, 2014
Revised document approved by University Council: May 7, 2015
Revised document approved by VCU Board of Visitors: May 8, 2015
Revised document approved by University Council: October 3, 2022
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