**MINUTES**

**Thursday, November 5, 2020**

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

A meeting of the University Council was held on Thursday, November 5, at 3 p.m. via Zoom.

The following members and alternates were present:

**Officers:** President Michael Rao and Holly Alford

**Administration:** Peter Buckley, Cathleen Burke, Matthew Conrad, Andrew Daire, Jean Giddens, Arthur Kellerman, Charles Klink, Tomikia LeGrande, Pam Lepley, and Constance Relihan

**Faculty:** Deidra Arrington,Sompop Bencharit,Alisa Brink, Michael Broda,Brian Brown,Jason Callahan,Everett Carpenter, Ross Collin, Mariah Crilley, Rodney Dyer, Josh Galligan, Denia Lee Hing, Aniket Jadhav, Melissa Jamerson, Hermine Maes, Jacqueline Smith-Mason, Tom McNulty, Jonathan Moore, Nicole Omecene, Lauren Pamulapati, Mary Pettiette, Christine Remmers, Valerie Robnolt, Scott Street, Dong Sun, Katharine Tibbetts, Melissa Tyler, Christy Tyndall,Matt Wallin, David Webber, Christine Wynd, and Wenli Yan

**Postdoctoral Scholar:** Sean Koebley

**Classified staff**: Delores Armstrong, Valarie Carter, Holly Dean, Christopher Garland, Michelle Hawkins, Brian McNeill, Karen Mullins, and Saher Randhawa

**Students**: Sydney Biondi, Dan Buth, Imani Carpenter, Alvin Chang, Alex Chong, Jordan James, Fatima Malik, and Taylor Maloney

**Ex-Officio and Guests**: Thomas Briggs, Karen Belanger, Gypsy Denzine, Christopher Garland, Catherine Ingrassia, Jacqueline Kniska, Teresa Knott, Patricia Perkins, Susan Robb, Reuban Rodriguez, Rita Shiang, and Deborah Noble-Triplett

1. **President’s Report**

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

* President Rao thanked everyone for all that they are doing this semester.
* He offered congratulations to all who celebrated promotion or tenure. He thanked them for their commitment to inquiry, truth, responsibility and working across disciplines to solve problems impacting humanity. VCU is grateful for their work guiding students during remarkably challenging times.
* He offered thanks for encouraging our studnets to be civically engaged, noting that the University continues to monitor post-election news.
* He provided a Provost search committee update, noting the search committee and website will be announced on November 11. The search firm will meet with University Council for input during the December meeting. He thanked everyone in advance for their guidance.
* A COVID-19 update was provided. We are proud of the VCU community’s care and concern for others through physical distancing and other safety measures to prevent infection. Thanks to all who volunteered for prevalence testing, noting participation helps form our decisions regarding safety and how we operate as a university. No-cost, at-will testing is now available to every member of the VCU community. Exit testing before Thanksgiving break will be offered, as well as re-entry testing.
* VCUHS is key to our success and continues to guide us in our decision making. Our colleagues go above and beyond to ensure the wellbeing and safety of us, surrounding communities and beyond. We are grateful for the infectious disease experts and epidemiologists serving on our Public Health Response Team. VCUHS to provide symptomatic and prevalence testing during the spring semester.
* President Rao discussed CARES Act Funding, to include: 1) $116M in Federal funds approved for higher ed institutions in Virginia; 2) VCU has been allocated ~$10.8M; 3) Funds infrastructure needed for successful remote learning and telework, testing for students, faculty and staff, and personal protective equipment, sanitation and cleaning supplies. 4) VCU Health will receive $20M, to be used to purchase protective equipment for healthcare and essential workers.
* As the Fall semester concludes: 1) remote fall exams will be held November 30-December 7 for Monroe Park Students; 2) remote exams for health sciences students will be held November 30-Decemer 4; and 3) Health Sciences and other students may return after the Thanksgiving holiday to continue with clinicals and other required activities.
* Spring semester plans include a phased re-opening: 1) health sciences, college research faculty, staff and trainees will return first; 2) undergraduate and graduate courses start January 25; 3) classes will be hybrid with 36% online; 4) spring break has been removed to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread, which is consisten with peers in VA and across the nation; 5) the last day of class for MPC is May 5 with exams following; and 6) the last day of class for MCV is May 7 with exams following.
* We will honor August and December 2020 graduate with an interactive, online event on December 12. Class of 2020 graduates will be invited to take part in a future university commencement ceremony. We are grateful for the work done by the Office of Events and Special Programs. This is the third time in a row recasting VCU’s commencement ceremony.

1. **For Information**

Ed McLaughlin, Vice President and Director Athletics, provided an overview on Athletics. A general discussion followed and Ed McLaughlin responded to questions.

1. **Minutes**

Minutes from the University Council meeting on October 1, 2020 were accepted.

1. **Committee Reports**

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

* Revised Honor and Standards of Academic Conduct Policy (Board of Visitors)—Dr. Reuban Rodriguez, Associate Vice Provost and Dean of Students, Division of Student Affairs, provided a recap of the policy (which was presented at our last meeting but was tabled for further discussion) and a summary of discussions since October 1. A general discussion followed. With 59 “yes” votes and 4 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 request a credit hour reduction to the Master of Science in Human Genetics –Dr. Rita Shiang, Graduate Program Director, Department of Human and Molecular Genetics, School of Medicine, discussed the proposal and responded to questions. With 58 “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.

1. **Constituent Reports**

Taylor Mahoney provided an SGA Report and discussed finishing the semester. She also noted that the SGA is looking at the best way to move forward for student advocacy. A general discussion followed.

Valerie Robnolt provided a Faculty Senate Report on behalf of Nancy Jallo. She discussed faculty senate highlights and a general discussion followed.

Saher Randhawa provided a Staff Senate Report. She discussed various activities, to include the March 2021 employee appreciation month and Fall 2021 elections to be held in the spring. A general discussion followed.

1. **Adjournment**

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