

MINUTES

Thursday, May 7, 2020

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

A meeting of the University Council was held on Thursday, May 7, 2020, at 3 p.m. via zoom.

The following members and alternates were present:

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

Administration: Cathleen Burke, Jean Giddens, Charles Klink, Tomikia LeGrande, Pam Lepley, Constance Relihan, Niraj Verma, and Don Young

Faculty: Sherif Abdelwahed, Deidra Arrington, Michael Broda, Brian Brown, Everett Carpenter, Muthoni Imungi, Nancy Jallo, Pam Mason, Melissa Jamerson, Jonathan Moore, Cynthia Kirkwood, Andrea Kohashi, Sharon Lanning, Katie Logan, Hermine Maes, Jacqueline Smith-Mason, Thomas Mayhew, Donna McClish, Thomas McNulty, Edward Millner, Jonathan Moore, Karen Mullins, Lauren Pamulapati, Carrie Peterson, Christina Remmers, Valerie Robnolt, Carlos Smith, Scott Street, Nancy Stutts, Dong Sun, Christy Tyndall, Brian Verelli, Matt Wallin, Christine Wynd, and Kristin Zimmerman

Postdoctoral Scholar: Sean Koebley

Classified staff: Delores Armstrong, Holly Dean, Brian McNeill, and Saher Randhawa

Students: Sombo Chunda, Alexia Guzman, Jordan James, Udhanth Mallasani, April Wayne, and Tyler Williams

Ex-Officio and Guests: Ellen Byrne, Gypsy Denzine, Karen Helderman, Alex Henson, Jacqueline Kniska, Ed McLaughlin, Susan Robb, Reuban Rodriguez, Deborah Noble-Triplett, and John Ulmschneider

1. President's Report

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

He thanked everyone for teaching and counseling our students during this semester of challenge and change.

Dr. Rao commented on the retirements of John Ulmschneider and Doug Boudinot. He thanked John Ulmschneider for his service to VCU, noting he helped VCU

Libraries reach a level of national prominence. He noted he is grateful to Doug Boudinot for his leadership of our graduate school. John Ulmschneider thanked Dr. Rao for his support and said it was a privilege to work at VCU.

Dr. Rao announced that an estimated 5,000 students will graduate this spring at a university-wide virtual celebration scheduled for May 8. Graduates will receive a link to share with family and friends. More than 1,500 graduates have created profiles for the event and it will be ADA accessible. Printed copies of the commencement program will be mailed to graduates. A PDF will be available for download. Spring graduates are invited to participate in December exercises.

The VCU Board of Visitors will meet virtually on May 8. Dr. Rao noted that the meeting will include a budget discussion, focusing on the hiring and pay freeze in effect across the commonwealth with requests or exceptions managed on a case-by-case basis.

In regards to returning to campus, decisions will be guided by science. Safety is our top concern. We will need to reassess how we teach, interact with one another and conduct daily life on campus. Return will likely be in phases.

Dr. Rao discussed VCU Health's reactivation of services, noting we will stay true to our mission as the region's safety-net hospital. We are in a public health crisis and cannot let people fall through the cracks or get behind on treatment, no matter their pathology. Non-emergency surgeries have resumed; dental clinics are preparing to reopen to provide preventative care; and tele-health will be very helpful in reach the community but not all-inclusive. There are questions/concerns about equal access to all members of the community we serve.

COVID-19 clinical trials are underway. Sarilumab (used commercially to treat rheumatoid arthritis) is being explored to use to treat patients with COVID-19 who are experiencing severe lung inflammation. Remdesivir is an antiviral that has shown effectiveness against other coronaviruses. An experimental treatment is available to local patients with documented COVID-19 infection.

A VCU COVID-19 Rapid Research Funding Opportunity was discussed. It includes 20 VCU and VCU Health researchers and will help us better understand the how and why of COVID-19, what we can do to survive and recover, and explore what we need to do better.

The Federal CARES Act is available to students suffering hardships during this pandemic. Students not eligible for federal funds are encouraged to apply for institutional funds. The Make it Real Campaign ends on June 30. \$822.3 million (109.6% of the \$750 million goal) has been raised. This includes 387 new endowed scholarship and student support funds, 62 new endowed chairs and professorships, and 76 new endowed faculty support and research funds.

President Rao thanked council members for learning and adapting together and reminded everyone to take care of themselves.

2. Minutes

Minutes from the University Council meeting on April 9, 2020 were accepted.

3. Committee Reports

The Academic Affairs and University Policy Committee presented the following organizational change:

1. Proposal requesting the reorganization of the Department of Endodontics and the Department of Oral Diagnostic Sciences through a merger to establish the Department of Endodontics and Oral Diagnostic Sciences, School of Dentistry—Dr. Ellen Byrne, Senior Associate Dean, School of Dentistry, discussed the proposal and responded to questions.

A motion was made, seconded and approved (with two abstentions) to accept the above organizational change and move it forward for review and approval by the VCU Board of Visitors.

4. Constituent Reports

Ms. Alexia Guzman provided a Student Government Association report. Mr. Mallasani noted that elections are in limbo and all activities have been cancelled due to the current COVID-19 situation. A general discussion followed.

Dr. Nancy Jallo provided a Faculty Senate Report. She noted elections are underway and thanked everyone for their support. 2020-21 officers include: President-Nancy Jallo; Vice President-Valerie Robnolt; Recording Secretary and Treasurer-Everett Carpenter; Corresponding Secretary – Maria Rivera; Monroe Park- Gaynell Sherrod; and MCV Campus – Stephanie Call. Valerie Robnolt, vice president, discussed a faculty senate resolution in honor of John Ulmschneider upon his retirement from VCU. John Ulmschneider thanked everyone for the recognition. Jean Giddens commended Nancy Jallo for her hard work and service to VCU. A general discussion followed.

Ms. Saher Randhawa provided a Staff Senate Report. She announced the staff senate award recipients: **New Employee Award:** Robert Burgess (MPC) and Amy Hall (MCVC); **Integrity Award:** Andrea Becker (MPC) and Jennifer Bradley (MCVC); **Staff Advocacy Award:** Cindi Phares (MPC) and Jessica Carey (MCVC); **Champion of Diversity & Inclusion Award:** Lucy Hudson (MPC) and Thelma Mack

(MCVC); **Career Achievement Award:** Mary Cox (MPC) and Judy Williamson (MCVC).

She discussed highlights from the recent employee appreciation week and noted the annual conference was cancelled and will be rescheduled when it can be held in person. Elections will be held in the spring of 2021, and current officers will remain the same. A Staff Senate COVID-19 Forum is scheduled for May 21, 2020 via zoom. A general discussion followed.

5. Cabinet Update

Ed McLaughlin, Vice President and Director of Athletics, provided an overview of VCU Athletics. He noted that Coach Paul Kostin is retiring after 30 years as tennis coach. He also discussed the recent real estate acquisition; NCAA violations; indoor/outdoor facilities for track and other highlights. A general discuss followed.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.