



## Provost's Report to VCU Faculty Senate -- Nov. 1, 2022

In September, [VCU was named among the most innovative universities in the country by U.S. News & World Report.](#)

Here are just a few ways we are being recognized for **innovation**:

### [VCU named as APLU 2022 Degree Completion Award Finalist](#)

The annual award recognizes institutions that employ innovative approaches to improve degree completion while ensuring educational quality. VCU was recognized for establishing a culture where “student success is everyone’s job.” The three driving factors of this culture change have been affordability, curricular redesign and faculty engagement. Other institutions named finalists for the award are Florida Atlantic University, the University of South Alabama and the University of Texas at San Antonio. The award winner will be announced at the APLU Annual Meeting, Nov. 6-8 in Denver.

### [VCU awarded \\$2M grant to expand first-generation student center](#)

The five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education will support the expansion of the You First at VCU First-Generation Student Success and Research Center and will increase the university’s capacity to support Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students through culturally competent student programming, student support and engagement, and faculty development and research. The DOE grant will also allow an expanded VCU You First Center to increase inclusive research activity that is accurately reflective of the diversity and intersecting identities of AAPI students.

## Celebrating VCU faculty

[Nao Hagiwara, Ph.D.](#), associate professor in the Department of Psychology, has received a [\\$2.4 million grant from the National Institution of Nursing Research \(part of NIH\) to co-lead a study on racial disparities in surgical pain.](#) Dr. Hagiwara’s co-PI is Peter Mende-Siedlecki, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at the University of Delaware. Additional researchers involved in the study are [Shawn Jones, Ph.D.](#), assistant professor in the Department of Psychology; [Emily Rivet, M.D.](#), associate professor in the School of Medicine; [Amelia Grover, M.D.](#), professor in the Department of Surgery’s Division of Surgical Oncology; Brian Eiler, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology, at Davidson College; and Lindsay Bryant, a community health educator in Richmond.

[Samy El-Shall, Ph.D.](#), professor and the Mary Eugenia Kapp Endowed Chair in Chemistry in the College of Humanities and Sciences has been [appointed as a program director of the Chemical Structure, Dynamics and Mechanisms Program in the Division of Chemistry at the National Science Foundation](#). As a program director he will be responsible for managing the evaluation process of research proposals submitted in the specific program and to make recommendations for funding the top selected proposals, as well as to evaluate the progress made of all the funded projects. The program director can also create new funding opportunities in emerging areas in chemistry. He will return to VCU when his term ends.

[The Research Institute for Social Equity \(RISE\) in the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs has received \\$3 million in state funding](#) from Virginia to expand racial and social equity research, academic scholarship and public engagement. The two-year funding enables RISE to expand its research across many policy issues affecting social justice reform across the United States to promote education, economic security and development on behalf of all Americans. [Nakeina E. Douglas-Glenn, Ph.D.](#), associate professor in the Wilder School, is the director of RISE.

### [Six new university-level research institutes and centers created](#)

The new institutes and centers are:

- The Center for Drug Discovery (director, [Saïd Sebti, Ph.D.](#), School of Medicine and the Massey Cancer Center; deputy director, [Martin Safo, Ph.D.](#), School of Pharmacy)
- The Center for Microbiome Engineering and Data Analysis (co-directors [Tomasz Arodz, Ph.D.](#), College of Engineering, and [Gregory Buck, Ph.D.](#), School of Medicine)
- The Humanities Research Center (director, [Cristina Stanciu, Ph.D.](#), College of Humanities and Sciences; associate director, [Jesse Goldstein, Ph.D.](#), CHS)
- The Institute for Creative Research (director, [Diane Derr, Ph.D.](#), VCUarts Qatar)
- The Institute for Drug and Alcohol Studies (director, [F. Gerard Moeller, M.D.](#), School of Medicine)
- The Institute for Sustainable Energy and Environment (director, [Puru Jena, Ph.D.](#), College of Humanities and Sciences; associate directors, [Jayasimha Atulasimha, Ph.D.](#), College of Engineering, and [Damian Pitt, Ph.D.](#), L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs)

## Important initiatives in progress

### [Quality Enhancement Plan \(QEP\)](#)

In an [Oct. 17 message](#) to faculty, staff and students, four (4) topic proposals for the university's next QEP were announced and public comment on the proposals was solicited. The topic proposals, which were selected by the [QEP Planning and Development Committee](#), identify projects that explicitly connect VCU students to life-changing mentored experiences. The four proposals advanced as finalists for further review are:

- Amplifying Transformative Work-Based Learning Experiences at VCU
- Hybrid and Online Experiential Learning: Level the Playing Field

- Scaling Undergraduate Research at VCU: Equitable Engagement in Transformative Learning
- Transformative Mentorship and Research Training with Undergraduate Students Underrepresented in the Sciences

The public comment period closed on Oct. 28 after receiving more than 100 responses. Results are being compiled for a second round proposal review. A final topic announcement is anticipated in December 2022.

### [Quest 2028: One VCU Together We Transform](#)

The recalibrated strategic plan, Quest 2028, was [officially launched on Oct. 25](#). The plan is unique in that we are taking a One VCU approach by aligning the university and health system's goals, for the very first time in our organization's history. Read more at [quest.vcu.edu](#).

## Events this week

**Nov. 2, 2022 – ICA – 4-6 p.m.**

Join us for the [Provost's Lecture Series & Faculty Club](#) - combined for an afternoon Ted-talk style lecture, networking and social. The lecture, *Centering Health Equity in Transdisciplinary Tobacco Regulatory Science*, will feature faculty members [Thomas Eissenberg, Ph.D.](#), professor, Department of Psychology and [Mignonne C. Guy, Ph.D.](#), chair and associate professor, Department of African American Studies. For more information, visit [go.vcu.edu/facultyclub](#).

**Through Nov. 4 - [Adobe Week @VCU](#)**

Celebrate VCU's designation as an Adobe Creative Campus and learn more about the Adobe Creative Cloud. During Adobe Week VCU experts will dive into new Adobe offerings that utilize some of the most exciting trends in emerging technology: interactive design, on-the-go video storytelling and more. There will be a variety of workshops led by VCU faculty, staff, students and Adobe professionals visiting campus during VCU Adobe week. [Details and workshop schedules are online](#).

###