



## Provost's Report to VCU Faculty Senate -- Feb. 28, 2023

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### Discussions about the future

The State of Academic Affairs discussions with faculty have taken place throughout the past month. Many thanks to the faculty in the College of Humanities and Sciences, the College of Engineering, the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, the University College and the School of Education for engaging in discussions with me regarding the future of VCU teaching and learning. We've collected the questions that I wasn't able to get to during the conversations and are in the process of getting answers back to you. At the end of March I look forward to meeting with the Schools of Social Work, Arts and Business.

Another significant discussion about the future took place on Feb. 6, 2023 when Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan, director of the National Science Foundation (NSF), visited VCU. [A full review of the day was posted by VCU News](#). I was fortunate to moderate a discussion with Dr. Panchanathan around the "missing millions" – all those brilliant creative minds from under-represented backgrounds and socio-economically disadvantaged communities who don't have access to pathways that will lead them to the careers of the future. Many of those pathways are here at VCU. But, we must strengthen and expand those pathways.

Prior to his departure from Richmond, Dr. Panchanathan said that VCU is a US university that "matters for the future." I agree. We are prototyping the future of higher education. I look forward to our continued discussions.

### Celebrating VCU Faculty

- [Vanessa B. Sheppard, Ph.D.](#), associate director for community outreach and engagement and health disparities research at VCU Massey Cancer Center, has received the [American Cancer Society's 2022 Researcher of the Year Award](#) for her remarkable advances in cancer research.
- [Arnethea Sutton, Ph.D.](#), an assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Sciences in the College of Humanities and Sciences, has been named to the second cohort of the [National Cancer Institute's Early Investigator Advancement Program](#) (EAIP). Dr. Sutton was one of 25 scholars from across the country selected for the EIAP.
- L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs faculty members [Elsie Harper-Anderson, Ph.D.](#); [Jay Albanese, Ph.D.](#); and [Susan Gooden, Ph.D.](#), are the

co-editors of a newly published book, [“Racial Equity, COVID-19, and Public Policy: The Triple Pandemic.”](#) The volume takes a critical look at how existing areas of racial inequality in the United States rose to the surface as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020.

- [Brooke Newman](#), Ph.D., an associate professor in the Department of History in the College of Humanities and Sciences, [has been named one of 142 recipients of MacDowell fellowships](#) for 2023. MacDowell is one of the nation’s leading artist residency programs with a mission to nurture the arts by offering talented individuals an inspiring residential environment in which to produce enduring works of the creative imagination.
- [Stephan Davis](#), DNP, interim associate dean of diversity, equity and inclusion for the School of Nursing and the College of Health Professions, recently began a two-year term on the [American Academy of Nursing Diversity & Inclusivity Committee](#). The committee comprises AAN fellows appointed by the board to recommend strategies and goals for increasing diversity and inclusivity within the academy and its leadership bodies.

## Leadership Updates

- [Kathleen Rudasill, Ph.D.](#), has been named interim dean of the VCU School of Education, effective May 15. She currently serves as professor and senior associate dean for research and faculty development in the School of Education.
- [D’Arcy Mays, Ph.D.](#) began his service as interim associate vice provost of Institutional Research and Decision Support (IRDS) on Jan. 15, 2023. He previously served as associate dean for research and operations in the College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS).

## Leadership Searches

- [Associate Vice Provost, Institutional Research & Decision Support](#): Search committee has been charged and applications are open.
- [Vice President, Strategic Enrollment Management & Student Success](#): Search committee has been charged and applications are open.
- [Dean of the College of Engineering](#): Finalists are anticipated to be on campus in late March and early April.

## Changes in the Office of the Provost

### Reorganization of academic affairs unit

Earlier this month I announced to the president’s cabinet and deans the reorganization of the academic affairs unit in the Office of the Provost. Achieving the bold vision articulated in the Quest

2028 strategic plan requires an innovative academic strategy to align with evolving university priorities while also ensuring that we are prepared for the approaching 2024 SACSCOC reaffirmation site visit. As part of this important process Dr. Deborah Noble-Triplett over the next several months will serve as senior vice provost with a portfolio focusing on accreditation. She will continue to lead the university as the SACSCOC liaison and in the ongoing preparation for the reaffirmation process. Additionally, she will continue leading the Pathways to the Arts and Humanities as principal investigator of VCU's \$3.5 million grant with the Virginia Community College System funded by the Mellon Foundation. An interim senior vice provost for academic affairs will be announced this week. These changes will be effective on March 1.

### **Transition of Institutional Equity and Student Success (IESS) units**

As President Rao announced in an [email on Feb. 17](#), "Community Engagement, iExcel Education and the Institute for Inclusion, Inquiry & Innovation (iCubed) are moving to the Provost's Office in order to bring these offices closer to faculty and students to help us to "meet them where they are" and to scale important initiatives that benefit the entire campus community." My team and I have reached out to these new members of the Office of the Provost and are working to ensure a seamless transition for them as well as for the projects that they will continue to oversee. I am excited by the possibilities that lie ahead and have no doubt that this transition is yet another opportunity to be innovative in the way that we serve VCU faculty, staff, students and the community.

## **Important initiatives in progress**

### **Transformative Learning Fund: Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) due 4-10-23**

Applications are open for the new VCU Transformative Learning Fund: Vertically Integrated Projects. Created collaboratively by the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation, the Transformative Learning Fund is designed to support the engagement of undergraduate students in faculty-led research, design or entrepreneur projects focused on finding solutions to societal challenges. To read the application criteria for the new fund, [read the full RFA on the OVPRI website](#). All projects submitted for funding consideration must be transdisciplinary; align with a societal issue or problem and the goals of the [One VCU Strategic Research Priorities Plan](#); and be led by principal investigators who are full-time VCU faculty, regardless of rank or tenure status. Funding for selected projects will range from \$10,000-\$20,000 for two academic years (2023-24 and 2024-25). **Application deadline: Monday, April 10, 2023.**

## **Upcoming events**

### **Unstoppable Innovation: Research Weeks 2020**

**March 16 - May 3, 2023**

This spring, the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation and the Office of the Provost are celebrating innovation. At VCU, research is for everyone. Students, faculty, staff and trainees work together to address society's grand challenges. Our solutions are designed not only

in laboratories, but in studios, classrooms, offices, the great outdoors, and beyond. Join us as we expand VCU Research Weeks to showcase our UNstoppable pursuit of knowledge, creativity, and scholarship. For more information and a full list of events, visit [researchweeks.vcu.edu](https://researchweeks.vcu.edu).

**Information Sessions: Transformative Learning Fund (VIP)**

**March 8 and March 28, 2023**

Information sessions will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, March 8 at 11 AM and Tuesday, March 28 at 9:30 AM. [Register for a Zoom session here](#). In addition, Dr. Erin Webster Garrett, assistant vice provost for REAL and coordinator of this opportunity, is available to speak to applicants about their projects. [Book a meeting with Dr. Webster Garrett here](#).

**Part 2: Gen AI and Teaching & Learning**

**March 15, 2023**

**Noon - 1:30 p.m. Virtual Only.**

This session will focus on three topics as virtual roundtables:

1. What is ChatGPT?
2. DEI and Chat GPT
3. Confronting Copyright and Plagiarism

[Register here](#).

**First Annual Conference for VCU Term Faculty**

**May 8, 2023**

Registration information coming soon. Save the Date!

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