

## **Resolution of Support for Maintaining Focused Inquiry Faculty**

WHEREAS, the Department of Focused Inquiry serves an incredibly important teaching and learning service to every major at VCU because this is where almost all VCU students hone their writing and critical thinking skills that prepares them for their future coursework in their majors;

WHEREAS, the Department of Focused Inquiry has [detailed documentation](#) that the VCU students who take their 3-course sequence with smaller class sizes have **positive outcomes for retention** and graduation rates, providing a direct positive impact on student success, in addition to [research](#) that supports their documentation;

WHEREAS, VCU has outlined student success as one of its 4 major goals in Quest 2028: One VCU Together We Transform strategic plan, including, “Retain...a diverse community of highly qualified faculty...that reflects a culture where everyone matters and belongs;” the Focused Inquiry faculty are highly qualified and uniquely positioned to provide classroom experiences with smaller class sizes for students in their freshmen and sophomore years in which they know that they matter to the faculty and have a sense of belonging at VCU;

WHEREAS, reducing the number of full-time faculty in the Department of Focused Inquiry would have a direct negative impact on the success of VCU students;

WHEREAS, the Faculty Senate understands the seriousness of the budget situation and is committed to the prosperity of the university, increasing enrollments, and retaining our students. This should not come at the cost of eliminating core faculty positions with demonstrated impact in improving retention and graduation rates, as such swift actions will only negatively impact students and the future of the university;

WHEREAS, the Faculty Senate understands the need for increased student enrollment and student retention, so we strongly encourage the administration to continue the three course Focused Inquiry sequence at its consistently low course caps, keeping the number of full-time faculty to support student success. The long term consequence of any reductions will have a negative impact on the University’s ability to “grow out” of our current budget issues;

THEREFORE, the Faculty Senate of Virginia Commonwealth University presents this resolution to President Rao, Provost Sotiropoulos, and the Board of Visitors that there should not be a reduction in the number of full-time faculty in the Department of Focused Inquiry due to the critical role they play in the [mission of VCU](#).

Approved by 95% of the Faculty Senate on May 9, 2023.