



Provost's Report to VCU Faculty Senate -- October 4, 2022

Fall 2022 Opening Message

Becoming the University of the Future

In my [Sept. 12, 2022 message to faculty](#) I outlined five key strategies that we must each embrace as we transform VCU into the university of the future: be innovative; be distinctive; exemplify a culture of care; hold ourselves accountable; and think as one VCU.

Here is one way we are being distinctive:

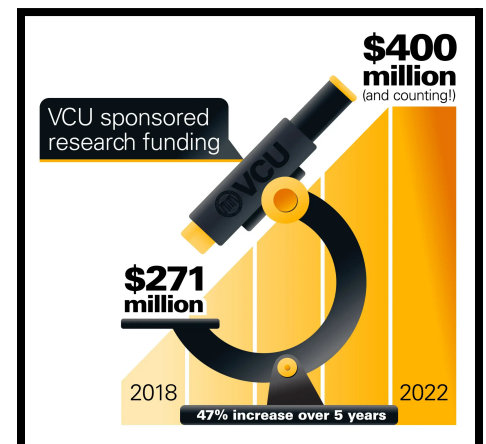
In becoming the university of the future we must consider the future of work for our students - and ourselves - in a tech-dominated world. As we learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, access to technology for our students, while vital, is not always easy. So, in June 2022, VCU announced that [full, free access to Adobe's Creative Cloud suite](#) is available to all VCU students enrolled in at least one credit-bearing course. No other university in Virginia has the distinction of being an Adobe Creative Campus. [Expanding digital literacy](#) - including access to the very tools these students will need in the work environment - is an important step in realizing our vision of a new kind of student. A student who is sufficiently proficient in the basics of computational thinking but also has been given the chance to cultivate higher-level cognitive skills, such as critical thinking, the ability to design and work with complex interconnected systems, entrepreneurship, compassion, and cross-cultural understanding. A student who is ready for the future of work.

Celebrating VCU faculty

[Congratulations to the 160 VCU faculty who were awarded promotion and/or tenure in 2022!](#) To achieve promotion and tenure, particularly at an R1 university, is a significant milestone in faculty careers. It represents not only outstanding work, but the promise of continued great work - the lifelong commitment of discovering and sharing knowledge. Please join me in congratulating these outstanding colleagues.

[VCU breaks record with more than \\$400M for sponsored research](#)

This incredible milestone is because of our outstanding faculty who work on research that matters!



In spring 2022, through a partnership of the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation, the [VCU Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Fund](#) was created to support, facilitate and enhance the creation, production and dissemination of arts, humanities and social sciences research and creative activity. The inaugural awardees were announced in June 2022.

- **Maysaa Almumin**, VCUarts Qatar: *“Women Within Arab Film and Cross-Cultural Filmmaking”*
- **Christopher Brooks, Ph.D.**, College of Humanities and Sciences: *“From Rural to Urban: HIV Positivity in the COVID-19 Era —Two Kenyan Communities”*
- **Brian Daugherty, Ph.D.**, College of Humanities and Sciences: *“The Green Light: School Integration in the United States”*
- **Michael McKean**, School of the Arts: *“Twelve Earths”*
- **Brooke Newman, Ph.D.**, College of Humanities and Sciences: *“The Queen’s Silence: The Hidden History of the British Monarchy and Slavery”*
- **J. Holiday Powers, Ph.D.**, VCUarts Qatar: *“Project Moroccan Modern, 1958-1972”*
- **Gabriel Reich, Ph.D.**, School of Education: *“Making Sense: Historical Consciousness in Troubled Times”*
- **Cristina Stanciu, Ph.D.**, College of Humanities and Sciences: *“Imagining Nations: Indigenous Networks in Film, Print and Theater”*
- **Diana Woodcock, Ph.D.**, VCUarts Qatar: *“Endangered National Treasures: Writing Poems of Place in Three of America’s National Parks With the Most Endangered Species”*
- **Sharon Zumbrunn, Ph.D.**, School of Education: *“Understanding Belonging in Context: A Longitudinal Mixed Methods Study”*

[Affordable Course Content Awards](#), in its sixth round, recognized eight VCU faculty projects in June 2022.

- **John M. Aughenbaugh, Ph.D.**, College of Humanities and Sciences, and **Nia Rodgers, M.A., M.L.I.S.**, VCU Libraries, will develop an open textbook on constitutional law.
- **Caroline O. Cobb, Ph.D.**, College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS), **David Chester, Ph.D.**, CHS, **Natalie Dautovich, Ph.D.**, CHS, **Jared Keeley, Ph.D.**, CHS, and **Fantasy Lozada, Ph.D.**, CHS, will identify existing open educational resources (OER) to assemble into a comprehensive open resource for a graduate course on the biological basis of behavior.
- **Vicki Pallo, Ph.D.**, University College, and **Julianne Guillard, Ph.D.**, University College, will lead a team of Focused Inquiry faculty in gathering OER of various formats and original works from faculty to create a resource repository for a redesigned UNIV200 course, a required course in the general education curriculum.

- **Rebecca Shields, Ph.D.**, School of the Arts, will create an open video resource in partnership with local historical sites highlighting African American art history, a topic absent from most art history textbooks.
- **Holly Jackson, Ph.D.**, School of Business, will update an open textbook previously created specifically for VCU's Foundations of Business course.
- **Garreth Blackwell, Ph.D.**, School of the Arts, and **Matt Woolman, M.F.A, M.B.A.**, School of the Arts, will expand upon a textbook supported by a 2018 Affordable Course Content Award.
- **Heather Nunnally, Ph.D.**, College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS), and **Hilary Cassil, M.S.**, CHS, will redesign a math course to use both an OER and customized corresponding assignments in MyOpenMath, an open source courseware platform.
- **Beth Rubinstein, M.D.**, School of Medicine, **Fnu Nutan, M.D.**, School of Medicine, **Julia Nunley, M.D.**, School of Medicine, and medical students Julianna Kang, Sindhuja Koppu, and Sarah Shapiro will create dynamic modules focusing on the identification, diagnosis, and workup of different dermatologic manifestations of rheumatic diseases, with an emphasis on utilizing examples in skin of color (SOC).

Important initiatives in progress

New training tool: [At-Risk for Faculty & Staff](#)

VCU has adopted an online conversation simulation, [At-Risk for Faculty & Staff](#), to help us learn to notice signs of distress in students, use techniques to discuss our concerns, and, if necessary, refer students to appropriate resources. [At-Risk for Faculty & Staff](#) lets you practice these challenging conversations at your own pace through role-play with virtual students. To take advantage of this simulation training, open an account at vcu.kognito.com. It can be completed in multiple sittings and your progress will be saved. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jihad Aziz at jnaziz@vcu.edu.

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

The [QEP Planning and Development Committee](#), which was convened in March 2022 and worked throughout the summer, is currently reviewing topic proposals that were submitted on or before Sept. 23. Later this month, the committee will announce the finalists and solicit feedback from the VCU community.

Leadership announcements

[Aaron J. Hart, Ed.D., Vice President for Student Affairs](#) (effective Oct. 25, 2022)

Dr. Hart currently serves as the vice president for student affairs at the University of Houston - Clear Lake (UHCL). He brings to VCU extensive experience in advancing university-wide student success. His strong background in student affairs spans across several universities and includes successful strategic planning, alignment of university priorities with student life, leveraging financial expertise in initiatives that improve the student experience, and a focus on the needs of diverse learners.

Mangala Subramaniam, Ph.D., Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs (effective Oct. 2, 2022)

Dr. Subramaniam previously served as the Butler Chair and Director of the Susan Bulkeley Butler Center for Leadership Excellence in the Office of the Provost at Purdue University. She brings to VCU a strong background in teaching and research, as well as research-based and innovative methods of faculty engagement in academic decision making, career development, and diversity and inclusion.

Garret Westlake, Ph.D., Associate Vice Provost for Innovation (effective Aug. 1, 2022).

Dr. Westlake, who will maintain his role as Executive Director of the da Vinci Center for Innovation, will expand upon his leadership in the areas of cross-disciplinary collaboration and innovation through the da Vinci Center by scaling the Center's transformational work to support the entire university. As a catalyst for advancing pedagogical, technological, design and policy innovations, Dr. Westlake's work in the Office of the Provost will include: working with academics units to develop programs that advance a design thinking mindset across the university; fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship; supporting cross-disciplinary collaborations and vertically integrated projects; as well as consulting with academic units and the Office of the Provost on innovation strategy, idea generation, and business plan development.

Jill Blondin, Ph.D., Associate Vice Provost for Global Initiatives (effective Sept. 10, 2022)

In her new position, Dr. Blondin will expand upon her current role in working across One VCU to build and implement a strategic vision for current and future globally-oriented initiatives. She will represent the institution internationally, and facilitate an even deeper engagement of VCU's students and faculty with partners around the world, fostering strategic institutional partnerships and increasing the university's international visibility and reputation. Dr. Blondin will continue to manage the Global Education Office and the areas of Global Learning (including education abroad and international student engagement); Global Partnerships; Immigration Services; English Language Program; and International Student Recruitment.

Gary C. Tepper, Ph.D., Interim Dean of the School of Engineering (effective July 1, 2022).

Dr. Tepper began his career at VCU in 1997 as an assistant professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering. He was promoted to associate professor in 2001 and to full professor in 2006. Since his appointment as chair of the Department of Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering in 2009, the department has been recognized in national rankings for its graduate program and Online master's program, and received a unique double accreditation in mechanical and nuclear engineering by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc. (ABET).

Catherine Ingrassia, Ph.D., Interim Dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences (effective

July 1, 2022) Dr. Ingrassia brings to this interim position nearly 30 years of experience at VCU, including seven years (2005-2011) in the CHS dean's office where she served as associate dean for academic affairs and executive associate dean for research and graduate affairs. She began her career at VCU in 1992 as assistant professor of English. She rose through the ranks of promotion and tenure to become associate professor in 1998 and full professor in 2005. She was appointed chair of the Department of English in 2019.

TBA, Interim Dean of the Graduate School (effective Nov. 1, 2022)

An interim dean will be appointed as soon as possible. Dr. Dan Bullard, dean of the Graduate School, will leave his current position and return to the faculty, effective Oct. 31, 2022. Dr. Bullard is a tenured, full professor in the Department of Human and Molecular Genetics in the School of Medicine and remains a valued leader for the university.

Leadership searches in progress

[Dean, School of Medicine and Executive Vice President, Medical Affairs, VCU Health](#)

Save the dates

Oct. 12, 2022 - Chip Jones, author of the 2022-2023 Common Book '[The Organ Thieves.](#)' will deliver a keynote address to VCU students, faculty, staff and the public on Wednesday, Oct. 12 from 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. at the Singleton Center (922 Park Ave, Richmond, VA 23220).

Nov. 2, 2022 - [Provost's Lecture Series at the ICA](#). This lecture 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. The lecture, titled "**Centering Health Equity in Transdisciplinary Tobacco Regulatory Science**" will be held in the ICA auditorium in conjunction with the **VCU Faculty Club** event. Additional information and RSVP to come.

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