Getting REAL:
Fulfilling our promise to students through a REAL academic regulation
Process for this academic regulation

To craft an academic regulation that fulfills Dr. Rao’s vision, we have engaged in the following governance process during the 2019-20 academic year:

- REAL Council: Discussions on possible regulation began.
- Curriculum subcommittee: Deeper exploration of regulation.
- Design team: Charged with drafting the proposed regulation.
- Curriculum subcommittee: Voted to approve proposed regulation (May 1).
- REAL Council: Full council to vote on proposed regulation at May 13 meeting.

Purpose of today’s presentation

- To keep you informed and in the loop.
- An additional part of our due diligence process.
- Introduce you to the REAL academic regulation, with the intent to return this fall with an update and to seek your endorsement.
The proposal

A new academic regulation, titled “Experiential learning, or REAL, graduation requirement at the undergraduate level,” will be developed, and put into place for all first-year and transfer undergraduates matriculating in fall 2021 or later.

To satisfy this new proposed requirement, a student must do one of the following:

• Complete a 300-level (or higher) course that has received a REAL attribute of Level 2, 3, or 4
• Complete an approved co-curricular experience that has received a REAL attribute of Level 3 or 4

REAL Levels
REAL courses and activities are leveled based on the degree to which they incorporate the REAL characteristics: hands-on learning, guided reflection, mentored experiences, and integrative learning. These levels were set in cooperation with the academic units in summer 2019.
The proposal

● Each school, college or unit will be encouraged to determine the pathway through which a student may fulfill the REAL requirement within its academic context, as long as it does not increase the hours required for graduation beyond the approved limit

● Alternative pathways to fulfill the requirement through the co-curriculum are recommended (e.g., through undergraduate research, service-learning, etc.)

● Courses in a program of study that already require experiential learning may concurrently fulfill the REAL requirement as well, assuming these courses meet the defined criteria

● Criteria for the regulation were carefully calibrated using Opportunity Audit inventory data; it’s designed to be reasonable/practical and easily met within most programs of study

● Having once satisfied the REAL requirement, a student will not have to fulfill it again (e.g., for returning students, or students who change major)
A REAL requirement:

- Aligns with the VCU mission
- Addresses equity and access as top priorities
- Enhances data collection systems
- Builds off of and expands what currently exists
Next steps

Information sessions for faculty interested in learning more

- May 6, 2 to 3 p.m.
- May 7, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.
- May 13, 1 to 2 p.m.

Email real@vcu.edu to receive a Zoom link for any of the above times.

Governance process

- Full REAL Council to vote on proposed regulation at May 13 meeting
- If approved, regulation will then be presented to deans and associate deans over the summer
- Regulation will return to Faculty Senate in the fall for potential endorsement
Questions?

Thank you for your support!

Full motion can be found at go.vcu.edu/realregulation