



## Provost's Report to VCU Faculty Senate -- April 5, 2022

### Celebrating VCU faculty

Here are just a few of the Feb./March 2022 news stories celebrating VCU faculty members:

- **Tracey Gendron, Ph.D.**, director of the Virginia Center on Aging at Virginia Commonwealth University and chair of the Department of Gerontology in the College of Health Professions, is the author of a recently published book. "[Ageism Unmasked: Exploring Age Bias and How to End It](#)," illuminates the pervasiveness of ageism and its impact on societal health and wellness.
- **Jean Giddens, Ph.D.**, dean and professor at the School of Nursing has been elected to serve a two-year term as [chair-elect of the board of directors of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing \(AACN\)](#). She will serve as AACN board chair from 2024-26.
- A new book by **Michael Dickinson, Ph.D.**, assistant professor in the Department of History in the College of Humanities and Sciences, will be released on May 1 by the University of Georgia Press. "[Almost Dead: Slavery and Social Rebirth in the Black Urban Atlantic, 1680-1807](#)," explores how thousands of enslaved Black people between the late 17th century and the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade formed dynamic urban communities in mainland America and the Caribbean. Dr. Dickenson worked on the book as part of a Barra Sabbatical Fellowship at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies.
- **Danielle Apugo, Ph.D.**, assistant professor in the School of Education and member of the iCubed research core Disrupting Criminalization in Education, is the [executive producer of a recently released documentary, "Policing Joy."](#) The film, which explores Black women's and girls' experience with hair bias, is based on Dr. Apugo's research and supported by a grant through the Blackhouse Foundation and the Facebook SEEN program.
- **Barbara D. Boyan, Ph.D.**, the Alice T. and William H. Goodwin, Jr. Dean of the VCU College of Engineering has received the [Distinguished Scientist Award](#) from the [American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research \(AADOCR\)](#) for 2022. Every two years, the AADOCR recognizes those who perform outstanding research of particular significance in any of the fields related to oral science. This is the highest award given by the organization.
- **Massimo Bertino, Ph.D.**, professor in the Department of Physics in the College of Humanities and Sciences, and **Martin Mangino, Ph.D.**, professor of surgery and associate chair for basic research in the School of Medicine, [have been elected by the National Academy of Inventors to the rank of senior members](#).

# Issues brought forward to administration by Faculty Senate leadership

## Classroom technology

VCU Technology Services is already well on the way to substantially increasing the number of classrooms with technology that can support technology-assisted courses. A multi-year plan to upgrade every classroom to support the teaching and learning of the future has been developed, and faculty input will be crucial to refining this plan.

## Infrastructure and support needed for navigating between in-person and online teaching

The [Online Strategy Task Force](#) has been working since last fall to develop recommendations that will inform the next steps in ensuring a positive experience for faculty and students in all forms of online teaching and learning. Tomikia LeGrande, chair of the Task Force, shared the [Faculty Senate endorsed letter to President Rao](#) with the members for review and consideration of the challenges - challenges for which long-term solutions lie in the recommendations of the Task Force and its Workgroups.

## Hybrid vs. online university

VCU will never be an “online” university; but post-pandemic our goal is to move the university forward in our ability to integrate technology into the fabric of our teaching and learning – leveraging technology and high-quality online learning modalities to create the flexibility and opportunity to innovate in the future.

## Decision making: COVID-19 and public health

In the fall 2020, VCU administration created the COVID-19 Faculty/Staff Advisory Committee for sharing and receiving feedback on university decisions (when possible) and mitigation strategies around COVID-19. Input from this committee, Faculty and Staff Senates, and the Dean’s Council are among the many factors that we very seriously evaluate when making decisions regarding public health and safety. Scientific data including positivity rates, hospitalization rates and demand for quarantine housing as well as guidance from public health and safety experts are also important considerations. Decisions are made through an inclusive balance of all of this feedback.

## Exhaustion

The VCU administration recognizes that VCU faculty and staff have worked tirelessly to carry out their duties under extraordinarily challenging circumstances throughout the pandemic and as a result each of you are exhausted. While we can’t predict what comes next with COVID-19, we are optimistic that a more normal teaching and learning environment is in the near future.

## Budget Update

On March 22, 2022 the VCU Board of Visitors held its annual budget workshop meeting. The materials provided to the board members in preparation for the meeting are [online](#). The meeting is summarized in this [VCU News article](#). For the first time in three years the university is recommending a tuition increase of 3%-6%.

The Board of Visitors invites your feedback on the proposed budget. The full proposed budget and the feedback form are available at <https://president.vcu.edu/board/open-comment-portal/>.

## Initiatives in progress

- [Amazon Career Choice program](#): VCU has been named a partner in this nationwide program through which Amazon provides tuition assistance to its employees so that they can further their careers. [The program at VCU is managed by the Office of Adult and Non-Traditional Student Services](#) in the Division of Strategic Enrollment Management and Student Success.
- [Recalibration of Quest 2025: Together We Transform](#): The Executive Committee is finalizing the refinement of Quest 2025 based on feedback that was received in February and March. In April, the final revised Quest 2025 will be presented to all shared governance groups (faculty, staff and students) for endorsement. In May, we will present the final version to the Board of Visitors for approval.
- [Online Strategy Task Force](#): The initial draft strategy recommendations have been completed. However, based upon feedback from workgroup chairs, I have extended the timeline for the final Online Strategy Task Force report to October 21, 2022. This will allow several of the workgroups to continue their work through the summer. To support the continued discussions, faculty who are not contractually engaged in the summer (May 15-August 12) and students will receive a summer stipend.
- [Faculty Fellows Program](#): The deadline to apply for a Faculty Fellow position in the Office of the Provost is **Friday, April 8, 2022**.
- [Syllabus policy](#): VCU's Course Syllabus Policy Workgroup has developed a draft course syllabus requirement policy based on recommendations from various stakeholders. The draft policy will be discussed at the Student Government Association meeting on April 4 and at the Faculty Senate meeting on April 5. It has also been vetted by student leaders, deans and academic associate deans. [The policy is available for public comment through April 18](#). The goal is to submit the draft policy for approval at the May meetings of the University Council and Cabinet to be effective for the fall semester.

## Leadership transitions

- [Division of Student Affairs](#) - **Dr. Charles Klink** will be stepping away from his current role as senior vice provost for student affairs. Dr. Klink will remain in his current role until the position is filled and will subsequently transition to the role of associate vice provost for student affairs. In his new role, Dr. Klink will focus on student health and wellness.
- [School of Social Work](#) - **Dean Beth Angell** will leave VCU to become the dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Michigan effective June 30, 2022. **Dr. Rebecca Gomez**, currently associate dean for academic and student affairs, will serve as interim dean of the School of Social Work (SSW) beginning May 16, 2022. In addition, **Dr. Gary Cuddeback**, currently the associate dean for research and professor, will take on expanded responsibilities as the associate dean for research and faculty affairs.
- [VCU Online](#) - **Dr. Mandara Savage** has stepped down as executive director of VCU Online to refocus his expertise as executive director of professional studies. In his new role, Dr. Savage will support and engage the university as it assesses and develops a strategic plan to advance its efforts in expanding professional studies. **Dr. Judith Kornberg** is now serving as interim executive director for VCU Online. She previously served as interim associate dean of programs and visiting associate professor in the

School of Education at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. Kornberg was recruited through [The Registry](#), which specializes in placing skilled and experienced academic leaders in interim positions.

- [College of Humanities and Sciences](#) - **Dean Jennifer Malat** will step down as dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS), effective June 30, 2022. Dr. Malat has accepted a position in VCU's Office of Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) as associate vice president for development. An interim dean will be named by the end of April.
- [School of Pharmacy](#) - **Dean Joe Dipiro** will step down as dean of the School of Pharmacy at the end of the semester to focus fully on his new role as associate vice president for faculty affairs in the Office of the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences. **Kelechi "K.C." Ogbonna, Pharm.D.**, associate dean for admissions & student services, will serve as interim dean.

## Leadership searches in progress

- [Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs](#)
- [Vice Provost for Strategy and Implementation](#)
- [Vice President for Student Affairs](#)
- [Dean, School of Medicine and Executive Vice President, Medical Affairs, VCU Health](#)

## Upcoming events

- [Provost's Lecture Series at the ICA](#)  
April 20, 2022, 6 p.m. at the ICA and online.

The third and final installment of the 2021-22 Provost's Lecture Series at the ICA will explore **Real and Virtual Movement: Insecting Art, Technology and Medicine** through presentations from **Kate Sicchio**, assistant professor, VCUarts and **Semi Ryu**, professor, VCUarts and associate professor, VCU School of Medicine. The Ted Talk-style presentations will be followed by a discussion, moderated by **Dominic Asmall Willson**, executive director of the ICA. Please [RSVP through our online form](#) by April 15. A live stream of the event will also be available on the ICA Youtube channel.

- [VCU Research Weeks](#)  
Events will take place throughout April and across VCU highlighting student work and promoting an array of diverse research.

- [Spring Commencement](#)  
Saturday, May 14, 2022, 10 a.m. to noon  
Greater Richmond Convention Center

Faculty who plan to participate in VCU's university wide Commencement ceremony should register and reserve their seat using the following link: [go.vcu.edu/mayfaculty2022](http://go.vcu.edu/mayfaculty2022)

A list of school, college, department and office ceremonies is [available online](#).

###