



Provost's Report to VCU Faculty Senate -- May 3, 2022

Celebrating VCU faculty

Here are news stories from March/April 2022 celebrating VCU faculty members:

Steven Woolf, M.D., director emeritus of VCU's Center on Society and Health, recently published an article examining the relationship between life expectancy, COVID-19 outcomes, and state policies. The article, "[The Growing Influence of State Governments on Population Health in the United States](#)," was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

[Three faculty members](#) in the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs received awards at the annual conference of the American Society for Public Administration in March. **Dr. Susan T. Gooden**, dean, received the Gwendolyn Bullock-Smith Public Service Award; **Dr. Blue Wooldridge**, distinguished career professor and professor emeritus, received the Gloria Hobson Nordin Social Equity Award; and **William 'Bill' Leighty**, senior strategic advisor to the dean and former chief of staff to two governors, received the National Public Service Award.

A \$2.6 million, five-year grant from the National Institute of Drug Abuse is supporting the work of **MaryPeace McRae, Pharm.D., Ph.D.** in determining [why opioids make many of the medications used to treat HIV less effective](#). Dr. McRae is graduate program director and associate professor in the School of Pharmacy.

Oyita Udiani, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics in the College of Humanities and Sciences, has been selected to join the inaugural class of [MGB-SIAM](#) Early Career (MSEC) Fellows. Each of the ten inaugural fellows are distinguished early career professionals and were selected based on their exemplary achievements; support of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their community; and commitment to industrial and applied mathematics, computational science, and data science. Dr. Udiani's research has focused on complex adaptive systems, ecology, public health, and collective behavior. He is passionate about engaging minoritized communities in mathematics.

Mignonne C. Guy, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the Department of African American Studies in the College of Humanities and Sciences, has been awarded \$845,000 for a three-year project, "[Eliminating Systemic Racism in Commercial Tobacco Control Research](#)," from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

[Eight VCU faculty members have been inducted](#) into the VCU chapter of the National Academy of Inventors. The VCU 2022 inventor inductees are **Daren Chen, Ph.D.**, professor and Floyd D. Gottwald Sr. Chair of the Department of Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering in the College of Engineering; **William Dewey, Ph.D.**, professor and chair of the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology in the School of Medicine; **Jonathan Isaacs, M.D.**, professor and chair of the Division of Hand Surgery in the School of Medicine; **Puru Jena, Ph.D.**, distinguished professor in the Department of Physics in the College of Humanities and Sciences; **Art Kellermann, M.D.**, senior vice president of VCU Health Sciences and CEO of VCU Health System; **Dana Selley, Ph.D.**, professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology in the School of Medicine; **Gary Tepper, Ph.D.**, professor and chair of the Department of Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering in the College of Engineering; and **Erdem Topsakal, Ph.D.**, professor and chair of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering in the College of Engineering.

At the annual VCU [Presidential Awards for Community Multicultural Enrichment \(PACME\)](#) ceremony on April 26 three faculty members were recognized for their significant contributions in promoting civility, building community, establishing cross-cultural initiatives, advocating equity, and nurturing a culture of caring throughout the university and local communities. **Mignonne Guy, Ph.D.**, associate professor and chair of the Department of African American Studies in the College of Humanities and Sciences, received the Faculty Award; **Sofia Hiort - Wright, Ph.D.**, senior executive associate athletic director/senior women's administrator for VCU Athletics, received the President's Inclusive Excellence Lifetime Achievement Award; and **Kelechi (K.C.) Ogbonna, PharmD, MSHA**, associate dean for admissions and student services and associate professor in the School of Pharmacy, received both the Academic and Administrative Leadership Award and the Riese-Melton Award.

Important initiatives in progress

- [Recalibration of Quest 2025: Together We Transform](#): The final Quest Recalibration document will be presented to the VCU Board of Visitors for approval on Friday, May 13, 2022. Visit the [VCU Board of Visitors webpage](#) for more information about the Board and its meetings.
- [Academic Analytics Data and Tool Use Guidelines](#): The Office of the Provost has finalized a document outlining what Academic Analytics data and tools will be used for and will not be used for. The Data Use Guidelines are available on a [new Academic Analytics webpage](#).
- [‘The Organ Thieves’ selected as VCU’s 2022 Common Book](#): The award-winning book by Pulitzer-nominated journalist Chip Jones examines a long legacy of mistreating African Americans, culminating in efforts to win the heart transplant race in the late 1960s. **Jones will deliver a keynote address, which will be free and open to the public, on Oct. 12, 2022** at the Stuart C. Siegel Center, 1200 W. Broad St.

Leadership transition

- College of Engineering - **Dr. Barbara Boyan**, the Alice T. and William H. Goodwin, Jr. Dean of the College of Engineering and professor of Biomedical Engineering, has asked to transition to the next phase of her academic life here at VCU. With a long list of accolades and accomplishments over her last nine years as dean, Dr. Boyan will take on a new career challenge at VCU as the Executive Director of the Institute for Engineering and Medicine (IEM). The growth of the IEM is a priority for VCU and a logical focus for Dr. Boyan, whose extensive experience and research portfolio make her uniquely qualified to lead the burgeoning efforts of the IEM. Therefore, effective June 30, 2022, Dr. Boyan will transition from being Dean of the College of Engineering to become the Executive Director of the IEM. An interim dean will be announced in the next few weeks.

Recent interim leadership appointments

- School of Social Work - **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. At the same time, **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. 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.
- School of Pharmacy - **Kelechi “K.C.” Ogbonna, Pharm.D.**, associate dean for admissions and student services, will serve as interim dean of the School of Pharmacy beginning in June.
- College of Humanities and Sciences and College of Engineering interim deans will be appointed within the next few weeks.

Leadership searches in progress

- [Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs](#)
Four candidates have visited campus. Feedback has been received and is being reviewed.
- [Vice Provost for Strategy and Implementation](#)
Three candidates have visited campus. Feedback has been received and is being reviewed.
- [Vice President for Student Affairs](#)
Applications are being reviewed.
- [Dean, School of Medicine and Executive Vice President, Medical Affairs, VCU Health](#)

May events

- May 4 [ConnectEd Symposium](#) - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
The General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC) and General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) are hosting this symposium to create a space to reflect on where we've been, where we are, and where we're headed in general education at VCU, as well as to celebrate the contributions and achievements of all our general education colleagues across the university. [RSVP to attend virtually](#). Registration for in-person attendance has closed.
- May 14 [Universitywide Commencement Ceremony](#) - 10 a.m. to noon, Greater Richmond Convention Center
[Faculty should RSVP](#) to attend the universitywide ceremony. Additional instructions will be sent to those who RSVP regarding arrival, processional, etc.
- May 12-15 [School, college and office commencement ceremonies](#) will also be held. Information for each ceremony is online.

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