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2015

# 2015 VCU Faculty Handbook

Revised by the Faculty Affairs Committee of University Council

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# Faculty Handbook

July 2015

Revised by the Faculty Affairs Committee of University Council  
July 30, 2015

With revisions to reflect the revised administrative and academic structures and approved policies July 2005,  
July 2006, July 2007, November 2008, November 2011, and July 2015.

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# History, Mission, General Organizations, Governance, and Policies

## University History

The university takes its founding date of 1838 from the year the Medical College of Virginia was created as the medical department of Hampden-Sydney College. MCV became independent in 1854 and state-affiliated in 1860.

Virginia Commonwealth University's Monroe Park Campus began in 1917 as the Richmond School of Social Work and Public Health. In 1925, it became the Richmond division of the College of William and Mary; and in 1939, its name was changed to Richmond Professional Institute. It separated from William and Mary in 1962 to become an independent state institution.

In 1968, Gov. Mills E. Godwin Jr. signed VCU into existence, based on recommendations set forth in a 1967 report developed by a legislative commission led by Edward A. Wayne Sr., president of the Richmond Federal Reserve Bank.

Wayne was named vice-rector of the first Board of Visitors of VCU, and the university's Wayne Medal honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions or provided exemplary service to VCU.

The full text of the [Wayne Commission Report](#) explaining the development of Virginia Commonwealth University and the rationale for bringing together the Medical College of Virginia and Richmond Professional Institute, is available through VCU Libraries' Digital Collections website (<http://dig.library.vcu.edu/index.php>).

MCV and RPI merged to become VCU in 1968 and it is now the most comprehensive urban university in the state.

To learn more about the history of Virginia Commonwealth University, view the [James Branch Cabell Library Special Collections and Archives](#).

To learn more about the history of healthcare at MCV, view the [Special Collections and Archives](#) at Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences.

## Mission and Vision of the University

### Mission Statement

As the premier urban, public research university in Virginia, VCU's mission is to advance knowledge and student success through its commitments to:

- An engaged, learner-centered environment that fosters inquiry, discovery and innovation in a global setting.
- Research that expands the boundaries of new knowledge and creative expression and promotes translational applications to improve human health.
- Interdisciplinary collaborations that bring new perspectives to complex problems and mobilize creative energies that advance innovation and solve global challenges.
- Health care that strives to preserve and restore health for all people, to seek the cause and cure of diseases through groundbreaking research, and to educate those who serve humanity.



- Diversity that provides a climate of inclusion, a dedication to addressing disparities wherever they exist, and an opportunity to explore and create in an environment of trust.
- Sustainable university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic, and cultural vitality of the communities VCU serves in Virginia and around the world.

### Vision Statement

VCU will be a premier urban, public research university distinguished by its commitment to:

- The intellectual and academic success of a diverse student body.
- Research and discovery that advances knowledge, inspires creativity and improves human health.
- The global engagement of students, faculty and staff that transforms lives and communities.

## The University and the State

Virginia Commonwealth University is a public institution founded in 1968 by an act of the [Virginia General Assembly](#). It depends upon the General Assembly and the Governor for appropriations from the State's revenues, especially for the "educational and general" (E & G) funds which support its basic operations. Ultimate authority for all activities of the University lies with the Board of Visitors. The University operates within basic fiscal and administrative procedures set by the state. The Code of Virginia contains numerous references to VCU. See <http://leg1.state.va.us/000/src.htm> for a searchable database for all the Code of Virginia references to Virginia Commonwealth University.

The [State Council of Higher Education for Virginia](#) (also known as SCHEV) has limited direct authority over the University. Nevertheless, it often plays a significant role in University planning and development because it is the policy development and coordination agency for the statewide higher education system. For example, the Council prepares and implements the formulas used in computing basic institutional budget recommendations for the General Assembly. SCHEV reviews and makes recommendations regarding budget requests from the various institutions to the State, and it is authorized to review and act on proposed programmatic changes, such as new degree programs. The [Code of Virginia](#) lists SCHEV's responsibilities.

## VCU's Administration

Final authority for the policies of the University lies with the Board of Visitors. The Board of Visitors appoints VCU's President who serves as chief executive officer of the institution. The remainder of the University's administration reports through the President to the Board of Visitors.

## Board of Visitors

The Board of Visitors (the Board) is the policy-making body of the University. Its [16 members](#) are appointed by the governor for a four-year term with the possibility of a second consecutive term. One VCU faculty member, one VCU staff member and one VCU student, recommended by the president and approved by the Board, are non-voting representatives to VCU's Board of Visitors. Board meetings are held quarterly, generally in February, May, August, and November. At its meeting in May, the Board elects a rector to serve as its

presiding officer and spokesperson. The rector takes office in July and appoints the Board's standing committees. In August, the Board elects the vice rector, the secretary, and the members of the executive committee.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Visitors, consisting of the rector, vice rector, secretary, and two additional members elected by the Board, is empowered to perform all duties performed by the Board in the interim between Board meetings. The Executive Committee gives particular attention to institutional planning. The committee also approves the naming of all physical facilities. The Board has standing committees and a number of special committees. The rector serves as an ex-officio member of all committees.

## President

The president ([president.vcu.edu/index.html](http://president.vcu.edu/index.html)) of Virginia Commonwealth University is the chief executive officer of the University and a member of the University faculty. The president presides at University meetings other than Board of Visitors meetings, and confers all degrees and diplomas. The president oversees the University in conformity with the purposes and policies of the Board. The president establishes the internal administrative structure in a manner that will ensure proper University management, adequate planning, and evaluation and improvement of academic programs. He delegates responsibilities and authority to other officers and committees of the University. He recommends to the Board of Visitors the establishment of faculty positions and the appointment, compensation, promotion, leave of absence, and termination of faculty after consultation with appropriate vice presidents. Vice presidents and other administrative officers are appointed by the Board of Visitors upon recommendation of the president and serve at the pleasure of the president.

## Provost and Vice Presidents

### Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

At Virginia Commonwealth University, the positions of provost and vice president for academic affairs are combined in a single office.

VCU's provost and vice president for academic affairs ([provost.vcu.edu](http://provost.vcu.edu)) serves as the chief academic officer of the university. The provost is responsible for developing and overseeing academic planning for the university, for overseeing the colleges and the schools on the Monroe Park Campus, which include the University College, the Honors College, the College of Humanities and Sciences, the schools of the Arts, Business, Education, Engineering and Social Work, and the Graduate School.

### Vice President for Health Sciences and CEO, VCU Health System

The [vice president for health sciences \(VPHS\)](#) ensures the effective implementation of the missions of education, research, and service as they relate to health sciences and the academic clinical enterprise. The VPHS is responsible for overseeing the schools on the Medical College of Virginia Campus, which include the schools of Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy. The VPHS also serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the [VCU Health System](#).

### **Vice President for Research**

The mission of the [Office of the Vice President for Research](#) is to facilitate research and scholarship. The services provided by this office enhance the development of faculty and students, strengthen VCU's position to recruit and retain outstanding scholars, increase the awareness of the breadth and diversity of VCU's faculty's expertise, and bring visibility to the University.

### **Vice President for Finance and Administration**

The vice president for finance and administration ([finance.vcu.edu/](http://finance.vcu.edu/)) serves as the chief financial and administrative officer of Virginia Commonwealth University. As the University's chief financial officer, the vice president provides advice to the administration and Board of Visitors on all matters pertaining to the institution's financial affairs.

### **Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations**

The vice president for development and alumni relations ([advancement.vcu.edu](http://advancement.vcu.edu)) works to increase the private support of the university for priority programs and needs that are most likely to attract such support.

To accomplish this objective, the vice president provides leadership by building substantive relationships with community leaders and alumni through university-related foundations and alumni associations, and provides leadership and guidance to these groups. The office includes Alumni Affairs, Development, Corporate and Foundation Relations, major projects and Advancement Services.

### **Vice Provost for Strategic Enrollment Management**

The vice provost for strategic enrollment management leads the Division of [Strategic Enrollment Management](#), which provides primary oversight for the recruitment, retention and graduation of students at all levels. The division provides student services through the offices of [financial aid and scholarships](#), [records and registration](#), [student accounting](#), undergraduate, graduate and international [student admission](#) and the enrollment service center. These departments are supported by offices of data analysis and marketing. The division also oversees the university's degree audit office and [Military Student Services](#). Additionally, the division works in tandem with other university departments to support the studies of current students with a focus upon four-year graduation for undergraduates. Maintenance of student records as well as the issuance of grades, transcripts and diplomas are the responsibility of the division. Students may receive personalized assistance in offices on both of the Richmond campuses.

### **Vice Provost for Learning Innovation and Student Success**

The vice provost for learning innovation and student success is responsible for efforts to enhance the quality of teaching and learning throughout the university, the first-year student experience, and advancing learning innovation and the strategic use of digital technologies. The vice provost provides leadership for those programs, initiatives and centers that support the education of all students, from undergraduate to graduate and professional, including an emphasis on support of faculty to engage in innovative approaches to teaching and learning. The vice provost also leads the university's strategic vision for learning

innovation, including such initiatives as the [Alt Lab](#) and [Online@VCU](#) as well as the highly successful [VCU University College](#).

#### **Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs**

The vice provost for academic and faculty affairs ensures the integrity, quality and transparency of academic programs; oversees policies and procedures governing the graduate and undergraduate curriculum; and supports the faculty evaluation and the promotion and tenure process. The vice provost for academic and faculty affairs also provides leadership and guidance for university academic advising, the SACSCOC reaffirmation process, academic program review, and the Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention. The office is the liaison to the VCU Graduate School, the [State Council for Higher Education in Virginia](#) (SCHEV) and our accreditor, the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges](#) (SACSCOC).

The Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention reports to the vice provost for academic and faculty affairs. This office promotes the hiring of outstanding and diverse faculty members by overseeing the development, implementation, and interpretation of faculty policies. Led by an associate vice provost, the team has oversight of faculty hiring and retention, the promotion and tenure process, faculty evaluation and faculty development including leadership programs. For more information, please visit the [Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention](#).

#### **Vice Provost for Community Engagement**

The vice provost for community engagement leads the [Division of Community Engagement](#), which works to mobilize university-community partnerships that generate innovative solutions to societal challenges and prepares the engaged citizens of tomorrow, utilizing university programs focused on teaching, outreach and research.

The Division of Community Engagement provides Virginia Commonwealth University with a centralized administrative unit focused on community engagement and nontraditional programs. In keeping with VCU's mission, the office:

- Facilitates and coordinates innovative academic programs, on and off campus, that enhance student learning and address community-identified needs.
- Supports the involvement of faculty, staff and students on the Monroe Park Campus and MCV Campus in community partnerships.
- Creates opportunities for interdisciplinary, community-based collaborations that integrate research, teaching and service.

#### **Vice Provost for Student Affairs**

The vice provost for student affairs leads the Division of Student Affairs, which provides programs, services and facilities designed to create a student-centered culture promoting community, student engagement and personal development. By enhancing the intellectual, personal, social moral, financial, physical and psychological development of students, the division builds the student capacity to become contributing citizens in a global and diverse society. Committed to a just and positive community, the division also provides resources for students, parents, faculty and staff to assist in navigating positive interactions regarding questions and concerns.

Division departments offer services on both the Monroe Park and MCV Campuses including:

- Living-learning communities
- Support for students with disabilities
- Recreational and student activities
- University student health services
- Multicultural student affairs
- Support for military students and dependents
- Career development
- Student conduct and academic integrity adjudication
- Technology support infrastructure
- Student media center
- Wellness resource center

### **Vice Provost for Planning and Decision Support**

The vice provost for planning and decision support leads the [Office of Planning and Decision Support](#) and is responsible for supporting executive decision-making and university planning by providing the president, provost, senior administrators and deans with timely information and data analysis. In addition, OPDS provides a variety of [statistical information](#), such as the [VCU Fact Card](#), reports and data about the university.

In order to assist university leadership with ensuring institutional effectiveness, the office:

- Supports the work of decision-makers at all levels within the university by tracking appropriate metrics and providing information and analyses necessary to make data-driven decisions.
- Meets the ongoing planning and evaluation needs of VCU.
- Evaluates business practices for efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.
- Ensures that the university meets its statutory and voluntary reporting requirements in an accurate and timely fashion.
- Pairs analysis with decision-making throughout the institution to identify information needed for decisions that are consistent with the university's mission and strategic direction, and to ensure that decision-makers have ready access to that information.

### **VCU Health System Authority**

In April 1996, Gov. George Allen signed legislation that established the Medical College of Virginia Hospitals Authority. Effective July 1, 1997, the operations, employees and obligations of MCV Hospitals (formerly a division of VCU) were transferred to the Authority. Three years later, in connection with legislation signed by Gov. James Gilmore, the MCV Hospitals Authority became the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority. The clinical activities of MCV Hospitals, MCV Physicians and the VCU School of Medicine are now coordinated and integrated by and through the VCU Health System.

The VCU Health System Authority is charged by statute with the missions of operating MCV Hospitals as teaching hospitals for the benefit of the schools of the Health Sciences Division of VCU, providing high quality patient care and providing a site for medical and biomedical research, all of which missions are required to be performed in close affiliation

with the Health Sciences Division. The VCU Vice President for Health Sciences also serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the VCU Health System Authority, and five VCU faculty physicians serve as members of the Health System Board of Directors.

## University Governance

### Curriculum Committees

VCU's curriculum committees are composed entirely or predominantly of faculty, at the school, college and University levels.

At the undergraduate level, two faculty members from each of the schools, colleges, and units with undergraduate programs represent the faculty on the University [Undergraduate Curriculum Committee](#). At the graduate level, the [Graduate Council](#) acts on curricular issues.

### University Graduate Council

The Graduate Council is the representative body of the faculty of the Graduate School. The Bylaws of the Graduate Faculty can be found at the Graduate School [website](#). The purpose of the Graduate Council is to promote excellence in all graduate programs. The Graduate Council is the policymaking body of the Graduate School. It shall serve and act on behalf of the faculty and students of the Graduate School.

The Graduate Council shall be composed of the following voting members:

1. Two Graduate Faculty members elected from and by each school or college except the Graduate School.
2. One Graduate Faculty member elected from and by each academic unit not contained within a school or college, which offers a graduate degree, such as VCU Life Sciences.
3. The President, or elected representative, of the Graduate Student Association.
4. The Dean of the Graduate School, or a representative designated by the Dean, chairs the Council but votes only to break a tie using criteria stated by these bylaws.
5. The Associate Dean(s) of the Graduate School serves as an ex-officio member of the Graduate Council.

There are four standing committees of the Graduate Council:

1. The *Admissions and Academic Standards Committee* recommends and reviews admissions and degree requirements for graduate programs. The committee hears appeals from applicants denied admission to graduate study by or dismissed from the Graduate School and makes recommendations to the dean.
2. The *Internal Review Committee* is responsible for reviewing all graduate programs as part of the university program review procedures and establishing guidelines for graduate program review. The committee also makes recommendations concerning these reviews to the Graduate Council.
3. The *Policy and Procedures Committee* recommends policies and procedures for governance of graduate education to the Graduate Council.



4. The *Programs and Courses Committee* reviews proposals for new and revised graduate courses and degree programs and makes recommendations to the Graduate Council.

### University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

The University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee is responsible for course and program issues that affect undergraduate instructional programs of the university. The UUCC meets monthly during the academic year for review and approval of proposals for new courses and programs, as well as changes in existing programs. The committee is also responsible for facilitating implementation of strategic initiatives related to undergraduate curricula. Revised guidelines for the committee follow.

The committee shall consist of voting faculty members elected by the faculty of each of the schools, colleges or units representing VCU undergraduate programs; and faculty members appointed by the dean from the faculty at large within each of those schools, colleges or units. All programs participating in undergraduate studies must submit curriculum matters to the committee for consideration and approval, whether directly represented on the committee or not.

The criteria that will be employed in selecting and appointing representatives are:

- Full-time faculty, tenure-track or term, or program representatives
- At least two years of service at VCU
- At least two years of instructional experience, preferably on the undergraduate level
- Experience or an interest in departmental or school-level curriculum planning

Elections and appointments for representatives are completed in a spring semester with service to the committee beginning in the following fall semester. Committee members from the same school or college will serve staggered three-year terms.

### University Council

Though the legal authority to guide and regulate the University is vested by the Commonwealth of Virginia in the Board of Visitors and the president, the University community has a collective responsibility through the [University Council](#) to communicate its views on academic programs and policies, to aid in communication and understanding among faculty, students, and administrators, and to assist the president in developing and evaluating University programs and policies. In its bylaws, the University Council states that as “a corollary of academic freedom, the University community has a collective responsibility for guiding the scholarly pursuits of the University. The University Council, as a representative body of faculty, classified staff, students and administrators is established to communicate its views on University-wide issues to those exercising authority over the institution.”

Four committees ([vcu.edu/council/committees.html](http://vcu.edu/council/committees.html)) review proposals for the University’s action:

Committee on Academic and Policy Affairs. This committee consists of the provost and vice president for academic affairs, six faculty members (three from each campus) selected from the Faculty Caucus, two administrators (elected by and from the four deans serving on the University Council), and two students. The committee serves as a deliberative and consultative body on academic plans and policies, proposals for new degrees, and policies for termination of degrees.

Committee on Faculty Affairs. This committee consists of eight faculty members elected by and from the Faculty Caucus (four from each campus, one of whom must be a faculty senator), two administrators elected by and from administrators serving on the Council, two students elected by and from student members of the Council and two classified staff elected by and from the classified staff members of the Council. The committee serves as a deliberative and consultative body with authority to study, report and recommend to the University Council policies and procedures bearing on faculty concerns and conditions of service; additionally, it serves as a forum for the consideration of such issues as curriculum, evaluation of students, and areas related to faculty service (such as recruitment, promotion, etc.).

Committee on Student Affairs. This committee consists of two faculty members, two administrators, two classified staff members, and seven students (two from the MCV Campus, three from the Monroe Park Campus, plus one from the Monroe Park Campus Student Government Association, and one from the MCV Campus Student Government Association). The committee serves as a deliberative and consultative body with authority to study, report, and recommend to the University Council policies and procedures bearing on student concerns and the quality of student life.

Committee on Classified Staff Affairs. This committee consists of six classified staff members, two faculty members, two administrators (elected by and from the University Council administrative members), and two students. The committee serves as a deliberative and consultative body with authority to study, report, and recommend to the University Council policies and procedures bearing on classified staff concerns and the quality of the work environment.

### **Faculty Senate**

The Faculty Senate ([facultysenate.vcu.edu/](http://facultysenate.vcu.edu/)) strives to facilitate shared responsibility and cooperative action between the faculty and administration. Each year the Credentials and Rules Committee of the Senate, using data supplied by the Office of Planning and Decision Support, reapportions the number of senators from each school and college based on faculty population. Each school and college is represented by at least two senators and no school shall be represented by more than 20 senators. Senators serve three-year terms and may not immediately succeed themselves.

The Faculty Senate elects four representatives to the University Council and four representatives to the [Faculty Senate of Virginia](#).

The Executive Committee, chaired by the president of the Faculty Senate, is composed of the president, vice president, corresponding secretary, recording secretary, immediate-past president, and two senators (one from each campus) elected by the Faculty Senate. The president of the Faculty Senate of Virginia appoints committee members, including



some non-senators, and much of the work of the Faculty Senate is done by its 11 standing committees:

- Academic and Professional Status
- Academic Programs and Research
- Academic Support Services
- Affirmative Action
- Alumni and Community Relations
- Budget and Planning
- Communications, Publicity and Publications
- Credentials and Rules
- Economic Status
- State Legislative and Statewide Relations Committee
- Student Affairs

### **Faculty Meetings**

Each school, college and department has its own internal governance structure, which determines the time, place, and frequency of their faculty meetings. At the beginning of the academic year, the President of the University welcomes new faculty. Attendance at the meetings, which are typically associated with the fall Faculty Convocation, is strongly urged.

In accordance with the [Bylaws of the Faculty](#), following a request from the president of the Faculty Senate, the VCU president usually convenes the faculty once a year during February for the purpose of reporting on the state of the University and receiving questions from the faculty.

### **Staff Senate**

The [Staff Senate](#) is the official representative body for classified employees of VCU and the VCU Health System communities. The Staff Senate provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among staff, the administration, faculty, and students. The Staff Senate is composed of 75 members (50 senators and 25 alternates). Staff senators serve three-year terms and are appointed by University vice presidents and deans and group directors of the Health System. Appointees must be full-time University or Health System employees with at least one-year's employment. The Staff Senate's Executive Committee is composed of the president of the Staff Senate (who also chairs the committee), vice president, recording secretary, and membership secretary. The standing committees are:

- Constitution and Bylaws
- Communications
- VCU Policies and Issues
- Elections and Nominations
- Volunteer (ad hoc)

The Staff Senate president also appoints a parliamentarian and historian. The executive director for Human Resources serves as the Staff Senate's administrative liaison. Except for July and August, Staff Senate meetings are held every other month, generally on the third Wednesday of the month.

## VCU's Strategic Plan – Quest for Distinction

On May 20, 2011 the VCU Board of Visitors approved *VCU Quest for Distinction*, a six-year strategic plan that establishes a roadmap to reach VCU's vision as a premier public urban research university distinguished by commitments to academic quality and student success.

Quest for Distinction affirms VCU's core values and rests on the following four themes:

1. Become a leader among national research universities in providing all students with high quality learning/living experiences focused on inquiry, discovery, and innovation in a global environment.
2. Attain preeminence as an urban, public research university by making contributions in research, scholarship, creative expression, and clinical practice to advance knowledge and enhance the quality of life.
3. Achieve national recognition as a fully-integrated research university with a commitment to human health.
4. Become a national model for community engagement and regional impact.

### VCU's Core Values:

- Integrity – adhering to the highest standards of honesty, respect and professional and scholarly ethics.
- Accountability – committing to the efficient and transparent stewardship of our resources to achieve institutional excellence.
- Achievement – ensuring distinction in learning, research and scholarly pursuits, service, and patient care.
- Collaboration – fostering collegiality and cooperation to advance learning, entrepreneurship, and inquiry.
- Freedom – striving for intellectual truth with responsibility and civility, respecting the dignity of all individuals.
- Innovation – cultivating discovery, creativity, originality, inventiveness, and talent.
- Service – engaging in the application of learning and discovery to improve the human condition and support the public good at home and abroad.
- Diversity – ensuring a climate of trust, honesty and integrity where all people are valued and differences are recognized as an asset.

The full text of VCU Quest for Distinction is online at [future.vcu.edu/pdfs/Quest\\_Full\\_Document.pdf](http://future.vcu.edu/pdfs/Quest_Full_Document.pdf).

## University Policies and Procedures

Definitions: Policies establish overarching philosophies that govern and have broad application throughout the University community. There are two distinct types of University Policy: Board of Visitors Approved Policies and Administrative Policies. Both are mandatory.

Procedures are defined, mandatory series of steps established to accomplish a particular policy.

Resources for accessing VCU Policies and Procedures include:

- Administrative Toolkit: [toolkit.vcu.edu/](http://toolkit.vcu.edu/)

- Provost's Web site: [provost.vcu.edu/](http://provost.vcu.edu/)
- Student Affairs: [students.vcu.edu/policies/](http://students.vcu.edu/policies/)
- Technology Services: [ts.vcu.edu/kb/2458.html](http://ts.vcu.edu/kb/2458.html)
- Research: [research.vcu.edu/p\\_and\\_g/policies.htm](http://research.vcu.edu/p_and_g/policies.htm)
- Development and Alumni Relations: [dar.vcu.edu/policies/](http://dar.vcu.edu/policies/)
- VCU Undergraduate Bulletin: [pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/undergraduate/?uid=10096&iid=30682](http://pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/undergraduate/?uid=10096&iid=30682)
- VCU Graduate Bulletin: [pubapps.vcu.edu/BULLETTINS/graduate/](http://pubapps.vcu.edu/BULLETTINS/graduate/)

### VCU Code of Ethics

Virginia Commonwealth University is committed to an environment of uncompromising integrity and ethical conduct. Our ethical standards are the foundation for our decisions and actions. As members of the faculty, staff and administration of Virginia Commonwealth University your actions will be guided by these principles and values: Respect: We will respect individuals, diversity and the rights of others. Honesty: We will act and communicate honestly and candidly. We will not mislead others. Excellence: We will strive for excellence in all that we do. Responsibility and Accountability: We will be responsible and accountable for our decisions and actions. Stewardship: We will be good stewards of the resources entrusted to the university. Compliance: We will understand and comply with the codes, laws, regulations, policies and procedures that govern our university activities.

We recognize that our decisions and actions reflect not only upon our individual reputations but also upon the reputation of the university. Our actions will be guided by these ethical principles even when confronted by personal, professional, social or economic pressures.

For a printable copy of the VCU Code of Ethics, visit [president.vcu.edu/ethics/index.html](http://president.vcu.edu/ethics/index.html).

### VCU Creed

Academic institutions exist, among other reasons, to discover, advance and transmit knowledge and to develop in their students, faculty and staff the capacity for creative and critical thought. At Virginia Commonwealth University, members of the academic community should strive to exemplify the following specific ideals in addition to other worthy ideals:

1. To demonstrate academic and personal integrity.
2. To respect the rights and property of others.
3. To be open to others' opinions.
4. To uphold academic freedom and freedom of intellectual inquiry.
5. To appreciate diversity and to value and learn from the uniqueness of each person.
6. To uphold the right of all persons to be treated with dignity and respect and to refrain from all forms of intimidation, harassment and illegal discrimination.
7. To demonstrate and respect intellectual courage in situations that demand it.

For a copy of the VCU Creed, visit [vcu.edu/vcu/creed.php](http://vcu.edu/vcu/creed.php)

### VCU Code of Conduct for Business Practices

The Code of Conduct for Business Practices (Code) provides guidance to faculty and staff in the area of financial, operational and administrative activities. Ethical behavior and compliance with laws, regulations and policies are the responsibility of every employee. This Code applies to all employees, including faculty, staff, administration, and student

employees, who manage, supervise or conduct university business, financial and administrative transactions and activities. For a printable copy of the VCU Code of Conduct for Business Practices, visit [finance.vcu.edu/pdfs/codeofconduct.pdf](https://finance.vcu.edu/pdfs/codeofconduct.pdf)

## Faculty Policies and Guidelines

### Academic Affairs

The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs ([provost.vcu.edu](https://provost.vcu.edu)) promotes and encourages a culture of excellence in instruction, scholarship, and service at Virginia Commonwealth University. The provost and vice president for academic affairs also provides campus-wide leadership on coordinating a wide variety of programs and activities that benefit faculty, administrators and graduate assistants in each of the University's schools and colleges.

### Faculty Appointments and Status

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) offers three categories of faculty positions for full-time and permanent part-time appointments: Teaching and Research (T&R) faculty, Administrative and Professional (A&P) faculty, and Term faculty. VCU also offers Adjunct faculty appointments (temporary part-time) and other special faculty appointments such as Affiliate, Emeriti, Eminent Scholar, and Visiting (see section 2.3.1). All faculty appointments are either tenured, probationary (tenure-eligible), Term (non-tenure), or adjunct (non-tenure) in accordance with VCU's Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures ([P&T policy](#)). Qualifications for T&R and A&P faculty can be found in the [Faculty Salary Administration Guidelines](#).

### Teaching and Research (T&R) Faculty

Positions in this category have specific assignments that customarily require instruction, research and public service as their principal activity. These positions have academic ranks designated as Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Instructor. Additionally, faculty rank of Research Associate or Research Assistant may be used under appropriate circumstances. The University offers tenure to certain faculty based on an extensive peer review and administrative process. Official tenure review procedures are described in detail in [VCU's P&T policy](#).

### Administrative Faculty

Administrative faculty appointments require the performance of work directly related to the management of the educational and general activities of the institution, department or subdivision thereof. Incumbents in these positions exercise discretion and independent judgment and generally direct the work of others. The organization reporting relationship normally must go no lower than three levels below the President.

### Professional Faculty

Professional faculty appointments require advanced learning and experience acquired by prolonged formal instruction and/or specialized work experience. This category is normally limited to librarians, counselors, coaches, lawyers, physicians, dentists, veterinarians and

other professional positions serving education, research, athletic, medical, student affairs, and development functions or activities.

### **Term Faculty**

Term faculty appointments are generally full-time appointment for a specified term and do not lead to tenure. Term faculty with instructional responsibilities must meet the same qualification criteria as specified for T&R faculty. Term faculty members hold the same basic benefits and rights and responsibilities as tenured or tenure-eligible faculty in accordance with the [University's Academic Rights and Responsibilities](#) policy except that they shall not be afforded tenure or tenure eligibility. Term faculty may be employed to work on a specific project or series of projects that may involve teaching, research or service or some combination of these activities. Employment of faculty in project-related positions is limited by the funds available and prior notice of termination or non-renewal varies according to the job category. Term faculty supported by restricted funds may be subject to different terms of notification of non-renewal that shall be specified in the letter of appointment in accordance with VCU's P&T policy. Transfers from the Term (non-tenure) track to the probationary (tenure-eligible) track will be considered only in exceptional cases where there has been a clear change in the role and work of the faculty member within the degree-granting school or college in accordance with [VCU's Guidelines for Faculty Track Transfers](#). Term faculty are appointed at the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor or instructor. When appropriate to the duties assigned to the faculty member holding a Term appointment, modifiers (e.g., clinical professor, visiting professor, research professor or teaching professor) should be used. A Term appointment may be for a term of one to five years and is renewable. Each unit with Term faculty appointments shall provide written guidelines for promotion. The guidelines shall be the same as those used for promotion of tenure and tenure-eligible faculty except a Term faculty's effort shall be weighted by the special mix of duties assigned to faculty members holding Term appointments. The guidelines shall also specify how a faculty vote will be taken in a recommendation to promote or renew Term faculty appointments. More details about Term appointments can be found in [VCU's P&T policy](#).

### **Adjunct Faculty**

Adjunct faculty appointments are granted to faculty who serve the University part-time and are employed for specific activities and do not lead to tenure (<http://provost.vcu.edu/media/provostdevelopment/pdfs/resourcelibrary/PTCalendar2014-15.pdf>). The rights and privileges of adjunct faculty are to be specified in the guidelines of the unit making the appointment, but they shall not participate in the evaluation of full-time faculty for promotion or tenure. As noted in the P&T policy, recommendations for appointments or rank of part-time non-tenured faculty do not require academic review outside the school. These personnel actions are reviewed using guidelines established by the school and department and recommended by a letter from the department and/or school with the concurrence of the dean. Adjunct appointments may not exceed one year at a time, are renewable, and do not carry tenure-eligible or tenured status.

Teaching and Research (T & R) faculty appointments are at the ranks of professor, associate professor, assistant professor and instructor. All T & R faculty appointments are

either tenured, probationary (tenure-eligible), Term (non-tenure), or adjunct (non-tenure). Adjunct (non-tenure) appointments are part-time. All other appointments are full-time and either tenured, probationary (tenure-eligible), or Term (non-tenure). Details about faculty positions are found in the [University's Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures](#). Appointment or promotion to assistant professor indicates the candidate can be expected to perform satisfactorily all required academic duties and holds promise for further professional development. Appointment or promotion to associate professor indicates a sustained record of professional achievement. Appointment or promotion to professor indicates national peer recognition of professional achievements.

### **Affiliate Faculty**

Affiliate faculty appointments may be considered for individuals who, by virtue of their expertise, are deemed capable of making a significant contribution to a University program. Details about the affiliate faculty and the appointment process can be found in [VCU's Affiliate Faculty Appointments policy](#).

### **Visiting Faculty**

Under special conditions, the University may appoint eminent, nationally or internationally recognized scholars as visiting professors for a specific, limited period of time. In certain instances, the "eminence" of artistic achievement or distinguished accomplishments may lie in areas which are beyond academic endeavor but for which there is concrete evidence of superior talent. The guidelines for these appointments, established by the General Assembly in 1966, are as follows:

- The appointee shall hold the rank of associate or full professor, or its equivalent;
- The appointee shall be a person who has achieved national eminence in his discipline as judged by his peers;
- The eminence of the appointee shall be judged, generally, on evidence of effective teaching and productive research as attested by his peers.

Visiting faculty are appointed as full-time faculty for up to one year of service and are not tenured or tenure-eligible. Visiting faculty appointments may be renewed but may not exceed a total of two consecutive years of service.

### **Administrative Titles**

Faculty may be assigned titles (e.g. Dean, Chair, Director, etc.) designating administrative responsibilities held in addition to any tenured, tenure-eligible or non-tenured faculty status concurrently held ([provost.vcu.edu/policies/tenure.html](http://provost.vcu.edu/policies/tenure.html)). If administrative duties exceed 50 percent of a faculty member's duties, the individual should be assigned to an administrative or professional position while the duties represent a majority of the individual's efforts. Administrative titles and compensation for administrative responsibilities are held independent of any concurrently held faculty appointment. Periodic reviews of a faculty member's performance as an administrator are separate and independent of academic reviews conducted for faculty promotion and/or tenure conducted under the P&T policies and procedures. Administrative titles and responsibilities are held for specific terms or at the discretion of an administrative official. Removal from an administrative position does not impair any rights the administrator held as a faculty member. It is not possible for an



administrator to hold tenure in an administrative appointment, but administrators may earn and hold tenure under concurrently held faculty appointments.

## Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures

Virginia Commonwealth University's current Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures can be found on the Web at the [assurance.vcu.edu](http://assurance.vcu.edu) website.

In order to foster the University's commitment to excellence, the criteria listed below shall apply in the evaluation of all faculty for promotion and tenure. Individual faculty work plans developed in accordance with the [Faculty Roles and Rewards Policy](#), as well as the special mix of duties assigned to faculty members holding Term faculty appointments, shall guide evaluation of each faculty member's effort under each criterion.

- Appropriate credentials and experience.
- Demonstrated quality in teaching.
- Demonstrated continuing scholarship and professional growth.
- Demonstrated performance of service responsibilities within the University, school, college, department and program and to the profession and broader community.

Initial appointment to the faculty is made formally by the Board of Visitors on the recommendation of the president. The president depends upon the vice presidents, deans, department chairs, and faculty search committees to recruit new faculty.

## Faculty Resignation

Any letter of resignation should be addressed to the appropriate dean or director with copies sent to the vice president and department chair. In accordance with criteria suggested by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in its [Statement of Professional Ethics](#), the resignation should be submitted "no later than May 15 or 30 days after the faculty member has received notification of the terms of his or her continued employment the following year, whichever date occurs later." A resignation from a 12-month faculty member should be submitted as soon as possible after January 1. After submitting a resignation, a faculty member should consult with the appropriate department head or dean regarding arrangement for the return of keys and ID cards, closing of accounts, etc. Guidelines for separating faculty and staff can be viewed at [hr.vcu.edu](http://hr.vcu.edu).

## Conditions of Initial Faculty Employment

Notice of Appointments and Changes in Status (Contracts). Every faculty appointment or change of status is to be specified in a written notice of appointment issued by or on behalf of the Board of Visitors to the faculty member. The appointment is established upon the recommendation of and approval by the appropriate chair, director, dean or vice provost and vice president, with final approval by the University president and/or the Board of Visitors.

Terms and Conditions of Employment. All faculty contracts are accompanied by a Terms and Conditions of Employment, which are incorporated into the contracts by reference and constitute part of the contracts. This document details the policies and conditions that faculty are subject to including the University's Code of Ethics, provisions of the Faculty

Handbook and any future modifications to the Faculty Handbook, as well as all University policies, procedures and regulations pertaining to faculty. This document is distributed to the units by the Office of the Provost and available at [provost.vcu.edu/index.html](http://provost.vcu.edu/index.html).

Transcripts. To meet institutional accreditation standards, every faculty member must have an official, seal-bearing transcript on file in the appropriate vice president's office. Each vice president may, at their discretion, delegate this responsibility to their respective dean/unit heads.

Selective Service Registration. To comply with the Code of Virginia, all new male faculty members are required to indicate whether they have registered for [Selective Service](#). Failure to register or to provide documentation from the Selective Service System that the requirement to register has been “terminated or become inapplicable” may result in termination.

Criminal Conviction Investigation. To ensure the well-being of the University community, Human Resources conducts [criminal background checks](#) on all new and rehired employees. All new and rehired faculty will undergo a criminal history check within the Commonwealth of Virginia and/or all other states of residence and/or employment. This investigation is considered a condition of employment by Virginia Commonwealth University. If job related convictions are revealed during the investigation process, the employee will be subject to termination or other appropriate action. Failure to disclose conviction(s) is considered falsification of application and may result in termination.

Federal Employment Eligibility Verification. New and rehired faculty must complete a U.S. Department of Justice I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification no later than three business days from the date employment begins. Failure to do so results in termination.

Child Support Disclosure. VCU is required by state law to ask each new faculty member if he/she has an income withholding order for child support payments. An affirmative response will not adversely affect your employment with Virginia Commonwealth University.

### **Faculty Conduct Rules and Procedures**

The academic community at VCU is comprised of individuals who learn, teach, and work, all of whom are entitled to certain rights and privileges that are protected and enforced by the Board of Visitors’ approved [Rules and Procedures](#). This document equally entitles each member of the University to community rights and privileges related to conduct, education, complaints, apologies, penalties, appeals, privacy, and implementation.

### **VCU Insider**

The [VCU Insider](#) is a student handbook and resource guide aimed at first year students. It is an important resource for faculty and students in finding services and policies that will support their success at VCU. Faculty are encouraged to review and be familiar with the VCU Insider, particularly the policies that apply to students and the wealth of resources available as aids in teaching and advising.



## Faculty Roles and Rewards

The [Faculty Roles and Rewards Policy](#) serves to create a balanced roles and rewards system based on the premise that flexibility and accountability for faculty and their work units are all integrally related. Implementing and maintaining this policy in annual operation is the responsibility of the provost in conjunction with the Council of Deans. The president of the Faculty Senate and the chair of the Faculty Caucus (the 27 faculty members of the University Council), working with their representative bodies, will review these actions to ensure that the policy is implemented and that it is carried out annually.

## Salary Increases

The University has a prescribed annual faculty salary administration and bonus award process. This merit process is the usual basis for any individual salary increase and is contingent upon funding as authorized by the General Assembly. The faculty member's performance evaluation serves as the justification for each salary recommendation. Faculty, chairs, deans, and administrative faculty are evaluated annually in accordance with [VCU's Faculty Roles and Rewards](#) policy and the [Annual Assessment of Faculty Performance](#) policy. VCU requires faculty to have students evaluate their teaching, and provides an evaluation process to its students. Administrators at or below the level of dean who hold faculty rank are evaluated in the performance of both their faculty and administrative functions. The annual evaluation is to be conducted by the next higher level administrator with the appropriate student/faculty input. The determination of merit, in comparison with other members of the faculty member's administrative unit, is made by the dean on the recommendation of department chairs, and in some departments, departmental committees. The Faculty Roles and Rewards policy encourages faculty, in consultation with their department chair or director, to specify at the beginning of each rewards cycle the specific criteria by which they wish to be evaluated. Additional information on faculty salary administration can be found in the [Faculty Salary Administration Guidelines](#).

## Pay Schedule

Nine- and 10-month faculty (academic year), and 12-month faculty are paid in twenty-four payments through direct deposit to a faculty member's bank or credit union account. There is a one-week lag between the payroll period and receipt of the related pay. Salary for the payroll period of the 10th through the 24th of the month is reflected in the deposit on the first of the subsequent month. Salary for the payroll period of the 25th through the 9th of the month is reflected in the deposit on the 16th of the month. If the first or the sixteenth falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, payments are issued on the preceding workday. The current year calendar of paydays is available at [hr.vcu.edu](http://hr.vcu.edu).

## Salaries for Summer and Intercession Studies

In accordance with the [Faculty Salary Administration Guidelines](#), no extra pay is provided to full-time faculty members for evening classes during the regular academic year. Nine-month faculty teaching during the summer sessions are paid seven percent of regular salary per course, not to exceed a cap of \$7,000 per course. Faculty teaching courses with more than 60 students receive 1.5% of their salary, not to exceed \$7,000. Under the state's salary authorization, twelve-month faculty are not allowed extra pay for teaching in the summer session. Salaries for adjunct faculty in evening, off campus, and summer studies are based

on the number of credit hours taught, but carry no fringe benefits. These wages are set at the discretion of the dean with oversight from the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Office of the Vice Provost for Instruction.

### **Overload Jobs (Secondary Assignments)**

Overload jobs are additional assignments where the duties are clearly outside of the regular job responsibilities of the employee's primary job. In general, a faculty member cannot hold an overload job (secondary assignment) at VCU. Teaching & Research and Administrative and Professional faculty in 9-month or 10-month appointments are not routinely permitted to hold overload jobs during the course of the academic year. Nine/ten-month faculty are permitted to have summer appointments. Twelve-month Faculty: T&R and A&P faculty in 12-month appointments are not routinely permitted to hold overload jobs. Please reference VCU's "[Overload Jobs](#)" policy at for more details on allowable overload jobs. All requests for faculty overload assignments must be made in writing by the hiring department head to the faculty member's primary supervisor (see [Overload Job Request Form](#)).

### **Continuing Education (CE) Instruction**

Continuing education (CE) is an integral part of the mission of Virginia Commonwealth University, and faculty are encouraged to participate in such activity. For purposes of this document, "continuing education" means VCU-sponsored short courses, seminars, workshops directed toward specific professional groups or target populations, and noncredit short courses advertised and open to the general public. Faculty participation in such activities sponsored by other institutions is considered outside professional activity (see policy on [Outside Professional Activity and Employment, Research and Continuing Education](#)). Compensation for teaching a CE course(s) may be permitted if within the following limits:

- The teaching must be outside the scope of the faculty member's regular responsibilities;
- Must be occasional;
- Must be for a limited duration (e.g. one or two days or one or two weeks); and Compensation received must be nominal relative to the faculty member's contractual salary.

All requests for faculty teaching a CE course(s) must be made in writing using a [Continuing Education Instruction Form for Faculty](#). These requests require approval by the faculty member's chair/director and respective vice president.

### **Deductions**

Usual payroll deductions include federal and Virginia income taxes, social security taxes and, when appropriate, supplementary health insurance premiums. Additional deductions may include disability income insurance premiums, dependent care and medical reimbursement accounts, additional life insurance, tax-deferred annuity contributions, parking fees, VCU Health System charges, gifts to the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC), and donations to the University.

### Research and Scholarly Activities

The Office of the Vice President for Research provides services to facilitate the scholarly activity of faculty, students, and staff and to provide an environment that promotes the integration of research, scholarship and graduate education. The office's essential role is to enhance faculty development, support the University's mission to generate and disseminate knowledge, and to maintain VCU's Carnegie status as "Very High Research Activity."

The vice president for research shall have the right to exercise broad discretion necessary for the encouragement, development, and protection of inventions, patents, and other intellectual property. The vice president for research shall consult with the [Office of Technology Transfer](#) and the [Intellectual Property Foundation](#) in matters relating to intellectual policy.

### Intellectual Properties Policy

[Virginia Commonwealth University's Intellectual Properties Policy](#) delineates VCU's policy with respect to intellectual properties developed by members of the University community.

The University shall retain all rights, title, and interest in any and all intellectual properties generated, created, or developed in facilities operated or controlled by the University, supported by funds administered by the University, and/or performed in the course of regular duties by University members, unless exempted by other provisions of this policy.

### Outside Professional Activity and Employment

Within strict limits set forth in the Virginia Commonwealth University policy concerning [Outside Professional Activities and Employment, Research, and Continuing Education](#), the University allows faculty to participate in outside employment and paid consultation. Faculty involved in outside professional activity (employment, consultation, research, or continuing education) are required to obtain permission in advance of participating. Requests for permission are made on a form designated by the University and submitted through channels set forth in the policy. When the engagement in outside professional activity and continuing education ends, faculty are required to complete the report form in accordance with the policy.

Compensated professional activity separately or in combination shall not exceed an average of one day per calendar week during the contractual year. At the end of each academic year, faculty involved in outside activities must submit this form listing the outside activities and the number of days devoted to them. In addition, faculty members in the schools of Medicine and Dentistry are permitted to supplement their salaries by private practice; these revenues are apportioned among the faculty member, the department, and the school. The School of Dentistry has a specified maximum income that may be earned from private practice within the institution. Clinical faculty in the School of Medicine may earn additional income related to professional practice through the faculty practice plan, MCV Physicians, consistent with the VCU School of Medicine's Faculty Appointment and Compensation Policy.

### Safety and Health

VCU has a responsibility to provide a [safe and healthful environment](#). Faculty are responsible for the safety of the students, staff, and faculty members under their direction.

The words “safety and health” encompass routine and emergency situations. Each new class of students needs to be informed of procedures for reporting emergencies, evacuation plans, and exit routes from buildings. In addition, faculty also must be aware of any student with special needs and determine if they require special assistance in emergency situations. The [VCU Alert](#) status is posted on the University’s Website and is updated frequently in the event of an emergency.

### **Duty to Report**

VCU is committed to an environment of uncompromising integrity and ethical conduct wherein all individuals are expected to understand and comply with the laws, regulations, and policies that govern our university activities. In order to maintain integrity at the highest level of excellence and to promote equal treatment, VCU expects that all members of our university community will timely report actual or suspected violations of laws, regulations, and policies, hereinafter referred to as misconduct.

The expectation to report actual or suspected misconduct is absolute and for this reason every individual also retains protection against retaliation for making a good faith report, raising a good faith concern and/or participating in an investigation of misconduct. Knowingly making a false report, or reporting with malice or reckless disregard for the truth, is prohibited. The detailed policy on the [Duty to Report](#) can be found at [assurance.vcu.edu](http://assurance.vcu.edu). Questions regarding the policy can be addressed to the Integrity and Compliance office in the Department of Assurance Services).

### **Sexual Harassment, University Guidelines on Prohibition of**

Prohibition of VCU prohibits acts of sexual harassment against any member of the University community. The [University Guidelines on the Prohibition of Sexual Harassment](#) define sexual harassment, outlines the guidelines to be followed, and provides resolution procedures.

### **Solicitation Policy**

Virginia Commonwealth University [restricts solicitation](#) by employees, vendors, or sales representatives to minimize interference with the efficient operation of the organization and to protect the privacy of faculty, staff, students, patients, and visitors.

### **Faculty/Staff Ombudsperson**

The ombudsperson is a confidential resource for all faculty and staff at Virginia Commonwealth University. Information is available at [ombudsperson.vcu.edu](http://ombudsperson.vcu.edu). In addition to providing assistance in problem, complaint and conflict resolution, the ombudsperson will monitor the policies, procedures and practices of the University for fairness and equity. The ombudsperson is a resource for information and guidance who, if necessary, directs clients to the University’s formal processes for grievances, such as the Faculty and Staff Mediation Program listed below.

### **Faculty Mediation**

Disputes are best resolved amicably and informally through effective communication within and between academic units, and it is expected that any Grievant shall have attempted to resolve any dispute with another individual with the assistance of the Department Head,

Dean/Director, Vice President for Health Sciences or Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, and/or Ombudsperson before invoking the grievance process set forth in this Policy. Only those disputes that have not been resolved through good faith effort should proceed to the VCU Mediation Process. If the grievance is not resolved through the VCU Mediation Process, then the grievance may be submitted to the Grievance Panel according to the [Faculty Mediation and Grievance Procedure](#).

The [University's Faculty Mediation Program](#) is sponsored by Human Resources and provides an option in helping to resolve work-related conflict. Whether a problem developed last week or over a longer period of time, mediation offers an opportunity to discuss issues with your department head, a colleague, or subordinate in a confidential atmosphere.

### **Black Education Association**

The [Black Education Association](#) (BEA) of Virginia Commonwealth University promotes the interests of African-American faculty. The BEA's mission is to help advance the professional development of black faculty at VCU, to help improve the socio-cultural and academic experience of African-American students, and to make general service contributions to the larger African-American community in the city of Richmond. Interested faculty should contact the assistant vice provost for institutional equity, in the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, to locate the current officers of the BEA.

## **Faculty Benefits and Development Opportunities**

### **Economic Benefits**

#### **Health Care Coverage**

Eligible full-time and part-time faculty may participate in the [Commonwealth of Virginia's health benefits](#) program. Premiums are paid with pre-tax dollars.

#### **Reimbursement Accounts**

Faculty who are eligible to participate in the state's health care plans may set aside pre-tax dollars in [Flexible Reimbursement Accounts](#) for eligible dependent care and medical expenses. Registration for dependent care and/or medical reimbursement accounts takes place within 31 days of employment, within 31 days of a life event, or during the open enrollment period.

#### **Group Life Insurance**

Full-time and part-time faculty receive [basic life insurance](#) at no cost. This program is administered by the Virginia Retirement System (VRS). Coverage is provided without medical examination at twice the amount of the employee's annual Commonwealth of Virginia-supported salary (with the salary rounded to the next thousand) for natural death and four times the annual salary for accidental death.

#### **Optional Group Life Insurance**

Faculty covered under the group life insurance plan may purchase additional life insurance ([hr.vcu.edu/benefits/benefits-list/life-insurance/](http://hr.vcu.edu/benefits/benefits-list/life-insurance/)) for up to four times their salary. Life insurance also may be purchased for a spouse and/or children.

## Risk Management

### Liability Insurance

Under the statewide self-insured liability program, the University and its faculty members are covered for negligent acts while acting within the scope of employment. This coverage includes an employee bond and liability auto insurance coverage while driving state-owned vehicles.

### Medical Malpractice Insurance

Faculty members who are licensed in the health professions and teaching on behalf of the University are covered by the state's self-insured medical malpractice plan while acting in an authorized capacity and within the course and scope of their employment. Medical and dental faculty in private clinical practice are not covered under the state's insurance. Medical faculty in private practice may be eligible for coverage under the MCV Physicians Plan and dental faculty through the Dental Family Practice. Questions about liability and medical malpractice insurance issues may be directed to the Office of Risk Management at 804-828-7531 or 804-828-4989.

### Personal Property

The University is not responsible for the personal property of a faculty member. To cover loss or damage to personal property, faculty should consider purchasing a homeowner's policy or similar type of contract through their insurance company.

### Leave Types and Guidelines

All [leave](#) must be earned before it can be taken. The employing department, school or college is responsible for submitting any leave taken by 12-month faculty and any sick leave taken by nine-month faculty for each pay period. The [Faculty Sick Leave Reporting Policy](#) provides details on how to report faculty sick leave. [VCU's Study-Research Leave Policy](#) provides the purpose, eligibility, and process to apply for study and research leave.

### Retirement

Virginia Commonwealth University provides a choice of two retirement plans for eligible full-time faculty when first employed. Detailed information on the VCU Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) or the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) is available at [hr.vcu.edu/benefits/FacultyRetirement.htm](http://hr.vcu.edu/benefits/FacultyRetirement.htm).

#### Virginia Retirement System (VRS)

The [Virginia Retirement System \(VRS\)](#) is a defined benefit plan. The basic benefit upon retirement is determined by average salary, years of service, and age. Normal retirement age is 65. After five years of covered service, a member is vested and eligible to receive a monthly retirement benefit.

#### Optional Retirement Plan (ORP)

[VCU's Optional Retirement Plan \(ORP\)](#) is a defined contribution plan, which means that the retirement benefit is based on the percent of contribution, length of participation in the plan and investment returns. Participants select from providers (mutual fund and insurance



companies) as well as the specific investment funds within that company. Upon enrollment, faculty members are immediately vested (and eligible to receive a retirement benefit) in the plan.

### **Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA) Program**

Participation in [VCU's Tax-Deferred Annuity \(TDA\)](#) program is available to faculty who wish to set aside some of their own money toward retirement. The portion of salary put into this program, established under Internal Revenue Code Section 403(b), is excluded from taxable income. Payment of both Virginia and federal taxes on this money and earnings is postponed until withdrawals are made, usually at retirement when most people may be in a lower tax bracket. A wide range of investment options is available to meet varying individual financial needs.

## **Disability**

### **Virginia Retirement System (VRS)**

At employment, VRS faculty have the choice to participate in the [Virginia Sickness and Disability Program](#) (VSDP), which provides sick leave, family and personal leave, as well as short- and long-term disability benefits or the Traditional Sick Leave Program. Faculty participating in the Traditional Sick Leave Program who become disabled are eligible to apply for disability retirement at any age and may purchase a supplemental group long-term disability insurance plan.

### **Optional Retirement Plan (ORP)**

Faculty who participate in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) are covered by the plan's group long-term disability plan, which is totally paid for by the University. ORP faculty are not eligible to participate in the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP).

## **Educational and Training Opportunities**

VCU's [Policy on Educational and Training Opportunities](#) states: "Virginia Commonwealth University is dedicated to providing training and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff and offers a variety of ways for employees to continue their education and enhance their professional development and growth." The [Human Resource Office of Training and Development](#) strives to provide quality educational and training opportunities through management development and technical and general open enrollment programs. Certain [guidelines](#) apply to participate in these programs.

### **Educational Opportunities**

**Tuition Waiver.** Full-time faculty may apply to take up to six credit hours of tuition-free courses per semester at Virginia Commonwealth University. Guidelines for tuition waivers may be found at [hr.vcu.edu/benefits/tuition.html](http://hr.vcu.edu/benefits/tuition.html). Adjunct faculty may receive a waiver of tuition and fees (excluding special course fees) for one class (1-3 credit hours) once they complete nine credit hours of adjunct teaching. The adjunct faculty tuition waiver must be used within the three-semester period immediately following the completion of teaching the nine credit hours. The summer semester counts as a semester.

### **Faculty Awards and Recognition Programs**

In addition to the awards named below, each school and college offers other faculty awards and recognitions. Information on national awards and University level awards can be found at [Office of the Provost's Faculty Awards](#). For information about specific awards provided by individual Colleges and Schools, please contact the appropriate dean's office for additional information.

### **State Council for Higher Education in Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards (SCHEV OFA)**

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards program is the highest honor a faculty member may receive in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It was initiated in 1986 by the Virginia General Assembly to recognize "excellence in teaching, research and public service." Information on the SCHEV awards can be found at [Office of the Provost's Faculty Awards](#) page.

### **Distinguished Faculty Awards Program**

VCU annually recognizes faculty who have distinguished themselves in teaching, research and service. The Distinguished Faculty Awards Program consists of four separate awards.

Distinguished Teacher Award. One monetary award and a non-monetary gift. A recipient of this award is recognized as being an outstanding teacher. This may be evidenced by being an inspiration to students and utilizing stimulating techniques, materials, and methods designed to promote learning.

Distinguished Scholar Award. One monetary award and a non-monetary gift. A recipient of this award is recognized as an outstanding scholar. The individual should have demonstrated a pattern of productive scholarly activity which has been recognized nationally or internationally. This may be evidenced either by traditional research or other creative endeavors.

Distinguished Service Award. One monetary award and a non-monetary gift. A recipient of this award has performed superior service to the community and/or University. This may be evidenced through activities over and beyond normally assigned duties, unique contributions to the University, or a long-standing pattern of superior service to the University and/or community.

University Award of Excellence. One monetary award and a non-monetary gift. Awarded to a truly exceptional recipient who has performed in a superior manner in teaching, scholarly activities, and service. The award is to be regarded as one of the highest honors the University can bestow on one of its faculty and is to be awarded only to an exceptional individual.

A selection committee considers nominations in all of these categories. Procedures for nomination and selection of faculty are available from the President's office.

### **Awards for Staff and Administrative and Professional Faculty**

The university administration of Virginia Commonwealth University established the President's Awards for Staff and Administrative & Professional (A&P/non-tenured) Faculty. These awards recognize and honor staff and A&P faculty for their outstanding performance,



achievement, and service excellence in support of VCU's Code of Conduct, the university's strategic plan, Quest for Distinction, diversity initiatives, and/or the Great Place Initiative. Detailed information on these awards can be found at [Award Nominations](#) page.

#### **President's Award of Excellence (highest level)**

One monetary award and a non-monetary gift. This award is the highest honor the university can bestow on one of its staff or A&P faculty. This recognition is awarded only to an exceptional individual for contributions throughout his/her career at VCU. This award is given in recognition of:

- Employee's excellent work or actions brought positive attention to the university or health system.
- Employee's work contributed to the university's strategic plan, Quest for Distinction, diversity initiatives and/or the Great Place Initiative.
- Employee used an innovative, creative and/or problem-solving approach to his or her responsibilities.
- Employee's superior performance has had an impact on diversity and the legacy and/or future of the university or health system.

#### **President's Outstanding Achievement Awards**

One monetary award and a non-monetary gift. This award is given in recognition of achievements have resulted in significant benefit to the university or health system in support of the university's strategic plan, Quest for Distinction, diversity initiatives, and/or the Great Place Initiative. These achievements must be sustained, long-term accomplishments (of at least a one-year period) within the realm of the employee's job and/or service to the university or health system.

#### **President's Service Excellence Awards**

One monetary award and a non-monetary gift. This award is given in recognition of an employee who consistently displays the highest level of customer service, which supports the university's strategic plan, Quest for Distinction, diversity initiatives, and/or the Great Place Initiative including:

- Respect: Greet every customer, communicate respectfully, appreciate diversity and make the customer feel like an individual.
- Integrity: Observe confidentiality, abide by the VCU Code of Conduct and ensure data security.
- Responsiveness: Demonstrate knowledge of policies and procedures; respond quickly and deliver excellence over the phone; use email appropriately.
- Initiative: Anticipate needs of customers; welcome and initiate change

#### **Community Multicultural Enrichment Awards**

The [Presidential Awards for Community Multicultural Enrichment \(PACME\)](#) are bestowed annually upon members of the University community in recognition of some significant contribution towards the principles, goals, and ideas of affirmative action or toward enhancing the University's commitment to diversity. There are four different awards granted

each year, one to a faculty member, one to an administrator, one to a classified or hourly staff employee, and one to a student.

Faculty Award. All instructional faculty are eligible. This award recognizes contributions or efforts made toward enhancing the goals of affirmative action or racial/ethnic diversity at VCU, especially in the areas of teaching, research, or service. Winners receive a monetary award.

Riese-Melton Award. The Riese-Melton Award for faculty is the University's capstone award for outstanding contributions to cross-cultural relations and is awarded annually to one of the winners of the Presidential Awards for Community Multicultural Enrichment. Winners receive an additional monetary award.

A selection committee considers nominations in all of these categories. Procedures for nomination and selection are available from the president's office.

### COMMONWEALTH AND UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

On rare occasions the President and/or Board of Visitors may designate the rank of Commonwealth Professor or University Professor as deemed appropriate. The appointment of a faculty member to one of these distinguished professorships at VCU constitutes one of the highest honors that can be granted to a University member. Details on these appointments can be found in [VCU's Commonwealth and University Professorships](#) policy.

Emeriti Faculty. The title Emeritus/Emerita is awarded for distinguished or exceptional service and outstanding dedication to the University. Normally, eligibility is limited to full-time faculty members who have retired at the rank of professor or associate professor and who have served the University for a period of not less than ten consecutive years prior to retirement. To be eligible for an Emeriti appointment, a faculty member shall be nominated by the department chair or applicable unit head. The nomination then requires approval by the respective dean, vice president and president before submission to the Board of Visitors. Emeriti appointments carry the benefits of retired faculty, plus the following lifetime privileges:

- Listing in University publications;
- Participation in University processions; and
- Ability to serve on dissertation committees.

Endowed Chairs and Professorships. In accordance with VCU's policy on [Private Support for Endowed Chairs and Professorships](#) the University seeks to attract, reward, and retain distinguished faculty, leaders, scholars, and artists of national and international reputation to occupy an Endowed Chair or Professorship as one of the highest forms of recognition provided by the University. An Endowed Chair or a Professorship is intended to improve an existing program by providing support to attract new faculty members. It can, however, reward an individual of exceptional accomplishments who is already on the faculty. In addition to rewarding excellence, an endowed position carries with it the expectation of continuing worthy contributions to his or her specialty area. Endowed professorships may also qualify for a percentage of eligible funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia's Eminent Scholars Program. In

accordance with VCU's Advancement Policies and Procedures, Endowed Chair funding is intended to supplement and not supplant state salaries.

Retired Faculty. Retired faculty (with a Retired Faculty ID-- VCUCard), are eligible for [specific benefits](#) such as the same library privileges as active faculty and discounts at the bookstore, among others.

## Teaching and Advising

### Academic Rights and Responsibilities

On November 18, 1976, VCU's Board of Visitors approved the [Academic Rights and Responsibilities](#) statement. This policy covers collegial rights and responsibilities of faculty and members of the administration, such as academic freedom; matters of curriculum and instruction; admission, retention, and graduation of students; University governance; as well as ethical principles relating to teaching and students, the University and colleagues.

### Classroom and Laboratory Guidelines

Classes must meet regularly and on time and must be conducted in a professional manner for the full duration of the assigned class period. Absences for personal or for professional reasons, such as scholarly meetings, are to be approved in advance by the department chair. These absences, however, should be limited in number and should not hinder the progress of normal class work. If a faculty member experiences an extended illness or disability, arrangements must be made through the department chair to have classes taught by other faculty. Faculty must, by grades or comments and in timely fashion, periodically evaluate each student's achievement.

### Course Syllabus

Each course should have a course syllabus that contains at least the following information:

- Identifying information, e.g. course title, semester offered, faculty contact information, and faculty office hours
- Expected student learning outcomes
- Required and optional texts
- General outline of when topics will be taught or discussed
- Examinations and grades
- Expectations concerning attendance
- Notification of the University Honors Policy
- Use of classroom management software, if any
- Notices related to services for students with disabilities and for students who will miss class because of religious commitments

For the most recent university-wide syllabus statements, visit [provost.vcu.edu/faculty-resources/academic-affairs/syllabus-statements/](http://provost.vcu.edu/faculty-resources/academic-affairs/syllabus-statements/).

### **Examinations and Grades**

VCU does not have a uniform numerical grading scale. At the beginning of each course or program, students should be informed in writing as to how they will be examined and how their performance will be evaluated. The final exam schedules are printed well in advance of the beginning of each semester, and faculty should not alter the schedule in any way; however, due to certain authorized circumstances, faculty may change the schedule, but only with the specific approval of the dean. Faculty must return the completed grade sheets to the appropriate dean's office within 48 hours of the exam administration. Instructors should carefully evaluate each student's work, checking that all factors have been considered before turning in grades. Once a grade has been approved, it may be changed only under authorized circumstances and with the approval of the department chair and the dean on an official Change of Grade Form. If a student misses a test the instructor may use personal discretion in deciding whether or not to give a make-up test, unless departmental policy dictates another course of action.

### **Mid-Semester Evaluations**

University policy requires that faculty provide students with an evaluation of their academic performance prior to the semester withdrawal date (which usually falls on or near the last day of the tenth week of classes). Although such evaluations need not be in the form of a letter grade, grades do provide the clearest indicators of progress in a class. Freshmen, in particular, may hold an inaccurate view of their academic standing if the mid-semester evaluation does not include a letter grade.

### **Early Alert Program**

The early alert program targets early intervention to assist first year college students who need help making the adjustment to the academic requirements of college. Early alert notices are mailed to the home addresses of students who, at mid-term, have earned grades of "D" or "F." The notification allows students to seek assistance in increasing their grades or to withdraw from a course in which they are not performing well.

### **Grade Review Procedure**

The document [Grade Review Procedures](#) states: "Undergraduate and graduate students of Virginia Commonwealth University have a right to appeal course grades they consider to have been arbitrarily or capriciously assigned or assigned without regard for the criteria, requirements and procedures of the course stated in the syllabus or guidelines for assignments. Grades determined by actions under authority of the Virginia Commonwealth University Honor System may not be appealed through this procedure, nor may dismissals that have occurred as a result of correctly derived course grades."

### **VCU Honor System**

Virginia Commonwealth University recognizes that honesty, truth, and integrity are values central to its mission as an institution of higher education. Therefore, it must act to maintain these values, even to the point of separating from the University those who violate them. This policy describes the responsibilities of students, faculty and administration in upholding academic integrity, while at the same time, respecting the rights of individuals to the due process offered by administrative hearings and appeals. All persons enrolled in any course

or program offered by VCU, and all persons supervising the learning of any student are responsible for acting in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

In August 2007, the Board of Visitors adopted a revision of the [VCU Honor System](#) policy. That document is in the VCU Insider. Questions about the VCU Honor System should be directed to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Division of Student Affairs.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Information regarding reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments for students with disabilities should be included in course syllabi for each class at the beginning of each semester. The following statement should be included on the syllabus: “Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require Virginia Commonwealth University to provide an ‘academic adjustment’ and/or a ‘reasonable accommodation’ to any individual who advises us of a physical or mental disability. If you have a physical or mental limitation that requires an academic adjustment or an accommodation, please arrange a meeting with me at your earliest convenience. Additionally, if your course work requires you to work in a lab environment, you should advise the instructor or department chairperson of any concerns you may have regarding safety issues related to your limitation(s).” In addition to including the statement from the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 on the course syllabus, it would be helpful to read it to students during your first class meeting.

The [Office of Disability Support Services](#) is a good resource for students and faculty. In addition, handbooks to assist students and faculty are available from the [Office for Institutional Equity](#).

### **Class Rosters**

Web-based class rosters are available from within Banner eServices. Rosters are updated in real-time as students add or drop from your course. Rosters are available to faculty members who are formally assigned to the course through the Registrar’s Office. Detailed instructions on accessing your web-based class roster are located at the [Banner Self Service Guide](#). Faculty must clearly inform students, in writing, the attendance policy for each course and the consequences of poor attendance. If a student continues to miss class and does not officially withdraw from the course, the instructor has the right to withdraw the student for non-attendance with a mark of “W” or may assign a full academic grade.

### **Office Hours**

Faculty are expected to make themselves available to students outside of the classroom and laboratory; furthermore, they are encouraged to post or otherwise make known when and where students or colleagues may normally find them for consultation.

### **Guidelines for Dealing with Disruptive Student**

It is the faculty's responsibility to uphold a learning environment conducive to effective teaching. Faculty should set guidelines to supplement the existing University policies that address [Student Conduct in the Instructional Setting](#).

### **Assisting Distressed Students**

The faculty and Staff Guide to Assisting Students in Distress is a website designed to help faculty recognize the signs of distress in a student, to express your concerns and to reach out for support. As a faculty or staff member interacting with students, you are in a unique position to identify students who are in distress. You may be the first person a student reaches out to for help. Your ability to recognize the signs of emotional distress and troubling behavior can have a significant impact on a student's future well-being. Information regarding resources to help distressed students can be found at [students.vcu.edu/safety/](http://students.vcu.edu/safety/).

### **Field Trips**

At the beginning of a semester, faculty using field trips as a part of their curriculum must seek authorization through the appropriate dean or department chair by filing the [Travel Authorization \(Domestic and Foreign\)](#) form, indicating the approximate number of participants and dates of the trips.

### **Release of Student Information**

The University may not release to third parties any educational records or personally identifiable information without the written consent of the affected student except as is consistent with the [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#). Grades may not be publicly posted by name or social security number. To ensure privacy protection, questions from unauthorized sources about student data should be referred to [Records and Registration](#). VCU follows the requirements of the [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act](#).

### **Religious Observances**

It is the policy of VCU to accord students, on an individual basis, the opportunity to observe their traditional religious holidays. Students desiring to observe a religious holiday of special importance must provide advance written notification to each instructor by the end of the second week of classes. Instructors are encouraged to avoid scheduling one-time only activities that cannot be replicated on these dates. Faculty members are expected to make reasonable accommodations to students who are absent because of religious observance through such strategies as providing alternative assignments or examinations or granting permission for audio or video recordings and the like.

### **Textbook Selection**

Generally textbooks are selected by the individual faculty member, though in some cases a departmental committee or a committee composed of faculty teaching a course may select texts. Faculty members have the responsibility for ordering their own texts and are required to provide textbook information to the appropriate VCU Bookstore. For more information visit the [provost website](#). The policy for textbook adoptions can be found at the [Assurance Services](#) site. Faculty may not engage in direct sale of instructional materials to students.

### **Graduation Requirements**

There are university requirements and major disciplinary requirements that students must fulfill before they can graduate. Faculty serving as advisors, as well as professional



advisors, will be responsible for the first step in reviewing and certifying a graduation application. Information about graduation and commencement can be found on the [Enrollment Services](#) website.

### **Mandatory Signed Statement on Graduation Applications**

The Office of the University Registrar ensures that each graduation application is validated with a signature by the student, the faculty advisor, the department chair or program director, and the dean or designee. The following statements are required to be signed on the graduation application: Student statement: "I understand and confirm that I have met or will meet upon successful completion of the proposed course schedule (i.e., current courses) the University and academic requirements for my degree." Advisor, department chair, dean or designee statement: "I have reviewed the academic record of the above applicant and certify that all the undergraduate degree requirements for the major and the university have been fulfilled. I recommend that this candidate be awarded the degree applied for upon satisfactory completion of the courses designated above."

### **Appeals to Academic Regulations**

Undergraduate students wishing to appeal to waive an academic regulation, including graduation requirements, must file an appeal with Academic Regulations Appeals Committee (ARAC). For additional information refer to the ARAC entry in this handbook. See the [University Bulletin](#) for the full policy.

### **Academic Regulations Appeals Committee**

The Academic Regulations Appeals Committee considers appeals for exceptions to undergraduate program academic regulations listed in this bulletin. The committee — composed of faculty and administrators from each school and the college, and representatives from the Office of Records and Registration, Division of Community Engagement and the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services — is a standing committee of the Office of Academic Affairs. To begin the appeal process, students should contact the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee representative in the dean's office of their school or college; non degree-seeking students should contact the University College at (804) 827-8648. The student then works with the representative to prepare the petition following guidelines established by each school and the college. After the Academic Regulations Appeals Committee representative receives the student's letter and all necessary documentation, he or she will prepare a petition cover sheet and, if appropriate, gather pertinent information from faculty. When the petition is complete, it will be presented to the committee at one of its semimonthly meetings. Since a request to waive a regulation is itself an appeal, committee decisions are final, and there is no further appeal within the university. However, if new documentable information is provided, petitions may be brought back before the committee. A rewritten student letter does not constitute new documentation. The representative will request that the petition be reheard based upon the new information and the committee will vote on that request. Certain exceptions may affect current and future financial aid. Students should consult with a financial aid staff member before submitting an appeal. Additional information is available in the [VCU Bulletin](#).

## Degree Revocation

The university reserves the right to revoke any degree, certificate, or other university recognition for cause. In addition, any time following the award of a degree, certificate or other university recognition, the university reserves the right to take appropriate action, including, but not limited to, the revocation of such degree, certificate or other university recognition, on the basis of academic misconduct discovered subsequent to, but which occurred prior to, the awarding of the degree, certificate or other university recognition. More specifically, when an action that constitutes a violation of the VCU Honor System leads to a finding that invalidates a major piece of work required for a degree, certificate or other university recognition so that the validity of the degree, certificate or other university recognition is jeopardized, the student or former student will be subject to a sanction that may include (a) rejection of a thesis, dissertation or other work, (b) revocation of a certification or other university recognition or (c) revocation of a degree. For additional information visit the [VCU Bulletin](#).

## Academic and University Services and Resources

### VCU Libraries

The [Virginia Commonwealth University Libraries](#) offers a wide range of digital and print library collections and services that advance the education, research, and teaching of students, faculty, and other members of the University community. The [James Branch Cabell Library](#) on the Monroe Park Campus emphasizes the arts, humanities, engineering, social work, business, social sciences, and basic sciences, with particular support for undergraduate student learning and research needs. The [Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences](#) on the Medical College of Virginia Campus focuses on basic and health sciences, health care professionals, clinical care, and patients, with emphasis on graduate and professional students and research faculty needs.

Services to faculty on both campuses include access to a wide variety of instruction and outreach assistance, along with digital information resources (including hundreds of thousands of journals, databases, books, and data resources), borrowing privileges, film, video, and DVD booking services for classes, print and digital course reserves, item purchase requests, and more. The VCU Libraries encourages and supports partnerships with individual faculty to help them develop their instructional and research programs.

### ALT Lab

[ALT Lab](#) models and inspires connected learning for a networked world through faculty development, student engagement, communities of practice, and technology enhanced active learning. We cultivate distinctive experiences of deeper learning fostered by high engagement for student success. The ALT Lab provides four types of services

- ***Faculty Development.*** Our faculty development embodies the same connected learning principles we promote for use with students, capitalizing on collective intelligence, openly networked resources, and digital technologies while meeting shared and individual faculty goals.
- ***Student Engagement.*** ALT Lab fosters student engagement through our commitment to interest-powered, production-centered, peer-supported, academically oriented learning that is openly networked and united by a strong sense of shared



purpose. These core principles of connected learning inform our work with students as well as the faculty who guide them—no matter where the learning takes place.

- ***Communities of Practice.*** Connected learning is directly related to the idea of Communities of Practice, groups of people bound together by a shared interest or purpose, actively working towards a product that can be shared with a broader audience. Communities of Practice can be defined in terms of their members, their shared interests, their meeting spaces (virtual, physical, or both), and their practices (how the group takes action).
- ***Technology Enhanced Active Learning.*** The focus of Technology Enhanced Active Learning (TEAL) is on active learning, not on technology. ALT Lab embraces TEAL because it emphasizes the experiential elements of learning and the benefits of digital engagement. When combined with the social learning emphasis of communities of practice, TEAL helps to empower connected learning.

More detailed information on the ALT lab can be found at [altlab.vcu.edu/](http://altlab.vcu.edu/)

### **VCU Technology Services**

VCU Technology Services (VCU TS) is responsible for the operation of central academic and administrative computing resources at VCU through its four divisions along in addition to the Project Management and Information Security Offices: Administrative Systems (Application Support, Applications Infrastructure, Data Access & Reporting), User Services (VCU helpIT Center, Desktop Support, Statistical Consultants, Training, Media Support Services, VCU Card, Marketing & Communications, Research Computing and computer purchasing/repair), Application Services (Email, Learning Systems/Blackboard, Web Services/Portal, Mobile Applications, Records Management), and Computing & Communications (Servers / Storage / Operating Systems, Directory Services / Database Administration & Backup Services, Network Services, Telecommunications Services, Computer Center Operations). Additionally, VCU TS oversees the Student Computer Initiative and co-sponsors the Tech Fair each April with VCU Libraries. For more information visit <http://ts.vcu.edu>.

### **Faculty and Instructional Support Services**

VCU Technology Services' Learning Systems group provides infrastructure and end-user support for Blackboard, LON-CAPA, Echo360, Softchalk, Respondus, StudyMate and numerous other instructional technology tools. The group works with schools, departments, and individual faculty members to foster excellence in the use of technology. Support for these programs and services is available at the VCU helpIT Center at <http://go.vcu.edu/helpIT>

### **Media Support Services**

Media Support Services (MSS) is an inter-disciplinary media department within VCU Technology Services, charged with providing faculty, staff and students with multimedia, television and audiovisual support to further the teaching and research mission of Virginia Commonwealth University. MSS provides operational, technical and creative support in the areas of distance learning, campus-wide video networking, multimedia system design and

implementation, classroom support, loaning of equipment via the VCU helpIT Center, and equipment maintenance and repair. For more information visit [go.vcu.edu/mss](http://go.vcu.edu/mss).

### **Web and Research, and Scientific Computing Services**

Web Support: VCU Technology Services (VCU TS) manages and supports the myVCU Portal, the VCU website, Web-based tools such as blogs & wikis, and collaborates with other VCU organizations in developing Web-based applications. In support of Web publishing, VCU TS provides training, consulting, online documentation and Web publishing standards. VCU TS is responsible for the design and features of the myVCU Portal and VCU Web site. Use of VCU computing resources is subject to the VCU Web Guidelines, VCU Policy on Guidelines for Using Electronic Information Systems and Office Equipment, and VCU Ethics Policy on Computing. For more information visit the [Assurance Services](#) website.

Research and Scientific Computing: VCU Technology Services, in collaboration with the Center for High Performance Computing (CHiPC), provides resources in support of student, faculty and staff research and scientific computing. Large Linux clusters and servers, with extensive collections of software, support high performance computing, research database applications, and statistical, mathematical and scientific applications for researchers. Significant disk capacity provides support for the storage and analysis of extremely large datasets. VCU TS provides consultative support in the use of these facilities, database design, statistical analysis and many of the software applications. For more information visit [ts.vcu.edu/kb/1353.html](http://ts.vcu.edu/kb/1353.html).

### **VCU helpIT Center**

VCU Technology Services operates the VCU helpIT Center under the customer service directive to provide quick, courteous, and comprehensive computing (software & hardware) support on the Monroe Park and MCV campuses. Self-service support is available online 24 hours a day and walk-in and live phone support is available during posted hours. chatIT, an online chat service, is available during posted hours to let you talk with VCU helpIT Center staff via instant messaging service. Support is available via telephone (804-828-2227), email ([helpIT@vcu.edu](mailto:helpIT@vcu.edu)), and online at [go.vcu.edu/helpIT](http://go.vcu.edu/helpIT).

### **VCU Computer Center**

The VCU Computer Center (VCUCC) provides computing services to faculty, staff, and students, various administrative data processing departments (Financial Operations, Human Resources, University Enrollment Services, etc.) and VCU Libraries. The VCUCC features a state-of-the-art computer room with keycard access, raised flooring, racks for mounting equipment, high-capacity air conditioning, and power provided by a battery backed-up building uninterruptible power supply. Individuals and departments can move their servers to VCUCC and take advantage of the superior facilities. The VCUCC staff members have expertise in Windows and UNIX operating systems, system design and administration, processing technologies and systems.

### **Telecommunications**

Network: VCU Technology Services (VCU TS) operates a campus network that supports the academic, research, and administrative activities of the University. This

network is comprised of over 60,000 ports and 1,000 wireless access points in faculty & staff offices, residence halls, student support service centers, libraries and computer laboratories that connect more than 25,000 computers and more than 2,800 server and network devices on campus. For more information visit <http://go.vcu.edu/network>.

**Audio Conferencing:** VCU Technology Services (VCU TS) offers access to Virginia Information Technologies Agency's audio voice and data conferencing, an enhanced, interactive audio and data conferencing service. This reliable, flexible and easy-to-use service supports voice and data conferencing that can include slides, Web tours, application sharing and other features. For more information visit [ts.vcu.edu/kb/telecommunications/3604.html](http://ts.vcu.edu/kb/telecommunications/3604.html).

**Video Teleconferencing:** VCU Technology Services (VCU TS) offers support for video teleconferencing at VCU through the operation of a multimedia conferencing bridge, enabling connection to conferencing devices worldwide via IP (internet) or ISDN (phone-based) protocols. VCU TS also operates two technician-supported conferencing endpoints for the origination or reception of point-to-point or multi-point conferences, each with seating for 40 persons. VCU TS staff is also available to consult with faculty and staff on the purchase, installation, configuration and testing of departmentally owned videoconferencing devices. For more information visit [ts.vcu.edu/kb/1292.html](http://ts.vcu.edu/kb/1292.html).

#### **Long Distance Authorization Codes**

Access to long distance, extended area, and directory or operator assistance services made from VCU telephone lines is provided for business use only and controlled through the issuance of user authorization codes. Departmental authorization is required before a code is issued. Users issued an authorization code are expected to maintain the privacy of the six-digit code number. If codes are compromised in any manner, the user is required to notify the telecommunications office as soon as practical. For more information visit [ts.vcu.edu/kb/telecommunications/1598.html](http://ts.vcu.edu/kb/telecommunications/1598.html).

#### **Identification: VCUCard & eID**

**VCUCard:** The [VCUCard](#) offers VCU identification and a wide variety of other services. It is the official identification card for Virginia Commonwealth University and Health System. While on the Monroe Park or MCV campuses, all students, faculty and staff are required to carry their VCUCard. In addition to being your university ID, your VCUCard has a wide variety of uses. If you lose your card, report it immediately to a VCUCard office or visit our online card office at [vcucard.vcu.edu](http://vcucard.vcu.edu). Although there is no fee for the initial issuance of the card, there is a charge for a replacement.

**eID:** The VCU eID is the username used, along with a corresponding eID password, to authenticate you to many VCU web applications and electronic services. Some popular resources that use the eID for authentication include the myVCU portal, wireless network, VCU Mail Anywhere, Blackboard, VCU Libraries resources, eServices, and some departmental applications. The VCU eID vision is to provide the VCU community with authenticated secure access to the information they need through the web using a simple, single sign-on process.

## Global Education Office

The [Global Education Office](#) (GEO) was established “to prepare students for a new global society and to foster a broader global perspective.” The mission of the Global Education Office is to advance the internationalization of the University, in cooperation with the schools and colleges as well as other administrative units. GEO is comprised of the units Education Abroad, Global Education Outreach, and International Student and Scholar Services which includes International Admissions and Recruitment, Immigration Services, Community Connections and the English Language Program.

## The Honors College

The [Honors College](#) at VCU provides opportunities for eligible students to meet the requirements necessary to graduate with University honors. Honors faculty members are selected for their demonstrated abilities to communicate in engaging and interesting ways. They capture students’ imagination and inspire their curiosity. They challenge honors students to think about themselves and their world in new and different ways. They help students learn to express clearly their positions and ideas. And, they help students learn to challenge themselves.

## Division of Community Engagement

The [Division of Community Engagement](#) seeks to engage Virginia Commonwealth University with its community to enhance the quality of life for all who work, live and study in the Richmond metropolitan area. The Division of Community Engagement provides VCU with a centralized administrative unit focused on community engagement and nontraditional programs. In addition, the office administers various outreach initiatives (<http://community.vcu.edu/news-and-events/outreach/>) that address pressing social concerns in the community. Among these programs are the Council for Community Engagement, the VCU AmeriCorps Program, America Reads, the Virginia Mentoring Partnership, service-learning, Nonprofit Learning Point, and the Carver – VCU Partnership.

## The University College

The [University College](#) is an academic unit that provides a single home for interrelated programs, services and learning opportunities. The UC enhances the quality of undergraduate education at VCU by providing a common experience for first-year and transfer students. Among the services provided by the University College are

- Advising for all new students, including pre-health, pre-law, student athlete, and transfer students;
- VCU’s core curriculum, the VCU Compact. VCU Compact is a program intended to guarantee students and their families that our students are supplied with the foundational tools to acquire the knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes necessary for success through a year-long two-course sequence -- UNIV I and II;
- The [Campus Learning Center](#) (CLC), which provides quality academic support to all Virginia Commonwealth University undergraduates. From one-on-one tutoring to Supplemental Instruction (peer-led group study) sessions, the center offers free ways for students to gain a clearer understanding of a subject and to develop better methods for reviewing new information. The CLC offers assistance in a wide variety

- of subjects and will work with faculty to create programs tailored to their class needs; and
- Services such as the Academic Warning and Probation Program, the Campus Testing Center, CLEP, Project Excel, learning communities, the Master Advisor Program and the Writing Center.

## Assessment and WEAVEonline

Assessment is a critical component in documenting the effectiveness of the University. Through a systematic, ongoing cycle of setting goals, measuring attainment of those goals, and using the results to make informed decisions, we can promote quality enhancement at all levels of the University. Assessment provides the necessary evidence to guide effective decision making in many areas— programmatic changes, classroom teaching modifications, support service adjustments, policy or procedure revisions, campus climate improvements, and structural reorganizations. In order to ensure consistency and continuity in the way we report our assessment, VCU has established a shared framework. Called WEAVEonline, this program provides the framework for 1) Setting goals and establishing expected outcomes; 2) Establishing criteria for success; 3) Assessing performance; 4) Viewing assessment results; 5) Effecting improvements; and 6) Archiving Annual Reports. For more information on WEAVEonline and the role of faculty in assessment, visit [assessment.vcu.edu](http://assessment.vcu.edu) or contact VCU's director of assessment and institutional effectiveness.

## Employee Health Services

[Employee Health Services](#) provides a wide range of services to University and hospital faculty and staff.

- Pre-placement examinations for new employees.
- Periodic exams designed to detect signs or symptoms of ill health related to employment conditions.
- Evaluation and treatment of occupational injuries and illnesses (for information about workers' compensation benefits and forms visit [hr.vcu.edu/workerscomp/index.htm](http://hr.vcu.edu/workerscomp/index.htm)).
- Medical monitoring for biohazard exposure.
- Vaccinations and immunizations for employees working with infectious agents or at risk of exposure to infectious diseases.
- Evaluations of on-the-job, non-occupational illnesses to ensure that employees do not transmit communicable diseases to coworkers or hospital patients.

## Financial Services

### Procurement and Payment

[Procurement and payment](#) for purchases of University goods and services are processed through the Office of Procurement and Payment. Call 828-1077 for more information on procedural guidelines, forms and instructions.

### Cashiering Operations

The [Cashier's Office](#) accepts student payments and deposits to University accounts. Conference/seminar payment options utilizing the web or other electronic payments may be available. Call 828-8774 for more information.



### **Banner Administrative System**

Banner is the administrative system for human resources and financial services. For more information, visit the Web at [banner.vcu.edu/](http://banner.vcu.edu/).

### **Travel – Domestic and Foreign**

Travel is subject to current Virginia and University guidelines. Deans and department chairs and directors may develop specific guidelines to manage travel funds efficiently so that University costs are minimized through special fares and other economical arrangements. Travel for professional purposes (to attend a convention, conference, seminar, workshop or similar function) must be requested on a [Travel Authorization](#) form, regardless of funding source. Travel request forms and guidelines are available from the department or school. Helpful hints for travel reimbursements are found at [vcu.edu/procurement/travel.htm](http://vcu.edu/procurement/travel.htm). Permission to travel outside the contiguous 48 states requires the appropriate vice president's approval.

### **Payroll Services**

[Payroll Services](#) is responsible for issuing paychecks, coordinating deductions, handling direct deposits of salary, and other matters concerning wage and salary payments to University employees.

### **Effort Reporting**

As required by federal regulations, the University maintains an [Effort Reporting System](#) for monitoring the salaries and wages of employees who:

- Effect payroll charges against federally sponsored programs.
- Effect payroll charges against two or more cost activities used for purposes of allocating indirect costs to federal programs.

The Effort Certification report will show the related cost-shared salary charged and the Principal Investigator will certify accordingly. These reports primarily serve as support for salary charges to grants and contracts, cost shared salary and may be examined during an audit.

### **Human Resources**

[Human Resources](#) provides programs and services to enhance the professional and personal growth of VCU's faculty. Some specialized programs focus on [benefits and retirement planning](#), [work/life resources](#) to help in balancing work and home responsibilities, and [evaluation and treatment](#) of occupational injuries and illnesses. The University also recognizes faculty through an [annual awards](#) program that honors service in years ranging from five to 50. Call 827-1770 for more information. Human Resources policies are on the [HR website](#). Direct policy questions or work-related conflict issues to Employee Relations at [emprel@vcu.edu](mailto:emprel@vcu.edu) or 828-1510.



## Office of Communications and Public Relations

[Office of Communications and Public Relations](#) serves as the main link between the news media and faculty, staff, students and administrators at Virginia Commonwealth University and the VCU Health System. The goal of the office is to build national, regional and local awareness of VCU's excellence in teaching, research, service and patient care. Targeting major national print and broadcast media, the Communications and Public Relations staff routinely promotes stories on a range of topics from research findings to innovative outreach programs, from new patient-care techniques to insight on issues shaping today's headlines. The staff also arranges opportunities for key news media representatives to meet with VCU newsmakers, including visits to reporters and producers in Washington, D.C. and throughout the region.

## Creative Services

VCU Creative Services provides editorial, print, exhibition and multimedia design, Web development and design, photography and other creative elements in support of the mission and goals of the university. For more information, visit [creative.vcu.edu](http://creative.vcu.edu).

## Recreational and Cultural Opportunities

Members of the University community have the opportunity to attend many scholarly and cultural activities sponsored each year by schools, departments and organizations. These activities include lectures, seminars, and symposia in the humanistic and scientific disciplines; concerts, plays and performances in music, dance and theater at the VCU Singleton Center for the Performing Arts and the Grace Street Theatre; and art exhibitions in the Anderson Gallery. Announcements about scheduled events are widely circulated. Many of the cultural opportunities are presented by VCU's [School of the Arts](#). VCU [recreational facilities](#) also are available to people in the following groups who purchase a membership: VCU alumni, VCU faculty and staff (all categories); spouses of VCU students, faculty, staff and alumni members; and employees of MCV Physicians and the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park.

## Reservation of Rooms for Special Events and Meetings

Monroe Park Campus: Reservations for non-instructional use of general classroom space during non-class times, rooms in the University Student Commons, and outdoor facilities on the Monroe Park Campus can be made through [Event Services](#). Non-general classroom space is reserved by the unit to which it is assigned. The Office of the Director of the Student Commons coordinates conference activities, including on-campus housing, meeting rooms, and food.

MCV Campus: Certain lecture and conference rooms may be reserved for special events through the room scheduling service of the Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences on the MCV Campus, at 828-9594.

## Work/Life Resources

[Work/Life](#) resources offers services to the faculty and staff of Virginia Commonwealth University to help balance work and home responsibilities throughout the life cycle. These

services are provided at no charge and are administered through Human Resources. In addition, VCU is a participating CommonHealth agency with access to many wellness initiatives and resources.

## Business Services

Information on VCU's Business Services is available on the unit's websites:

- [Parking and Transportation](#)
- [Dining Services](#)
- [Retail Stores](#)
- [Mail Services](#)

## Emergency Procedures and Information

### VCU Text Messaging Alerts

Sign up for the text messaging system at [vcu.edu/alert/notify](http://vcu.edu/alert/notify) to receive an immediate text message on your cell phone notifying you about campus emergencies. NOTE: it is important that you include your full 10-digit cell phone number (i.e., 804-555-1212) along with your cellular carrier information to sign up for this service. Please ensure that your cell phone account is enabled to receive SMS text messages. You are not signed up until you have validated your cell phone number. If you experience problems doing so, please e-mail e2Campus at [support@e2campus.com](mailto:support@e2campus.com). Detailed emergency information will be reported on the VCU Alert webpage and/or sent to your VCU e-mail account.

### VCU Alert

Visit the VCU Alert Web page at [vcu.edu/alert](http://vcu.edu/alert) for up-to-date information on:

- Emergency event impact VCU campuses
- Inclement weather and office closing information
- VCU building status
- Parking facility status
- Transit service status

### VCU/Campus Police

The [VCU Police Department](#), which consists of sworn police officers and security personnel, has jurisdiction on both VCU campuses. VCU Police cars are identifiable by gold reflective stripes on white vehicles. Services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Notify the department if suspicious activity is seen. All incidents are investigated promptly. The Victim/Witness Program coordinator is available to assist VCU community members who are victims of, or witnesses to, crimes either on- or off-campus. For emergencies call 828-1234; for the non-emergency dispatcher call 828-1196. The VCU Police Department is located at 938 West Grace St. Information can be anonymously sent via text messaging to VCU Police – Text VCUTip to 274637.

## Campus Security Escort Service

This free service provides security escorts for the safety of members of the university community traveling to or from university-related activities. This service is provided on campus and in some off campus areas adjacent to the campuses. The escort drivers wear distinctive uniforms and are in constant radio contact with police dispatchers. To use the service, call 828-WALK (828-9255) or use one of the emergency telephones, and present a VCUCard. The service is available on both campuses from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. nightly. Visit [vcu.edu/police/security.html](http://vcu.edu/police/security.html).

## Emergency Response Telephones (ERTS)

These telephones are for the VCU community to use when campus police assistance is needed. Outdoor ERTS are yellow, some with flashing amber lights above them. Indoor ERTS are red wall phones. When you lift the receiver or push the button, you can automatically give a message to a trained communication officer. If you cannot give a message, your location is pinpointed on a call directory and a police officer is sent to your location.

## Sirens

When a siren sounds, an emergency has occurred or is imminent:

1. If you are in a building on campus, remain where you are and seek additional information about what is happening and how to respond.
2. If you are outside but on-campus, go to the nearest university building and seek additional information about what is happening.
3. If you are off-campus, do not come to campus, but seek additional information about what is happening.

You can hear sample warning sirens at these Web locations:

- Event Alert Wail: [alert.vcu.edu/know/typesofalerts.php](http://alert.vcu.edu/know/typesofalerts.php)
- Event "All Clear" Wail: [alert.vcu.edu/know/typesofalerts.php](http://alert.vcu.edu/know/typesofalerts.php)

## What to know and do to be prepared for emergencies at VCU

1. Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts at [vcu.edu/alert/notify](http://vcu.edu/alert/notify). Keep your information up-to-date.
2. Know and brief each new class on the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
3. Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
4. Know where to go for additional emergency information. See [vcu.edu/alert](http://vcu.edu/alert).
5. Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234). Report suspicious activities and objects to VCU Police.

## Emergency Preparedness Plan

The Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) is a University-level plan intended to establish policies, procedures and organizational structure for response to emergencies that are of sufficient magnitude to cause a significant disruption of the functioning of all or portions of Virginia Commonwealth University. The plan describes the roles and responsibilities of

departments, units and personnel during emergency situations. The EPP addresses each type of emergency on an individual basis, providing guidelines for the containment of the incident. For more information please contact VCU Facilities Management, Office of Planning & Design at 827-2238 or see [fmd.vcu.edu/planningdesign/index.html](http://fmd.vcu.edu/planningdesign/index.html).

## Office of Environmental Health & Safety

([vcu.edu/oehs/](http://vcu.edu/oehs/))

### Emergency Response

Throughout VCU, thousands of students attend classes over the course of a day. Many times, especially in the evenings, classroom instructors are the only VCU staff on the scene when emergencies occur. It is therefore critical that faculty be aware of and comfortable with their role in such situations. Like any effective plan for dealing with emergencies, preparations taken in advance of the emergency are the key to minimizing danger and loss. Each new class of students needs to be informed of procedures for reporting emergencies, evacuation plans and exit routes from buildings. This includes pointing out locations of emergency phones, fire alarm pull stations, and fire extinguishers. Please be familiar with the [university safety manual](#).

### Assessing Risk

In addition to being aware of emergency procedures, and informing students of emergency plans at the beginning of each term, faculty must also be aware of any students with special needs. Instructors need to assess their classes to determine if any students will require special assistance in emergency situations. Again, planning in advance will help prevent confusion and chaos once emergencies occur. Students requiring assistance during emergencies include anyone with conditions that affect ability to detect alarms, identify exit routes, or evacuate by established exit paths. Once identified, students requiring assistance can be informed of the plan of action they will follow during emergencies.

### Bomb Threat Procedures

The VCU Campus Police are responsible for handling a bomb threat emergency; however, VCU employees should familiarize themselves with the proper procedures for handling this type of emergency. These procedures can be found in the safety manual.

### Fire Alarms

Whenever an alarm sounds in the building, the occupants MUST evacuate. Remember that drills are held only 1 time a year in most buildings (hospitals are drilled quarterly), so most alarms will not be drills. When an alarm occurs, close all doors in your area and proceed to the nearest exit. Employees should be familiar with the layout of their building and know two ways out of every area. Once outside you should clear away from the building and await further instructions. You will be notified when it is time to re-enter the building. Please follow the evacuation procedure guidelines in the safety manual. More training can be found at [oehs.vcu.edu/fire/vcudrills.html](http://oehs.vcu.edu/fire/vcudrills.html)

### **Emergency Assistance for Fire Alarms**

Disabled persons should be instructed to proceed to the nearest exit or stairwell. They should be instructed to remain in the stairwell while help is summoned. A volunteer may stay as long as possible or until assistance arrives. Faculty should note the exact floor level where the disabled person is left waiting, and should personally locate Richmond Bureau of Fire or VCU Police personnel immediately upon leaving the building. Fire or police personnel should be notified of the exact stairwell and floor level where the disabled person is waiting. Uniformed fire personnel respond to every fire alarm on campus. Once notified, fire personnel will make immediate efforts to reach the disabled individual if necessary. Please be sure that once in the stairwell, disabled persons are not blocking traffic down the stairwell. In addition, the stairwell doors must be shut. If the disabled person cannot be taken to a stairwell, or if leaving them there creates a traffic jam, they should be instructed to proceed to the closest room to the stairwell. They should be instructed to remain in the classroom with the door closed. The exact room number needs to be given fire personnel immediately upon exiting the building. Always reassure the disabled person that help is being summoned and should arrive as soon as possible.

### **Power Failures**

In cases of power failure where the building must be evacuated, disabled persons should be instructed to proceed to the nearest exit or stairwell. They should be instructed to remain in the stairwell while help is summoned. A volunteer may stay as long as possible or until assistance arrives. Faculty should note the exact floor level where the disabled person is left waiting, and should personally contact the VCU Police by emergency telephone. The VCU Police should be notified of the exact stairwell and floor level where the disabled person is waiting.

Always reassure the disabled person that help is being summoned and should arrive as soon as possible. Remember, planning in advance for such contingencies will greatly reduce risk.

### **Emergency Assistance for Disabled Persons**

In an emergency, instruct individuals with disabilities to proceed to the nearest safe exit. If the nearest safe exit is a stairwell, instruct them to remain in the stairwell while help is summoned. Ensure that traffic is not impeded from entering or exiting the stairwell. Make certain that the stairwell doors remain shut. If individuals with disabilities cannot be taken to a stairwell, or if leaving them there impedes persons from entering or exiting the stairwell, instruct them to proceed to the closest room to the stairwell and remain there with the door closed. Always reassure the individual with the disability that help has been summoned and should arrive as soon as possible.

Faculty should note the exact location, including the floor level and room, where the individual with a disability is waiting to be evacuated. Immediately upon exiting the building, personally locate the Richmond Bureau of Fire or VCU Police personnel and communicate the location of the individual with the disability. Once notified, fire personnel will make immediate efforts to reach the individual with a disability.

A volunteer may stay with the individual with a disability as long as possible or until assistance arrives, if doing so does not pose a safety risk to him/her. If the individual with a disability uses a wheelchair or scooter, it may be potentially harmful for untrained persons to carry them down the stairs. Fire personnel will take action to evacuate these individuals.

If an individual is blind or visually impaired, an assistant can offer his/her elbow and guide the individual through the evacuation route.

## Other Policies and Information

### Human Resource Policies

Human Resources maintains a comprehensive list of human resource policies at [hr.vcu.edu/about/policies.html#policies](http://hr.vcu.edu/about/policies.html#policies)

### Inclement Weather/Office Closings

The complexity of Virginia Commonwealth University's operations requires certain essential services to be provided in times of inclement weather and emergency conditions. This policy allows supervisors and managers to designate personnel to work when the University is closed officially and provides a uniform method of handling employee absences and pay continuity during this time. State government closing and late opening announcements do not apply to Virginia Commonwealth University. A [separate announcement](#) will be made about any changes in VCU's normal operating status for the Monroe Park Campus and the MCV Campus. Employees of the VCU Health System follow a separate inclement weather procedure. The decision to close the University for inclement weather is made by VCU's president in consultation with senior management. Emergency closing announcements are (1) reported on major area radio and/or television stations; (2) recorded on the Inclement Weather line at VCU-OPEN (828-6736); and (3) posted on [VCU's inclement weather website](#), [VCU Alert website](#), Twitter @VCUnews and [Facebook](#).

### Drug Free Schools and Workplace Policy

The purpose of this [policy](#) is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of members of the University community and the public being served by the University.

### Conflict of Interest

The [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) guidelines are designed to provide a framework within which the propriety and advisability of a proposed contract for research and development can be addressed. The guidelines apply to all employees of Virginia Commonwealth University." All employees of the University are subject to the provisions of the Virginia State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act. In addition, the Act requires persons occupying certain "positions of trust" to file annual Statement of Economic Interests disclosures. Every fall, VCU Human Resources provides this form to faculty and staff who meet this requirement.

### Nepotism

State laws regarding conflict of interest govern the hiring of two persons from the same immediate family. Generally, no person may hire, supervise, or be in a position to influence the employment activities of a member of his or her immediate family. Special cases may require individual clarification from the Board of Visitors, provost, vice presidents, or the University general counsel's office.



## Smoking in the Workplace

In accordance with the Virginia Indoor Clean Air Act, Virginia Commonwealth University provides reasonable [no smoking areas](#) in all University buildings.

## Campus Maps and Directions

See [vcu.edu/maps](http://vcu.edu/maps).