



VCU

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

**VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS
ACADEMIC AND HEALTH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

3:15 - 4:45 PM¹

March 21, 2024

**VCU JAMES BRANCH CABELL LIBRARY
901 PARK AVE., ROOM 303
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
AGENDA**

DRAFT

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. CALL TO ORDER | Dr. Tonya Parris-Wilkins, Chair |
| 2. ACTION ITEMS:
<i>2 minutes (3:15 - 3:17 p.m.)</i> | Dr. Tonya Parris-Wilkins, Chair |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dec. 7, 2023 meeting minutes b. <u>Degree Program Discontinuance Proposal:</u>
Proposal to discontinue the current MS degree program in Nursing - School of Nursing c. <u>New Degree Program Proposal:</u>
Proposal to establish a new MSN degree program in Nursing - School of Nursing | |
| 3. CLOSED SESSION - Freedom of Information Act Sections 2.2-3711(A) (2), (11) specifically: | Dr. Tonya Parris-Wilkins, Chair |
| RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND CERTIFICATION | Dr. Tonya Parris-Wilkins, Chair |
| 4. REPORT FROM THE PROVOST
<i>20 minutes (3:25 - 3:45 p.m.)</i> | Dr. Fotis Sotiropoulos, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs |
| 5. REPORT FROM THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR HEALTH SCIENCES
<i>20 minutes (3:45 - 4:05 p.m.)</i> | Dr. Marlon Levy, Interim Senior Vice President for Health Sciences and CEO VCU Health |
| 6. REPORT FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
<i>40 minutes (4:05 - 4:45 p.m.)</i> | Dr. P. Srirama Rao, Vice President for Research and Innovation |
| 7. OTHER BUSINESS | Dr. Tonya Parris-Wilkins, Chair |

¹ The start time for the Board of Visitors meeting is approximate only. The meeting may begin either before or after the listed approximate start time as Board members are ready to proceed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Tonya Parris-Wilkins, Chair

In accordance with the Board's operating procedures and in compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, there will be no opportunity for public comment at this meeting.

**CONFIDENTIAL SUMMARY
ACADEMIC AND HEALTH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS
March 21, 2024**

OPEN SESSION

DRAFT

ACTION ITEMS:

- Minutes of Dec. 7, 2023 meeting
- Proposal to discontinue the current MS degree program in Nursing
- Proposal to establish a new MSN degree program in Nursing

FOR INFORMATION/COMMITTEE REVIEW:

- 1) Items that may be action items at upcoming committee meeting:
 - None
- 2) Items that the board needs to be aware of, but will not require action:
 - None

EXECUTIVE REPORTS:

Report from the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (20 min.)

- Dr. Fotis Sotiropoulos will provide an update on the One VCU Academic Repositioning Initiative.

Report from the Interim Senior Vice President for Health Sciences (20 min.)

- Dr. Marlon Levy will provide updates on issues pertaining to the health sciences schools and campus.

Report from the Vice President for Research and Innovation (40 min.)

- Dr. Srirama Rao will provide a brief update on VCU's research enterprise. He will also introduce a panel of faculty inventors and entrepreneurs who will discuss their innovations and the process towards commercialization.

Virginia Commonwealth University Proposed Program Discontinuance Brief Proposal to close the Master of Science in Nursing degree program

Overview

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) requests approval to discontinue the Master of Science (M.S.) degree program in Nursing (CIP code: 51.3818). The degree is located in the School of Nursing.

Delivery Format

The program is offered in the traditional, face-to-face format except for the concentration in nursing leadership and organizational science (NLOS) which is offered fully online.

Target Implementation Date

Summer 2024. Following implementation of a teach-out plan, full closure of the degree program will take place at the end of spring 2027 semester.

Demand and Workforce Development

A shortage exists for advanced practice registered nurses in VA. Given the demand for advanced practice registered nurses, VCU offers and will continue to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) in Nursing Practice degree program. The DNP in Nursing Practice has become and is the endorsed entry-level preparation for nurse practitioners and prepares graduate to become nurse practitioners and nurse leaders. The same advanced practice concentrations available with the M.S. in Nursing are currently embedded and available in the DNP in Nursing Practice degree program.

External Competition

Currently, no other public institution in the Commonwealth offers a master's degree in advanced nursing practice (CIP code: 51.3818). Four other public institutions offer a master's of nursing under a generalized registered nursing/registered nurse CIP code 51.3801.

Target Population

A teach-out plan is in place for the 137 students currently enrolled in the M.S. in Nursing degree program. All students are expected to graduate by spring 2026. The last term that students will be able to complete the M.S. in Nursing degree is Spring of 2027. The 6 students that have "stopped out" have been considered and will be advised that the program will no longer graduate students after the spring of 2027. A revised plan of study will be completed for each student.

Impact on Existing Programs

With the closure of the M.S. in Nursing, registered nurses interested in advanced practice training will be able to enroll in the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) in Nursing Practice program. VCU School of Nursing has dedicated the past three years to transitioning advanced practice nursing programs to the DNP degree level as the entry point for nurse practitioners. VCU anticipates a further increase in enrollment in the DNP in Nursing Practice degree program.

Impact on Faculty

No faculty positions will be lost as a result of the discontinuance of the degree program. Faculty teaching core and required courses in the Master of Science in Nursing will teach coursework in other degree programs.

Funding

No funding is needed or requested for the discontinuance of the M.S. degree program in Nursing.

Next Steps

- February 20 – University Graduate Curriculum committee meeting
- February 22 – University Committee on Academic Affairs (UC-AA) meeting
- March 7 - University Council (UC) meeting
- March 11 - President's Cabinet
- March 21/22 - Board of Visitor's Meeting (BOV)
- March 25 – Submission for SCHEV and SACSCOC approval

Virginia Commonwealth University Proposed Program Brief **Proposal to create a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree program in Nursing**

Overview

Virginia Commonwealth University seeks approval for a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree program in Nursing at the MCV campus in Richmond, VA. The proposed degree program will be administered through the dean's office in the School of Nursing.

The proposed master's degree program is designed as a direct-entry pre-licensure degree that will focus on providing students with entry-level professional nursing education and core competencies for nurse generalists. Students will learn foundational nursing concepts, health assessment techniques, chronic and acute care management, evidence-based practice, informatics, and leadership principles, preparing them for diverse roles in the nursing profession. The proposed degree program will prepare students to conduct health assessments in delivering comprehensive patient care, promoting wellness, and making informed clinical decisions. Students will learn to utilize nursing informatics to improve healthcare data management, enhance clinical decision-making, and optimize patient care outcomes across the lifespan. Graduates will be prepared to take the NCLEX-RN and serve as Registered Nurses (RNs) and nursing leaders or managers, capable of working in various healthcare organizations and settings. The degree program will address the growing demand for nurses in the Commonwealth.

Delivery Format

The proposed program will be offered in a hybrid format.

Target Implementation Date

Summer 2025

Demand and Workforce Development

Employment projections in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Occupational Outlook Handbook show the viability of employment for graduates of the proposed MSN in Nursing. According to the BLS, employment for nurses is expected to grow 6.2%, or "faster than the average for all occupations." Data from Virginia Employment Commission demonstrate demand for nurses to grow by 8.26%.

External Competition

One (1) public university offers a similar or related degree program. University of Virginia is the only public institution in the Commonwealth offering a direct entry pre-licensure MSN degree program in Nursing.

Target Population

The program is designed for individuals who hold a bachelor's degree in a non-nursing field and wish to pursue a fast-track route to enter the nursing profession and immediately join the healthcare workforce.

Impact on Existing Programs

The proposed MSN in Nursing will not compromise any existing degree programs at Virginia Commonwealth University. No degree programs will close as a result of the initiation and operation of the proposed degree program.

Impact on Faculty

The School of Nursing has twenty-two (22) full-time faculty members. All faculty will teach core and required experiential learning courses for the proposed degree program.

Funding

The proposed degree program will require approximately 16.5 FTE of instructional effort to initiate, rising to approximately 22 FTE by the target year of 2026-2027. The School of Nursing has the faculty, classified support, equipment, space, library, and other resources necessary to initiate the proposed program. The program will be supported by resources already in place to sustain existing academic programs, including student support services (enrollment services, library support, and career services) and faculty support services.

Alignment with the VCU Mission

The proposed degree program aligns with Virginia Commonwealth University's mission. Through "real-world learning," students engage in civic service projects promoting health and wellness in at-risk populations. This hands-on experience fosters a spirit of "inquiry," enhancing clinical problem-solving skills and competencies. The program focuses on "translating" research into evidence-based practice to elevate the quality of care. Emphasizing "collaboration" with various health disciplines, students develop holistic care plans addressing social determinants of health. Community partnerships with healthcare providers and agencies contribute to the program's success, designed intentionally to foster "diversity, inclusion, and equity." Students learn to appreciate the diversity of the human body, value differences, advocate for inclusion, and promote equitable access to healthcare for improved outcomes across populations.

Next Steps

- January 25 – University Committee on Academic Affairs (UC-AA) Meeting
- February 1 – University Council (UC) Meeting
- February 19 – President's Cabinet
- March 21 – Board of Visitor's Meeting (BOV)

One VCU Academic Repositioning Task Force Update

Fotis Sotiropoulos, Ph.D.
Provost



Responding to Higher Education's “Perfect Storm”

- Declining birthrates
- Questions about the value of college
- Game-changing technologies

Objectives

- Maximize operational efficiencies and collaboration;
- Facilitate more cross-unit engagement and transdisciplinary research opportunities; and
- Propose new transdisciplinary degree programs.

Goal & Guiding Principles

“...recommend an academic structure that ensures an academically exciting and leaner university. Its guiding principles are trust and transparency.”

Timeline

Begin

May - June 2023: Task Force Recruitment

July - September 2023: Work Group research, investigations and discussions

Sept. 9 - Oct. 20, 2023: Work Groups determine recommendations that will move forward

Oct. 27, 2023: Final recommendations presented to the Task Force

Nov. 3, 2023: Combined group recommendations submitted to the Provost

December 5, 2023 - Recommendations shared with VCU campus communities

January - February, 2024 - Provost hosts unit-level conversations across academic units

March, 2024 - University leadership reviews recommendations and feedback

Spring 2024 - Priority recommendations vetted through university shared governance

May - Sept., 2024: Board of Visitors and SCHEV review

Fall 2025: Tentative implementation



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52

VCU faculty and staff members served on the task force

4

The number of months the task force worked

100

The number of recommendations created



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Timeline

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Phase II

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One VCU Academic Repositioning Portal

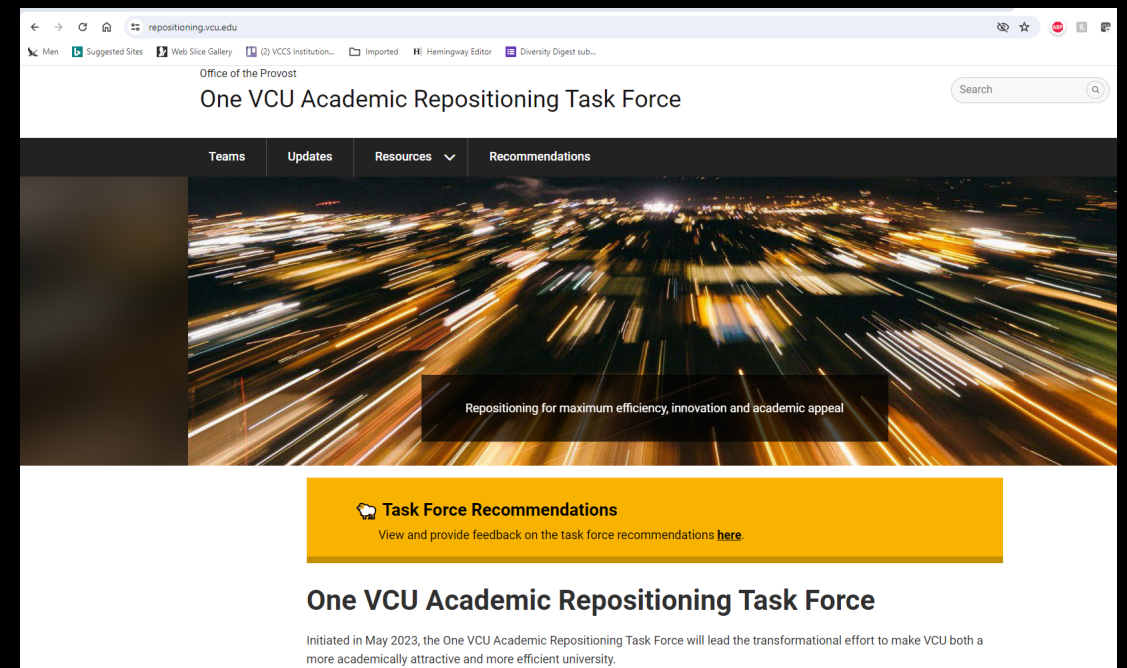
27,000+

Portal engagements (*as of Feb. 15*)

2,500+

Responsive comments shared (*as of Feb. 15*)

[\(Portal Link\)](#)



Timeline

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17

Listening session across
VCU's Richmond campuses

1,205

Faculty and staff attendees



College of Humanities & Sciences



School of Nursing



School of Social Work



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Next

March, 2024 - University leadership reviews recommendations and feedback

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Identified Opportunity Areas Include...

- Virtual academic units
- Thematically-focused faculty hiring
- Innovation-focused investment
- Increasing the value of a VCU degree

VCU's Inaugural NIRA Class

The National/International Recognition Award (NIRA) recognizes VCU faculty who were nationally or internationally recognized for exceptional accomplishments during the course of their current evaluation period, performing at the top of their academic unit, and were recommended by their dean. ([LINK](#))



February 8, 2024

Thank you



**Technology and Commercialization at VCU:
Faculty Inventor / Entrepreneur Presentations and Panel Discussion
BOV AHAC Meeting on Thursday, 3/21 from 3-4:30PM**

Report from the Vice President for Research and Innovation (40 minutes): Dr. Srirama Rao will provide a brief update on VCU's research enterprise. He will also introduce a panel of faculty inventors and entrepreneurs who will discuss their innovations and the process towards commercialization. The panel discussion will be led by AHAC Co-chair, Dr. Dale Jones, and Dr. Srirama Rao.

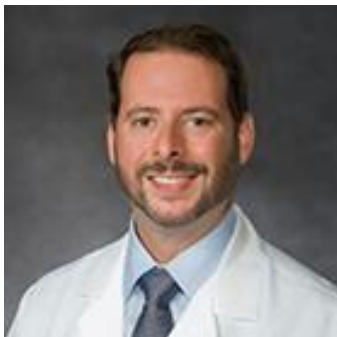
GROUP #1: FDA-cleared Nerve Tape for nerve end repair and alignment



Geetanjali Bendale, Ph.D. (presenter)
Assistant Professor, Department of Orthopedic Surgery
VCU School of Medicine

Senior scientist in Isaacs Lab

Dr. Bendale is presenting on behalf of Dr. Isaacs and BioCircuit Technologies.



Jonathan E. Isaacs, M.D.
Professor and Chair, Division of Hand Surgery
Department of Orthopedic Surgery
VCU School of Medicine

Inventor and expert advisor to BioCircuit Technologies

Dr. Isaacs is traveling and unable to join on presentation day.

Nerve Tape is a novel nerve coaptation aid designed to efficiently and consistently achieve precise nerve end alignment and repair. Pre-clinical comparative data versus conventional micro-sutures including specific testing, study and repair models have demonstrated superior holding strength, markedly faster repair times, improved nerve end alignment and equal or slightly superior regeneration and functional recovery. Having recently received FDA clearance, many predict Nerve Tape will be a disruptive technology in peripheral nerve surgery.

[BioCircuit Technologies](#): Dr. Isaacs is the expert advisor to this company on a range of IP opportunities with a focus on alternative market applications for Nerve Tape. (Note: He is not an equity holder in or paid by the company).

[Video: Nerve Tape for Sutureless Nerve Repair](#)

GROUP #2: ThermaGEL is a patented technology for effective thermal insulation**Marc McConnaughey (presenter)****President / CEO, [ThermaGEL Innovations, Inc.](#)**

Marc McConnaughey has an extensive international career in Europe, Asia and North America with a focus on nurturing materials and components into useful products and solutions with scale. Alongside taking ViewSonic from \$50M to \$1.4B in sales, he is a veteran startup executive raising over \$110M in funding and an expert in New Product Process and Global Supply Chains.

**Massimo F. Bertino, Ph.D.****Professor of Experimental Nanoscience in the Department of Physics****VCU College of Humanities and Sciences****Inventor, co-founder and Chief Science Officer, [ThermaGEL Innovations, Inc.](#)****Everett Carpenter, Ph.D., MBA****Co-director of the Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Program****Professor, Department of Chemistry****VCU College of Humanities and Sciences****Co-founder and Chief Operations Officer, [ThermaGEL Innovations, Inc.](#)**

Based in the center of Richmond, Virginia's tech hub, ThermaGEL is a climate materials solutions company transforming the built environment with a groundbreaking aerogel material delivering reduced cost, energy savings, ease of installation and significant upside in CO2 savings. ThermaGel Innovations is the developer, patent holder and manufacturer of a radically more effective thermal insulation. They utilize breakthrough patented science and technology to deliver ground-breaking Mold, Moisture Fire Resistant and Acoustically Dynamic insulation products with the structural integrity to serve multiple applications. There are 122 million homes and 6 million buildings in the U.S. alone. Those buildings consume 40% of energy produced domestically and because most of them were built before 1990, their poor insulation results in a staggering 30% energy loss. ThermaGel's slimline aerogel panel products are focused directly on disrupting the \$61B global new and retrofit construction market.

[VCU News article: Climate tech startup licenses VCU-created insulation for homes, commercial buildings](#)

GROUP #3: Patented IV drug infusion for patients affected by shock

Gerard Eldering, MBA (presenter)
CEO, [Perfusion Medical](#)

Entrepreneur-in-residence
OVPRI's TechTransfer and Ventures, VCU

Gerard Eldering is a registered patent agent, an experienced entrepreneur, a nationally recognized authority on technology transfer venture creation and the CEO of Perfusion Medical. At Perfusion Medical he leads a team of life science business experts working with the VCU research team to bring an important IV drug to market. Since becoming an entrepreneur in 2007 Gerard has participated in the formation of more than 12 tech startups, raised more than \$10 million in seed funding, and led the successful turnaround and sale of a technology consulting firm. Gerard is an expert at university licensing, startup formation and company operations. Before 2007 he founded and served as Director of the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) at The MITRE Corporation. Gerard is a military veteran who served in the U.S. Air Force for seven years as a UH-1 Helicopter Pilot and Instructor Pilot.



Martin J. Mangino, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Surgery (Trauma / Critical Care and
Emergency Surgery)
VCU School of Medicine

Inventor, Chief Scientific Officer and co-founder, [Perfusion Medical](#)

Perfusion Medical is commercializing a patented IV drug for the restoration of tissue perfusion developed by researchers at VCU with \$12 million in Army funding. The drug is a game-changing therapy for patients affected by shock (e.g., hemorrhagic, acute kidney injury) and large animal trials indicate it could improve survival from hemorrhagic shock by 4 times or more. Perfusion Medical has received more than \$6.7M in Department of Defense funding in the past six months and expects to start Phase I Clinical Trials at VCU this year.

[Venture Victories story: Air Force issues awards to VCU-backed shock therapeutic startup Perfusion Medical](#)

GROUP #4: A Virtual Reality platform for patients with substance use disorders

Mark Lambert (presenter)
Founder, [Lighthouse XR](#)

Mark Lambert is a visual effects and VR developer whose film work includes “Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe”, “Polar Express” and “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone.” In 2015, he began creating in virtual reality, working with companies around the world before starting Lighthouse XR with his wife, Dale.



Jarrod Reisweber, Psy.D.
Affiliate Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology
VCU College of Humanities and Sciences

Faculty collaborator and partner, [Lighthouse XR](#)

The Transcending Self Therapy Retreat is an integrative Virtual Reality platform for patients with substance use disorders. In the platform, patients go to a beautiful retreat in the woods where they learn and apply therapeutic concepts shown to improve mood and decrease the likelihood of relapse. Data is very positive with one paper published in a peer reviewed journal and three more additional publications in development. The project has been deployed at the Richmond Veterans Affairs Medical Center and pilot sites across the country.

[VCU News article: Healing with a headset: Virtual Reality shows promise in treating substance use disorders](#)