



# VCU

## Board of Visitors

### ACADEMIC AND HEALTH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Thursday, September 11, 2025

3:00 p.m.<sup>2</sup>

The Honorable Benjamin Lambert, III Board Room

1213 Clay Street

Richmond, VA

### AGENDA

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. <b>CALL TO ORDER</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Dr. V. Dale Jones, Chair</b>                                                                     |
| 2. <b>ACTION ITEMS:</b><br>2 minutes (3:00 - 3:02 p.m.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. May 9, 2025 meeting minutes</li><li>b. Annual review of Academic and Health Affairs Committee Charter and Planner</li></ul> | <b>Dr. V. Dale Jones, Chair</b>                                                                     |
| 3. <b>REPORT FROM THE PROVOST</b><br>25 minutes (3:02 – 3:27 p.m.)                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Dr. Beverly Warren, Interim</b><br><i>Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs</i> |
| 4. <b>REPORT FROM THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR HEALTH SCIENCES</b><br>25 minutes (3:27 – 3:52 p.m.)                                                                                                                         | <b>Dr. Marlon Levy, Senior Vice</b><br><i>President for Health Sciences and CEO VCU Health</i>      |
| 5. <b>REPORT FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION</b><br>25 minutes (3:52 – 4:17 p.m.)                                                                                                         | <b>Dr. P. Srirama Rao</b><br><i>Vice President for Research and Innovation</i>                      |
| 6. <b>OTHER BUSINESS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Dr. V. Dale Jones, Chair</b>                                                                     |
| 7. <b>ADJOURNMENT</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Dr. V. Dale Jones, Chair</b>                                                                     |

*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.*

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

**CONFIDENTIAL SUMMARY**  
**ACADEMIC AND HEALTH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE VCU BOARD OF VISITORS**  
**Sept. 11, 2025**

**OPEN SESSION**

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- May 9, 2025 meeting minutes
- Annual review of Academic and Health Affairs Committee Charter and Planner

**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

- Interim provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, Beverly J. Warren, Ed.D., Ph.D., will provide a presentation that explains the strong momentum driving VCU's 2025–26 academic year, marked by what's expected to be the second-largest freshman class in its history, more than 200 new faculty, and a slate of innovative academic offerings aimed at “future-proofing” the workforce. Highlights include new degrees in Data Science, Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Supply Chain Management, each tied to pressing economic needs and strategic growth sectors for Virginia. Many of our gains stem from faculty-led academic repositioning, including the creation of the School of Life Sciences and Sustainability and a reimagined University College offering customizable, interdisciplinary pathways. The briefing culminates with the launch of Convergence Labs, a signature initiative uniting research, curricula, and experiential learning around applied AI, neurosciences, and health outcomes, positioning VCU as a national leader in team-science innovation with measurable impact on student success, faculty excellence, and the public good.

Report from the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences and CEO VCU Health

- Senior vice president for health sciences, Marlon Levy, M.D., will provide an update about the health sciences campus and start of the academic year.

Report from the Vice President for Research and Innovation

- Vice president for research and innovation, P. Srirama Rao, Ph.D., will provide updates of the research enterprise, including sponsored funding, notable accomplishments from over the summer and an overview of the current federal research funding landscape. He will also share a new concept of research clusters that will continue to advance VCU's four key research initiatives and support the Convergence Labs.

# **VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS**

## **ACADEMIC AND HEALTH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHARTER**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The primary purpose of the Academic and Health Affairs Committee is to provide oversight and make recommendations to the Board on all policies and plans regarding strategic enrollment management; academic quality; student matters; faculty matters; athletics; inclusive excellence and research consistent with the stated goals and objectives of the University and with its academic health center, including its affiliation with the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority. Areas of responsibility include:

- Strategic enrollment management
  - Admissions
  - Retention
- Academic quality
  - Quality
  - Degrees, programs and structure
  - Trends
  - Strategic priorities
  - Academic program review
  - Online education
  - SACS/accreditation
- Student matters
  - Academic Success
  - Rights and Responsibilities
  - Concerns
  - Safety, satisfaction and engagement
- Faculty matters
  - Employment, rights and responsibilities, and professional development
  - Salaries
  - Recruitment and retention
  - Benchmarks and best practices
- Athletics
  - Academic success of student athletes and compliance with NCAA guidelines
- Research
- Inclusive Excellence
- Coordination of academic activities of health sciences schools and affiliation with the VCU Health System Authority

In addition, the Academic and Health Affairs Committee provides oversight and counsel toward the achievement of the mission, vision and goals of the Virginia Commonwealth University strategic plan.

The function of the Academic and Health Affairs Committee is primarily oversight. University management, under the auspices of the President, the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences and CEO of the VCU Health System, is responsible for the development, implementation, and measurement of success regarding these areas of responsibility, as well as the policies and procedures for maintaining these programs and activities.

## **II. COMPOSITION AND INDEPENDENCE**

The Academic and Health Affairs Committee will be comprised of three or more Visitors. Each member must be free from any financial, family or other material personal relationship that, in the opinion of the Board or Academic and Health Affairs Committee members, would impair their independence from management and the University.

## **III. MEETINGS**

The Academic and Health Affairs Committee will meet at least four times annually. Additional meetings may occur more frequently as circumstances warrant. The Committee chair should communicate with the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences and CEO of the VCU Health System prior to each Committee meeting to finalize the meeting agenda and review the matters to be discussed.

## **IV. RESPONSIBILITIES**

In performing its oversight responsibilities, the Academic and Health Affairs Committee shall:

### **A. General**

1. Adopt a formal written charter that specifies the Committee's scope of responsibility. The charter should be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.
2. Maintain minutes of open session portions of meetings.
3. Report Committee actions to the Board of Visitors with such recommendations as the Committee may deem appropriate.
4. Consistent with state law, the Committee may communicate in closed session (with or without members of senior management present) with general counsel and/or the executive director of assurance services present to discuss matters that the Committee or any of these groups believe should be discussed privately.

### **B. Academic degrees and structure**

1. Review and approve academic program proposals when required by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) policy, and monitor existing programs.
2. Review and approve proposals for the organization of the University's academic health center, including the affiliation between VCU and the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority.
3. Review and approve proposals for the organization of the academic structure of the University when required by SCHEV policy.

### **C. Coordination of academic activities of health sciences schools and affiliation with the VCU Health System Authority**

1. Receive reports on the relationship and affiliation between the University and the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority and other institutions, organizations, laboratories, and clinics involved in the University's academic health center, including reviewing program coordination between the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority and academic and research programs.

### **D. Academic research activities**

1. Review and approve research policies deemed to require Board of Visitor action.

2. Receive reports on research advances of faculty, interdisciplinary groups, and VCU institutes and centers.
  3. Receive reports on the relationship of research activities to local, regional, national, and international economic development.
  4. Report annually on the state of the VCU research enterprise including the total research awards, expenditures, trends, and outlook.
- E. Faculty and staff employment, rights and responsibilities, and professional development
1. Review and approve policies governing the compensation, tenure, promotion, recruitment, retention, rights and responsibilities, and development of the faculty.
  2. Review and approve policies and programs on equal employment opportunity and affirmative action.
  3. Afford an opportunity for direct communication between Board members and members of the faculty and staff.
- F. Admissions and retention
1. Review and approve policies governing the admission and retention of undergraduate, graduate and professional students to all divisions of the University.
- G. Accreditation
1. Review and approve policies and reports related to departmental, school, and institutional accreditation.
- H. Academic Success of Students
1. Review nominations and make the final selection of the recipient(s) of the Board of Visitors Award at a regularly scheduled meeting in the spring of each year.
  2. Review topical areas of interest related to the student experience.
  3. Review major fall and spring activities.
  4. Review and monitor student academic success.
- I. Academic Success of Student Athletes
1. Review and oversee matters relating to the intercollegiate athletic program.
- J. Student Rights and Responsibilities
1. Review matters (including approving policies) relating to student rights, responsibilities, conduct, concerns and discipline, including matters relating to the VCU Honor System, and Student Code of Conduct.
  2. Review and oversee matters relating to student government, and appropriate student participation in University governance.
  3. Review and oversee matters relating to student organizations and extracurricular activities.
- K. Student Services
1. Review and oversee matters relating to financial aid, housing services, counseling, student health, safety and other student services.
  2. Review and approve policies relating to student records.
  3. Review report on campus safety that provides awareness of federal reporting requirement, general overview of VCU safety-related statistics, and ongoing efforts to improve safety.
- L. Student Communications
1. Afford an opportunity for direct communication between Board members and students.

M. International Partnerships and Collaborations

1. Review and approve international partnerships

# Virginia Commonwealth University Board of Visitors

## Academic and Health Affairs Committee Meeting Planner

A=Annually; Q=Quarterly; AN=As Necessary	Frequency			Planned Timing			
Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 based on Fiscal Year (July – June)	A	Q	AN	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
				Sep	Dec	Feb	May
<b>A. General</b>							
1. Review, update, and approve Academic and Health Affairs Committee charter	X			X			
2a. Approve minutes of previous meeting		X		X	X	X	X
2b. Maintain minutes of meetings		X		X	X	X	X
3. Authorize investigations into any matters within the Committee's scope of responsibilities			X				
4. Report Committee actions to the Board of Visitors with recommendations deemed appropriate		X		X	X	X	X
5. Communicate in executive session, with general counsel		X		X	X	X	X
6. Review and approve Academic and Health Affairs Committee meeting planner for the upcoming year	X			X			
7. Monitor student academic success.		X		X	X	X	X
<b>B. Academic degrees and structure</b>							
1. Review and approve academic program proposals when required by the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) policy, and monitor existing programs.			X				
2. Review and approve proposals for the organization of the University's academic health center, including the affiliation between VCU and the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority.			X				
3. Review and approve proposals for the organization of the academic structure of the University when required by SCHEV policy.			X				
<b>C. Coordination of academic activities of health sciences schools and affiliation with the VCU Health System Authority</b>							
1. Receive reports on the relationship and affiliation between the University and the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority and other institutions, organizations, laboratories, and clinics involved in the University's academic health center, including reviewing program coordination between the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System Authority and academic and research programs.			X				

A=Annually; Q=Quarterly; AN=As Necessary	Frequency			Planned Timing			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	A	Q	AN	Sep	Dec	Feb	May
Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 based on Fiscal Year (July – June)							
<b>D. Academic research activities</b>							
1. Review and approve research policies deemed to require Board of Visitor action.			X				
2. Receive reports on research advances of faculty, interdisciplinary groups, and VCU institutes and centers.			X				
3. Receive reports on the relationship of research activities to local, regional, national and international economic development.			X				
4. Report annually on the state of the VCU research enterprise including the total research awards, expenditures, trends, and outlook.	X				-		X
<b>E. Faculty and staff employment, rights and responsibilities, and professional development</b>							
1. Review and approve policies governing the compensation, tenure, promotion, recruitment, retention, rights and responsibilities, and development of the faculty.			X				
2. Review and approve policies and programs on equal employment opportunity and affirmative action.			X				
3. Afford an opportunity for direct communication between Board members and members of the faculty.			X				
4. Afford an opportunity for direct communication between Board members and members of the staff.			X				
<b>F. Admissions and retention</b>							
1. Review and approve policies governing the admission and retention of undergraduate, graduate and professional students to all divisions of the University.			X				
<b>G. Accreditation</b>							
1. Review and approve policies and reports related to departmental, school, and institutional accreditation.			X				
<b>H. Academic Success of Students</b>							
1. Review nominations and make the final selection of the recipient(s) of the Board of Visitors Award at a regularly scheduled meeting in the spring of each year.	X					X	
2. Review topical areas of interest related to the student experience and overall student engagement.		X		X	X	X	X
3. Review major fall and spring activities.	X				X		X
4. Review and monitor student academic success.			X				



A=Annually; Q=Quarterly; AN=As Necessary	Frequency			Planned Timing			
Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 based on Fiscal Year (July – June)	A	Q	AN	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
				Sep	Dec	Feb	May
<b>I. Academic Success of Student Athletes</b>							
1. Review and oversee matters relating to the intercollegiate athletic program.	X		X				
<b>J. Student Rights and Responsibilities</b>							
1. Review matters (including approving policies) relating to student rights, responsibilities, conduct, concerns and discipline, including matters relating to the VCU Honor System.			X				
2. Review and oversee matters relating to student government, and appropriate student participation in university governance.			X				
3. Review and oversee matters relating to student organizations and extracurricular activities.			X				
<b>K. Student Services</b>							
1. Review and oversee matters relating to financial aid, housing services, counseling, student health, and other student services			X				
2. Review and approve policies relating to student records.			X				
3. Review report on campus safety that provides awareness of federal reporting requirement, general overview of VCU safety-related statistics, and ongoing efforts to improve safety.	X					X	
<b>L. Student Communications</b>							
1. Afford an opportunity for direct communication between Board members and students.			X				
<b>M. International Partnerships and Collaboration</b>							
1. Review and approve international partnerships			X				

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 Approved by BOV: 09/15/2023



# VCU Office of the Provost

**TO:** The Academic and Health Affairs Committee of the  
Virginia Commonwealth University Board of Visitors

**FROM:** [Dr. Beverly J. Warren](#), Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

**RE:** September 11, 2025 AHAC Meeting Pre-Read Materials

## **AHAC September 2025 | Innovation Briefing** *Overview for Committee Discussion*

**A Year of Momentum** VCU begins the 2025–26 academic year with [energy and optimism](#). We're on track to welcome the [second-largest freshman class in university history](#); clear evidence that students see VCU as a place where they belong and can thrive. More than 200 new faculty across disciplines have joined our community, bringing fresh perspectives and deep expertise to a university poised for its next chapter. We recently [honored seven VCU faculty members](#) for their outstanding achievements and, prior to Sept. 11, we will be honoring more than 50 of VCU's best and brightest faculty members for their groundbreaking research and innovative teaching. (The list will be visible on the [Office of the Provost blog](#).)

Across classrooms, laboratories, clinical settings, and field sites, VCU's faculty and students are engaged in work that reflects both the vibrancy of our academic community and the urgency of our mission. This year's new student convocation and faculty orientation underscored the power of connection—students building the skills to navigate complexity across disciplines, and faculty advancing solutions at the intersections of fields where innovation changes, and often saves, lives.

**Innovative Academic Offerings** Enrollment gains may represent a vote of confidence in our faculty-led efforts to continually explore [innovative academic offerings](#) to best prepare our students for a changing workforce. Over the past year, VCU has created more than two-dozen new degrees, certificates, and program concentrations that include the following:

**M.S. in Data Science** Prepares graduates to lead in a data-driven economy, with specialized tracks in biomedical data analysis and machine learning.

- **Why it matters:** Data fluency is essential across every sector from health care and finance to public policy and logistics. This program equips students to model, interpret, and act on complex data in ways that drive innovation and equity.

- **Future impact:** Builds a talent pipeline for high-growth fields like health analytics, cybersecurity, and smart infrastructure. Positions VCU as a strategic partner in Virginia's tech workforce development.

**B.S. in Pharmaceutical Sciences** The first of its kind at a public university in Virginia, this program supports the state's expanding health sciences sector.

- **Why it matters:** With Richmond emerging as a biotech hub and national demand for pharmaceutical talent surging, this program opens new career pathways in drug development, clinical trials, and regulatory affairs.
- **Future impact:** Strengthens Virginia's health innovation ecosystem and supports public health equity through research and workforce readiness.

**B.S. in Supply Chain Management** Addresses urgent workforce needs in logistics, sourcing, and operations.

- **Why it matters:** Supply chain disruptions have exposed vulnerabilities in everything from food systems to medical equipment. Virginia's port infrastructure and manufacturing base demand professionals who can optimize logistics and risk management.
- **Future impact:** Enhances regional resilience and economic competitiveness by training graduates to design smarter, more sustainable supply systems.

Each of these programs reflects a strategic pivot toward "future-proofing" the workforce. VCU isn't just responding to trends, it's shaping them.

**Academic Repositioning: From Vision to Impact** This momentum is not accidental. It reflects the early returns of VCU's faculty-led [academic repositioning](#) effort, a strategic initiative designed to align programs, structures, and resources with the evolving needs of learners and society. The repositioning has created space for innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and more intentional student pathways.

One major outcome is the establishment of the [School of Life Sciences and Sustainability](#), which brings together VCU Life Sciences and the Department of Biology. This new school fosters interdisciplinary research and education at the intersection of biological sciences and environmental sustainability, positioning VCU as a leader in solutions-focused inquiry.

**University College: A Reimagined Front Door** [University College](#) exemplifies our transformation. Originally founded in 2006 as VCU's academic entry point, it has been [reimagined as a hub](#) for all VCU undergraduate and graduate students with interdisciplinary and innovation-focused degrees and experiential transformative learning.

- **What's new:** Customizable undergraduate and graduate learning pathways, stackable credentials, and hands-on experiences through Transformative Learning, the da Vinci Center, Shift Retail Lab, and Life Design.

- **Why it matters:** Supports retention and preparing students for the future of work by empowering them to chart their own academic journeys.
- **Board relevance:** Aligns with national trends in learner-centered design and directly impacts student success metrics.

**Convergence Labs: VCU's Next Signature Initiative** Convergence Labs is a university-wide platform for transdisciplinary research, interdisciplinary curricula, and transformative learning.

- **What it is:** A centrally-supported environment where faculty, students, staff, and community partners collaborate to address real-world challenges.
- **Why it matters:** Convergence moves beyond disciplinary silos to unlock cooperative potential. It reflects VCU's commitment to relevance, innovation, and public good.
- **Launching Now:** Three enterprise themes – Applied AI, Neurosciences, and Health Outcomes – each housing multiple labs that integrate research, curriculum, and student learning.
- **Board relevance:** Convergence Labs position VCU as a national leader in translational research and workforce-aligned education, with clear ROI for students, faculty, and society. To the best of our knowledge, VCU is unique in how we are threading transdisciplinary research, academics and experiential learning through Convergence Labs.

**Looking Ahead** These innovations represent more than isolated projects; they signal a university-wide commitment to clarity and strategic alignment. From academic innovation to Convergence Labs, VCU is building systems that empower faculty, elevate student success, ensure the relevance of our offerings, and strengthen public trust.

As we consider the road ahead, it is worth reflecting on where our momentum can take us next.

- As demand for **paid internships** [outpaces supply](#) across Virginia, how might VCU most effectively leverage its faculty expertise, employer relationships, and alumni network to open more high-quality, paid work-based learning opportunities for our students so they graduate with both a degree and the kind of experience that accelerates career success?
- How might VCU most effectively demonstrate the **long-term value of its academic innovations** – to students, employers, and the Commonwealth – in ways that strengthen our reputation and attract sustained investment and partnership?
- As **AI tools** become more embedded in learning, work, and everyday life, how can VCU ensure that our graduates not only use these technologies effectively, but also strengthen the critical thinking, judgment, and problem-solving skills that set them apart in a technology-driven world?

I look forward to exploring these questions together and to the guidance this committee will bring as we shape what comes next.