

**Virginia Commonwealth University
Graduate Certificate**

Name of Certificate

Culturally Responsive Leadership

CIP Code

13.0401

Initiation Date

Fall 2022

Description of the Certificate

The purpose of the proposed certificate program is to prepare school and community leaders with foundational theory, research and skills related to culturally responsive leadership. Culturally responsive and community-based leadership is, at its core, leadership that creates, maintains and supports belonging for all participants in an organization, particularly for those marginalized within most organizations. Students will develop specific knowledge of power imbalances related to race, ethnicity, culture and class in school and community settings. Graduates will possess the skills to mitigate those imbalances through the establishment of practices that nurture an anti-racist organizational climate. Graduates will be able to: 1) analyze research and theory related to race, ethnicity, culture and class; 2) engage in critical self-reflection and action; 3) develop relationships with schools, communities, nonprofits and other community-based organizations to advocate for transformative, justice-centered praxis in education; 4) implement place- and people-based education strategies to empower communities for social change.

Target Audience

The target audience includes individuals working in K-12 educational settings, including schools and education-related non-profit organizations.

Time to Complete

Degree-seeking students can take courses anytime during the program. It is anticipated that students who enroll full-time can complete the program in one year (2 semesters). Students attending part-time, maintaining a course load of three to four credit hours per semester will complete the program in 3 years (5 semesters).

For non-degree seeking students who are enrolled full-time, it is anticipated that students can complete the program in one year (2 semesters). Students attending part-time, maintaining a course load of three to four credit hours per semester will complete the program in 3 years (5 semesters).

Admission

The admission requirements will apply to all students. All applicants to the proposed graduate certificate program are required to meet the admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School.

Applicants will be required to submit the following materials to the Graduate School Admissions Office:

- Application form and application fee
- Three letters of recommendation, professional and/or academic
- Official undergraduate transcripts from all schools attended
- A personal statement outlining career goals
- A resume stating relevant work experience.

For international students, the following is required:

- Submit an official transcript evaluation from a recognized foreign educational credentials evaluation service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) or the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO).
- A Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) minimum composite score of 100 for the Internet Based Test (IBT) or 600 for the paper-based score; or an International English language Testing System (IELTS) score minimum of 6.5 on the academic exam.
- A score of 68 or higher on the VCU English Language Program Compression test. Students who do not achieve a score of 68 will be placed in the appropriate level English language proficiency courses.

Curriculum Requirements

The curriculum is designed to provide students with the foundational knowledge required to promote and enact culturally responsive leadership practices (e.g., creating a sense of belonging for individuals in an educational organization, with particular attention to historically marginalized populations) in K-12 schools and school-supporting organizations. Students will gain an understanding of the historical and contemporary contexts for existing inequities in schools, education-related organizations and communities, as well as an asset-based understanding of cultural wealth within those same schools, organizations and communities. Coursework will also focus on how culturally responsive leaders can work within and across organizations to advocate for and implement culturally responsive practices that address inequities. Students will develop an understanding of leadership, policies and procedures that promote equitable, inclusive and just educational and organizational environments.

The proposed graduate certificate responds to issued guidelines from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) around culturally relevant instruction and anticipated guidelines around culturally relevant supervision/leadership.

Program Requirements

Total Number of Credit Hours: 15

All courses are new.

ADMS 655. Cross-Sector and Community-Centered Collaboration (3)

ADMS 656. Human Dimensions of Leadership: Empathy, Trust, and Care in Organizations (3)

ADMS 657. Educational Leadership and Civil Rights (3)

ADMS/EDUS 658. Community-Based Action Research for School and Community Sustainability

(3)

ADMS 659. Leadership in the “New Demography”: Immigration Theory and Politics (3)

Faculty

Faculty appointments in the proposed Graduate Certificate in Culturally Responsive Leadership are established by the Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership. All courses will be taught by existing faculty in the Department of Educational Leadership. All faculty hold Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees in Educational Leadership or a related field. The minimum requirement for faculty teaching in the certificate program include a doctorate in educational leadership or a related field and three years of higher education teaching experience.

No adjunct faculty will be used to initiate the proposed certificate program.

Course Delivery Format

All courses for the certificate program will be offered in a traditional face-to-face format and fully online. Both physical space and software to facilitate the synchronous and asynchronous online sessions are required and will be available. VCU possesses the resources, support, and technology necessary for quality online programs. Online programs are supported by VCU Technology Services, the Academic Learning Transformation Laboratory (ALT-Lab), and the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence. The university’s primary learning management system is Canvas. Canvas is centrally supported by VCU Technology Services, which provides technical assistance, training, and system administration. Technology Services also supports a portfolio of academic technology for use in online courses. The university has sufficient resources to deliver this certificate program.

All faculty assigned to teach in the certificate program are required to complete training offered by the VCU Academic Learning Transformation Lab and the VCU Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence. The University has adequate resources to deliver the certificate program.

Resources

Resources required to support the proposed certificate include existing resources to support current programs such as: student support services (e.g., enrollment, help desk for computer and technology support, library); faculty support services (e.g., copying, contracts); and general administration (e.g., budgeting, forecasting). Program administration is provided by the program coordinator. Faculty in the Department of Educational Leadership created new courses for the program. Faculty time to teach the new courses will be included in existing teaching loads. No new positions will be created to initiate the proposed certificate program. Virginia Commonwealth University has sufficient resources to initiate and sustain the proposed certificate program.

Gainful Employment

The certificate will not be included under Gainful Employment regulations. Non-degree seeking students will not be eligible for Title IV funding for this certificate program.

Course Descriptions

All courses are new.

ADMS 655. Cross-Sector and Community-Centered Collaboration. 3 Credits. (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). Students will explore the school/community ecology to understand the influences on--and the potential for--a more equity-oriented and culturally relevant K12 public education system. Students will explore the role of public K12 governance and advocacy for policy change, cross-sector collaboration, and social entrepreneurship to increase their knowledge and application of the skills and conditions needed to advance equity, opportunity and achievement. The course will focus on organizational and community leadership that values stakeholders as equal partners to improve decision making and policy oriented towards student success, particularly for historically marginalized populations.

ADMS 656. Human Dimensions of Leadership: Empathy, Trust, and Care in Organizations. 3 Credits. (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). Effective, culturally-responsive and sustaining leadership practices and approaches are grounded in humanistic, relationship management with a clear understanding of human behavior and social processes. This course is about people in organizations. It is designed to help leaders incorporate human dimensions of leadership focused on empathy, trust, and care in organizational and community-based leadership. Course content is derived from contemporary theory, research, and practice in educational, community-based, and organizational behavior and leadership such as: organizational theory and management; community cultural wealth; ecological/systems theory/models; community theories (sense of community, social capital, environmental psychology); and critical social and race theory, social justice, and social determinants of well-being.

ADMS 657. Educational Leadership and Civil Rights. 3 Credits. (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). This course will examine the evolution of civil rights in the U.S. educational system from historical, legal, policy and social science perspectives. We will explore the grassroots organizing that supports landmark civil rights victories, as well as leadership across crucial spheres like law and policy. The purpose of the course is to develop students' understanding of how key civil rights principles have been advanced and contested in schools. We will do this with an ultimate goal of developing leadership capacity to respond to contemporary civil rights challenges related to education.

ADMS/EDUS 658. Community-Based Action Research for School and Community Sustainability. 3 Credits. (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). This course introduces students to a research approach that engages school and/or community stakeholders. The course focuses on action-based research designs with a thoughtful and critical focus on Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPR) and related approaches such as Participatory Action Research (PAR), Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), and Community-Engaged Research. The course will explore this work as it occurs in school and community based settings, as well as within Research-Practice Partnerships (RPP). Collectively, these approaches offer students not just a set of methods, but seeks to equip them with the skills and insights to fundamentally change the relationship between researchers and research participants, and the power dynamics of the knowledge production process. The course attends to the following questions: How can research help with addressing real world problems in education? How can data collection and knowledge creation through praxis be participatory in a truly democratized, co-owned, and emancipatory process? And, how can educational stakeholders use action research as a

means to transcend disciplinary boundaries in order to positively impact social and educational change?

ADMS 659. Leadership in the “New Demography”: Immigration Theory and Politics. 3 Credits. (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). Doing so requires an examination of competing theories of race, immigration, identity, as well as notions of transnationalism, integration, and citizenship. This course considers these issues, both historically and contemporaneously, from a culturally-responsive lens to provide students with the analytical and practical tools to engage students, families, and communities in a rapidly changing environment.

Appendix A: Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Education Practices Regulation

<http://www.virginiaisforlearners.virginia.gov/culturally-responsive-inclusive-education-practices-regulation>

Virginia Commonwealth University
Baccalaureate Certificate

Name of Certificate

Public Health Laboratory Sciences

CIP Code

51.1005

Initiation Date

Fall 2022

Description of Certificate

The purpose of this certificate program is to provide students with specific coursework and training for performing laboratory testing in a public health facility. Students will learn foundational knowledge and skills in areas related to public health laboratories (e.g., whole genome sequencing and epidemiology). Graduates will possess competencies and skills specific to a public health laboratory setting and be able to: 1) perform molecular assays that are not performed routinely in the clinical laboratories such as those applicable to whole genome sequencing and newborn screening; 2) apply the fundamentals of epidemiology in public health surveillance including data collection, analyzing and interpreting data, and evaluating and improving surveillance; and 3) assess and apply quality management and regulatory requirements of public health laboratories.

Target Audience

The primary target audience for the proposed certificate program is existing undergraduate students in the Bachelor of Science (BS) degree program in Medical Laboratory Sciences. Additionally, current graduate students in the Master of Science (MS) degree program in Medical Laboratory Sciences and individuals who possess a bachelor's degree and are certified as Medical Laboratory Scientists may apply to the certificate program.

Time to Complete

Degree-seeking students may take courses in conjunction with their regular course load. It is anticipated that students who enroll full-time can complete the program in one academic year (3 semesters) Students attending part-time, maintaining a course load of three credit hours per semester will complete the program in 2 academic years.

For non-degree seeking student who are enrolled full-time, it is anticipated that students can complete the program in one year (2 semesters). Students attending part-time, maintaining a course load of six credit hours per semester will complete the program in 2 years (3 semesters).

Admission

The following admission requirements apply to all students. All applicants to the certificate program are required to:

- Submit a completed application.

- Have achieved a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or better for undergraduate coursework. Students with a bachelor's degree and a cumulative GPA above 2.3 may petition the Department Chair for a waiver of the cumulative 2.5 GPA requirement.
- Current undergraduate students enrolled in the B.S. in Medical Laboratory Sciences must have completed 36.5 credit hours.
- Submit official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended. Applicants do not need to send in transcripts for courses taken at Virginia Commonwealth University.
- Submit a 500-word (maximum) goal statement outlining background and experience (academic and/or professional), and future career goals after the completion of the certificate.
- Provide two (2) letters of recommendation (for students not currently enrolled at VCU).

Students who have not earned a baccalaureate degree in the U.S. must submit: Proof of English proficiency. International students must submit scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS) academic exam, or Pearson Test of English meeting the minimum requirements:

- Submit an official transcript evaluation from a recognized foreign educational credentials evaluation service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) or the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO).
- A Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) minimum composite score of 100 for the Internet Based Test (IBT) or 600 for the paper-based score; an International English language Testing System (IELTS) score minimum of 6.5 on the academic exam; or Pearson: 59 overall score.
- A score of 68 or higher on the VCU English Language Program Compression test. Students who do not achieve a score of 68 will be placed in the appropriate level English language proficiency courses.

Curriculum Requirements

The curriculum will focus on educating students in theory and processes needed to work in a public health laboratory setting. Students will gain an understanding of the fundamentals of infectious epidemiology in a public health laboratory setting (e.g., basic epidemiology, health literacy, informatics). Students will complete coursework to develop skills in molecular techniques and advanced instrumentation utilized in the public health laboratory (e.g., whole genome sequencing, newborn screening). Coursework will include public health laboratory practicums to master these skills. Coursework will focus on fundamentals and application of quality management systems.

Program Requirements

Number of Credit Hours: 12 credit hours
All courses are new.

Core Courses – 8 credit hours

CLLS 422. Fundamentals of Public Health, Epidemiology and Laboratory Surveillance (3)
CLLS 424. Laboratory Techniques and Emergency Response and Preparedness (3)
CLLS 426. Quality and Ethics (2)

Practicum – 4 credit hours

All students will select four credit hours.

CLLS 428. Public Health Food Microbiology Practicum (2)

CLLS 430. Public Health Newborn Screening Practicum (2)

CLLS 432. Public Health Molecular Detection and Characterization Practicum (2)

CLLS 434. Public Health Molecular Laboratory and Whole Genome Sequencing Practicum (2)

Faculty

Faculty appointments for the proposed certificate are established by recommendation of the department chair. The primary faculty appointments are drawn from the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences. All faculty teaching in the certificate program will meet the minimum requirements for faculty as determined by the home departments.

Minimum requirements for faculty teaching in the proposed certificate program include:

- A master's degree or higher and be certified as a Medical Laboratory Scientist or related credential.
- A minimum of five years of experience in their discipline.
- A minimum of two years of higher education teaching experience or training at the laboratory bench.

Two adjunct faculty will be used to teach in the certificate program. Adjunct faculty will meet the minimum requirements for faculty as determined by the home departments.

Course Delivery Format

The core courses for the proposed certificate program will be offered fully online:

CLLS 422. Fundamentals of Public Health, Epidemiology and Laboratory Surveillance (3)

CLLS 424. Laboratory Techniques and Emergency Response and Preparedness (3)

CLLS 426. Quality and Ethics (2)

All practicum courses will be offered in a public health laboratory setting.

VCU possesses the resources, support, and technology necessary for quality online programs. Online programs are supported by VCU Online, VCU Technology Services, the Academic Learning Transformation Laboratory (ALT-Lab), and the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence. The university's primary learning management system is Canvas. Canvas is centrally supported by VCU Technology Services which provides technical assistance, training, and system administration. Technology Services also supports a portfolio of academic technology for use online courses. The university has sufficient resources to deliver this certificate program.

All faculty assigned to teach in the certificate program are required to complete training offered by the VCU Academic Learning Transformation Lab and the VCU Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence. The University has adequate resources to deliver the modified certificate program.

Resources

Resources required to support the proposed certificate program include existing resources to support current programs such as student support services (e.g., enrollment, help desk, and library,

technology services), faculty support services (e.g., copying, contracts, technology services), and general administration (e.g., budgeting and forecasting). A full-time faculty member in the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences will serve as program director. No new faculty or staff positions will be created to support the certificate. Resources for adjunct faculty will be available within the existing budget of the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences in the College of Health Professions. The university has sufficient resources to offer and sustain the certificate program.

Gainful Employment

The proposed certificate is a gainful employment program. The certificate comes under Gainful Employment regulations.

Course Descriptions

All courses are new.

Core Courses – 8 credits

CLLS 422: Fundamentals of Infectious Epidemiology. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. (delivered online). Guided study introducing the mission and essential services of public health, epidemiological concepts, methods and goals, application, evaluation and individual and community considerations of public health interventions, the use of laboratory information management systems (LIMS) and informatics, and the role of the public health laboratory, including surveillance activities.

CLLS 424: Laboratory Techniques and Emergency Response and Preparedness. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. (delivered online). Guided study that reviews basic laboratory skills such as statistics, chain of custody and safety. Biological threat agents of public health concern are introduced along with common technologies and practices utilized as part of emerging and emergency preparedness and response technologies.

CLLS 426: Quality and Ethics. 2 Hours. Semester course; 2 lecture hours. 2 credits. (delivered online). Guided study of quality management systems, non-conforming events, root cause analyses, preventive actions, and corrections. Public health laboratory regulatory requirements and ethics involved in associated activities and research are also discussed.

Practicum - 4 credit hours

Students will select four credit hours from the list below.

CLLS 428: Public Health Food Microbiology Practicum. 2 Hours. Semester course; 80 laboratory hours. 2 credits. (This course includes site-based requirements.) Public health laboratory rotation experience in food microbiology to highlight the role in public health along with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and challenges unique to the field. Areas included in this course include method verification, method validation, screening methods of foodborne pathogens, identification and characterization of foodborne pathogens. This course will help prepare students for a career in a public health laboratory.

CLLS 430: Public Health Newborn Screening Practicum. 2 Hours. Semester course; 80 laboratory hours. 2 credits. (This course includes site-based requirements.) Public health laboratory rotation experience in newborn screening to highlight the role in public health along with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and challenges unique to the field. Students enrolled in this course will gain knowledge and experience specimen preparation, screening assays, molecular based newborn screening assays, next-generation sequencing, and newborn screening reporting results. This course will help prepare students for a career in a public health laboratory.

CLLS 432: Public Health Molecular Detection and Characterization Practicum. 2 Hours. Semester course; 80 laboratory hours. 2 credits. (This course includes site-based requirements.) Public health laboratory rotation experience in molecular detection and characterization to highlight the role in public health along with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and challenges unique to the field. Areas covered in this course include specimen processing specific to a molecular laboratory, conventional, real-time (rt), and reverse-transcriptase (RT) PCRs, analysis of PCR results, environmental sampling, working in a biological safety cabinet, pulsed-field gel electrophoresis for molecular characterization, and nucleic acid sequencing analysis for molecular characterization. This course will help prepare students for a career in a public health laboratory.

CLLS 434: Public Health Molecular Laboratory and Whole Genome Sequencing Practicum. 2 Hours. Semester course; 80 laboratory hours. 2 credits (This course includes site-based requirements.) Hands-on, 2 credit, 80 clock hours, public health laboratory rotation experience in Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) to highlight the role in public health along with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and challenges unique to the field. Areas covered in this course include specimen preparation and processing needed in WGS, methods to extract nucleic acid, DNA library preparation, quality control, WGS, and data analysis. This course will help prepare students for a career in a public health laboratory.

Appendix A – Practicum Site

Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services
600 N. 5th Street
Richmond, Virginia

Appendix B – Letter of Support



September 14, 2021

Denise M. Toney, Ph.D. (HCLD),
Laboratory Director
Department of General Services
Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services
600 North 5th Street, Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Toney,

I am writing to express my strong enthusiasm and support for your plans to work with Virginia Commonwealth University to create a Baccalaureate Certificate in Public Health for the University's Clinical Laboratory Sciences Program. The program's purpose is to prepare students to perform laboratory testing in a high complexity public health laboratory. As Chief Executive Officer of the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), I believe this program will serve an urgent need.

As you know, the continuous long-term erosion in the funding support for the core public health infrastructure has created workforce shortages within public health laboratories. Additionally, the prolonged response to the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the negative impact of understaffing. Public health laboratories have demonstrated incredible resilience but have strained under the intense pressure to ramp up and sustain long-term surge capacity. You are acutely aware of this issue from your own experience directing the Virginia laboratory's pandemic response. To meet the ongoing demands and further establish appropriate preparedness and response capabilities, a recent APHL survey from 84 Directors of state, local, large city, and territorial public health laboratories demonstrated a range of need for an increase of full-time staff from 30% to as high as a 75%.

Fortunately, the federal government recognized this acute staffing shortage, and President Biden's American Rescue Plan contains \$7.6 billion for workforce development. While some of this funding will be used to quickly place more staff in our laboratories to handle the current need during the ongoing pandemic, it is essential that we also work for the future. We need to fund programs to attract more new graduates to the public health profession by developing pipelines that give them experiential learning opportunities. To this end, I am excited to tell you that APHL has been awarded, by the CDC, five years of funding with approximately \$30M in the first year alone to develop a fellowship and internship program. APHL looks forward to turning to baccalaureate programs such as the one you and the Virginia Commonwealth University are creating to attract future Fellows.

I hope you can tell that I am very excited about the opportunity that your Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services and the Virginia Commonwealth University are creating. This initiative will be of great value in helping to address the urgent need for qualified public health laboratory scientists. I would be grateful if you would keep me posted as you progress and let me know if I can help in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott J. Becker" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scott J. Becker, MS
Chief Executive Officer
Association of Public Health Laboratories

Virginia Commonwealth University Graduate Certificate

Name of Certificate

Health Equity

CIP Code

51.2299

Initiation Date

Fall 2022

Description of Certificate

The purpose of the proposed Graduate Certificate in Health Equity is to prepare students to manage factors (e.g., differences in income, education, social and physical environments, and access to health care) that contribute to health disparities in the United States (U.S.) by helping them identify and advocate for strategies to reduce these disparities (e.g., increasing insurance coverage, increasing school and social program funding in disadvantaged communities, and eliminating food deserts). Students will gain an understanding of the historical context and existing research on the causes and impact of health disparities. Students will also explore the values and ethical framework that relate to health equity. Students will learn how health care organizations and public entities are funding efforts to address unconscious bias, patient centered care, and the social determinants of health such as housing, food insecurity, and environmental conditions as well as increased access to health care as a means to reduce health disparities. Students will apply this knowledge of critical thinking models for further assessment. Students will develop skills to understand and influence the policy process and learn to apply advocacy skills to influence policies that affect health equity. Graduates will be prepared to critically analyze, design, and implement strategies to enhance health equity.

Target Audience

The target population for the certificate program is students enrolled in VCU graduate degree programs in the health sciences (e.g., nursing, medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, health professions) as well as other graduate programs such as social work and public administration. The certificate will also target graduates of undergraduate programs in health sciences, social work, and public administration.

Time to Complete

Degree-seeking students can take courses anytime during the program. It is anticipated that students who enroll full-time can complete the program in one year (2 semesters). Students attending part-time, maintaining a course load of three credit hours per semester will complete the program in 2 years (4 semesters).

For non-degree seeking student who are enrolled full-time, it is anticipated that students can complete the program in one year (2 semesters). Students attending part-time, maintaining a course load of three credit hours per semester will complete the program in 2 years (4 semesters).

Admission

The following admission requirements apply to all students. All applicants to the certificate program are required to:

- Submit a completed application and the application fee.
- Provide an official undergraduate transcript from all schools attended.
- Provide three (3) letters of recommendation (at least one academic reference).
- Submit a current resume or curriculum vitae.
- Submit a statement of purpose outlining career goals (less than 500 words).

Students who have not earned a baccalaureate degree in the U.S. must submit: Proof of English proficiency. International students must submit scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS) academic exam, or Pearson Test of English meeting the minimum requirements:

- Submit an official transcript evaluation from a recognized foreign educational credentials evaluation service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) or the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO).
- A Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) minimum composite score of 100 for the Internet Based Test (IBT) or 600 for the paper-based score; an International English language Testing System (IELTS) score minimum of 6.5 on the academic exam; or Pearson: 59 overall score.
- A score of 68 or higher on the VCU English Language Program Compression test. Students who do not achieve a score of 68 will be placed in the appropriate level English language proficiency courses.

Curriculum Requirements

The curriculum is designed to provide students with an understanding of the many factors that contribute to health disparities in the U.S. and help them identify and advocate for strategies to reduce these disparities. Students will learn about the historical and current social, economic, and political factors contributing to health disparities and their relationship to illness and disease as well as the challenges to vulnerable populations that impact health promotion and health equity. Coursework will enable students to understand and apply ethical frameworks and critical thinking to health equity issues, to identify strategies to address unconscious bias, and to develop advocacy strategies that promote public policies that promote health equity. The curriculum will place an emphasis on practical application of the concepts, culminating in a project to promote health equity.

Program Requirements

New courses indicated with an asterisk (*).

Total number of credit hours: 12

HADM 662. Foundations of Health Equity: History and Research (3)

HADM 663. Reducing Health Disparities: Issues and Strategies (3)

HADM 664. Health Equity: Policy and Advocacy (3)*

HADM 665. Applications of Health Equity (3)*

Faculty

Faculty appointments for the certificate are established by recommendation of the Department of Health Administration. Faculty members teaching courses will have appointments in the Department of Health Administration and other departments in the College of Health Professions. All faculty teaching in the certificate program will meet the minimum requirements for faculty as determined by the home departments.

Minimum requirements for faculty teaching in this certificate program include:

- A master's degree in their research, health care, or related field.
- A minimum of five years of experience in their discipline.
- A minimum of three years of teaching or curriculum development experience.

Course Delivery Format

All courses for the proposed certificate program will be conducted in a fully online format. Students will be required to attend synchronous virtual sessions only twice during the program: at the beginning of the program for an orientation and opening session, and at the end of the program to present the final project to faculty and (if applicable) representatives of the organization in which the project took place.

Both physical space and software to facilitate the synchronous and asynchronous online sessions are required and will be available. VCU possesses the resources, support, and technology necessary for quality online programs. Online programs are supported by VCU Technology Services, the Academic Learning Transformation Laboratory (ALT-Lab), and the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence. The university's primary learning management system is Canvas. Canvas is centrally supported by VCU Technology Services which provides technical assistance, training, and system administration. Technology Services also supports a portfolio of academic technology for use online courses. The university has sufficient resources to deliver this certificate program.

All faculty assigned to teach in the certificate program are required to complete training offered by the VCU Academic Learning Transformation Lab and the VCU Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence. The University has adequate resources to deliver the modified certificate program.

Resources

Resources required to support the proposed certificate program include existing resources to support current programs such as student support services (e.g., enrollment, help desk, and library), faculty support services (e.g., copying and contracts), and general administration (e.g., budgeting and forecasting). The proposed certificate program will have a Program Coordinator who is a staff member within the Department of Health Administration. Existing faculty will teach certificate courses. No new faculty positions will be created to teach new courses. Faculty time to teach the new courses will be included in existing teaching loads. No new positions will be created to initiate and sustain the proposed certificate program. The university has adequate resources to offer and sustain the proposed certificate program.

Gainful Employment

The proposed certificate will not be included under Gainful Employment regulations. Non-degree seeking students will not be eligible for Title IV funding for this certificate program.

Course Descriptions

A new course is denoted with an asterisk (*).

HADM 662. Foundations of Health Equity: History and Research. 3 credits. (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). This course provides an overview of the historical context and existing research on causes and impact of health disparities. It explores the values and ethical framework that relates to health equity. At the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical and current social, economic, and political factors contributing to health disparities and their relationship to illness and disease; demonstrate an understanding of the challenges to vulnerable populations impacting health promotion and health equity; and identify values and apply ethical framework to health equity issues.

HADM 663. Reducing Health Disparities: Issues and Strategies. 3 credits. (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid) This course explores the current strategies used to reduce health disparities including how health care organizations and public entities are funding efforts to address unconscious bias, patient-centered care, and the social determinants of health such as housing, food insecurity, and environmental conditions as well as increased access to health care as a means to reduce health disparities. It applies knowledge of existing strategies to critical thinking models for further assessment. At the end of the course, students will be able to identify strategies to address unconscious bias and promote patient centered care for oneself and colleagues, apply models of critical thinking to assess existing strategies, identify gaps left to be addressed, and begin to identify/crystalize the community partnership for their final health equity project.

***HADM 664. Health Equity: Policy and Advocacy. 3 credits. (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid)** This course facilitates development of skills to understand and influence policy process. It applies advocacy skills to influence policies that affect health equity. At the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of policy process, identify policy leverage points, demonstrate the ability to advocate for policies that address health disparities and promote health equity, and further crystalize the community partnership for their final health equity project if applicable.

***HADM 665. Applications of Health Equity. 3 credits. (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid)** This course consists of independent design and implementation of a student-initiated project relating to some aspect of health equity. Guidance for the project will be provided by faculty and, where appropriate, a community partner. At the end of the course, students will be able to synthesize concepts from didactic courses, identify salient problems related to health equity, identify a project mentorship team, and use the course framework to analyze problem, propose solution, and outline advocacy strategies.

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Institution

Virginia Commonwealth University

Nature of Proposed Change

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) requests approval to establish a School of Public Health. The proposed School of Public Health will build on VCU's long-accredited and substantive public health program as a stand-alone academic unit within the university and consistent with national accreditation standards, will have the same reporting structure as the other schools at the university (e.g., College of Health Professions; and the Schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmacy).

Appendix A presents the existing organizational structure of the institution.

Appendix B presents the organizational structure after establishing the School of Public Health.

Appendix C presents the organizational structure of the proposed School of Public Health.

Background

In 1917, a group of Richmond community leaders founded the Richmond School of Political Economy, later known as the Richmond School of Social Work and Public Health. Over the years, these early efforts developed into the Richmond Professional Institute, which later merged with the Medical College of Virginia to form Virginia Commonwealth University. The notion of developing a School of Public Health resurfaced in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the Anthrax attacks that shortly followed. Supporters reasoned that a school could help the state prepare for bioterrorism and support VCU's mission "to improve the health of citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia." Following extensive discussions, VCU submitted a definitive plan and was approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to start a school of public health in January 2005. Unfortunately, a rapidly declining economy and competing priorities prompted university leadership to indefinitely suspend work on establishing a standalone school.

Despite this setback, faculty interest in the concept did not wane, and quickly intensified as the global pandemic of COVID-19 exposed deficiencies in public health at every level from local to global. As the pandemic raged, the new Senior Vice President for Health Sciences - who also serves as CEO of VCU Health System – launched a strategic planning process for the VCU Health System and its adjoining Health Sciences Schools. In early 2021, eight interdisciplinary workgroups of academics and practitioners were tasked with analyzing key aspects of VCU Health System and VCU Health Sciences Schools' clinical and academic operations and identify opportunities to strengthen both. Their recommendations were forwarded to a senior group of clinical department chairs, health sciences deans, and senior VCU Health leaders. The resulting strategic plan, which was recently vetted with the Board of Directors of the VCU Health System, calls for VCU Health to expand beyond its traditional focus on acute and chronic disease care and do more to prevent needless disease, injury and disability. The workgroup reasoned that by doing more to promote and protect the health of the communities VCU Health serves, we can help the Commonwealth of Virginia eliminate longstanding racial, ethnic, economic and geographic disparities in health.

In May 2021, VCU Health's interest in addressing health disparities and the university's rekindled interest in establishing a School of Public Health led VCU's Provost and its Senior Vice President for Health Sciences to jointly convene a Dean's Task Force to examine the pros

and cons of establishing a new school. Among the many reports and policy statements the task force examined, two stood out:

1. *The Commonwealth's Next 400 Years: Higher Education in Post Pandemic Virginia*, written by the Virginia Council of Presidents, July 17, 2020, contains the following passage:

“Healthcare and Public Health: Virginia’s institutions of Higher Education and our healthcare providers are poised to work together to improve the health and well-being of the residents of the commonwealth while striving to eliminate disparities across income, wealth, race, and locality.

- Higher Education’s research and healthcare enterprises will lead the way toward vaccines, improved testing, better epidemiological modeling of infectious diseases, enhanced disaster readiness, prioritization of preventive public health measures, and a focused effort in understanding disease transmission from other species to humans. Virginia’s higher education enterprise is well positioned to lead in this “One Health” movement that merges human health, animal health, and the environment.”

2. A May 20, 2021 Joint Statement from Governor Ralph S. Northam and General Assembly Leaders on *Shared Priorities for American Rescue Plan Funding* was also cited:

“We stand united on how to position Virginia for the future. We intend to meet in special session this summer for the express purpose of allocating federal dollars to five specific needs:

Help public health. The pandemic highlighted the need to upgrade state and local public health services, which have been long underfunded in Virginia, as well as the need to help people with the cost of housing and utilities.”¹
[Emphasis added]

The task force noted that VCU *already has* all necessary components of a top-tier School of Public Health:

- VCU established the first accredited public health program in Virginia. VCU currently offers a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree and four (4) doctoral degrees in relevant disciplines.
- VCU supports an excellent Division of Epidemiology and 2 highly-regarded public health departments in the School of Medicine: Biostatistics and Health Behavior & Policy. The University also supports a Department of Health Services Administration in its College of Health Professions and a large Center for Environmental Health Studies on its main campus.
- VCU is home to a substantial number of relevant research institutes and centers on its Medical College of Virginia (MCV) and Monroe Park (MP) campuses.
- VCU’s proximity to state and local public health agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), central Virginia businesses and diverse communities provide ideal settings for student internships and experiential learning.

¹ Webmaster@governor.virginia.gov. (n.d.). Joint Statement from Governor Northam and General Assembly Leaders on Shared Priorities for American Rescue Plan Funding. Retrieved from <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2021/may/headline-895119-en.html>.vc

On the strength of these observations, the Dean's Task Force unanimously recommended that VCU establish a School of Public Health. Feedback was solicited from a wide range of university faculty members, deans, and key professional staff, and their suggestions were incorporated into the proposal. The final proposal was widely shared with the VCU community, including the shared governance bodies that are a part of the VCU approval process. The process for institutional review and approval includes the submission of a proposal to the University Council, the President's Cabinet, and the VCU Board of Visitors. Because of the nature of this proposal, the VCU Health Board of Directors is also a part of the approval process. The University Council includes approximately 100 representatives from university administration (9), university deans (5), department chairs (4), faculty representatives from every school and college and faculty senate (55), post-doctoral scholars (2), staff senate (12) and students (13). This process will culminate with formal consideration by both the Board of Visitors of Virginia Commonwealth University and the VCU Health System Authority Board of Directors at their December meetings. If approval to proceed is granted, a formal proposal will be submitted to SCHEV in January 2022.

Purpose of Proposed Change

The purpose of the proposed organizational change is to establish a School of Public Health within the university that will have the same reporting structure as the other schools at the university. The proposed school will become a national leader and advocate for the discipline of public health through education, research, and service. Additionally, the proposed organizational change will foster greater collaboration and synergy in teaching and research across both campuses of the university.

Mission

The proposed School of Public Health aligns with the mission of Virginia Commonwealth University, which states: "VCU and its academic health sciences center serve as one national urban public research institution dedicated to the success and well-being of our students, patients, faculty, staff and community through:

- Real-world learning that furthers civic engagement, inquiry, discovery and innovation.
- Research that expands the boundaries of new knowledge and creative expression and promotes translational applications to improve the quality of human life.
- Interdisciplinary collaborations and community partnerships that advance innovation, enhance cultural and economic vitality, and solve society's most complex challenges.
- Health sciences that preserve and restore health for all people, seek the cause and cure of diseases through groundbreaking research and educate those who serve humanity.
- Deeply engrained core values of diversity, inclusion and equity that provide a safe, trusting and supportive environment to explore, create, learn and serve."

The proposed organizational change supports the institution's mission of "research that promotes translational applications to improve the quality of human life" by strengthening and expanding academic programming and collaborative research in public health. The proposed School of Public Health will provide students with the opportunity to engage in "developing real-world solutions" to overcome longstanding local, regional and national health inequities. The proposed school's faculty and students will conduct research focused on "improving the quality of life" of all populations in Virginia and beyond, with a particular emphasis on aligning community engagement, social science and communications to promote public health. The academic programs will promote

“interdisciplinary collaborations” across a broad range of university schools and colleges to address complex challenges. The proposed school will produce graduates who are “ready for work on day one” to replenish the depleted ranks of state and local public health agencies and other organizations, and by doing so support the university’s mission to “preserve and restore health for all people, seek the cause and cure of diseases through groundbreaking research and educate those who serve humanity.”

Council of Education for Public Health (CEPH) Accreditation

The proposed School of Public Health is designed to address the Council of Education for Public Health (CEPH) criteria for accreditation.² VCU offers a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree program that CEPH has fully accredited since 1996. Establishing a standalone School of Public Health represents a transition from program accreditation to a school-level accreditation. University faculty consulted with CEPH to identify the three primary changes required to transition from a long-accredited public health program to an accredited School of Public Health. The three criteria are:

- The proposed School of Public Health must operate at the highest level of organizational status and independence available within the university context. The school must have the same reporting structure as all other professional schools at the university (e.g., the College of Health Professions and the Schools of Dentistry, Nursing, Medicine, and Pharmacy).
- The proposed School of Public Health must have, at a minimum, a doctoral degree with (at least) two concentrations and a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree program with three concentrations. CEPH defines a concentration as any area of study that the school or program advertises as available to students, via its catalog and/or website.
- The proposed School of Public Health must have (at least) 21 primary instructional faculty (faculty who dedicate 100% of their time to the school and have a regular instructional role).

Accordingly, the proposed School of Public Health will be freestanding, and have the same functional independence accorded to other schools at the university. The proposed school will offer curricula that address the core areas of concentration for degree programs in public health, including biostatistics, environmental health, epidemiology, health management and policy, and social and behavioral sciences. The proposed school will meet CEPH accreditation requirements by offering three concentrations with a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree program. At present, VCU offers two MPH concentrations: Epidemiology and Applied Public Health. VCU is presently developing a third concentration in an area of existing strength: Cancer Health Equity Science. The proposed school will easily exceed the CEPH requirement of one doctoral program with two concentrations, as VCU currently supports four Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree programs: Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Healthcare Policy and Research. The two existing MPH concentrations and four doctoral programs are currently administered in the VCU School of Medicine, but all will move with the faculty to the proposed School of Public Health. In addition, CEPH requires a minimum of 21 full-time instructional faculty. From the outset, the proposed School of Public Health will include 41 full-time instructional faculty members from the existing departments.

If the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) approves the request to create the proposed School of Public Health, VCU will promptly pursue CEPH accreditation as a freestanding school. VCU intends to initiate the application process for CEPH accreditation as a school in the

² Council on Education for Public Health (n.d.) Accreditation Criteria for School of Public Health & Public Health Programs. <https://media.ceph.org/documents/2021.Criteria.pdf>

summer 2023. Once accredited, we will provide CEPH with an annual report to confirm our ongoing compliance with accreditation standards.

Rationale for Proposed Change

The proposed organizational change to establish the School of Public Health will create a standalone academic unit with the requisite academic and administrative infrastructure to prepare graduates in multiple fields to improve the health of populations. The proposed school intends to focus on advancing the health of the commonwealth, with a particular emphasis on eliminating longstanding racial, ethnic, economic and geographic health disparities. The proposed school will attract and prepare a high-performing public health workforce with the breadth of knowledge and skills required to meet existing and emerging threats to public health. The proposed school will also catalyze world-class, multidisciplinary and inter-professional research across VCU's MCV and Monroe Park Campuses to improve public's health at a local, regional, national, and global level.

Persistent health disparities have disadvantaged many Virginians for generations. The most recent Virginia Department of Health Equity-at-a-Glance Scorecard observes: "Virginia ranks 10th in Income and Poverty; 28th in Educational Attainment; 11th in Food Access; 23rd in Unemployment; 17th in Broadband Access; and 25th in Housing Insecurity."³ The metrics for the City of Richmond across these six areas are worse than the state's average. The VCU Massey Cancer Center catchment area encompasses four million racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, and geographically diverse individuals. Fifty-four of the 65 localities are designated as medically underserved areas by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The catchment area has nearly three times the proportion of African-American/Black residents compared to the U.S. overall; and six of the nine majority-minority counties in Virginia, including the City of Richmond. A healthier Virginia, relieved of the burdens imposed by preventable health disparities, excessive healthcare spending, and high rates of preventable death and disability is a worthy goal for any university. Better health will allow the commonwealth's citizens to achieve higher levels of education, greater economic prosperity, and enjoy a better quality of life.

The proposed School of Public Health will benefit the university in six ways, including: 1) strengthen ties between schools and faculty across the MCV and Monroe Park Campuses, 2) foster partnerships with other universities, colleges and organizations in the commonwealth, 3) rebuild the depleted ranks of public health, 4) prepare a capable and versatile workforce, 5) align with Schools of Public Health at SCHEV peer institutions, and 6) increase collaborative research.

Strengthen ties across schools

The proposed organizational change to establish a freestanding School of Public Health will be built around existing talent in the core departments that will make up the school. However, it will also engage, through secondary appointments and academic collaborations a much wider range of faculty, staff and students who are currently scattered across multiple schools and colleges on the MCV and Monroe Park Campuses, including medicine, education, social work, public policy, engineering, business, humanities and sciences, environmental science and other fields. Aligning this talent will provide students with expert instruction in the five core disciplines of public health (i.e., biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health, health management and policy, and social and behavioral

³ Virginia Department of Health Equity Score Card (n.d.), Virginia Overview. <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/equity-at-a-glance/virginia/virginia-scorecard/>

sciences) and help them acquire additional skills that are clearly needed in the 21st century, such as cultural competency, addiction, bioinformatics, aging, nutrition, disaster preparedness, community engagement, supply chain management, media and marketing, environmental justice and public policy. The transdisciplinary synergy VCU can offer, coupled with a focus on applying it to eliminate long-standing health disparities, should draw talented students from across the commonwealth and our nation and foster high-impact research. The proposed School of Public Health will actively pursue academic and service partnerships across both VCU campuses by offering joint faculty appointments, forming interdisciplinary teams and establishing joint academic programs and/or cross-listed courses that are beneficial to students based in different departments and schools.

Partner with other Virginia universities, colleges, agencies and organizations

The proposed School of Public Health will work collaboratively with other state universities and local community colleges. The proximity of VCU to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and several local health departments will significantly facilitate collaborations that will strengthen the education, research, and service components of the proposed school and foster student interest in careers of public service. The administration of the proposed school will offer adjunct faculty appointments and explore other ways to facilitate partnered educational opportunities for our students and adult learners from state and local public health agencies, regional NGOs and businesses. The collaboration will not only provide experiential learning opportunities for our students; it will enable VCU to strengthen and expand the skills of the commonwealth's existing public health workforce.

Rebuilding the depleted ranks of public health

The pandemic has not only battered the state's economy, it has placed "...extraordinary and inordinate demands on health professionals."⁴ As a result, our nation's public health workforce, which was already depleted by years of budget cuts, has been hit hard by retirements and resignations. According to Seifman, "what is needed is an urgent, massive acceleration in health professional faculty, infrastructure, and support for student financing, to meet the anticipated demand."⁵ The projected establishment of a regional school of public health to serve Hampton Roads is a welcome development, but it will not be enough to meet the need for new talent across the state and our nation. If the proposal to establish a School of Public Health is approved, VCU will engage other state colleges and universities that offer public health programs to develop an academic consortium akin to that which currently exists in metropolitan Washington, DC (i.e., The Consortium). The proposed VCU School of Public Health will increase opportunities for widespread and collaborative impact within Virginia by rounding out VCU's academic offerings and strengthening public health at a local, regional, national, and international level.

Prepare a capable and versatile public health workforce

Because VCU has existing academic programs, research, and resources in the public health field, we will be able to quickly expand our production of graduates who are ready on day-one to contribute to local and state health departments, non-governmental organizations, and companies to improve the health of Virginia's diverse and growing population. Additionally, "the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed major cracks in our public health system of public, private, and voluntary entities (for example, public health agencies, health care providers, public safety organizations, nonprofit

⁴ Seifman, R. (2020). COVID Healthcare Workers Crisis: Bad Now, Worse in Future. Impakter. Retrieved October 3, 2021, from <https://impakter.com/covid-healthcare-workers-crisis/>

⁵ Ibid.

organizations, laboratories, and others)."⁶ Even after the pandemic recedes, Virginia will face formidable health threats, including communicable diseases such as pandemic flu, HIV/AIDS and multi-drug resistant bacteria, and non-communicable diseases including hypertension, diabetes, and cancer. Collectively, conditions like these cost the United States economy more than \$2 trillion annually. Unfortunately, public health's capacity to respond is hobbled by a shrinking workforce (i.e., a shortage of 250,000 positions nationwide), declining funding, and a shortage of individuals with the skills required to meet new and emerging challenges. Although public health science has never been more vital, it's standing with the public is eroding due to counter-messaging on social media and other platforms. To reverse these trends, Virginia needs public health leaders who are not only skilled in biostatistics, epidemiology, and environmental health; they must understand crisis communication, community engagement, and supply chain management. We need a workforce trained to predict threats to our public health, contain threats to our health as they occur, and protect us from future threats to our health. We live in a pandemic age, and the importance of these skills to the future is paramount. The proposed School of Public Health is needed to provide quality public health education to meet the commonwealth's demands for public health professionals.

Align activities with any future Virginia Schools of Public Health at SCHEV Peer Institutions

By creating the proposed School of Public Health, VCU will be poised to compete more effectively for talented students, faculty, and funding among both its institutional peers and its aspirational peers. At present, SCHEV has identified 25 peer institutions for VCU. Of the 25 peer institutions, 64% have a standalone, CEPH accredited School of Public Health. VCU has also identified six Quest 2025 peer institutions, of which 85% maintain a CEPH accredited School of Public Health. In addition, 83% of VCU's aspirational peer institutions maintain a CEPH accredited School of Public Health. The proposed School of Public health will position VCU to compete more effectively for talented students and faculty, and research funding. It will also enhance the university's prestige and attractiveness by providing outstanding teaching and promoting collaborative community engagement, research and service. Virginia has the potential to become the nation's hub for developing, evaluating, and disseminating high-impact programs, policies, and techniques to eradicate racial, ethnic, and geographic disparities and restore support and confidence in public health science. VCU anticipates that its activities and programming will inspire philanthropy and attract outstanding and diverse students from across the country to learn public health and ultimately serve the commonwealth, our nation and the world.

Increase collaborative research funding

The proposed School of Public Health will be well-positioned to improve health in the 21st century. The proposed school will foster transdisciplinary and translational research and develop new technologies and approaches to solve previously intractable public health problems. Additionally, faculty will partner with local leaders and community groups across the commonwealth to overcome unjust social, economic, and environmental forces perpetuating racial, ethnic, and geographic disparities to health. Public health is truly a multidisciplinary field involving many biomedical and social science disciplines, including health policy and administration, psychology, genetics, pathology, pharmacology and toxicology, environmental science, education, pharmacy, nursing, dentistry, sociology, social work, microbiology, criminal justice, forensic science, behavioral health, and clinical

⁶ "Investing In Evidence To Inform Practice: Reimagining The US Public Health System," Health Affairs Blog, April 6, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20210405.773991/full/>. DOI: 10.1377/hblog20210405.773991

medicine. This multidisciplinary nature of public health will facilitate greater collaboration, partnership, and participation among schools, departments, research centers, faculty, students, and communities.

The proposed school will be part of the VCU MCV campus and for that reason, will be part of a comprehensive academic health sciences center with a thriving research enterprise. It will bring together experts from multiple disciplines to tackle key public health challenges. Importantly, it will attract and link talented students, faculty and staff from both campuses, the metro Richmond community, and other institutions and organizations across the commonwealth to promote multidisciplinary scholarship. Initially, the proposed school will focus its research on the following priority areas:

Health Disparities in Underserved Populations - Racial and ethnic minorities suffer disproportionately from major diseases including cancer, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, asthma, and mental illness. These disparities persist even after controlling for socio-economic status and other factors that often influence access to care. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) refers to racial disparities in pregnancy outcomes as “one of the most stubborn and persistent health disparities in the nation.” Through its Center on Health Disparities, the proposed school will aim to improve quality of healthcare and reduce disparities in health care for low-income and racial/ethnic minority patients by conducting research to improve population health and access to care for underserved populations; with an initial emphasis on maternal and child health, cancer, and cardiovascular disease.

Health behavior and communication - Although public health science has never been stronger, public confidence in science is eroding at an alarming rate. Over the past decade various state and non-state actors have mobilized the web to disseminate false and misleading information to convince large swaths of the public to reject time-tested public health countermeasures and even life-saving vaccines.⁷ The social and technological sophistication of this campaign which effectively harnessed social media as well as more traditional communication channels caught mainstream public health by surprise. The response to date has not been up to the task. This is a major reason why the COVID-pandemic has persisted and claimed so many casualties. VCU is well suited to take up this challenge.

Health effects of environmental pollutants and climate change - Environmental agents play key roles in the development of many common illnesses, from heart disease and cancer to diabetes and asthma. Understanding how these agents harm humans requires knowledge of their sources and their movements through natural ecosystems, their mode of entry into the body, and their interaction with the biological systems that regulate the body. Likewise, climate change has vast implications for human health including heightened risk of heat illness and natural disasters, vector-borne illnesses, water and food insecurity and sea level rise.

Forensic Epidemiology, Public Health Forensics, Bioterrorism and Public Health Preparedness - This unit will focus on the development and application of epidemiologic methods to investigate a health problem for which there is suspicion or evidence of criminal act as a factor contributing

⁷ Harris, K. M., Maurer, J., & Kellermann, A. L. (2010). Influenza Vaccine — Safe, Effective, and Mistrusted. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 363(23), 2183-2185. doi:10.1056/nejmp1012333

to the health problem. This field of research incorporates forensic and criminal investigation techniques into epidemiologic investigations.

Addiction Research - In collaboration with the Institute of Drug and Alcohol Studies (IDAS) at VCU, the proposed school will: 1) promote the identification, prevention and effective treatment of alcohol and other drug use problems in Virginia and nationally; 2) conduct substance abuse-related health policy research; and 3) evaluate prevention and treatment programs.

Public Health Nutrition (Nutritional Epidemiology) - Nearly two-thirds of adults in the US are overweight or obese, and the situation is getting worse in both adults and children. Obesity is now the largest avoidable cause of cancer in nonsmokers; and the NIH calls it, “one of America's most urgent public health problems.” Proposed School of Public Health scientists will investigate relationships between diet and a variety of diseases. The investigations will combine behavioral sciences with biologic and quantitative approaches to design and evaluate nutrition programs and policies. Specific areas of research may include: development of methods to assess nutritional status; and the interaction of nutritional factors with genetic determinants of disease, infectious agents, blood pressure, blood lipids, lipoprotein metabolism, molecular mechanisms of diabetes and obesity.

Maternal and Child Health - This unit will focus on the prevention of infant morbidity and mortality; reducing risk factors for adverse outcomes of pregnancy; dietary assessment methodologies for women and children; the impact of nutrition education interventions for low-income women; environmental influences on reproduction and child development; access to care for disadvantaged populations, including children of the working poor; and adolescent health including psychiatric morbidity, delinquency, violence, and substance abuse.

Cancer Prevention and Control - In collaboration with the Massey Cancer Center, an NCI-designated cancer center that is pursuing Comprehensive Cancer Center status, researchers in the proposed School of Public Health will conduct epidemiologic and laboratory research to determine the lifestyle, environmental and genetic causes of cancer, and translate these findings into effective prevention strategies at the individual and community levels. Investigators will also conduct behavioral health research to determine the most effective methods for communicating information on cancer prevention with the goal of changing behaviors associated with cancer risk, as well as promoting healthy and forward looking cancer survivorship.

In all of these areas, the proposed School of Public Health will provide expert consultation to many clinical and social science investigators across VCU. Through the Faculty Research Advancement Program, the proposed school will provide, on a fee-for-service basis, expertise in hypothesis generation, sample size estimation, sampling, research instrument design, testing, data collection, data management, data analysis and interpretation, to name a few. The school's expertise in research methodology will enhance and strengthen biomedical and social science research, empowering VCU scientists and other university faculty to be more competitive for federal research grants and contracts.

See Appendix D for a preliminary list of potential community and State partners.

See Appendix E for potential strengths of the proposed School of Public Health.

See Appendix F for the VCU's peer institutions.

Academic Programs

The proposed organizational change will: 1) academically relocate the Department of Biostatistics, 2) academically relocate and reorganize the Department of Health Behavior and Policy into two departments -- the Department of Social and Behavioral Health and the Department of Health Management and Policy, and 3) academically relocate and elevate the Division of Epidemiology, currently located within the Department of Family Medicine and Population Health, to become a Department of Epidemiology. All three organizational units currently reside in the School of Medicine but will be reallocated, with the support of the School of Medicine's dean and faculty, to the proposed School of Public Health. The academic programs that reside within each of the departments will realign with their respective departments.

There will be no changes to academic programs as a result of the proposed creation of the School of Public Health. The following academic programs will reside in the proposed School of Public Health.

Department of Biostatistics

Graduate Certificate in Genomics Data Science

Master of Science (MS) in Biostatistics

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Biostatistics

Department of Epidemiology

Master of Public Health (MPH)

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Epidemiology

Department of Social and Behavioral Health

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Social and Behavioral Health

Department of Health Management and Policy

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Health Care Policy and Research

Space

The university has adequate space for the proposed new School of Public Health. The administrative offices for the proposed school will be located in the same building where our current public health programs are housed: One Capitol Square, 830 E. Main Street, Richmond, Virginia. In this building, VCU Health has access to 53,837 square feet of assignable space across seven floors. This should be more than sufficient for all current and proposed faculty and staff of the school, its component departments, and dean's office. The co-location of these departments with each other, and the building's close proximity to the MCV campus, VCU Medical Center, the state capitol and health agencies in downtown Richmond should facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations across multiple sectors. In addition to this office space, VCU has adequate conference facilities, classrooms and meeting space for faculty, staff, and graduate teaching assistants to interact with students. Lab space is available to meet current and projected teaching and research needs.

Resources/Budget

The Dean of the proposed School of Public Health will be responsible for overseeing and monitoring the budget for the administration and operation of the school. New expenditures are anticipated in the first three years of operation for the proposed new school, including business operation (i.e., fiscal,

sponsored awards, human resources, and information technology), space allocation, graduate support services, faculty and staff salaries, marketing and communications, and development. Funding for the proposed School of Public Health will be sourced in two ways: (1) Existing VCU resources allocated to the departments that are being restructured into the new school will be retained and (2) VCU Health will provide \$5 million dollars in start-up support to cover initial operating costs, and will underwrite any operating deficits that might occur over the life of the school. This arrangement is similar to the support VCU Health System provides to other health professions schools that help it advance its mission. To assure sound financial management, the school's spending and annual budget will be jointly reviewed by the Office of the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences and CEO, VCU Health System and the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at VCU.

Administration

A dean position will be created to oversee the proposed School of Public Health. The dean will be full-time and report directly to the Senior Vice President of Health Sciences. The dean will be responsible for providing the overall management, budget and operations oversight of the departments and all activities in the proposed School of Public Health. The Office of the Dean will be responsible for administering degree programs and research. The dean will work with academic deans, other academic leaders, and the larger VCU community to ensure collaboration throughout the public health disciplines. The dean will be responsible for the budget and supervision of personnel within the proposed School of Public Health. The salary for this position is \$301,492 with fringe benefits of \$126,928 for a total of \$428,420.

The proposed School of Public Health will employ one-full-time associate dean for academic affairs. The associate dean of academic affairs reports to the dean. The associate dean is responsible for overseeing all aspects academic programs, curriculum development, academic grievances, student academic progress, and distance learning. The salary for this position is \$250,000 and benefits are \$105,250, for a total of \$355,250.

The proposed School of Public Health will employ one-full-time associate dean for research. The associate dean of research reports to the dean. The associate dean is responsible for providing leadership for the proposed school's research program. The salary for this position is \$250,000 and benefits are \$105,250, for a total of \$355,250.

The proposed School of Public Health will employ one-full-time finance director. The finance director reports to the dean. The finance director will be responsible for providing fiscal oversight for the proposed School of Public Health. The salary for this position is \$110,000, and benefits are \$ 46,310, for a total of \$156,310.

Faculty

Initially, the proposed School of Public Health will house 41 instructional faculty and 6 adjunct faculty for a total of 47 faculty. The current faculty are academically located in the School of Medicine and will relocate to the proposed school. The instructional faculty of the proposed School of Public Health will include 26 faculty (15 tenured, 11 tenure-track) and 15 full-time (i.e., non-tenure or non-tenure eligible positions) faculty. These faculty will be supplemented by 6 adjunct faculty for a total of 47 faculty positions. As enrollment grows, additional faculty will be hired. Anticipated enrollment growth

has been budgeted for the first three years of the school's operations. If enrollment targets are met, the proposed School of Public Health will hire three faculty in year 1, two more faculty in year 2, and two more faculty in year 3, a total of 7 additional faculty and 54 total faculty by the end of year three.

The Department of Biostatistics will initially have a total of 16 instructional faculty (7 tenured, 3 tenure-track, and 6 full-time term). The department does not currently have any adjunct faculty. The salary for the department chair will be \$368,472 with benefits of \$155,126, for a total of \$523,598. The remaining full-time faculty salaries are \$550,256 with benefits of \$231,657, for a total of \$781,913.

The Department of Epidemiology will initially have a total of 7 instructional faculty (0 tenured, 2 tenure-track, and 5 full-time term). The department will have 6 adjunct faculty for a total of 13 faculty positions. The salary for the department chair will be \$210,000 with benefits of \$88,410, for a total of \$298,410. The remaining full-time faculty salaries are \$470,515 with benefits of \$198,086, for a total of \$668,601. As enrollment grows, additional faculty, possibly supplemented by adjunct faculty and/or graduate teaching assistants, will be hired to ensure high-quality education. If enrollment targets are met, Epidemiology will hire one faculty in year 1, one more faculty in year 2, and two more faculty in year 3, for a total of four (4) additional faculty. The projected starting salaries for the new faculty hires is \$121,000, with benefits of \$50,941, for a total of \$171,941 per faculty member.

The Department of Social and Behavioral Health will initially have a total of 9 instructional faculty (4 tenured, 3 tenure-track, and 2 full-time term). The department does not have adjunct faculty but may add some later as well as offer opportunities to graduate teaching assistants. The salary for the department chair will be \$339,227 with benefits of \$142,814, for a total of \$482,041. The remaining full-time faculty salaries are \$433,645 with benefits of \$182,564, for a total of \$616,209. As enrollment grows, additional faculty, possibly supplemented by adjunct faculty and/or graduate teaching assistants, will be hired to ensure high-quality education. If enrollment targets are met, Social and Behavioral Health will hire, one (1) additional faculty in year 1. The projected starting salaries for the new faculty hires is \$121,000, with benefits of \$50,941, for a total of \$171,941 per faculty member.

The Department of Health Management and Policy will initially have a total of 9 instructional faculty (4 tenured, 3 tenure-track, and 2 full-time term). The department does not currently have adjunct faculty. The salary for the department chair will be \$339,227 with benefits of \$142,814, for a total of \$482,041. The remaining full-time faculty salaries are \$433,645 with benefits of \$182,564, for a total of \$616,210. As enrollment grows, additional faculty, possibly supplemented by adjunct faculty and/or graduate teaching assistants, will be hired to ensure high-quality education. If enrollment targets are met, Health Management and Policy will hire one faculty in year 1, and one more faculty in year 2, for a total of two (2) additional faculty. The projected starting salaries for the new faculty hires is \$121,000, with benefits of \$50,941, for a total of \$171,941 per faculty member.

Classified Staff

The proposed School of Public Health will employ one-full-time executive administrative assistant. The executive administrative assistant reports to the dean. The administrative assistant is primarily

responsible for assisting with office needs, including scheduling meetings, taking minutes, updating policies, and faculty support. The salary for this position is \$65,500 and benefits are \$27,576, for a total of \$93,076.

The proposed School of Public Health will employ one-full-time admissions officer. The admissions officer reports to the associate dean for academic affairs. The admissions officer is primarily responsible for recruitment, advising, and the enrollment of prospective students. The salary for this position is \$123,300 and benefits are \$51,909, for a total of \$175,209.

The proposed School of Public Health will employ one-full-time academic affairs officer beginning in year 3. The academic affairs officer reports to the associate dean for academic affairs. The academic affairs officer is primarily responsible for assisting with curriculum development and management, faculty training, and other miscellaneous faculty support. The salary for this position is \$100,700 and benefits are \$44,409, for a total of \$145,109.

The proposed School of Public Health will employ one-full-time senior research administrator beginning in year 2. The senior research administrator reports to the associate dean for research. The senior research administrator is primarily responsible for assisting the associate dean for research in writing grants and managing existing research activities. The salary for this position is \$159,000 and benefits are \$68,529, for a total of \$227,529.

The proposed School of Public Health will employ one-full-time development officer. The development officer reports to the associate dean for academic affairs. The development officer is primarily responsible for the fundraising from corporate and private donors. The salary for this position is \$100,000 and benefits are \$42,100, for a total of \$142,100.

The proposed School of Public Health will hire three (3) FTE for administrative support, i.e. fiscal operations, human resources, IT, and office management who will report to the Finance Director in Year 1. The salaries of the three staff members combined will be \$180,000 with benefits of \$75,780, for a total of \$255,780. Over the first three years, the budget anticipates hiring a fourth in year 3. The salary for the additional FTE is expected to be \$55,000, with benefits of \$24,255, for a total of \$79,255.

If enrollment targets are met, the proposed School of Public Health will hire two (2) advisors in year 1. The role of the advisors will be to support faculty and students to ensure retention and matriculation through the program. The salaries for each advisor will be \$60,000, with benefits of \$25,260, for a total of \$85,260 per advisor.

The Department of Biostatistics will initially have a total of three (3) staff: an Office Manager, a Fiscal and Grants Accountant, and a Systems Analyst. The salaries of the three staff members combined will be \$156,184 with benefits of \$65,753, for a total of \$221,937. The Department of Biostatistics will not need to hire additional staff.

The Department of Epidemiology will initially have a total of two (2) staff: an Administrative Assistant and a Post Award Grant Specialist. The salaries of the two staff members combined will be \$68,115 with benefits of \$28,676 for a total of \$96,791. The Department of Epidemiology will not need to hire additional staff.

The Social and Behavioral Health will initially have a total of two (2) staff: a Department Administrator and a Fiscal Technician. The salaries of the two staff members combined will be \$90,795 with benefits of \$38,224, for a total of \$129,019. The Department of Social and Behavioral Health will not need to hire additional staff.

The Department of Health Management and Policy will initially have a total of two (2) staff: an Office Manager and an Education Administrator. The salaries of the two staff members combined will be \$126,056 with benefits of \$53,069, for a total of \$179,125. The Department of Health Management and Policy will not need to hire additional staff.

Graduate Teaching Assistants

The proposed School of Public Health will have 25 graduate teaching assistant positions. Graduate teaching assistants are allocated throughout the four academic departments. Graduate teaching assistants working in graduate-level teaching and programming are paid an annual salary of approximately \$30,000.

The Department of Biostatistics will have 10 graduate teaching assistants. Total salary for graduate teaching assistants in the department will be \$300,000.

The Department of Epidemiology will have 10 graduate teaching assistants. Total salary for graduate teaching assistants in the department will be \$300,000.

The Department of Social and Behavioral Health will have 2 graduate teaching assistants. Total salary for graduate teaching assistants in the department will be \$60,000.

The Department of Health Management and Policy will have 3 graduate teaching assistants. Total salary for graduate teaching assistants in the department will be \$90,000.

If enrollment grows as anticipated, the proposed School of Public Health expects to hire two (2) additional graduate teaching assistants in year 3.

Graduate Research Assistants

The proposed School of Public Health will have 17 graduate research assistant positions. Graduate research assistants are allocated to The Department of Health Management and Policy (9) and The Department of Social and Behavioral Health (8). Graduate research assistants working in graduate-level research areas are paid an annual salary of approximately \$30,000.

The Departments of Biostatistics and Epidemiology will not use graduate research assistants.

The Department of Social and Behavioral Health will have 8 graduate research assistants. Total salary for graduate research assistants in the department will be \$240,000.

The Department of Health Management and Policy will have 9 graduate research assistants. Total salary for graduate research assistants in the department will be \$270,000.

To mitigate Educational & General costs, the departments will use sponsored research funding and local funds to offset portions of the salaries for graduate teaching and research assistants.

Other Costs

Other costs included in the annual budget for the proposed School of Public Health include:

Conferences/Professional Development	\$14,527
Instructional supplies	\$187,096
IT/Facilities	\$62,365
Office supplies	\$90,143
Marketing	\$390,150
Scholarships	\$167,184
Travel	\$235,541
Other Services	\$239,000
Total	\$1,386,006

In the first year it is projected that “Other Costs” will total \$1,386,006 and in the third year, increase to \$1,633,921.

Miscellaneous

There will be an initial expenditure of \$500,000 for updating business cards, stationery, signage (internal and external to the building), and other supplies associated with the creation of a new school. These costs will be spread out over the first three years of operation. This cost is included in the “Other Costs” listed above. Revision to the website will be handled by university staff and accomplished within the staff’s current workload. No additional costs will occur. As miscellaneous expenses decline, the funds will be reallocated to support day to day operations in the school.

Printed materials (stationery, business cards)	\$150,000
Publicity and promotion	\$250,000
Signage	\$100,000
Total	\$500,000

Sustainability

Resources from the budget of the Office of the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences will be designated, dispersed, and utilized to support the proposed School of Public Health. The Office of the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences will be responsible for the budget of the proposed School of Public Health. The establishment of the proposed School of Public Health will utilize existing academic and administrative positions and resources. Virginia Commonwealth University and Office of the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences have adequate and sufficient resources to sustain the proposed School of Public Health.

Budget

The budget includes all of the expenditures needed to establish and operate the proposed School of Public Health. With the establishment of the proposed School of Public Health, no positions will be eliminated. After the first three years, the proposed School of Public Health will have hired 13 staff in the dean’s office to support faculty, instruction, research and administration, and seven (7) faculty

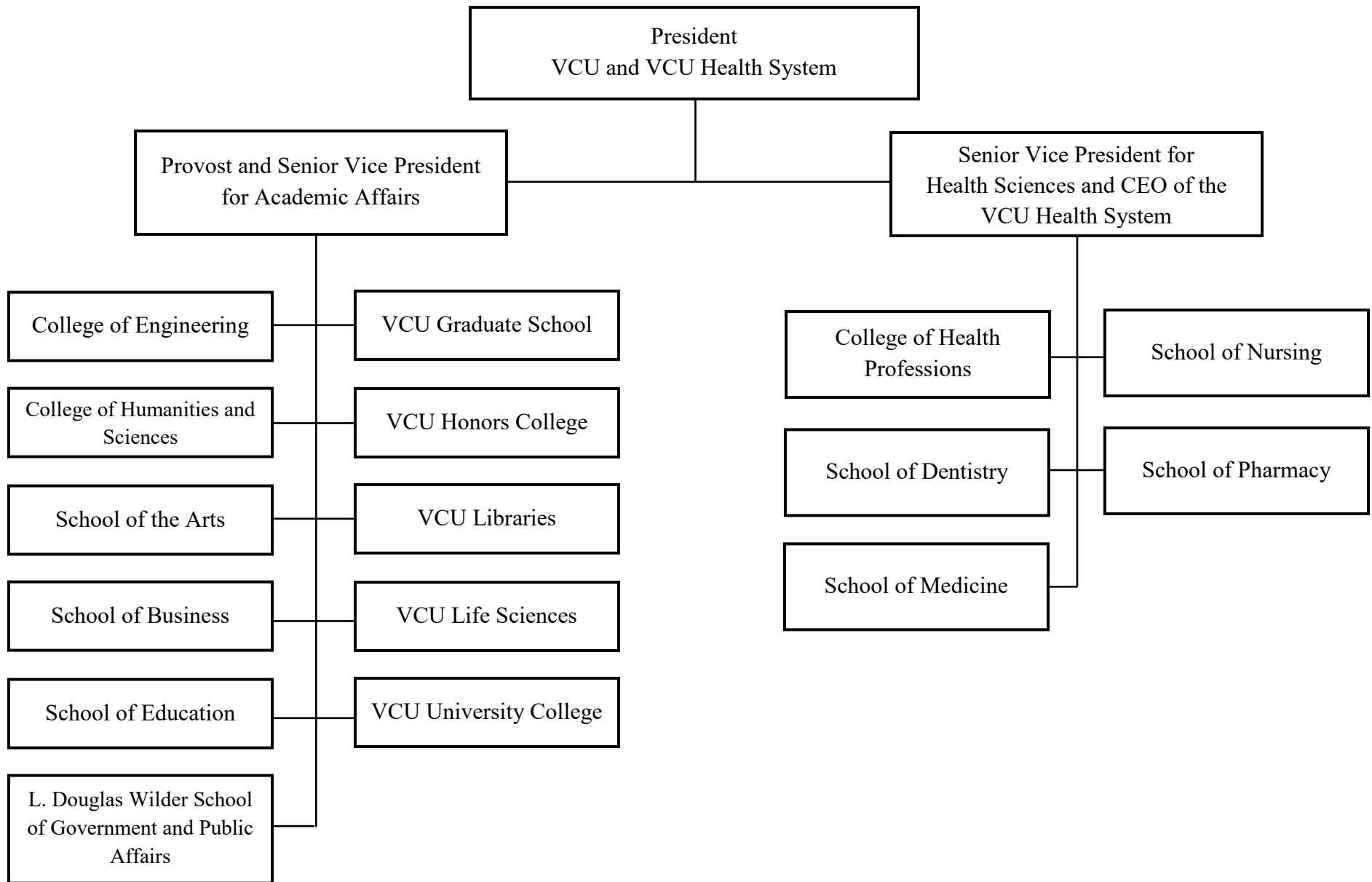
members in the departments. The budget presents proposed expenditures for the first three years of the proposed School of Public Health. The operational expense allocation provides for expenditures to include office and computer supplies, marketing, branding, promotion, postage, photocopying, telecommunications, maintenance, travel, and other departmental expenditures. All of the costs associated with miscellaneous items have been included in the budget. Miscellaneous items that do not have a designated line item in the budget form are included in the line item for “Other Costs.”

New Academic Unit - Proposed Name: School of Public Health

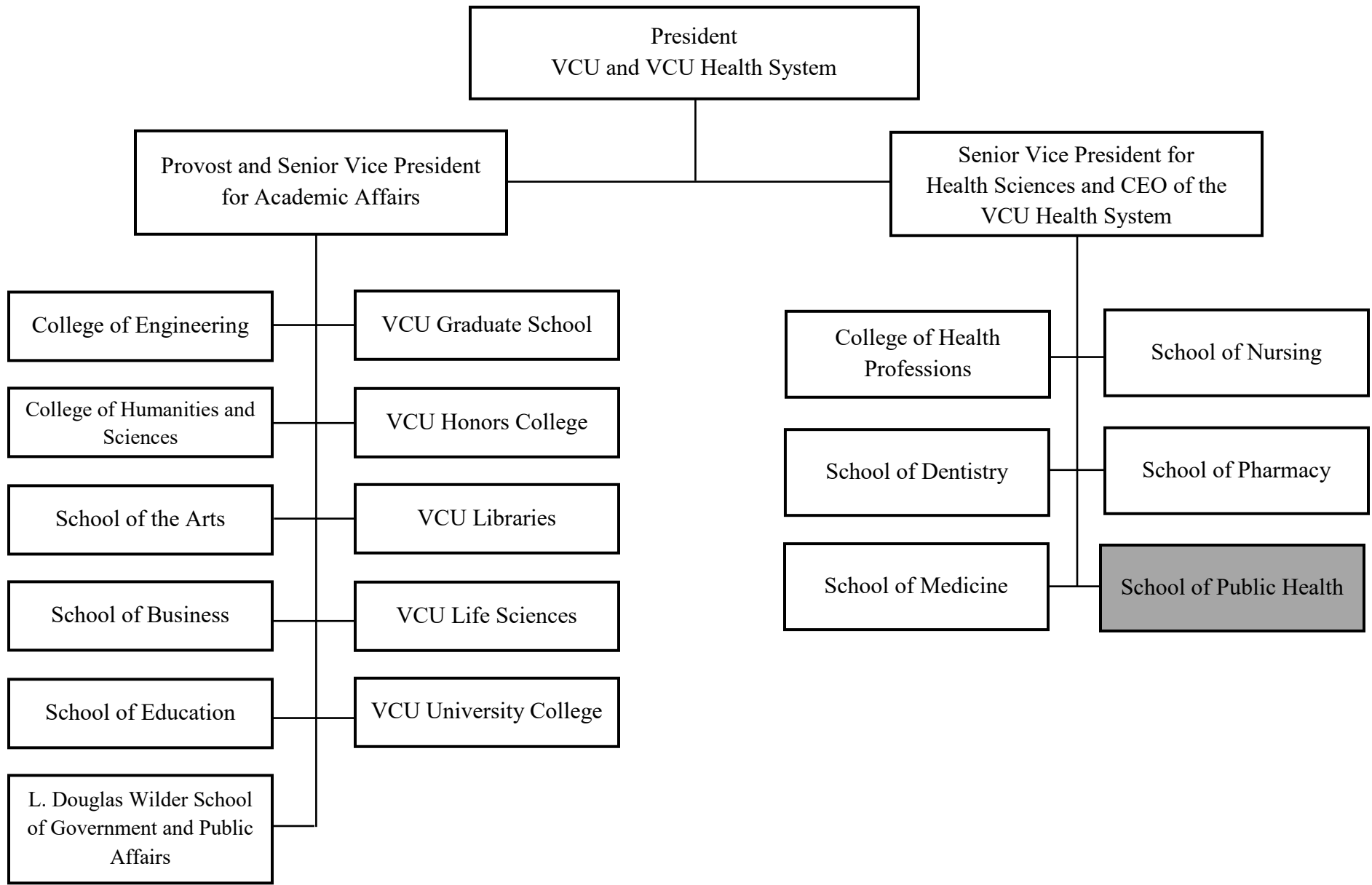
Expenditure Category	Proposed Budget			
	HDCT	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025
Personnel Salary				
Dean	1	\$301,492	\$306,014	\$310,605
Fringe Benefits		\$126,928	\$131,892	\$136,977
Exec Assistant to the Dean	1	\$65,500	\$66,483	\$67,480
Fringe Benefits		\$27,576	\$28,654	\$29,759
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs	1	\$250,000	\$253,750	\$257,556
Fringe Benefits		\$105,250	\$109,366	\$113,582
Associate Dean for Research	1	\$250,000	\$253,750	\$257,556
Fringe Benefits		\$105,250	\$109,366	\$113,582
All Other Personnel	17	\$1,654,707	\$1,886,672	\$2,105,199
Faculty	54	\$3,367,220	\$3,654,283	\$3,942,023
Fringe Benefits		\$1,402,221	\$1,558,925	\$1,721,651
Personnel Subtotal	75	\$7,656,144	\$8,359,155	\$9,055,970
Student Support				
Student Helpers/Workers				
Graduate Teaching Assistant	25	\$528,849	\$528,849	\$618,849
Graduate Research Assistant	17	\$337,007	\$337,007	\$337,007
Student Support Subtotal	42	\$865,856	\$865,856	\$955,856
Operating Expenses				
Conference/Professional Development		\$14,527	\$14,818	\$15,114
Instructional Supplies		\$187,096	\$190,838	\$194,655
IT/Facilities		\$62,365	\$63,613	\$64,885
Office Supplies		\$90,143	\$91,946	\$93,785
Marketing		\$390,150	\$397,953	\$405,912
Scholarships		\$167,184	\$170,528	\$173,939
Travel		\$235,541	\$240,252	\$245,057
Other Services		\$239,000	\$339,780	\$440,575
Operating Expenses Subtotal		\$1,386,006	\$1,509,728	\$1,633,922
Total	117	\$9,908,006	\$10,734,737	\$11,645,745

Appendices

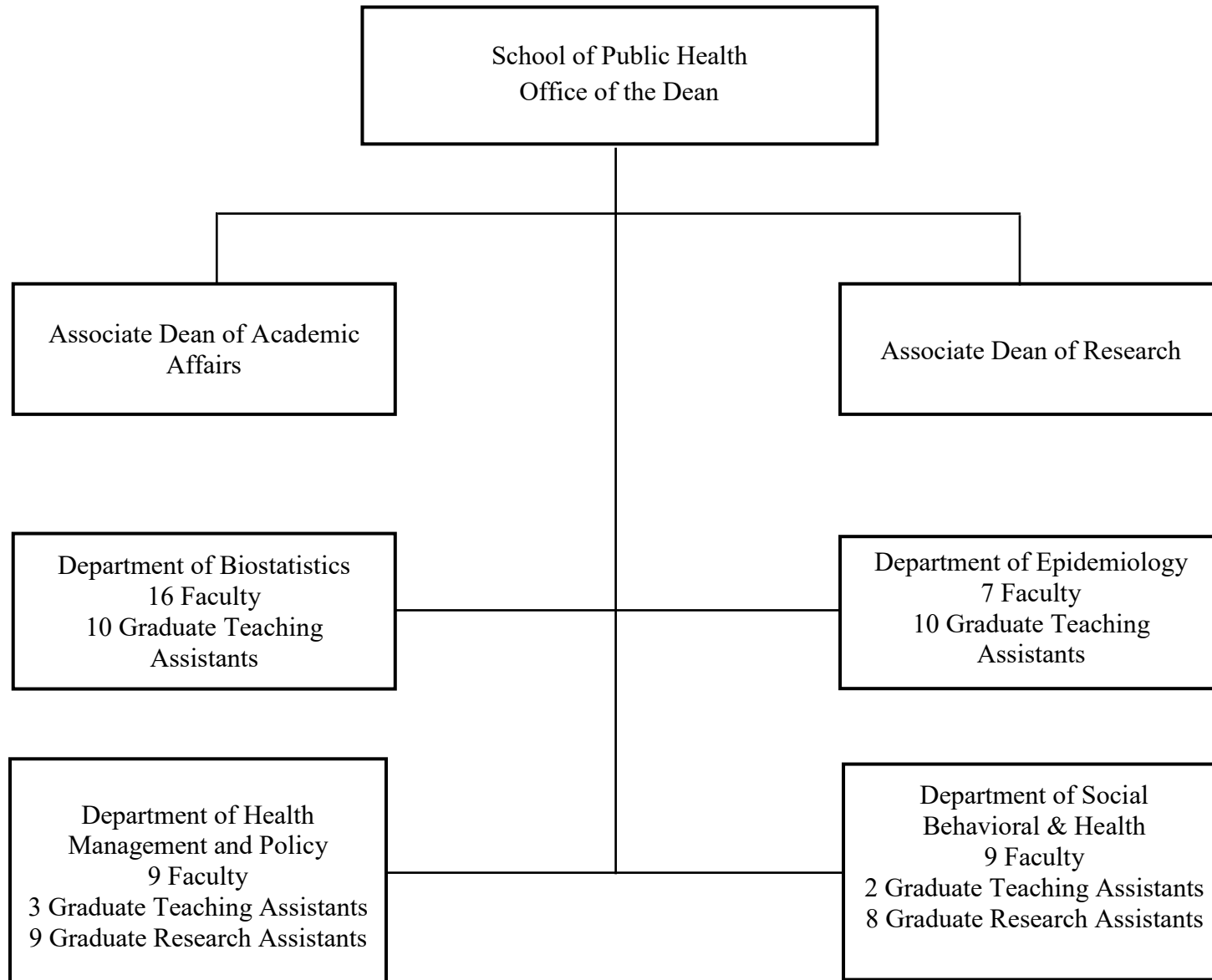
Appendix A: Current Organizational Structure



Appendix B: Proposed Organizational Structure



Appendix C: Organizational Structure of the Proposed School



Appendix D: Community and State Partners

1. Richmond City/Henrico County Health District
2. Chesterfield County Health Department
3. Chickahominy Health District (includes Charles City, Goochland, Hanover, and New Kent)
4. Crater Health District (Emporia, Hopewell and Petersburg and the counties of Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, Surry and Sussex)
5. Powhatan County Health Department
6. Capital Area Health Network, Richmond
7. Crossover Healthcare Ministry, Richmond
8. Daily Planet Health Services, Richmond
9. Health Brigade, Richmond
10. Richmond Memorial Health Foundation
11. Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services
12. Virginia Department of Health
13. Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services
14. Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
15. Virginia Office of Chief Medical Examiner
16. Virginia Department of Corrections
17. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
18. Virginia Department of Veterans Services
19. Virginia Department of Military Affairs
20. Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association

Appendix E: Potential Strengths of the Proposed VCU School of Public Health

Engage sectors *outside* the health sciences to improve population health. The sectors that largely shape if not define social determinants of health are largely outside traditional disciplines such as medicine, nursing, dentistry or pharmacy. However, few schools of public health are doing cutting-edge work on engaging employers, housing authorities, the food industry, developers, the investment community, elected officials and others to develop win-win strategies that are good for their bottom line but also improve population health. Few public health schools have even attempted to form relationships with non-health sectors much less built out this capacity.

Inform business leaders and policy makers about issues affecting public health: Few schools of public health are near Washington, DC. Fewer still are across the street from their state's capitol. Public health institutes like the Health Policy Institute of Ohio, the Kansas Health Institute, and the Georgia Health Policy Center illustrate the value of proximity to state government. Georgia's General Assembly even has a line item in the state's budget to keep its policy institute running. An SPH at VCU could play this role for Virginia's state government. In addition to helping VCU faculty inform policymakers, VCU SPH students would learn how to concisely and effectively communicate with local, state and federal elected officials, agency heads, CEOs and other leaders. VCU SPH students should learn how to present scientific evidence in ways that are useful to policymakers and the public.

Harness epidemiological data to identity priority populations, communities, and needs: Public health officials with limited resources face increasing pressures to prioritize investments and identify "hot spots" in the commonwealth where health needs are greatest. VCU has developed cutting-edge methods for small-area geographic analysis to identify districts, counties, and census tracts with high disease rates and low life expectancy. Although some of these efforts are directed at scientific audiences, maps and other products have been produced to convey the scope of disparities to the public, media, and policymakers. More sophisticated metrics—such as the Healthy Places Index developed by the VCU Center on Society and Health—are available to focus attention on priority populations and neighborhoods, and measure progress towards improving their health. Mapping tools like *Health Landscape Virginia*, which is linked to Virginia's All Payer Claims Database, make it easy to profile the socioeconomic and clinical characteristics of these neighborhoods and capture the disproportionate risks experienced by communities of color. This capability will be a boon to faculty and students alike.

Attack health inequities at their roots: Adverse economic conditions and systemic racism not only perpetuate health disparities; they limit opportunity and social mobility. However, few public health schools make understanding and removing these barriers a mission priority. To do this, VCU SPH students must build strong connections to disadvantaged communities and listen to their lived experiences. The social unrest, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the other forces (good and bad) that defined 2020 make it imperative for schools of public health to capture the moment. VCU sits in the middle of an urban setting where matters of race have a long and troubled history. It is committed to confronting the past and taking positive action to address longstanding inequities.

Work across disciplines: How many public health schools have climbed outside of their silo to do cutting-edge transdisciplinary work with like-minded academic partners in other disciplines? The problems confronting 21st century public health will not be solved by doctors and epidemiologists alone; they require people who understand sociology, history, economics, political science, business, media, social work and other fields. These groups, in turn, will benefit from contact with public health professionals who bring a complimentary set of tools and techniques to bear on societal problems. VCU SPH can develop classes and courses that bring faculty together from a wide range of disciplines to teach students (and researchers) how to talk and think creatively and respect the value of working with colleagues who have complimentary expertise and skills.

Strengthen ties between health care and public health: As health care finance shifts from volume-based fee-for-service reimbursement to value-based payment and capitation, Health Systems are increasingly focused on how to address the social needs of their patients and improve population health. Nearly every health system now has a population health program, although some are far better developed than others. That being said, few schools of public health focus on this intersection, and fewer still have the opportunity to play a transformational role in the operations of an academic health system.

Community engagement: Many schools of public health at academic institutions near communities of need are weakly engaged at best. Not surprisingly, when their researchers and graduate students venture forth to do community research, they are often met by residents who are deeply skeptical of their sincerity and commitment. When their studies are completed, they often make policy recommendations that are detached from the daily lives of those they profess to serve. In addition, too many universities are insensitive to town-gown divides and oblivious to their checkered history with people of color. In contrast, VCU has built strong ties with communities like the East End, established trust and coequal partnerships, and put communities at the center of educating faculty and graduate researchers about realities “on the ground.”

Tobacco: VCU is home to the Center for the Study of Tobacco Products (CSTP) administered within the Department of Psychology in the College of Humanities and Sciences, one of only nine NIH/FDA-funded Tobacco Centers of Regulatory Science in the country. Funded since 2013 with over \$40 million, and having produced over 200 peer-reviewed publications in that time, the mission of the CSTP is to promote public health equitably across populations by developing and applying regulatory science to the evaluation of tobacco products and tobacco product policy while training the next generation of tobacco regulatory scientists. Complementing this, VCU Health has a growing tobacco cessation program through a partnership between Massey Cancer Center and the Department of Psychiatry’s Addiction Division. A tobacco treatment specialist was recently hired to drive the clinical aspects of this partnership forward and boost uptake of effective treatments for nicotine use disorder. VCU also has a well-established research program on alternative tobacco products within the Department of Psychology in the College of Humanities and Sciences. It is funded by a NIDA center grant.

Opiate Addiction and Abuse: Drug overdose deaths have reached epidemic levels in the U.S. within the commonwealth. They are largely driven by overdoses involving opioids. Last year, VCU’s Emergency Department noted a dramatic increase in opioid overdose visits particularly

involving underserved minority patients. Currently, VCU has several projects to combat this challenge. In 2017 VCU Health established the Multidisciplinary Outpatient Treatment (MOTIVATE) program to treat patients suffering from addiction. MOTIVATE currently treats over 400 patients a month, the majority of which have Opioid Use Disorder. Project ECHO (Department of Internal Medicine) is educating primary care providers across the commonwealth on opioid use disorder including prescribing effective medications for opioid use disorder. The Addictions Division (Department of Psychiatry), in collaboration with the Wright Center for Clinical and Translational Research, has several research initiatives focused on expanding access to treatment for opioid use disorder within the Emergency Department. Many of these initiatives are partially funded by the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, (DMAS).

Appendix F: VCU Peer Institutions

SCHEV Peer Institutions	State	Standalone School of Public Health
1. Boston University School of Public Health	MA	Yes
2. Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health	PA	Yes
3. Florida State University	FL	No
4. New York University School of Global Public Health	NY	Yes
5. Ohio State University-Main Campus – College of Public Health	OH	Yes
6. SUNY at Buffalo School of Public Health and Health Professions	NY	Yes
7. Temple University College of Public Health	PA	Yes
8. University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health	AL	Yes
9. University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health	AZ	Yes
10. University of Cincinnati-Main Campus	OH	No
11. University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center – School of Public Health	CO	Yes
12. University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health	IL	Yes
13. University of Iowa – College of Public Health	IA	Yes
14. University of Kansas Main Campus	KS	No
15. University of Kentucky College of Public Health	KY	Yes
16. University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences	KY	Yes
17. University of Miami	FL	No
18. University of Minnesota-Twin Cities School of Public Health	MN	Yes
19. University of Missouri-Columbia	MO	No
20. University of Nevada-Reno School of Public Health	NV	Yes
21. University of New Mexico-Main Campus	NM	No

22. University of Southern California	CA	No
23. University of Utah	UT	No
24. Wayne State University	MI	No
25. West Virginia University	WV	Yes

VCU Quest 2025 Peer Institutions

Institution	State	Standalone School of Public Health
University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health	AL	Yes
University of Cincinnati - Main Campus – No School of Public Health	OH	No
University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health	IL	Yes
University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences	KY	Yes
University of South Carolina - Columbia Arnold School of Public Health	SC	Yes
University of South Florida - Main Campus College of Public Health	FL	Yes

VCU Aspirational Peer Institutions

Institution	State	Standalone School of Public Health
University of California - Los Angeles, Fielding School of Public Health	CA	Yes
Florida State University – No School of Public Health	FL	No
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities School of Public Health	MN	Yes
University of Buffalo School of Public Health and Health Professions	NY	Yes
The Ohio State University - Main Campus College of Public Health	OH	Yes
University of Pittsburgh - Pittsburgh Campus – Graduate School of Public Health	PA	Yes