



VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

**VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS**

December 7, 2023

James Branch Cabell Library

901 Park Avenue – Room 303

Richmond, VA

MINUTES

DRAFT

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Todd Haymore, *Rector*

Mr. Anthony Bedell

Mr. Steven DeLuca

Mr. H. Benson Dendy III

Hon. Peter Farrell

Ms. Ellen Fitzsimmons

Dr. Dale Jones

Ambassador Carmen Lomellin

Mr. Edward McCoy

Rev. Tyrone Nelson

Mr. Keith Parker

Dr. Tonya Parris-Wilkins

Dr. Clifton Peay

Mr. P2 Sandhu

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Andy Florance, *Vice Rector*

Ms. Rooz Dadabhoy

OTHERS PRESENT

President Michael Rao

Ms. Chelsea Gray, *Executive Director of Board and Executive Operations*

Ms. Stephanie Hamlett, *University Counsel*

Ms. Karen Helderman, *Executive Director, Audit and Compliance Services*

Presidential Cabinet of VCU

VCU students, faculty and staff

Members of the Media

CALL TO ORDER

Rector Todd Haymore called the meeting to order. The public was able to view the open session of the meeting via livestream at <https://mssvideo.vcu.edu/BOV>.

Rector Haymore reminded the Board that this session was scheduled as a continuation from the October Retreat. Chief Information Officer Mr. Alex Henson's presentation about artificial intelligence (AI) needed to be rescheduled due to a timing error. He stated that Mr. Henson will present about the non-academic applications of AI, harnessing the opportunities while recognizing the risks associated with AI. He continued that Mr. Grant Heston, Vice President for Enterprise Marketing and Communications, will provide a brand update.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. Henson provided an overview of some of the issues around AI. He stated that on an average day in November, about 250 unique users (approximately 5,000) access ChatGPT from a VCU-owned computer. Of the campus network, about 2,300 unique users out of about 45,000 total on the VCU wired and wireless networks connected to Chat GPT. About 4% of VCU users on VCU owned equipment are accessing ChatGPT at a given time, and 5% of the users on campus wired and wireless networks are accessing ChatGPT on a given day. In addition, Technology Services (TS) sees connectivity to about 14 other open, generative AI applications, not AI applications that VCU actually procured. This does not include students or others using their cell phones and cellular networks.

VCU has AI-based applications and tools being used for many purposes. Technology Services manages about 570 systems in the application inventory at VCU. About 32 of those have a real generative AI, or very sophisticated machine learning capability. He said that about 5.5% of the systems TS is running now actually have AI. And those are procured systems that have contracts associated with them and that people are actually using.

Mr. Henson explained that even though AI is ever changing, unique, and new, it really is like any other new technology in terms of concerns and those concerns are managed. Specifically, what data is going in - who sees it and who has access to it. Another area to focus on is what business or business problem or other problem AI is being used to try to solve. VCU has a lot of processes in place to manage these things, including an IT governance process and procurement processes. There are also IT security processes and monitoring processes to help manage the risks.

However, there are very specific risks with AI. The first is that it is changing rapidly and exponentially more quickly than most technologies. It can be one thing 1 minute and one thing the next minute, and then back to another thing. Watching that and monitoring it is key in this environment. There are about 350 AI startups, most of which have little or no controls yet. The big companies, like Microsoft and Google, are still really figuring this out as they continue to proliferate open and easily accessible tools. There is an increasingly rapid risk of enabling shadow IT systems. The other big risk is the data that is input in the system, It can train the AI environment and introduce the risk of exposing data that was not intended to be exposed. He

then explained the ethical considerations and possibility of bias, which are pretty important to be considering as these systems are scrutinized.

Some of the guard rails that VCU uses include an IT governance process, a security review and a data review which is conducted before any product is purchased via a procurement process. Checks and balances are in place. VCU also has committees dedicated to reviewing specific kinds of technology like academic technology. Same for administrative or infrastructure technologies. There is also a steering committee with representations with senior leaders that represents the institution as a whole. At times, the university does say no to things; but mostly VCU asks the vendor to address specific concerns before the product is purchased or ensure that appropriate provisions are in place.

TS also reviews all the integrations with the main learning management system at VCU, called Canvas. Another important task is managing the communication around AI. Starting in January, the university will communicate more to the community about the following tenets that should be used to protect the university's confidential data. There have been academic integrity issues that have been spoken of, so it will be critical to address these both from a plagiarism and cheating aspect, as well as intellectual property and copyright infringement. TS also wants to reemphasize the governance processes. From an administrative perspective, it will be important to manage incidents and events along with threat response and blocking spam, for example. TS will conduct data network traffic analysis and load management. Managing the risks associated with AI have been added to the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) portfolio as an ongoing risk to track. Regular reports will be provided to the president and his cabinet. He cited the University of Michigan, as a university that is paving the way for how institutions are attempting to manage risks associated with AI, possibly spending more than \$1 million a month with service providers just to manage their current infrastructure. VCU is working with some national organizations like Edge Cause and Internet Two to hopefully get structured things that can meet the needs of higher education, but it is still being worked through. Mr. Henson then described the AI steering committee that will be composed of the right people and senior leadership representing various areas that will help continue to update and manage VCU policies and procedures, and monitor AI activity across VCU and other efforts – making sure that the university is also aligned with the health system and regularly reporting to senior management to the board. He then answered questions regarding the ethical implications of AI from board members.

ENTERPRISE BRAND UPDATE AND WHAT'S NEXT

Rector Haymore then introduced Grant Heston, who presented a branding update and discussed what's next for both VCU and VCU health system. He started by showing board members VCU's latest commercial, which also has 30 and 15 second versions. The commercial can be found here: _____. He explained that the commercial is intended to show off VCU's distinctive excellence, highlight the beautiful campus, and showcase the amazing, diverse

students in a way that is modern, bold, and fun. His presentation focused on two areas – how Enterprise Marketing and Communications is focusing on undergraduate student recruitment and secondly, introducing the very exciting VCU health brand launch that is underway.

He provided the example of post cards, which feature big bold images and crisp and clear headlines – which communicate the university’s excellence. He then said that VCU has taken the opportunity to purchase additional sponsorship spots on other institution’s U.S. News and World Report’s ranking web pages, so VCU can tell its story to the students and parents who visit those webpages.

He then invited board members and others in the room to take out their phones and visit the redesigned VCU website, where the main feature is about VCU’s new guaranteed admissions program. He spoke about making history with the number of applications received. This is a top priority, driving the enrollment funnel, by collaborating with several VPs and directors of admissions. He specifically mentioned the collaboration between the Enterprise Marketing and Communications team and Dr. Hernan Bucheli’s office. He then explained that VCU’s out-of-state applications are tracking ahead of last year. He explained that other universities in Virginia seem to like the boldness of VCU’s branding campaign and they like the freedom that the president and the Board give their office to be creative, bold, and modern in ways that maybe they don't have the freedom to do.

Finally, he mentioned that with input from the president and the health system board of directors Enterprise Marketing and Communications has come up with a branding strategy for VCUHS that works strategically and complements the university brand. Recruiting an 18-year-old student to come to VCU is very different than talking to a patient seeking cancer care or an expectant mother looking to find maternity services. The brand is fluid enough to recognize VCU, but target different audiences.

He mentioned that the VCU brand won best in show at the National Collegiate Advertising Awards. He then introduced images from the work that has been done on the health system side using the “un-“ premise - mentioning uncommon compassion, unbelievable joy which connects between what we do on the university side, the difference here, and how the brand has evolved and changed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Rector Haymore adjourned the meeting.