Search for the Vice President for Research and Innovation
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
Executive Summary

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) seeks a strategic, creative, collaborative leader and scholar to serve as its Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI). Reporting to the President, this individual will lead the strategic growth of research and innovative activities to promote research excellence across all disciplines at the University and will oversee the management of research operations. This is an exciting opportunity to join a thriving, fast-paced institution that functions as both a hub for interdisciplinary scholarship and the central driver of the economic development of Richmond and the surrounding region. VCU is a premier urban research university with an enduring commitment to the positive progress of humanity through discovery and innovation. The VPRI will work to promote and foster the development of high impact, timely, interdisciplinary and cross-campus research and supporting activities utilizing the intellectual power of the university.

VCU is home to more than 3,000 faculty members across thirteen schools and a college, serving more than 31,000 students. The Carnegie Foundation has designated VCU with both “R1 - Highest Research Activity” and “Community Engaged” status. The University’s sponsored research has grown steadily in recent years and continues its upward trajectory. VCU received over $271 million in sponsored research funding in 2016. As the largest employer in the city of Richmond, VCU is uniquely positioned to shape the local innovation economy. Ongoing partnerships with local and state government as well as key innovation hubs have allowed VCU to lead the way in facilitating new ventures that benefit the Virginia economy. As a leader in both research and innovation, the VPRI will facilitate discovery research within the University and the dissemination and commercialization of those discoveries for a broader impact.

As a key leader advancing the University’s research agenda, the VPRI works closely with the Provost and the Vice President for Health Sciences, the other Vice Presidents, as well as with Deans, Center and Institute Directors, and other major campus research leaders. This individual will lead an office of approximately 130 personnel encompassing sponsored programs, research administration and compliance, research development, research infrastructure, and VCU’s Innovation Gateway and Innovation Economy, which focus on intellectual property development, technology transfer, commercialization, and strategic collaborations. The Office of Research and Innovation also house the Office of Postdoctoral Services and the VCU
Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.

The search committee seeks self-driven candidates with the capacity to play a major leadership role in a large, complex, public university. The successful candidate will have an earned doctorate or its equivalent, a strong personal record of funded research, thorough knowledge of the operations and practices of a comprehensive research-oriented university, and proven administrative success. This individual will display the emotional intelligence and interpersonal abilities necessary to lead and inspire diverse constituents while working across and throughout the university and the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

VCU has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of the new VPRI. This profile was prepared by the VPRI Search Advisory Committee and Isaacson, Miller to provide background information related to the position. A complete list of the qualifications and characteristics desired in the VPRI as well as information for applications and inquiries can be found at the conclusion of this document.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) was designated in 2013 by US News & World Report as one the nation’s “up and coming universities, recognizing its promising and innovative changes in academics, faculty, student life and research.” VCU ranks among the top 50 public research universities in the country according to the Center of Measuring University Performance, especially in the areas of faculty awards, doctorates granted, and number of postdoctoral fellows.

Located in Richmond, Virginia, VCU is part of a culturally diverse city surrounded by historic neighborhoods. The University’s rich history is drawn from two separate institutions that were merged in 1968 by an act of the Virginia General Assembly to create VCU. Today, the University supports students in over 220 degree and certificate programs across its campuses – the downtown Monroe Park and MCV campuses, as well as campuses in Fairfax, Virginia for the schools of Medicine and Pharmacy, and Doha, Qatar for the School of the Arts. Hailed for its nationally ranked programs in the arts, social work, and health sciences, VCU is a cutting-edge teaching and research university with an exceptional commitment to excellence, diversity, innovation, and outreach.

Combined, VCU and the VCU Health System are the largest employer in the Richmond metropolitan area and the sixth largest employer in the state of Virginia. Additionally, VCU’s investment in the Broad Street corridor between the two Richmond campuses has catalyzed private developers to revitalize this neighborhood. VCU’s Siegel Center has drawn crowds to the downtown area through its concerts, speakers, and university athletic events. Moody’s, a national bond-rating agency, notes that the region’s economy “has gained strength from education and health services anchored by VCU, which has invested $655 million in the city’s downtown since 2006.”

Today, VCU continues to play an integral role in the economic health of the city of Richmond and the region — educating the current and future workforce, reaching out to the community,
advancing research, and enhancing patient care. VCU and VCU Health System have a total economic impact of $4 billion on Richmond and the surrounding area. In the Richmond metropolitan area, VCU, its health system, and other related entities have cash and investments of approximately $4 billion, which includes $1 billion in endowment funds.

The $3.2 billion VCU Health System includes the Virginia Premier Health Plan, a 210,000-member non-profit Managed Care Organization; VCU hospitals (1,125 beds); the MCV Physicians, a faculty practice plan with more than 700 members; and 770 residents and fellows. VCU Health System is one of the largest employers in the Richmond area, employing about 12,000 full-time and part-time physicians, nurses, support and administrative staff. VCU Medical Center is ranked the #1 hospital in the Richmond metropolitan area and is the only Level I trauma center in central Virginia. The robust Health System provides about 66% of the support for the academic enterprise.

For more information on VCU, please visit: www.vcu.edu.

Research at VCU

VCU has long been recognized as a transformational institution. Across the university, members of the VCU community are engaged in life changing activities. At the core is a commitment to an engaged, learner-centered environment that fosters inquiry, discovery, and innovation. To that end, the University supports research that expands the boundaries of new knowledge and creative expression while promoting translational applications.

VCU received over $271 million in sponsored research funding in 2016. Federal funding sources accounted for $144.1 million of the portfolio, industry sources represented $26 million, and state sources accounted for $25.6 million. The federal funding total included $86.4 million awarded by the National Institutes of Health. About 40% of the total federal awards came from funders other than NIH, which points to the ongoing diversification of VCU’s research funding portfolio and the breadth of the research being conducted at the University.

VCU is home to 36 centers and institutes that foster interdisciplinary research initiatives. Among them are: the Wright Center for Clinical and Translational Research; Massey Cancer Center; the Center for Public Policy, which works with partners at the local and state level to strengthen the impact of the public sector in Virginia; the Institute for Structural Biology, Drug Discovery and Development, which focuses on the interface of chemistry and biology with emphasis on medicinal chemistry, molecular medicine, nanotechnology, metabolism, drug development and pharmaceutical manufacturing; and the Kornblau Institute, which focuses on research broadly related to real estate, such as land use, housing, and commercial development. For more information on the Institutes and Centers at VCU, please visit: http://www.research.vcu.edu/centers_cores/institutes.htm

The Monroe Park Campus (MPC) breadth of scholarship includes the study of nanotechnology, biocomplexity, creative destruction, tissue engineering, literary criticism, domestic violence, social justice and many other areas. The MPC possesses a cadre of strengths to build upon in research, scholarship and creative expression. Members of the faculty include Nobel Prize
winners, Guggenheim Fellows, Jefferson Science Fellows, and Fulbright Fellows. The School of Arts is the number one public arts and design program in the country and has tremendous strength in the MFA sculpture, glass, ceramics, graphic design, painting and printmaking programs. The School of Education received $24.7 million in external funding in 2016, second only to the School of Medicine in research awards. The School of Engineering is on a rapid growth trajectory with a global approach to innovation and cross-disciplinary focus areas including sustainability and energy engineering, micro- and nano-electronic systems, pharmaceutical engineering, mechanobiology and regenerative medicine, security and data mining, and device design and development.

The School of Medicine was responsible for $138 million of VCU’s sponsored program awards in 2016. The School of Medicine has established research strengths in cancer, cardiovascular, and neurosciences. Research at the MCV Campus also includes the School of Nursing, the School of Pharmacy, the School of Dentistry, and the School of Allied Health. Investigators in these disciplines promote collaborative efforts across the University; the possibilities for interdepartmental cooperation and research in clinical sciences are boundless. With many talented, driven faculty members specializing in health equity and the social determinants of health, a patient population unique in its diversity, and an array of related research conducted throughout the University, VCU is poised to establish itself as a premier 21st century urban research university in the interdisciplinary health sciences.

Buoyed by a $16 million gift in 2015, VCU’s Wright Center for Clinical and Translational Research encourages, engages and supports collaborative participation of VCU investigators, students, regional community partners, volunteers and government organizations to accelerate translational research for the betterment of human health. The Wright Center has been part of the NIH CTSA hub network since 2010 and is the only academic health center in Virginia in the network. VCU’s NCI-designated Massey Cancer Center is among the top 4% of cancer centers in the country, leading and shaping America’s cancer research efforts. The 26 basic health science and clinical departments are located throughout the MCV Campus in downtown Richmond, adjacent to the Virginia Bio+Tech Park and city and state government districts.

The University has notable strengths in neuroscience. Grants from NIDA, NIAAA, NIMH, and NINDS account for $30 million of VCU’s NIH-funded research portfolio; VCU ranks 29th in the country for neuroscience funding. In 2013, VCU was awarded a $62 million federal grant to oversee a national research consortium of universities, hospitals and clinics for a longitudinal study of service members and veterans who suffer mild traumatic brain injuries and concussions. VCU also houses the Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics, a world leader in psychiatric genetics and epidemiology with collaborations spanning ten countries.

Research at VCU is supported by eleven core laboratories and centers. The Office of Research and Innovation supports these cores which facilitate a wide variety of research in the biomedical, life, physical, and social sciences. Some of these core laboratories are institutional, while others are associated to specific schools, programs or departments. However, all are available to all VCU researchers, typically on a fee-for-service basis. Access to core laboratories is also possible for outside academic and commercial users. Cores include the Flow Cytometry Core, the
Transgenic Mouse Core, the Center for High Performance Computing, and the Microscopy Core to name a few. For more information on VCU cores, please visit: http://www.research.vcu.edu/centers_cores/core_laboratories.htm

For more information on research at VCU, please visit: www.research.vcu.edu.

**Innovation and the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem**

VCU is a leader in innovation and creativity with a profound impact on the regional economy. The innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem at VCU produces entrepreneurial alumni: 50% of VCU students say they want to start a business. The University has established a variety of programs and partnerships to sustain and promote this culture of innovation and position Virginia Commonwealth University as the Venture Creation University.

**VCU Innovation Gateway**, formerly known as the Office of Technology Transfer, facilitates commercialization of university inventions and supports university research through collaborative agreements. In FY2016, the Innovation Gateway recorded 133 invention disclosures, filed 157 patents, supported four new startups, and brought in $2.3 million in licensing revenues. VCU Innovation Economy supports faculty and student entrepreneurship, builds strategic partnerships to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship at the University and promotes regional economic development and new venture creation by leveraging key local, regional and state business development resources.

A collaboration of VCU’s Schools of the Arts, Business, Engineering, and the College of Humanities and Sciences, the **VCU da Vinci Center** is advancing a unique collegiate model that promotes innovation and entrepreneurship through cross-disciplinary collaboration. Project-based academic offerings in the da Vinci Center are conducted in close collaboration with industry, community organizations, entrepreneurs and investors. The da Vinci Center for Innovation is committed to providing real world entrepreneurial experiences for all students through a curated series of competitions, conferences, boot-camps, incubators, and accelerators.

**Activation Capital** is a non-profit organization designed to foster a vibrant creative culture in Richmond and the surrounding area. Its leaders, known as the Activation Council, connect important stakeholders throughout the region with the makers, thinkers, and doers who drive innovation. These leaders set the vision for regional innovation by identifying gaps in the innovation ecosystem and finding sources to fill them. The Activation Council includes VCU’s President and VPRI as well as Virginia’s Secretary of Commerce and Trade, the Mayor of the City of Richmond, the Henrico County Manager, Chesterfield and Hanover County administrators, and representatives of Virginia community colleges. Regional accelerators, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and innovative businesses also play a central role in Activation Capital’s leadership.

**Lighthouse Labs** is a non-profit, mentor-driven startup accelerator program connecting promising founders with mentors, investors, support services, work space, and lean startup education to help them build viable high growth ventures in just months. Lighthouse is supported by Activation Capital and has partnered with VCU Innovate, the da Vinci Center’s Living-
Learning Program - providing a hands-on insider experience for students. With support from the VCU School of Business, Lighthouse Labs has also provided internships for VCU students.

The Virginia Bio+Tech Park is a dynamic and growing life sciences community located adjacent to the VCU Medical Campus that houses nearly 70 private sector companies, research institutes, non-profits, and state and federal laboratories on a 34-acre campus. The Park employs approximately 2,400 researchers, scientists, engineers, and support personnel and has been given accolades including “Best of R&D in Virginia” and “Best Locations for Biosciences in Virginia.” The Bio+Tech Partnership Authority is an important resource for advanced-technology ventures and is governed by a board of directors including the President of VCU, the Mayor of the City of Richmond, and the Secretary of Commerce and Trade for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Role

The VPRI will explore potential new areas for research at VCU, provide leadership and coordination of multi-disciplinary research programs, oversee campus-wide planning efforts with respect to research facilities and support, assist in developing appropriate linkages between the university and industry, and represent the University to local and regional constituencies as well as to federal and other funding agencies.

The VPRI supports the University and its missions by partnering with faculty members in all schools and departments as they seek funding, plan studies, establish collaborations, calculate budgets, submit grant applications, negotiate industry contracts, and secure patents and licensing agreements. Moreover, this individual fosters a culture of impactful, community engaged, multidisciplinary research and innovation throughout the University and serves as a conduit to external partners in VCU’s scholarly and entrepreneurial endeavors.

The VPRI has 11 direct reports with a budget of $10 million. This individual exercises authority over and responsibility for functions including sponsored programs, research administration, research integrity and compliance, research development, research information systems, and VCU’s Innovation Gateway and Innovation Economy divisions. The VPRI also has oversight of the Institutes and Centers, research core facilities, Research Quest Funding, the Grant Academy, undergraduate research, and postdoctoral services. The VPRI works closely with the Provost, the Vice President for Health Sciences, and the Vice Provost for Life Sciences and Research.

This position will provide strategic and operational leadership as VCU continues to ascend to higher levels in research and innovation. The VPRI will be responsible for ensuring that VCU faculty and staff have the resources, information, and training needed to continue to produce the most cutting edge research and are competitive in securing external funding. The VPRI must provide opportunities to work collaboratively across disciplines, nationally, and internationally, and make sure that faculty have the tools to develop world-class scholarship, research, and creative expression and are equipped to advance contributions to the community at large. The VPRI will also be expected to seek out emerging opportunities, developing new initiatives and research directions to promote and enhance the University’s contributions to new knowledge as well as advance VCU’s national standing in research.
Opportunities and Challenges

Priorities for the next Vice President for Research and Innovation will include but not be limited to the following:

_create and implement a strategy for research and innovation at VCU_

Dr. Michael Rao, the fifth president of VCU and president of the VCU Health System, has played a key leadership role along with his team in the development and execution of a strategic plan, Quest for Distinction, which built upon the history of the institution and its strategic assets spanning academic medicine, engineering, life sciences, social sciences and the arts. University-wide engagement was the hallmark of VCU’s Quest for Distinction, and the VCU community has now come together to begin a new conversation building on the legacy of Quest in a strategic plan for 2019-2025. The new VPRI will come to VCU at a pivotal moment when a new university-wide strategic planning initiative has just been launched, a new budget model for indirect cost recovery is currently being designed for implementation in 2018, and the University has commissioned a research space planning study to help develop its new Master Site Plan. The VPRI will have a voice in these conversations to advocate on behalf of the VCU research and innovation community.

To facilitate expansive system-based thinking and strategic planning related to VCU’s research enterprise, the Research Deans Advisory Council (ReDAC) was formed to create and implement the vision and strategy for the enterprise-wide research endeavors, optimize communication among leaders, and identify potential funding sources. Working closely with the ReDAC and the Center and Institute directors, the VPRI is expected to develop strategic plans to support and enhance the research enterprise across all of VCU. To that end, the VPRI will engage staff and faculty at all levels, seeking to minimize bureaucratic barriers to collaboration and establish policies and processes that support an environment of creativity and academic excellence.

The VPRI will also help to oversee the Presidential Research Quest Fund, which is grounded in the University’s commitment to develop and enhance faculty scholarship. Its goal is to afford all faculty members internal funding opportunities to support new, emerging, or continuing research. The VPRI will capitalize on this mechanism to leverage the many talents of VCU’s faculty and help to ignite collaborative opportunities.

Sustain a compliant, robust, and service-oriented research administration and operations infrastructure

The office of the VPRI delivers critical services to the VCU research and innovation community, including research administration, compliance, information systems, core facilities, research development, and the Innovation Gateway. The new VPRI will sustain the service-oriented culture the office has established with VCU investigators. As their leader, the VPRI will build upon the successes of these units and review the current administrative structure to create greater efficiencies and ensure that it continues to meet VCU’s current and future needs, paying special
attention to the evolving regulatory landscape and the increasing university-wide demand for strong informatics and data management resources.

The VCU Health System’s strategy includes continued growth in clinical trials and will require highly efficient, streamlined processes and systems to support these endeavors. Currently, staff located within the health sciences center collaborate with their colleagues in the Office of Research and Innovation on these activities. The new VPRI will strengthen clinical research administrative systems to ensure the provision of high quality support to investigators as they expand these activities.

The Vice President must also demonstrate fiscal responsibility in overseeing the budget for a large and complex administrative unit and create a research climate that promotes diversity and inclusion.

**Diversify research funding sources and forge enduring partnerships**

VCU is home to diverse, open-minded, collegial faculty with a commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship leading to exciting discoveries. The research community is filled with investigators who collaborate broadly while possessing depth in areas where VCU is particularly strong, such as the arts, neuroscience, education, clinical/translational research, engineering, and cancer research. As a result, the University is supported by a wide variety of research sponsors. The VPRI will draw upon these strengths to continue to expand VCU’s funding portfolio and be proactive about new funding opportunities. With its location in the Commonwealth’s capital and its proximity to Washington, D.C., VCU is uniquely positioned to develop and maintain relationships with government funders. The VPRI will nurture existing relationships and facilitate new ones with industry, foundations, and government agencies to support research and innovation at VCU.

**Champion VCU to local, national, and global audiences**

Research and innovation at VCU continues to grow. To facilitate and further enhance the work of VCU’s talented scholars and entrepreneurs, the VPRI will serve as a spokesperson for the University and work closely with the communications staff to facilitate the promotion of VCU’s intellectual and economic contributions to a broader audience. VCU already enjoys strong relationships with the city of Richmond and has built a foundation for innovation with Activation Capital, Lighthouse Labs, and other affiliated entrepreneurship platforms. By broadcasting VCU’s successes, the VPRI will have the opportunity to deepen these relationships and to widen the circle of partners who benefit from the University’s wins.

**Catalyze further development of the regional innovation economy**

VCU plays a critical role in the economic development of Richmond and the surrounding region by educating the work force, employing thousands of residents, and incubating innovations that lead to new businesses. Therefore, the VPRI is expected to serve as a thought leader for the University and the region. Working with VCU’s leadership as well as external partners such as
the Activation Council, the VPRI will assess the current state of Richmond’s innovation economy and develop forward-thinking plans to leverage VCU’s assets for a better future.

**Sustain and promote VCU’s culture of interdisciplinary, community engaged research**

As a key leader within the University, the VPRI is responsible for ensuring that research and innovation programs continue to grow within VCU. VCU has earned the Carnegie Foundation’s “Community Engaged” classification status through its ongoing commitment to serving the Richmond community. The VPRI will capitalize upon this relationship to support the University’s community engaged scholars and promote new opportunities for social entrepreneurship and research that serves the public interest.

**Qualifications and Experience**

The position requires a leader with vision, creativity, and drive; demonstrated executive management experience; and the interpersonal ability to lead and inspire diverse constituents working across and throughout the university and the entrepreneurial ecosystem. A Ph.D., M.D., and/or equivalent degree is required. Other desired qualifications and experience include:

- A distinguished record of leadership and scholarly success, ideally including federal and other research funding, in a complex, competitive, diverse academic research environment;

- A history of successful, collaborative, collegial, and transparent leadership;

- Effective management of an organization’s capital, human, fiscal, and other critical resources; a record of success in managing and building research revenues; and experience in financial management in a large academic institution;

- Demonstrable commitment to facilitating and developing the innovation and opportunity catalyzed by academic discovery;

- Understanding of importance of compliance with regulatory laws, policies, and procedures as it relates to a research enterprise;

- An innovative and global orientation with demonstrable success in addressing inclusion and diversity;

- A proven capacity working effectively with local communities, including state and local government officials and agencies;

- Appreciation of the importance of translating academic discoveries into new products, businesses, jobs, and/or economic growth;
• An outstanding record of leading, hiring, retaining, and managing talented people; a strong team orientation, along with a willingness to listen well and build bridges;

• Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including the ability to effectively collaborate across disparate disciplines and to operate at the highest levels of academic, business, and government leadership;

• The capacity to represent the University to funders and partners in a compelling manner;

• A genuine understanding and respect for the tradition and culture of success at VCU;

• A demonstrable commitment to the mission of access, providing to all the finest of educational programs, the most relevant research, and the highest quality of care;

• A clear record of accomplishment in bringing people together to achieve outcomes of significance to society.

Location

The office of the VPRI is located in downtown Richmond, VA on the MCV Campus. Established as the Commonwealth’s capital in 1779, Richmond boasts a rich history which can still be seen today in the architecture, the statues on Monument Avenue and the State Capitol grounds, and even in the cobblestone streets running through the city. Richmond has a low cost of living and a strong cultural community that enhances the distinct diversity that flows throughout the city. Intimate neighborhoods, cozy restaurants and cafes, and quaint local markets provide the familiarity of a small town, while theaters, galleries, music festivals, sports attractions, and a steady stream of annual events bring the region to life. The city offers more than 550 acres of parks bordering the historic James River, just steps from VCU’s campus. Richmond’s ideal location in central Virginia allows for day or weekend trips to the beach, the mountains, or Washington, D.C. Travel + Leisure magazine recently named the Richmond region as one of five top wine regions to visit. The metropolitan area is also home to ten Fortune 1000 companies, a broad base of financial companies, hospitals, media firms, high-tech manufacturing companies, as well as state and local government agencies.
To Apply

Virginia Commonwealth University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to:

Denise O’Grady Gaffney, Vice President
Jamie Sands, Managing Associate
Laura Mariani, Associate
Isaacson, Miller
263 Summer Street
Boston, MA 02210

Electronic submission of materials is encouraged via: www.imsearch.com/6247

All applications must also be submitted through the VCU Jobs website: www.vcujobs.com

VCU is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer. Women, minorities and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply.