



VCU Office of the Provost

Dear VCU faculty and staff,

VCU leadership reaffirms its strong support for academic and research collaborations worldwide. We are committed to our vision of the global engagement of students, faculty and staff that transforms lives and communities.

We write to you today to remind everyone of VCU's commitment to transparency in our partnerships and relationships and to provide an update as to recent activities from the U.S. federal government. Recently, attention from the federal government on improper activities and relationships has raised concerns about foreign influence at some institutions of higher education.

VCU strongly supports international collaboration and values its partnerships with universities and other organizations worldwide. It is important in pursuing these activities that all faculty, staff and students understand the need to maintain relationship transparency and be aware of the current regulatory environment. VCU has guidance and requirements that govern conflicts of interest and commitment — specifically, outside professional activities, financial interests, international collaborations, intellectual property protections, foreign gifts and contracts reporting that support compliance and protect and preserve one of the very best parts of VCU: our collaborative spirit. Our [Code of Conduct](#) outlines all of this information.

In April of this year, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), working with the Association of American Universities (AAU), issued a series of recommendations for campuses to consider. In light of these suggestions, the provost's office convened a task force to review and consider ways to reaffirm VCU's unwavering commitment to academic freedom while also ensuring an aware and compliant campus community. VCU's task force determined adequate policies and procedures exist. This letter is to remind faculty and staff of our current reporting and compliance requirements.

As we all continue to advance existing international collaborations and pursue new opportunities benefiting our faculty, students, and research objectives, we ask that you review the international activities resources found on the Integrity and Compliance Office [website](#), which will be updated as needed.

Our offices are currently working to assemble an expertise-based working group to further explore any necessary guidance or policy enhancements in relation to the recommendations of the task force.

Further questions or comments can be sent to ucompliance@vcu.edu.

Sincerely,

Gail Hackett, Ph.D.
Provost and senior vice president for academic affairs

P. Srirama Rao, Ph.D.
Vice president for research and innovation

