



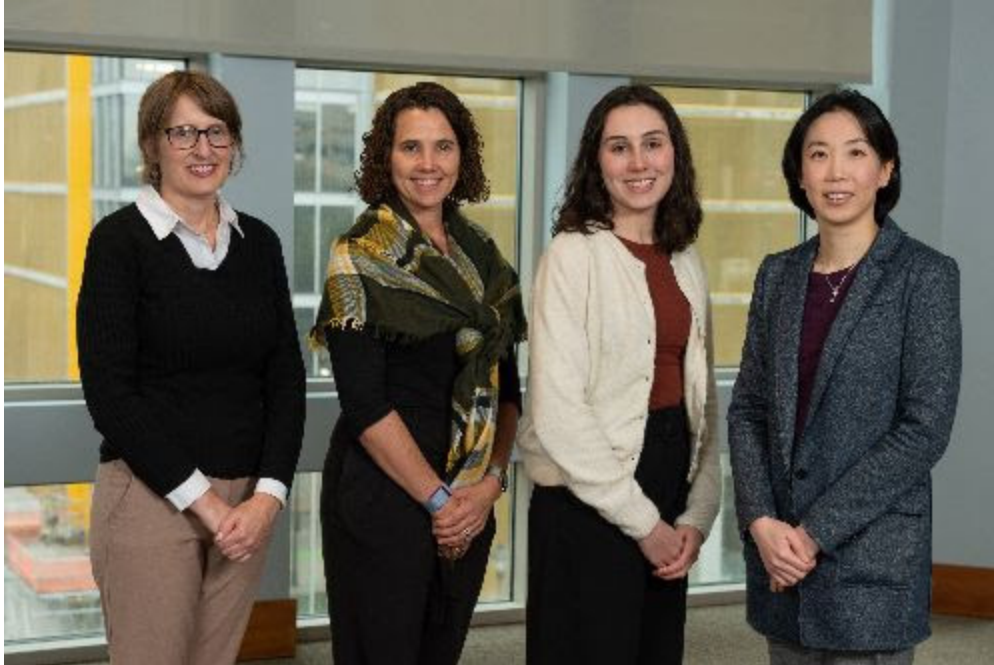
Dear colleagues:

I am delighted to share the exciting news that the National Science Foundation, which tracks research and development funding, ranks VCU **#50** among the nation's most prestigious U.S. public universities. Our breaking into the top 50 comes much ahead of the timeline set out by VCU's QUEST 2028 goals.

This #50 ranking, advancing VCU from #58 only a year ago, is based upon fiscal research expenditures reported to the [NSF Higher Education Research and Development FY21 survey](#). In this annual survey, the NSF defines research and development funding as expenditures from all funding types related to creative and systematic work undertaken to increase the stock of knowledge, including STEM, health fields, arts and humanities faculty. While VCU's 2021 research expenditure data reflects advancing research across all our disciplines and campuses, it also highlights an especially exceptional year when VCU participated in multiple clinical and investigational trials for therapeutics against the COVID virus.

Our #50 ranking reflects the talented researchers, scholars and creators who conduct collaborative, transformational and outstanding research at VCU, as well as the engagement of our postdoctoral trainees, students and staff who help facilitate VCU's rising national and global prominence.

In addition to our sponsored research, VCU's innovative and creative faculty, students and staff have a strong impact on the Richmond region, the commonwealth and beyond. Among this impact In FY21, upon which this ranking is based, 27 patents were issued and 24 inventions were licensed or optioned, with seven start-ups launched, to advance transformative innovation and enhance the economic and social well-being of the region.



The [NSF HERD data for FY21](#) include these specific VCU rankings for public research universities:

- #1: Visual and performing arts
- #7: Non-science / engineering fields
- #13: Education
- #31: Social work
- #34: Health sciences
- #35: Psychology
- #37: Department of Health and Human Services
- #41: Biological and biomedical sciences
- #45: Life sciences
- #58: Expenditures in science and engineering fields
- #66: Computer and information sciences
- #82: Engineering

In FY21, VCU received several impactful federal grant renewals to address societal challenges. One such renewal funds the pursuit of [developing a drug](#) to target a specific, tumor-growing protein that causes pancreatic cancer. Another renewal continues VCU's investigations into the [genetic components of alcohol use disorder](#).



A [\\$16 million gift](#) in FY21 to the Wright Center for Clinical and Translational Research fosters collaborative science and health care research among VCU investigators and students. New federal funding that year also allowed [VCU's oyster shell recycling program](#) to expand the community project into northern Virginia, helping to replace oyster beds that play a critical role in sustaining the Chesapeake Bay. VCU's Medicines for All Institute is partnering with a Richmond-based firm, Phlow Corp., on a \$354 million federal contract to secure the domestic pharmaceutical supply chain.



The foundation of our strength is our collaborative community of field-shapers with diverse experiences among our three campuses, including VCUarts Qatar. For example, we see this in the effort of a VCU researcher in Dance and Media Technologies [collaborating with our cybersecurity faculty](#), [the creation of seven new, university-wide transdisciplinary research centers](#), and the establishment the new [Stravitz-Sanyal Institute for Liver Disease and Metabolic Health](#) and many more within the arts, education, health sciences, the humanities and STEM. Collaboration among disciplines is essential for achieving transformative innovation that impacts our community, nation and even our world.



I am so proud that based on the latest NSF rankings announced today, VCU has become a top 50 public research university in the U.S. I am also very grateful for your commitment to making a difference every day and your readiness to tackle societal grand challenges. Our rankings for FY22 will be announced a year from now, and I am confident that we will continue our upward trajectory. Thank you for all that you do, I look forward to collaborating with you and all of our VCU colleagues on another highly productive year.

Sincerely,
P. Srirama Rao, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research and Innovation

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