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STATEMENT OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

[Link to VCU University Council Philosophy of Shared Governance](#)

The ultimate authority in University government is vested in the Board of Visitors which, with advice from the faculty, administration, classified employees and students, selects a President to whom it delegates the responsibility for managing the University. A vigorous university develops through the active participation of the faculty in the formal and informal decision-making processes concerned with educational functions and policies at various administrative levels. It is in the interest of the University to provide avenues of communication through which the faculty can provide counsel and advice on other matters of mutual interest.

Every faculty member shares a continuing responsibility for shaping the direction of their department, of their School, and for serving on University-wide councils, committees and offices. Since participation of the faculty in academic matters is vital to the proper governance of the University community, it is incumbent upon the University to provide ample opportunities for faculty participation.

The [Bylaws of University Council](#) of Virginia Commonwealth University 2.a ensure that school governance bylaws have been developed and adopted by each school and state that the nature of the school governance structure shall be left to the individual school. 2.c defines “Representative governance” as

the right of participation in the school or college's governance structure by all full-time faculty members (including tenure and non-tenure track) who hold appointments or joint appointments in that school or college. Participation includes the right to discuss on the floor and vote on all matters coming before meetings. Part-time faculty members should have the prerogative to take part in meetings of the faculty. Voting privileges for part-time faculty should be decided by each school or college.

**Bylaws for the Faculty of the School of the Arts
Virginia Commonwealth University
Adopted and approved March 24, 2026**

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Faculty of the School of the Arts, Virginia Commonwealth University, also known as the Faculty of VCUarts.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

This governance document outlines the methods through which School of the Arts faculty participate and engage within the school and their individual units. It shall be in conformity with the Faculty Roles and Responsibilities policy defined by the University Council of Virginia Commonwealth University and to those University policies that affect the School and its faculty. Faculty have the right to freely express their opinions and concerns. The intention of this document is to guarantee the members of the School of the Arts Faculty participation and engagement opportunities in matters vital to the welfare of the University, School, and their respective academic units, and ensure that there is an orderly process that enables faculty to engage in the process of decision making, and to provide feedback and insight that contributes to informed decision making processes that serve the best interests of the School.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

III. Section 1: School Membership

Membership in the School of the Arts faculty consists of all personnel who hold faculty rank within the School. Membership includes the right to discuss matters that come before meetings of the School of the Arts faculty.

III. Section 2: Participation in Meeting: Voice/Vote

Voting privileges are limited to those members who hold full-time tenured, tenure eligible, and term faculty appointments in the School of the Arts. Individuals who hold joint appointments in other schools of the University who are also full-time tenured, tenure eligible or term faculty in the School of the Arts are voting members. Adjunct faculty shall have a voice, not a vote, at designated meetings of the faculty as determined by the Dean. This means they have the right to participate in those School of the Arts meetings without voting privileges.

III. Section 3: Academic Unit Membership

Membership in each Academic Unit, which includes department, program, or center, is limited to individuals holding faculty rank in and assigned to a particular unit/s. Assignment to a unit occurs at the time of hiring. Reassignment or reappointment of a faculty member in a full-time teaching position requires approval from the dean and support from the Academic Unit Leader and the full-time faculty of the unit to which the faculty member will be appointed.

ARTICLE IV: FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL (FAC)

IV. Section 1: Roles and Responsibilities

The Faculty Advisory Council is an advisory faculty entity that represents the faculty of the School of the Arts.

The roles and responsibilities of the Faculty Advisory Council include:

- The discussion of matters related to faculty status, issues, and interdepartmental concerns, bringing such issues and concerns to the attention of the dean, and advising on matters in which the dean seeks input.
- Collaboration with the Dean of Faculty Affairs on developing and proposing a slate of candidates for election to designated university-wide committees, boards or councils to be elected by the School of the Arts faculty. (See: Article VIII.5: Voting)
- Recommending faculty to receive School of the Arts faculty awards, and undergraduate students to receive School of the Arts scholarships.
- The periodic review of this document, the Bylaws for the Faculty of the School of the Arts, following the process described in Article VIII to revise and amend as necessary, in order to ensure its relevance and the maintenance of shared governance.

IV. Section 2: Composition: Election of Members and Terms

The council is composed of one tenured, tenure eligible, or term faculty member from each academic unit (departments & academic programs). Committee members are elected by the faculty of their respective unit, to represent their unit. Committee members serve two-year terms.

IV. Section 3: Election of Officers (Chairs, Secretary) and Terms of Office

The committee chair and secretary are elected by and from the council. It is advised, not required, that the chair be a tenured faculty member.

IV. Section 4: Frequency of Meetings

The FAC members meet monthly, and each representative communicates notes from meetings to their unit's faculty. The FAC chair(s) meets with the Dean of the School and/or Dean of Faculty Affairs as needed, notes are distributed to FAC members. The FAC chair(s) and the Dean of the School meet at least once per semester.

ARTICLE V: ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL

V. Section 1: General Organization

The governance Chair of the Faculty of the School of the Arts shall be the Dean of the School. The Dean, the Assistant and Associate Deans, the Directors, the Departmental Chairs and along with such other persons shall meet regularly as the School's Administrative Advisory Committee to conduct the business of the School. The officers, required meetings, and Standing Committees of the Faculty of the School of the Arts are defined in these Bylaws.

The School is composed of academic units; each academic unit is administered by a chair, director, or program lead. The School leadership is responsible for administering in their areas of responsibility, to conduct the business of the School. Roles and Responsibilities are outlined in the following sections. The primary responsibilities of faculty are outlined in Article VI.

V. Section 2: Academic Unit Leaders

Academic Unit Leaders are appointed by the dean; faculty feedback is solicited and considered. The *Academic Unit Leader* should demonstrate a commitment to the academic, scholarly, and administrative success of the department's faculty, staff and students. Academic Unit Leaders are responsible for supporting and sustaining the organization and administration of their Academic Unit.

The Academic Unit Leader serves as a mentor to faculty colleagues, collaborates with administrative and staff members, and advocates for the Academic Unit from a perspective that considers the overall interests of the School and the Academic Unit. The Academic Unit Leader leads faculty in shaping and maintaining the curriculum and facilitates and advocates for faculty research. The Academic Unit Leader articulates both the Academic Unit and the School's missions to internal and external constituencies, and encourages engagement, participation, and collegiality.

V. Section 3: Director, Senior Director

The school's directors are responsible to the dean for the organization and the administration of their respective areas. Structural organization differs among individual areas administered by directors. Their specific roles and responsibilities are defined by the Dean.

The senior director reports and provides active support to the dean. This person maintains responsibilities invested in ensuring alignment of university, school and department visions and goals, and the success of department chairs, faculty, staff and students. They mentor Academic Unit Leaders and administrators, ensure departments align with the overall interests of the School of the Arts and articulate the mission of the school to internal and external constituencies. Senior Directors are appointed by the dean; feedback from faculty and chairs is solicited and considered.

V. Section 4: Associate Dean, Assistant Dean

Associate/Assistant Deans support the Dean by providing leadership for and coordination of academic programs, strategic planning, resource allocation, implementation, and evaluation as well as leadership in faculty development through collaboration with the dean, Academic Unit Leaders, and directors.

V. Section 5: Dean

Primary responsibility for the school's administrative and educational policies rests with the dean. The dean is assisted in this regard by assistant /associate deans, directors and department chairs. In the role of Dean of the Faculty of the School of the Arts, the dean is the primary advocate for the school while providing overall leadership and direction for the School of the Arts. In their responsibilities to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, they ensure university policy is communicated and followed among faculty and staff and ensures that the school operates within the framework of university policy.

ARTICLE VI: FACULTY ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

VI. Section 1: Faculty

The faculty of the School of the Arts includes a diversity of artists, scholars, performers, designers, and educators. Their actions and responsibilities in the governance of their respective units, the School of the Arts and the university is central to the mission of the institution and the education of their students. The faculty's position at the intersection of the University's mission of teaching, research and service uniquely qualifies them to assume the central role in establishing and sustaining curricular, scholarship, and service responsibilities, goals and expectations.

Every faculty member shares a continuing responsibility for shaping the direction of their department, of their School, and for serving on University-wide councils, committees and offices.

VI. Section 2: Definitions of Faculty Roles

All faculty appointments are either tenured, tenure-eligible, term (non-tenure), or adjunct (non-tenure), in accordance with the [VCU Faculty Handbook](#) and the [VCU Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedure](#) documents. The Handbook gives guidance on Visiting, Emeritus, and Affiliated faculty roles, as well as the University Academic Professional designation. Tenured, tenure-eligible, and term faculty are selected through a national and international search, with peer stakeholders serving on the Search Committees, following the University faculty search guidelines provided by Human Resources.

The role of the faculty is defined in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and the [Faculty Roles and Rewards Policy](#). Key responsibilities include the development and delivery of curriculum, participation in assessment activities, serving as a recommending body to the Dean concerning matters related to promotion and/or tenure, and significant commitment to original research, scholarship, and creative work.

VI. Section 3: Faculty Workloads

Workloads are discussed with the faculty member's academic unit leader. The agreed upon distribution of service, teaching, and research, as appropriate to faculty assignment, is documented in the faculty's annual individualized work plan.

As of Fall 2024, The School of the Arts is in the process of drafting an equitable faculty workload document, in accordance with the [University Faculty Roles and Rewards Policy](#).

ARTICLE VII. COMMITTEES

VII. Section 1: The Administrative Advisory Committee (AAC)

The Administrative Advisory Committee shall be comprised of the Dean of the School, who shall serve as chair, all Associate/Assistant Deans, Directors, Academic Unit Leaders, and any other person designated by the Dean. The AAC is an advisory committee to the Dean that reviews the performance of the school and serves to disseminate official University communications to the faculty.

VII. Section 2: Standing Committees of the Faculty

Art Foundation Program Committee

This committee supports programmatic and curricular initiatives that impact the foundation student experience. One committee member is elected in departmental faculty meetings from each AFO fed major. In addition, the Art Foundation director appoints one Art Foundation faculty member. The director of the Art Foundation Program chairs the committee.

Arts Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

This committee is responsible for advising and providing faculty approval on all matters relating to undergraduate programs within the school. The committee reviews undergraduate course offerings and the undergraduate bulletin.

The committee is composed of a selected member from each department, including the Art Foundation Program, and the two School of the Arts representatives of the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. An associate or assistant dean of the School of the Arts serves as the committee chair.

Anderson Faculty Advisory Committee

This Committee is responsible for advising on, and providing support for, programs and initiatives related to the fulfillment of the Anderson's mission. The committee is composed of faculty representatives, elected in departmental faculty meetings, from each department that exhibits in the space. The Anderson director chairs the committee ex officio. One additional Anderson staff member may sit on the committee at the director's discretion. Committee members are expected to serve a term of at least one academic year. Subcommittees and sub-chairs may be organized on a temporary basis, to be disbanded at the conclusion of their charge. The director receives and implements the guidance of the Committee at their discretion.

Faculty Committee for Foundation Admissions

This committee supports the admissions process for first year foundation students. Ten faculty members, one from each major department, will be identified in departmental faculty meetings to serve on this committee which will be charged with reviewing and scoring portfolios from prospective student applications. Faculty must score portfolios outside their discipline and should be comfortable doing so. Faculty serve a two-year term. Weekly reviews are completed independently and start in October and continue to the first part of March the following year.

Inclusion and Equity Committee - *Disbanded as of January 2025*

The Diversity, Inclusion and Equity committee is responsible for and committed to eliminating bias and discrimination, dismantling systems of oppression, and promoting equity and inclusion, to create an environment in which all of our faculty, students, and staff can not only feel safe, but thrive. The committee addresses both the challenges and opportunities for growth and development, by empowering students, faculty, and staff to create a more inclusive learning environment and the sustainability of an equitable space for the production of culture. The committee achieves this by advising the VCUarts Director of Inclusion and Equity and the Deans of concerns, challenges, accomplishments, and needs within VCUarts and its surrounding community.

Graduate Studies Committee

This committee is responsible for advising on all matters relating to graduate programs within the school. The committee reviews graduate degree programs, graduate course offerings, and the graduate bulletin. Departmental committee member representatives update faculty within their departments on information relevant and pertinent to graduate programs. Academic Unit Leaders solicit nominations and self-nominations for department level graduate program directors. The Unit Leader invites departmental faculty to provide feedback regarding those nominated, and then makes a recommendation to the senior director and the School of the Arts director of graduate studies. The director of graduate studies for the School of the Arts is the committee chair.

School of the Arts Promotion and Tenure Committee

This Committee reviews candidates for promotion and/or tenure who have been recommended by departmental peer review committees. The committee is responsible for evaluating and recommending candidates to the dean of the School of the Arts. The committee reviews and approves all school and departmental guidelines relative to promotion and tenure. The committee is composed of one tenured faculty member elected or appointed by each department.

There is a priority to have representation from each department. In the event that tenured faculty are not available, a term (non-tenure) faculty at rank of at least associate professor may be elected or appointed. If in any given year there will be term (non-tenure) faculty promotion candidates(s), there must be at least one member of the Committee that is a term (non-tenure) faculty representative. If there is no term (non-tenure) faculty representative on the committee

during this given year, one must be appointed specifically to review and vote on such promotions. Committee members serve staggered three-year terms. The committee chair and secretary are elected by and from the membership.

VII. Section 3: Standing Committees Charges and Appointments

All Standing Committees of the School are representative of the faculty as a whole and report to the Dean and the School. Appropriate minutes and records are kept for all school level committee meetings. At the close of the academic year, each Standing Committee compiles a summary report of the year's proceedings, which the committee chair will share with the Dean in writing. With the exception of the Promotion and Tenure Committee minutes, committee chairs are to provide minutes and yearly reports to the faculty through the School of the Arts shared Google Drive (or the most current University electronic platform).

Members of Standing Committees should be representative of the School and academic units. Unless otherwise specified, it is recommended that Members are appointed to standing committees for three years, and may be reappointed. Standing committees shall elect a chair from their membership. When changes are made to the membership of any of the Standing Committees, the revised membership list shall be published to the faculty and the Dean.

VII. Section 4: Authority of Standing Committees

Standing Committee membership and voting authority should balance, as appropriate, the interests of the School, the School's Academic Units and other stakeholders such as students, alumni and staff. Each Standing Committee shall establish inclusive quorum and voting policies and bylaws that allow fair and orderly organization and meetings.

ARTICLE VIII. FACULTY MEETINGS

VIII. Section 1: Regular Meetings of the Faculty

Meetings of the faculty are held at both the school and unit levels.

At the school level, the dean calls and chairs regular meetings for the entire School of the Arts faculty at least once a semester during the academic year. The regular meeting at the beginning of the Fall Semester is known as the Annual Meeting.

VIII. Section 2: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Dean of the School. Full-time faculty members can request faculty wide meetings through the Faculty Advisory Council.

VIII. Section 3: Meeting organization

The Dean serves as the Chair of the meeting and has oversight of the agenda.

VIII. Section 4: Voting

A simple majority of the voting members present, in person or by teleconference, shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the School. The FAC Secretary shall conduct a count for purposes of establishing a quorum before any vote is taken. The parliamentary authority adopted by this organization shall be the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, which shall govern this organization in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws.

Absentee votes shall only be accepted at a meeting of the faculty if: 1) the quorum present at a meeting vote by a majority to accept them, and 2) the nature or meaning of the proposal or motion has not been altered by the members present at the meeting. This determination is made by the Dean of the School or at their discretion, by vote of the membership. The tally of any absentee ballots will not be revealed until the vote of those present has been completed. Proxy voting is not allowed.

Voting for University positions and appointments shall conform to relevant University regulations. Votes can also be conducted electronically, and shall conform to relevant University regulations. Anonymous voting ballots will be distributed to full-time faculty members by email. Voting ballots will be submitted within ten (10) working days. The ballots will be tabulated by the Faculty Advisory Committee. The results of the vote will be announced to the faculty within ten (10) working days of the deadline for receipt of the ballots.

VIII. Section 5: Academic Unit Meeting

At the academic unit level, meetings are held at least on a monthly basis during the academic year and are called and chaired by the Academic Unit Leader.

Academic Unit faculty meetings provide opportunities for faculty participation and representation in various aspects of academic unit governance. Some of the specific purposes of these meetings are to:

1. provide a forum for review of school and University policies, procedures and concerns which may have an impact upon the academic unit,
2. develop and approve academic unit philosophy,
3. make recommendations to the chair on matters concerning development of academic unit policies and procedures,
4. review and recommend academic unit curricula and course offerings,
5. confer with the chair on issues related to faculty scheduling, space utilization, facilities and resources, and
6. elect representatives to school and academic unit committees,

In addition to the purposes of academic unit faculty meetings, the established school and academic unit committee structure ensures faculty representation as well as organizational and administrative continuity.

ARTICLE IX. REVISIONS AND AMENDMENT TO THE BYLAWS

IX. Section 1: Frequency of review

The Faculty Advisory Council shall conduct a comprehensive review every 3 years (at minimum) of the School of the Arts Governance Document. During the review, the Faculty Advisory Committee may raise questions about compliance and/or the need to amend the document to better reflect and support the School and its faculty.

The Dean, in collaboration with those faculty members elected to serve as University Council delegates, are responsible for communicating University updates, and may propose amendments needed for School bylaws to be in compliance. Everyone shares the responsibility and participation of reviewing, updating, and understanding the bylaws. Ultimately, the Dean is responsible for enabling the feasibility and implementation of the bylaws.

IX. Section 2: Process for Revision and amendment

An amendment adds to, alters or changes existing language in the governance document through the process of review, discussion, and voting.

The Faculty Advisory Council reviews the governance documents and administers the process of amendments. In order to vote on a proposed amendment during the same academic year, the Faculty Advisory Committee should review or receive proposed amendments to this document on or before February 15 of each academic year. The FAC chair will forward the proposed amendment to the Dean of Faculty Affairs who will distribute the information to the AAC and solicit comments and feedback.

School of the Arts faculty members who wish to propose changes to this document must submit their proposed amendments in writing, indicating support from at least five other faculty members, to their departmental representatives serving on the Faculty Advisory Council, or directly to the FAC chair, and request to be added to the agenda of the next FAC meeting to present the amendment/s. The person proposing the amendment should indicate if they would like the proposal sent to the Administrative Advisory Committee immediately or if they would first like to present the amendment to the FAC for feedback and input, so it may then be sent to AAC with the FAC's endorsement.

The FAC chair will forward the proposed amendment accordingly, (and FAC endorsement, if applicable) to the Dean of Faculty Affairs, with a request to be added to the agenda and present the amendment at the next Administrative Advisory Committee meeting. The Dean of Faculty Affairs will distribute the information to the Administrative Advisory Committee and solicit comments and feedback.

These committees and the dean shall review the suggested changes and present written notice of the proposed amendment/s to the full faculty at least two weeks prior to a School of the Arts

Faculty Meeting, called by the dean, where the amendment/s will be discussed and a vote held. Amendments to this document require an affirmative vote of a simple majority of the voting members present at any regular meeting of the Faculty of the School of the Arts, or at a special meeting called for that purpose. If the vote is conducted electronically, an amendment requires a simple majority of votes, cast by eligible faculty, for passage.

The Faculty Advisory Council reviews the governance documents and administers the process of amendments. In order to vote on a proposed amendment during the same academic year, the Faculty Advisory Committee should review or receive proposed amendments to this document on or before February 15 of each academic year. The FAC chair will forward the proposed amendment to the Dean of Faculty Affairs who will distribute the information to the AAC and solicit comments and feedback.

Revision History

(A list of dates, and footnotes or other systems to indicate major revisions, shall be documented in the amendment section)

Last revision - 8-23-2004

Proposed update - FAC passed 01-26-2023

Proposed update - FAC passed 05-03-2024 with proposed edits

Proposed update - FAC passed 10-08-2024

Proposed update - FAC passed 11-11-2025 with proposed edits

Appendices

University Standing Committees are under the Office of the Provost and can be found on the Office of the Provost website.

[VCUarts Organizational Chart](#)

[Position Descriptions](#)

The Academic Work Unit (Unit) bylaws must align with relevant university policies and rules.

[Academic Rights and Responsibilities](#),

[Annual Assessment of Faculty](#),

[Performance](#), [Faculty Roles and Rewards](#)

[Policy](#),

[Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures](#),

[Faculty Search Guidelines](#)

[Bylaws of The University Council](#), [Philosophy on Shared Governance](#)

[Bylaws of the Faculty](#), [VCU Faculty Senate](#)