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Shared Governance Task Force Report

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Shared Governance Task Force Report

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How to use this report

We recognize this is a long and detailed document, one that is difficult to fully absorb in one reading. The task force has included many recommendations, some that can be implemented in the short term and others that can only be implemented in the longer term. With those things in mind, here are some suggestions:

- Rather than read the report from start to finish, start with the introduction and background, and then read the recommendations in the order of their relevance to you.
- Some recommendations are for specific groups who should take the lead on these next steps. Other recommendations are for VCU Libraries as a whole, so any person, group, department, or division can implement recommendations in their work.
- Some recommendations are only starting points that need more discussion and planning. The task force sometimes received feedback about issues that were too large in scale or not firmly within the scope of our charge to be fully addressed in this report. In some cases, we still included recommendations related to this feedback in order to bring concerns to light and draw attention to areas where more work is needed.
- Some recommendations need to be implemented in phases. Some may even need new groups to be formed to gather additional feedback and develop more detailed implementation plans. The recommendations should evolve as new feedback and ideas are shared by VCU Libraries employees and other stakeholders. If and how recommendations are implemented should be informed and guided by those who will be impacted by implementation.

Introduction and background

The Shared Governance Task Force was convened in September 2019 and charged with reviewing and describing the current VCU Libraries' governance structure, identifying gaps and areas for improvement, and recommending changes. The Task Force was also asked to revise VCU Libraries' existing shared governance policies to create documentation that aligns with the requirements of the review articulated by the Faculty Affairs Committee of the University Council.

Decision-making is currently concentrated in three VCU Libraries entities: Administrative Council, Management Council, and the Faculty Organization. In addition to these, there are a number of standing committees for more narrowly scoped areas of work that cross divisions and departments, and ad hoc working groups and task forces are frequently formed around specific or time-limited initiatives. The Faculty Organization is responsible for naming representatives to a number of university governance entities including the Faculty Senate, University Council, and the University Grievance Panel. VCU Libraries also has representation on the Staff Senate. However, this group is currently not accepting new members as they revise election and voting bylaws, so future decisions about representation in this group will be needed.

To explore shared governance at VCU Libraries, we started by reviewing the work of previous groups. In the last few years, both the Faculty Organization and Management Council have held discussions related to shared governance, including questions of the groups' membership, purpose, and scope of authority in decision-making. Both groups identified two gaps held in common. First was a lack of clarity about the relationship of each group to the Dean of Libraries and Administrative Council. Second was that the scope of authority and/or of advisory roles for each group was not clear except in a few instances.

To hear from more voices and gather more feedback about decision-making, the task force led a series of facilitated discussions, starting with the January All Staff meeting. We spoke directly to UAP and classified employees who have been underrepresented in shared governance through department meetings and open sessions held during the spring semester. We followed up with discussions with the Faculty Organization, Management Council, and Administrative Council. Throughout this process, we offered opportunities to share feedback through anonymous forms. The first fifteen minutes of each regular task force meeting were also open for all to join and participate in the discussion. The task force reviewed the aforementioned documentation and analyzed the feedback we received to develop the VCU Libraries Shared Governance Statement and the recommendations in this report. Below is a summary of that feedback.

First, the feedback we received identified a need for organization-wide reflection and professional development on decision-making processes, particularly in the areas of communication and transparency. Specifically, there are cultural norms and legacy practices that unintentionally contribute to issues and need to be examined and revised. As an example, employees shared that disparities in communication practices contribute to transparency issues. Many expressed an appreciation for agendas and notes posted on the staff blog as a method for sharing information,

but some felt that more could be done to increase the transparency of decision-making processes and proactively seek participation in those processes.

Feedback also indicated that there is a "faculty-staff divide" in VCU Libraries. Such a divide is not unique to VCU; it was one of the major themes in a recent summary of site visits at ASERL institutions that focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Areas, where this divide is felt, include disparities in communication across employee groups (including information shared by administration and other key decision-makers), dynamics between faculty and UAP and classified employees, and organizational structures that limit representation in decision-making processes and opportunities for career advancement. Specific feedback described an overemphasis on credentials versus experience and expertise gained "on the job" that sometimes causes colleagues to dismiss or give less weight to UAP and classified employee suggestions, opinions, and perspectives. A related concern expressed by employees is the presence of power differentials (between faculty and UAP and classified employees and between supervisors and supervisees) that can make it difficult to voice opinions and, in particular, disagreement. Some employees expressed a sense of intimidation about speaking up in "traditional" decision-making settings (like face-to-face meetings), particularly when there are power differentials among those present.

There is great interest in increasing support for UAP and classified employees to participate in existing and future groups (standing and ad hoc) and decision-making processes, in recognition of the benefits gained by exchanging ideas and perspectives and fostering personal and organizational relationships. However, time/timing, compensation, and recognition were all identified as barriers to staff participation. This includes both lack of time and support for UAP and classified employees to engage as fully as desired and timing that works with all employees' schedules, particularly those that do not work traditional 9-5 hours. There is also concern about increased expectations for participation and engagement that are not reflected in job responsibilities or recognized through career advancement or increased compensation. UAP and classified employees shared that they want their participation to be meaningful (personally and professionally enriching), not just in fulfillment of a quota for employee representation.

There is widespread interest in changing formal structures of shared governance in VCU Libraries. UAP and classified employees are interested in some form of UAP and classified employee organization, but there is also hesitancy related to the history of the past staff organization. There is also interest from faculty in achieving a more equitable balance of representation in matters of shared governance through changes to Faculty Organization or broader structures. We received a wide range of ideas for what this could look like, including an organization that includes all employees (and with sub-groups for faculty and UAP/Classified employees); a representative UAP/Classified employee council; or a shared governance council with equal representation of faculty and UAP/Classified employees. Appendix C includes more detail about options considered by the task force and the reasoning for the model we propose.

VCU Libraries Shared Governance Statement

The VCU Libraries Shared Governance Statement is a draft that should continue to be discussed and revised as any recommendations in this report are considered and implemented. While we recognize that we may not always meet all of the principles outlined in the statement, now and in the future, the statement is intended to serve as the model of shared governance that we aspire to put into practice throughout VCU Libraries.

Shared governance is a model where decision-making is collaborative, transparent, well-communicated, and informed by the perspectives of all those who are impacted by the decision. In alignment with the [VCU University Council Philosophy of Shared Governance](), VCU Libraries recognizes that shared governance is neither consensus nor democratic governance, but rather a model that maximizes participation in decision-making processes while also recognizing that final decisions must be made by a clearly defined decision-maker (whether a group or an individual) who will be held accountable for those decisions.

While we recognize that decisions must sometimes be made within constraints, such as time or confidentiality, we seek to put the following principles into practice in our decision-making:

- The voices of people impacted by decisions are sought and represented in the decision-making process.
- Stakeholders are aware of the process used to make decisions and the rationale for decisions that are made.
- Groups and individuals have timely and easy access to information about the decisions they are responsible for.
- Groups and individuals impacted by decisions have timely and easy access to information about those decisions.
- Decision-makers are accountable for the decisions they make and for involving the appropriate stakeholders in those decisions.

We recognize and value the contribution and expertise of all VCU Libraries employees, and we commit to equitable representation of all divisions, departments, and employee types within decision-making processes and representative groups. Further, we recognize that representation should be guided by the principle that those who are most impacted by decisions should have an increased role in the decision-making process.

We recognize that the best decisions are made when the voices of every person impacted by decisions are sought and represented in the decision-making process and when every person feels comfortable and safe in expressing opinions or voicing disagreement. For this to happen, every employee must be responsible for treating colleagues with respect, as well as recognizing and valuing every individual's knowledge, experience, expertise, and input. We also seek to acknowledge and address power differentials that have a negative impact on open expression.

VCU Libraries is committed to providing equitable and meaningful support for all employees to engage in shared governance. This means that administrators, department heads, and managers are responsible for providing the support that is sufficient for each individual employee to engage in shared governance, recognizing that the type and amount of support needed will be unique to each employee. We are also committed to providing, supporting, and participating in professional development that helps us enact shared governance principles at all levels of VCU Libraries.

As individuals and within VCU Libraries groups, we aim for timely and transparent communication across all levels of the organization so that groups and individuals have access to information about decisions they are responsible for and any decisions that will impact them. To increase transparency and awareness of how individuals can participate in decision-making processes and to help ensure uniform practices across divisions, departments, and employee groups, we document and share communication and decision-making processes with all members of VCU Libraries. To hold ourselves accountable, we commit to ongoing reflection on and revision of our practices to strengthen shared governance in VCU Libraries.

In regard to faculty governance, VCU Libraries functions as a single academic unit with uniform faculty bylaws (rather than independent bylaws for each department), and faculty governance is addressed in the Bylaws of the VCU Libraries Faculty Organization.

Responsibility for oversight of this document lies with the Shared Governance Task Force in the interim, with the Shared Governance Implementation Task Force once it is charged, and ultimately with the permanent Shared Governance Committee within the VCU Libraries All Staff Organization.

Task Force Recommendations

The recommendations below are based on the feedback we received throughout this process. They are listed in order of priority, with both short and long term goals. In some cases, it was appropriate to offer interim recommendations.

Shared Governance Implementation

Recommendation 1: Administrative Council should provide a written response to this report, with "referrals for action" for recommendations that require Administrative Council approval or for which Administrative Council wants to offer its support/endorsement.

Recommendation 2: The Interim Dean of Libraries should charge a Shared Governance Implementation Task Force to assist with the implementation of recommendations. See Appendix B for a proposed draft charge.

Recommendation 3: Provide training and professional development related to shared governance. When possible, provide training through Talent@VCU so that participation is reflected in an official VCU training platform. Consider making some training required for specific groups (such as managers) when appropriate. Topics for professional development include decision-making models (particularly consensus and participatory models and models that apply to decisions with different scales of impact); how to create effective meeting minutes and project updates; options currently available to address issues of shared governance (like the VCU Ombudsman); change management; recognizing and addressing power differentials; active listening and facilitating discussions; and working through disagreement.

Faculty and UAP/Classified employee dynamics

Recommendation 1: VCU Libraries should amplify the VCU Code of Conduct in order to ensure that all employees treat one another with the utmost respect, that all employees are responsible and accountable for their decisions and actions, and that every individual's knowledge, experience, expertise, and input is recognized and valued.
- The Code of Conduct applies to all employees. Administrators, managers, supervisors, and others in leadership positions have additional responsibilities to ensure that the Code is put into practice and should take increased responsibility for amplifying it. This includes making all employees aware of their options for reporting concerns (including an option to do so anonymously), VCU-provided resources for mediation and conflict resolution, and grievance policies and procedures.
- All employees should read the code, and professional development opportunities related to the Code principles should be offered to all employees. All departments, divisions, and other groups within VCU Libraries should discuss the Code, reflect on ways we can better put it into practice in the VCU Libraries context, and make any changes needed to do so.

- If employees have concerns that are not addressed by the Code, VCU Libraries should take steps to address any gaps.

Recommendation 2: Replace non-faculty desktop computers with laptops when upgrades are scheduled. UAP and classified employees would benefit from the ability to utilize their own laptop in the performance of their daily tasks, streamlining such functions as accompanying patrons to the stacks, working on inventory control, reporting or working on technical issues, and being able to check item information while searching for materials. The ability to have a laptop at meetings would allow for recording notes and more full participation (including all meetings related to shared governance -- committees, task forces, etc.).
Update: Desktop Support is currently working on replacing desktops with laptops. The effort will continue according to the replacement cycle. This was mentioned in the April 1, 2020, Management Council Meeting notes.

Recommendation 3: Implement a more equitable framework for professional development funding. Offer annual professional development funds for UAP and classified employees.
Update: Administrative Council announced in the July 15, 2020 meeting notes that, starting in fiscal year July 2020 – June 2021, there will be a $500 professional development allocation for all full time UAP and classified employees. Further, in the July 29, 2020 meeting notes, they are working on a more formal policy articulation that would update an out of date Professional Development and Travel Policy from 2001.

Support, compensation, and recognition for engaging in shared governance

Recommendation 1: UAP and classified employee participation in shared governance within VCU Libraries and the university should be recognized in SMART goals and work percentages, with a minimum of 5%-10% of their work percentage able to be devoted to committee participation (but not required). Participation might include membership in committees or groups, holding elected roles, and participation in decision-making processes. Managers should work with supervisees to adjust SMART goals and work percentages accordingly. Management Council should create a uniform process for requests and approval of shared governance and service opportunities for UAP and classified employees (see Recommendation 5 in [Management Council](#) section).

Recommendation 2: Faculty, in collaboration with Management Council and Administrative Council, should develop guidelines on how to address increased service responsibilities in faculty work plans in such a way that reasonably balances percentages and responsibilities across all categories (librarianship, scholarship, and service).

Recommendation 3: Every group seeking feedback on decisions must ensure that all those who will be impacted by the decision have an opportunity to provide feedback. The "Best Practices in Decision-making" document can serve as a resource. Feedback from UAP and

classified employees emphasized that not all VCU Libraries employees work 9-5 hours, and there are disparities in the ability to attend meetings based on employee classification and job responsibilities. Feedback from all employees also indicated varying levels of comfort in participating in synchronous meetings and the potential for power differentials among meeting participants to impact free expression.

Recommendation 4: [Staff recognition awards](#) should be used to recognize UAP and classified employee participation in shared governance within VCU Libraries and the university. We recognize that this is a challenge to implement in the current budget situation (although Associate Deans are currently investigating the use of SPOT Awards for recognition of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic), but we recommend this as a longer-term practice.

Committees, workgroups, and task forces

Recommendation 1: Committees (standing and ad hoc), workgroups, task forces, and other similar types of groups should have equitable representation across divisions, departments, and employee types (Faculty, UAP, and Classified employees). Equitable representation does not necessarily mean equal numbers from each, but rather an attention to representation based on who will be impacted (and most impacted) by decisions that are made by the group. Decisions about membership should also take into account that power differentials among members (like a supervisor and supervisee both serving in the same group) can hinder the open expression of opinions and should be avoided when possible.

Recommendation 2: When a new group is formed or charged, decisions about membership should be as transparent as possible. If membership is appointed, those forming or charging the group should provide an explanation of the process and rationale used to make membership decisions. For groups with broad or library-wide impact, a transparent and participatory process should be used for membership decisions (for example, a nomination and election process).

Recommendation 3: For existing groups and new groups, the scope of authority/role within decision-making processes and who the group reports should be clear. This will likely require discussion among those responsible for creating or charging the group and other decision-making bodies in the libraries.

Recommendation 4: Existing groups should review their communication and decision-making practices and make revisions that strengthen shared governance.
[Appendix A](#) includes a tool for developing decision-making practices that can be used by all VCU Libraries groups. These practices should be documented and included in the group's charge or bylaws/rules.

Recommendation 5: A (recommended, not required) template for group statements of purpose or charges should be developed, with sections on communication practices, decision-making practices, and membership (how it will be decided on and how it will achieve equitable representation).

Recommendation 6: Informal groups that do not have a purpose statement or charge should consider creating and sharing some type of written description of the group and discussing communication and decision-making practices. Appendix A includes a tool for developing decision-making practices that can be used by all VCU Libraries groups.

All Staff Organization

Recommendation 1: Create an All Staff Organization that includes and represents all employee types: Faculty, UAP, Classified staff, and student and hourly employees. The All Staff Organization should serve as a unified representative and decision-making body for matters that affect all employees. However, we recommend that there are two distinct "sub-organizations" within the All Staff Organization, one for faculty (which would take the place of the current Faculty Organization) and one for UAP, Classified staff, and student and hourly employees so that each group can independently address matters that only or primarily impact a specific employee group.

Recommendation 2: Use an adapted version of the Faculty Organization statement of purpose as a starting point for a library-wide discussion on the All Staff Organization statement of purpose. This statement of purpose addresses the role of a representative employee organization within the shared governance of VCU Libraries and the broader university, but the library-wide discussion is needed to ensure that it reflects the needs of all employees.
- "The purpose of the VCU Libraries All Staff Organization shall be to serve as an instrument through which each member of the organization will be guaranteed the right to express opinions and concerns freely about any and all matters vital to the welfare of the University and VCU Libraries; through which the organization can exercise educational, advisory, administrative and service functions in the formulation of policies affecting VCU Libraries and its employees; and by which the employees of VCU Libraries can be represented in relations with the University, with the Commonwealth, and with other organizational bodies and individuals."

Recommendation 3: Leadership team and elections
- Within this, All Staff Organization creates a leadership team whose purpose is to represent all VCU employees in matters of shared governance, including representation to the Administrative Council and the broader university. The leadership team should have equal membership of faculty and UAP and classified employees and should be elected through separate faculty and UAP and classified employee elections.

● The All Staff Organization should continue to elect representatives to university groups: University Council, Faculty Senate, University Grievance Panel, and Staff Senate (when this group finalizes changes to its Bylaws to move to an elected representative model).
● Two separate elections should be held, one for faculty and one for UAP and classified employees, based on which elected roles represent each employee type. For example, UAP and classified employees elect representatives to the All Staff Organization and Staff Senate, and faculty employees elect representatives to the All Staff Organization and Faculty Senate.

Recommendation 4: Bylaws and standing rules recommendations
● Hold standing All Staff Organization meetings and standing meetings for faculty and for UAP and classified employees. This will allow for discussions and decision-making to happen based on who is impacted by the discussion topic or decision: everyone, faculty only, or UAP and classified employees only.
● Create bylaws that allow flexibility in membership for standing committees and ad hoc groups based on their scope. For example, the Peer Review Committee should continue to have faculty membership, while a Nominating Committee with equal representation of faculty and UAP/Classified employees can work together on annual elections.
● Select an alternative "parliamentary procedure" to the full Robert's Rules of Order, and provide training for all employees on that alternative so that each individual is prepared to engage with discussion and decision making.

Recommendation 5: Create a standing Shared Governance Committee within the All Staff Organization, with equal representation of faculty and UAP/Classified employees.
Committee responsibilities include the ongoing review of VCU Libraries shared governance, responding to issues of shared governance, and oversight of the VCU Libraries Shared Governance Statement.

Administrative Council

Administrative Council is the primary decision making body for VCU Libraries. Feedback indicated a need for more transparency and communication about the group's decision making processes. Administrative Council members are all senior-level faculty members resulting in a power differential. Feedback from faculty, UAP, and classified employees indicated that this power differential is felt most keenly during in-person (including online) discussions where the presence of Administrative Council members can hinder the open expression of opinions, particularly when there are dissenting opinions.

Recommendation 1: Review existing decision-making practices, revise practices to strengthen shared governance, and document/share these practices with all employees.
● We recommend that the Administrative Council seek external consultation to support this review. Given that an external review could take significant time and resources, we also

recommend that the Administrative Council consider an interim review process that allows the implementation of as many recommendations as possible.

- Written descriptions should formalize existing practices that have been noted by employees as good examples of shared governance, including sharing and seeking feedback on drafts of policies undergoing substantial revision and faculty position descriptions for upcoming searches.
- Develop methods for employees to bring forward issues or items for discussion to the Administrative Council.
- Develop guidelines that describe situations in which the Administrative Council will ask for presentations from non-members to inform discussion or decisions, as well as other methods outside of meetings used to gather information and feedback.

Recommendation 2: Develop formal roles for non-members to contribute to Administrative Council discussions and decisions.

- Add Faculty and UAP/Classified employee representation, either as ex officio members or as liaisons. Representatives should communicate employee feedback and concerns to Administrative Council and assist the Administrative Council with gathering feedback and sharing information.
- If the All Staff Organization is formed, elected leadership from faculty and UAP/classified employee groups can serve in this role. However, we recommend that this be implemented in the interim of an All Staff Organization formation.

Recommendation 3: Review existing communication practices, revise practices to strengthen shared governance, and document/share these practices with all employees.

- Establish a method for all employees to provide anonymous feedback, ask questions, submit ideas, or voice concerns to the Administrative Council, including the option to request a response, as well as a method for communicating Administrative Council responses to the libraries.
- Communication practices should ensure uniform communication across divisions, departments, and employee groups, including how information is shared before meeting minutes are posted.

Recommendation 4: Use change management models to help facilitate discussions about changes to group practices.

Management Council

Management Council was also cited as a key decision making entity at VCU Libraries. As such, feedback suggested that the Management Council would benefit from increased transparency and expanded representation. Most notably, Management Council does not currently include any UAP and classified employees as members.

Recommendation 1: Add UAP and classified employee directors as Management Council

members. Currently, only faculty department heads are members of the Management Council. There are UAP and classified employees who hold director-level positions that report directly to the Dean of Libraries or an Associate Dean.
Update: Management Council added directors to Management Council membership (7/2/2020).

Recommendation 2: Define the relationship between Management Council and the shared governance structure at VCU Libraries. Consider the addition of representatives from key VCU Libraries leadership bodies including the Faculty Organization and Inclusion and Diversity Committees. Since there is not currently a UAP and classified Employee organization, consider immediate interim action for UAP and classified employee representation. For example, a representative or a representative from each division could be selected.
Update: Management Council added representation from the Faculty Organization and Inclusion and Diversity Committee (7/2/2020).

Recommendation 3: Increase representation of student employee managers. Consider the addition of a student employee manager to Management Council membership or designation of a current member with the responsibility to represent student employees. In addition, make a plan to periodically bring student employee managers into meetings or provide them with regular updates in order to strengthen the representation of student employees.

Recommendation 4: Review current communication and decision-making practices and make revisions to strengthen shared governance, in order to increase transparency and incorporate more voices in discussion and decisions. Appendix A includes a tool for developing decision-making practices that can be used by all VCU Libraries groups.
- Develop written policies about communication practices to help ensure uniform communication across divisions, departments, and employee groups.
- Develop methods for employees to bring forward issues or items for discussion to Management Council.
- Develop guidelines that describe situations in which Management Council will seek feedback from outside the group detailing methods including: invited presentations from non-Management Council members to inform discussion or decisions, open attendance or observation for some meetings, inviting more managers for discussion around key topics, and other methods outside of meetings used to gather information and feedback.

Recommendation 5: Management Council should create a uniform process for requests and approval of shared governance and service opportunities for UAP and classified employees (see Recommendation 1 in Support, compensation, and recognition for engaging in shared governance section).

Recommendation 6: Use change management models to help facilitate discussions about changes to membership and group practices.

Faculty Organization

The task force's recommendations for Faculty Organization apply regardless of the formation of the task force's recommended All Staff Organization. The recommendations can be implemented prior to the formation of an All Staff Organization and incorporated into that new group's structure and bylaws.

Recommendation 1: Formalize Faculty Organization representation within Management Council. Establish a method for representation, which could be done through an existing elected position or the creation of a newly elected position. Ensure that representatives are not already Management Council members so that their role is focused on the representation of all faculty. Revise Bylaws to reflect any changes to elected positions.
Update: See Faculty Organization minutes of April 14, 2021

Recommendation 2: Develop procedures and clarify Bylaws to address concerns about power differentials between supervisors and supervisees and between the Dean/Associate Deans and other faculty.
- Procedures should seek to support the free expression of opinions and concerns. All faculty, including those who are Associate Deans and supervisors, have the same rights of participation in the Faculty Organization. Therefore, procedures should not infringe on any faculty member's rights of participation, including the right to vote on all matters coming before the Faculty Organization.
- Procedures should include opportunities to voice opinions and concerns anonymously.
- Faculty Organization Bylaws and Standing Rules should be revised to address the role of the Dean and Associate Deans in elected positions, standing committees, and ad hoc groups.

Recommendation 3: Offer training and facilitated discussions that address the faculty and UAP/Classified employee divide and power differentials. Possible topics include recognizing and addressing power differentials, serving as an ally/advocate for colleagues, change management, emotional intelligence, active listening and facilitating discussions, and working through disagreement.

Appendix A. Decision-making practices

This tool can be used to develop a plan for making a specific decision or standard decision-making practices for representative groups, committees, workgroups, task forces, and others in VCU Libraries who make decisions. The tool includes suggestions for inclusive and transparent decision-making processes, but decisions must sometimes be made within constraints of time or confidentiality that may prevent putting every suggestion into practice for every decision-making process. In addition, the impact of a decision should also determine the scale of the decision-making process (decisions with smaller impact may not require a process as intensive as decisions with larger impact).

Before you use this tool, make sure that all stakeholders have been identified so that they are represented in your plan (or involved in creating it). This includes stakeholders within VCU Libraries, the broader VCU community (students, staff, and faculty), members of the Richmond community, and beyond. Share an overview of the decision to be made and the currently identified stakeholders as widely as possible, and ask other stakeholders who are not yet involved to get in touch. As other stakeholders are identified, changes to a group's membership should be considered if needed.

What process will we use to make the decision?

All stakeholders should be aware of the process used to make decisions and the rationale for decisions that are made. At a minimum, this requires the decision-making process to be documented and shared after a decision has been made. However, to make the entire process more participatory and transparent, it is best to determine the process at the start (while recognizing that it might need to change) and share it with stakeholders.

- Who will be the final decision-maker(s)?
- What role will other stakeholders play?
- What factors will the decision be based on (the rationale for the decision)?
- How will we share the final decision?

    Examples: When a decision is announced, share the rationale for the decision that was made, as well as other options that were considered.

How will we provide timely and easy access to information to those who will be impacted by the decision?

Each stakeholder will have different information needs. The best way to ensure that everyone has the information they need is to collaboratively develop a communication plan with each stakeholder. Remember that information may need to be shared "up, down, and across" the libraries, as well as outside of VCU Libraries (students, staff, and faculty) and VCU (members of

the Richmond community and beyond). Aim to share information early, often, and as transparently as possible, and identify who will be responsible for sharing information.

- Who needs the information?
- What do they need to know?
- When do they need to know it?
- How will we share information with them?
- Who will be responsible for sharing information?

    Examples: Post regular updates to the staff blog. Send regular email updates to the all-staff email list, to email lists for specific departments or groups, or directly to stakeholders. Use online or in-person sessions to share information (particularly information that is harder to capture in writing), and record sessions for those who cannot attend. Hold open meetings to allow stakeholders to observe the discussion. Share working documents.

How will we ensure that the voices of people impacted by decisions are sought and represented in the decision-making process?

Synchronous meetings (in-person or online) should never be the only method used to seek feedback. Always provide options for asynchronous feedback so everyone can take time to review questions or information, consider their responses, and respond at a time that fits their schedule. Asynchronous methods, including an option for anonymous feedback, will also help ensure that everyone can share concerns or voice disagreement.

- How will we ensure that everyone impacted by the decision has an opportunity to share feedback?

    Examples: Hold multiple meetings during days and times that work for all employees' schedules. Attend department or group standing meetings to reach people where they are. Hold an open comment period for drafts of written policies or reports. Revise and repeat open comment periods as needed. For asynchronous methods (like a response form), include an option to share anonymously.

- How will the feedback we receive be shared, used, and responded to? How will we communicate this to those who provide feedback?

    Examples: Request permission to share verbatim feedback received beyond the group. When gathering feedback through a form, include an option to indicate if a response is requested.

How will we ensure accountability as decisions are implemented?

Decision-makers are accountable for the decisions they make and for involving the appropriate stakeholders in those decisions. Decision-makers should stay informed as decisions are implemented, continue to seek feedback from stakeholders, and commit to revisiting decisions that have negative impacts or that were made without including all stakeholders.

- Who will be responsible for assessing the impact of decisions and addressing negative impacts?
- How will the impact of the decision be assessed?
- What will be done if there are negative impacts?
- What will be done if a decision was made without informing or consulting all stakeholders?

Appendix B. Proposed Draft Charge for the Shared Governance Implementation Task Force

Purpose and Background

Charge
The Shared Governance Implementation Task Force will assist with the implementation of shared governance recommendations. The task force will also lead to further development of an All Staff Organization model.

Tasks
- Develop a timeline and framework for implementation of recommendations, in consultation with stakeholders.
- Assist with/consult on implementation of recommendations, including how to implement interim steps ahead of the formation of an All Staff Organization.
- Create a method to track the implementation of recommendations that will keep all employees updated about progress through the staff blog.
- Create and implement a process that provides additional opportunities for all employees to shape the proposed model, develop a more detailed model based on that feedback.
- Create an implementation plan for an All Staff Organization, in coordinating with existing groups like the Faculty Organization.
- As a final task, review and revise the VCU Libraries Shared Governance Statement as needed (for example, if recommendations have been implemented and the statement can be strengthened).

Decision-making Practices
The task force should select and implement practices that reflect the VCU Libraries' "Best Practices in Decision-making" document (Appendix A).

Membership and Reporting
The task force membership should have equal representation of faculty and UAP/Classified employees and report to the Dean of Libraries and the Faculty Organization. We recommend that it also include some members of the current Shared Governance Task Force for continuity.

Appendix C: Rationale for All Staff Organization and Other Options Considered

Rationale for the recommended All Staff Organization model

As a part of the task force's charge, we were asked to develop a plan for UAP and classified employee representation in VCU Libraries governance structure and recommend additional steps VCU Libraries can take to strengthen shared governance.

We recommend the All Staff Organization model in recognition of the fact that we are all interdependent and that faculty, UAP, and classified employees should work together on matters that impact all of us. In this model, we work together through All Staff Organization meetings, joint committees and task forces, and collaboration among each group's elected representatives to the All Staff Organization leadership team. By working together, we can also help maintain momentum within the two sub-groups for faculty and UAP and classified staff.

We recommend that there are two groups within the All Staff Organization: one for faculty and one for UAP and classified employees, including full-time, hourly, and student employees. We envision the All Staff Organization as the default group for discussions and decision-making related to matters that impact all employees, but some matters may only or primarily impact a specific employee group, or the matters may impact employee groups in disparate ways. In recognition of this, creating multiple groups allows space for each group to independently set its own priorities, hold its own standing meetings for discussions and decision-making, create more narrowly-focused committees or task forces, create additional sub-groups for specific employee types (such as student employees) for even more focused discussion and decision-making, and hold independent elections for representatives to the All Staff Organization leadership team and to university groups based on employee type (like Faculty Senate and Staff Senate). This model allows existing matters that are specific to faculty to remain within the purview of faculty (like the work of the Faculty Organization Peer Review Committee), while creating the same structure for other employee groups.

The All Staff Organization will have a different purpose and scope than the Library Services Career Community and other career communities. These communities focus on professional development, mentoring, and networking for all employees, while the All Staff Organization will focus on shared governance. However, we envision that these groups can collaborate on shared initiatives or goals.

Other options considered

No change to the current structure. This was always an option under consideration, in case we found that this was the option most strongly supported by employees, but it was clear early in the process of gathering feedback that a large majority of employees wanted to see some kind of change.

The creation of a UAP and classified employee liaison role within the Faculty Organization. If this is the only change to the current structure, we have a concern about an imbalance of power between faculty and UAP and classified employees. However, this could make a good interim step over the next year to increase collaboration and representation.

The creation of a shared governance leadership committee (with equal representation across employee types) that represents all employees in matters of shared governance. We feel that, at a minimum, a shared governance committee should be created. There is still some concern about an imbalance of power between faculty and UAP and classified employees in this model. There is currently a Faculty Organization that would likely elect and work with faculty members of a leadership committee. Without a similar UAP and classified employee organization, these employees might not have the same opportunity to meet, discuss, and work with their representatives to the shared governance committee.

The creation of a UAP and Classified Employee Organization, with liaison roles for UAP/classified employees and faculty within each other's organizations. We received feedback indicating concerns that creating a UAP and Classified Employee Organization could increase silos and be difficult to maintain in the longer term. If such an organization is created, we recommend that the Faculty Organization and UAP, and Classified Employee Organization develop methods for communication and collaboration.

The creation of a UAP and Classified Employee Organization, liaison roles for UAP/classified employees and faculty within each other's organizations, and a shared governance leadership committee (with equal representation across employee types) that represents all employees in matters of shared governance. This is the closest option to the model we recommend, but the two employee organizations are completely independent rather than having them be a part of a collective All Staff Organization. It includes the creation of a new UAP and Classified Employee Organization that is independent of the Faculty Organization. It would encourage information-sharing and collaboration between these groups through liaison roles. It would also create a shared governance leadership committee that would serve in a similar role to the All Staff Organization leadership team in our proposed model.