

Talking points

Role of PAs and managers

- Create awareness.
- Encourage participation.

Key messages

- Provide input and dates for the open comment period.
- Now is the time to get involved.
- When we started the Great Place Initiative, you spoke and we listened. HR Redesign committee members have been researching best practices and drafting policies and procedures, and the new HR plan is starting to take shape.

About the process

- The committees' draft policies were reviewed by the advisory committee and the steering committee, with input from Faculty Senate and Staff Senate. Now it's time to hear from you.
- We're keeping what works (e.g., state retirement and health benefits) and modernizing our other policies and procedures.

About the comment period

- All feedback collected during the open comment period will be shared with HR Redesign committees for review and consideration, and revisions will be made to the policies as appropriate.
- There is the option to receive a direct response by submitting your policy-specific questions to the FAQ page.
- A final report of the comments/themes and resulting actions will be posted at greatplace.vcu.edu.

About the policy

- There is one comprehensive HR policy that describes the new human resources plan, with individual sections on recruitment, compensation, employee relations, etc.
- The first section of the policy defines the various types of employees across the university (faculty, post docs, etc.), including the creation of a new employee group called university and academic professionals.
- Three sections of the policy — performance management, career development and leadership development — are proposed to apply to classified staff, as well as university and academic professionals. The other areas of the policy will only apply to university and academic professionals.

Next steps

- After the open comment period the policy will be revised as necessary and will be presented to University Council, the President's Cabinet and the board of visitors.
- After the policy is approved, procedures and guidelines will be developed and will begin the process of training university constituents (managers, PAs, etc.) on the new HR plan.
- The effective date of the new policy is Jan. 1, 2018.



Policy highlights

Employee types

Goal: Provide an employment structure that reflects the university's core values by promoting inclusion and community, where each member's contributions are valued and respected.

Policy highlights: Creation of a new university and academic professionals category to span from entry level to senior executives; supplement appointments with faculty-affiliate status to preserve academic access where appropriate; and add an administrative assignment option within T&R faculty to better accommodate academic administrators.

Employment

Goal: Provide a streamlined and consistent recruitment process that promotes hiring a diverse and highly qualified workforce.

Policy highlights: One recruitment process to follow for all employment categories; encourage use of diverse search committees; use standard behavioral interview questions that align with VCU's core values and competencies; new hires serve a one-year probationary period.

Compensation

Goal: Support the compensation philosophy of attracting and retaining top talent to meet the mission of the university while remaining fair and equitable within and across the university.

Policy highlights: New job family structure provides market-based salary ranges for each job title; salary decisions, made the same for new and continuing employees, based on where the individual's qualifications and experience fall within the range; merit-based salary increases; more flexibility for departments to work within the market ranges for pay actions.

Performance management

Goal: Using a standardized process with more meaningful feedback, connect employee contributions and career interests with VCU's strategic priorities so employees see the impact they have on the university's ability to accomplish its mission and achieve its vision.

Policy highlights: New multipart performance management process that includes clear expectations at the start of the year, feedback throughout the year, a midyear review, plans for career development and a final performance review. The career development plan supports promotions through the career path, and the overall review rating is the basis for merit-based salary increases.

Career development

Goal: Encourage participation in career development activities and provide the resources to make these opportunities available to all employees.

Policy highlights: Career advancement opportunities offering noncompetitive (i.e., no search) promotions-in-place through flexible career paths; offer career paths for those with deep subject matter expertise distinct from those who aspire to management or leadership roles.

Leadership development

Goal: Recognize the critical role of managers and support their leadership development; create a work environment where leadership is encouraged, recognized and nurtured.

Policy highlights: Identify critical competencies for effective leadership at VCU, an annual evaluation of these competencies and a leadership development curriculum designed to nurture and develop these competencies.

Employee relations (including dispute resolution, disciplinary procedures and workforce reduction)

Goal: Provide a comprehensive employee relations policy that offers transparency and inclusivity, provides support and balanced perspective for both employees and managers, and is easy to understand.

Policy highlights: The practice of annual contracts for A&P faculty is eliminated; only top-level executives have employment contracts; integration of performance management and progressive discipline; informal and formal dispute resolution programs; layoff and severance benefits; and reciprocity with state service.



Policy highlights *continued*

Alternative work arrangements

Goal: Develop flexible and less restrictive options for both exempt and nonexempt employees that promote better work/life balance.

Policy highlights: Provides expanded alternate work options and the resources necessary to educate and encourage supervisors and managers to support alternative work arrangements.

Paid leave plan

Goal: Provide flexibility and promote work/life balance, protect employees when they cannot work and provide a generous benefits package for recruitment and retention.

Policy highlights: One leave balance with full annual accrual up front, an accelerated escalation table, exempt reporting in half-day increments; family-friendly additions include expanding short-term disability protection for all; and parental, caregiver and enhanced community service leave.

FAQ

Employee group

What is the proposed employee group, and what does it mean?

The proposed employee group is university and academic professionals. Most non-teaching and research employees would fall into this new employee group under the proposed policy. VCU would no longer hire classified staff and would only use contracts for senior-level administration.

If I'm classified, then can I remain classified?

Classified staff hired at VCU before July 1, 2016, will have a choice. You may remain classified staff, or you will be given the opportunity to change to the new HR plan if you wish. The enrollment period will be next year — January to March 2018. It is your decision, and we will provide you details to help inform your decision.

If I'm A&P faculty, will I have the choice to retain my current HR plan?

The procedures accompanying the proposed policy recommend that many A&P faculty be converted to university and academic professionals in conjunction with the June 2018 contract renewal cycle. Some university and academic professionals would also have a faculty affiliate appointment to reflect academic responsibilities such as teaching, serving on a dissertation committee or serving as a PI on a grant. Additionally, some current A&P faculty with primarily academic responsibilities may be more appropriately designated as T&R faculty. The HR Redesign project office is working with the Faculty Senate to design a review process whereby some A&P faculty could apply for consideration to become "term" T&R

faculty. Other A&P faculty serving as academic administrators such as deans, vice provosts, associate deans, etc., may be returned to T&R faculty with an administrative assignment.

Why are A&P faculty positions being moved into the new employee group?

In the Great Place Initiative survey, A&P faculty requested improvements such as better career advancement opportunities, market-based pay ranges, more meaningful performance evaluations and enhanced professional development. The new employee group is designed to address these improvements for everyone while also reflecting VCU core values of inclusion and a sense of community, where each member's contributions are valued and respected.

Paid leave

How many days/hours of leave are proposed for full-time university and academic professionals?

Years of service	Days per year	Hours per year	Max annual carry forward
0-3	28	224	224
4-6	30	240	240
7-9	32	256	256
10-14	34	272	272
15-19	36	288	288
20-24	40	320	320
25+	42	336	336

FAQ *continued*

Is personal and family leave and sick leave incorporated into the leave balance in the new plan? What about holidays?

The proposed leave accrual amounts include personal, family and sick leave but do not include holidays. Holidays will continue to be awarded separately just as they are now. Employees would still be expected to cover additional time off for winter break if necessary from their accrued leave balance.

Will leave accruals be the same for VSDP and traditional plans?

Yes.

Will A&P faculty who convert have the same leave plan?

Yes, the proposed leave plan would apply for all those in the new university and academic professional employee group. A&P faculty who become university and academic professionals would be subject to the same proposed paid leave plan and all of its benefits. However, A&P faculty would be grandparented in at their current accrual rates until they reach 20 years of service, at which time they will hit a higher amount and will be at the same accrual rate as other university and academic professionals.

What happens to current leave balances if you switch to the new plan?

Annual leave will be rolled into the new leave balance and will be subject to the proposed carry-forward and cash-out provisions. Accrued sick leave from employees currently in the traditional plan will be banked if needed for use in the future.

Does the parental leave option include both fathers and partners?

Yes, it does. We tried to design a paid leave plan to meet the more modern definitions of a family.

Compensation

Are market ranges going to be available?

Yes, market ranges will be published online as part of a more comprehensive compensation management section on the Human Resources website.

Are we going to get raises if we switch?

No, employees who select the new HR plan will continue at the same salary.

By what process will salaries be increased to their market ranges? About how long will this process take?

The proposed compensation procedures provide three ways an employee's base pay can increase over time: merit, promotion and career path advancement. Merit will be based on the overall rating in the performance review process. Career path advancements will come from the career development plan section of the performance review. Promotions can be either competitive through the current job search process or noncompetitive through the career development plan. Pay increases will be awarded as the budget allows. Managers will determine the size of an increase based on the employee's qualifications, experience and current pay relative to the appropriate market range. There would no longer be caps on salary increases as found in the state classified system.

Are we still using recognition awards?

Yes, in the compensation section of the proposed policy, the use of salary incentives to recognize and reward employees is encouraged. The recommendation is to increase the amount of a bonus an employee may be awarded in a fiscal year up to \$5,000 or 10 percent of their base pay, whichever is greater.

Can you get more than a 10 percent increase in a year?

Yes, you could. There are no caps on salary increases in the proposed compensation policy. It allows more flexibility for managers to work within the posted market ranges. In addition to merit and promotion increases, we anticipate the use of smaller (3 to 5 percent), more frequent salary increases as employees move through their career paths.

Because the emphasis seems to be shifting to merit-based increases, is there a guarantee that you will receive a raise in pay if you consistently perform at a high achiever level?

The purpose of a merit-based pay system is to reward employees for their level of performance. The plan is for managers to evaluate performance on a scale (e.g., one to five) and, accordingly, have the flexibility to offer increases within a range (e.g., 0 to 5 percent) that correlates with the evaluations. Candidly, there are no guarantees in a pay-for-performance model; however, the expectation is that over time, the high performers receive higher salary increases. It is also important to note that annual salary increases are not the only reward for high performers. The new HR model will also include predefined career paths. High performers would also be eligible for promotional opportunities as they advance through their careers.



FAQ *continued*

Alternative work arrangements

Will there be an education component for managers about alternative work arrangements that promote their use?

While there is a current telecommuting policy and there are many positions across the university that would qualify to telecommute, it is not widely used. The committee working on this has developed some terrific resources for employees and managers to better support these options. In addition to the proposed policy and procedures that are out for comment, the committee is developing how-to guidelines. We are planning a robust curriculum of management training for all these new policies as part of the new leadership development programming.

The key to all this working is how the policies and programs come together. So, for example, having a goal-based performance review process begins to change the working relationship between employees and managers to focus more on outcomes. That begins to change thinking by both parties to be less about managing attendance or presence and more about managing results, and that in turn helps open up alternative work options for how the work gets done. While we are focused now on the details of each particular proposal, the ultimate goal is how they all come together to create the kind of culture change we envision in the Great Place Initiative. It's about working together to make VCU an even better place to work.

If a manager denies a request for an alternative work arrangement, even when all factors indicate it is an eligible position, will employees have a process for appealing that decision?

As currently drafted, the decision to grant an alternative work arrangement is at a manager's or department's discretion. The policy as proposed does not include an appeal process. However, the committee working on this has developed some terrific resources for employees and managers to better support these options. In addition to the proposed policy and procedures that will be out for comment, they are developing how-to guidelines. We are planning a robust curriculum of management training for all these new policies as part of the new leadership development programming.

Is the alternative work arrangements policy for everyone?

No, it would only be for university and academic professionals (those in the new employee group). Classified staff that choose to remain will still be covered by the state policy and will not lose access to any current telecommuting agreements made under that policy.

Career development

What's a career path?

The foundation of the new HR plan is a universitywide job structure that groups jobs by function using a standard set of job titles. Most titles have three levels (e.g., Accountant I, Accountant II, Accountant III). Each job title has a unique market range. Career paths provide opportunities for employees to advance through their careers by moving across the market ranges through proposed stages of emerging, proficient, accomplished and expert, as well as advancing up through the job title series as they gain competencies and experience. Career advancement in the same job is called promotion in place. There will also continue to be opportunities to receive promotions across the university. Different career tracks are designed for individual contributors with deep subject matter expertise distinct from those who aspire to a supervisory, management or leadership role.

What's a career community?

Career communities are how employees who are doing similar work or who have similar career interests across the university connect regularly to network, share information and determine best practices. The career development committee is designing a mentoring program with resources and support for both mentors and mentees. Career communities are the structure around which these career development opportunities will be provided in the new HR plan.

How do I get my manager to support my career development?

In the proposed policy, the expectation is for employees to engage in and managers to support the career development process. The updated performance management process provides the infrastructure to implement this new expectation for both employees and managers. The career development planning phase will document agreed upon career development opportunities in which employees will participate.



FAQ *continued*

The draft policies specify that managers are expected to support employees in pursuit of their career interests, to adopt practices that promote career development throughout their area and to allow employees participation in appropriate developmental opportunities. Managers will be evaluated on these expectations in their own performance review. It is important for the employee to be clear on what their career development interests are and work collaboratively with their supervisor to determine their strategic goals for the position and define ways to develop their goals.

What happens if your department doesn't have the money or resources to advance your career development?

Career development can take many forms, and it doesn't have to be expensive. There are books that one can read, internet-based group email lists in which to participate, free online courses through Lynda.com and low-cost webinars. In addition, the new career communities being created across the university are intended to provide new cost-effective resources for employee professional development. With so many employees across VCU doing similar work or having similar career interests, the career communities can host brown bag lunches, invite guest speakers and sponsor on-site annual conferences.

What is a promotion in place?

The new HR plan is being designed around a series of flexible career paths in the various job families around the university. An exciting new feature that is part of that design is the ability to receive promotions in place as employees engage in career development, become more proficient in their current role or learn new skills and grow their role. Promotions can occur both across the market range through proposed stages of emerging, proficient, accomplished and expert, as well as advancing up through the job title series as they gain competencies and experience. In our current HR system, promotions typically require employees to wait for jobs to become vacant and then to apply for and compete for the promotion as an applicant through the employment process. Often, this means that employees must leave one job for another to advance in their career. At VCU, we want to retain our valuable employees by offering them promotions within their career path without having to change positions. That's not to say that there won't still be times when the right "next move" for an employee would be applying for a different position, but the career paths are meant to provide another option that's not currently available.

Performance management

Will my performance evaluation be a 360-degree feedback review?

Not at this time. As part of the proposed performance management policy, a new online tool is being implemented that all employees will use for tracking and documenting performance and completing reviews. Performance reviews will be based on cascading goals and competencies. There are no immediate plans to adopt 360-degree evaluations universitywide. However, the use of 360 feedback is included in the proposed leadership development policy.

Will all employees have to complete a self-review as part of the performance review process?

Yes. The proposed policy requires that all employees complete a self-review as part of the overall performance review process. The online performance management tool will provide a mechanism for the employee to document progress and accomplishments toward goals throughout the performance management cycle. This information will be a valuable starting point for completing the self-review and will provide more content to support a comprehensive performance review.

What is performance calibration, and what role will it play in the performance review process?

The practice of performance calibration refers to the steps taken to make sure that managers apply an appropriate and consistent set of standards in making performance ratings. At the beginning of the performance cycle, the calibration process provides an opportunity for managers to meet, learn to use the same language, and share an understanding of the core competencies and expectations for employee behavior and results. Performance calibration meetings at the end of the performance cycle provide a process in which managers come together to discuss employees' performance ratings, thus ensuring an objective assessment is made based on past performance and in relation to other employees in the same department/school/unit.

What resources are going to be available to support this process?

VCU is implementing performance management software that will be used by employees and their managers to set goals at the beginning of the year, document progress throughout the year and complete the annual review process.



FAQ *continued*

Leadership development

How will we assure buy-in from senior leaders?

Senior leadership has been closely involved in every step of the Great Place: HR Redesign project. They are fully engaged in the process and are supportive of the recommended changes. Targeted communications have been addressed to them specifically and will continue to be utilized throughout the implementation. In addition, the new HR plan includes the identification of competencies critical for effective leadership at VCU. These leadership competencies will serve as the basis for a new leadership development curriculum to foster and develop managers' skills and abilities. They will also be part of the managers' annual review.

Will employees have the opportunity to evaluate their managers through a 360 review?

The proposed policy recommends the use of 360 feedback as part of the new leadership development curriculum to help those in these challenging leadership positions develop their skills and competencies and live up to their fullest potential. This process would be incorporated into the managers' performance and career planning to hold them accountable and help them excel in the VCU core leadership competencies.

Employment

How does a recruitment waiver work for career advancement/promotions in place?

A search may be waived in the following situations: If the manager and employee agree on the criteria necessary for the employee to advance through their career path as part of the career development plan documented in the performance review process, then as the employee subsequently achieves those established milestones, they can be promoted in place through the agreed upon career path without a search being conducted.

What is an "open rank" job posting?

The new job structure for university and academic professionals is built by grouping jobs into job families using a standard set of job titles. Each job title has a unique market-based pay range. Most job titles will have three levels (e.g., Accountant I, Accountant II, Accountant III) that create a job series. Level 1 is typically entry level; level 2 is mid-career; and level 3 reflects extensive experience. Much like you will see faculty searches conducted for an assistant, associate or full professor, the

final rank will be determined based on the credentials of the selected candidate. This strategy could be used for university and academic professional positions. A search could be conducted for an Accountant I, II or III, allowing applicants from a wide range of experience to be considered. The selected finalist would be placed in the appropriate job title based on their individual qualifications.

What's the difference between a search committee and an interview panel?

Search committees are typically involved in the early stages of the process. They provide input into the type and scope of search, desired qualifications and sources of potential applicants, and they actively recruit potential applicants. In addition to conducting interviews, search committees often help plan campus visits and may also conduct reference checks. Interview panels are typically involved only at that stage — they participate in the interview and provide feedback on the applicant's performance.

How is it determined if a search is internal, local, regional or national?

The scope of the search is determined based on what will most likely be needed to find and build a diverse pool of highly qualified candidates. In some cases that may be possible to do within the university (internal) or the Richmond community (local). For others, it may mean widening the scope to include recruiting across the mid-Atlantic region or even nationally.

Budget and finances

For departments that have smaller budgets, where is the extra money going to come from to give merit-based increases?

Much like the university has done with T&R faculty for years, the merit-based process will begin with the pool of money determined by the state legislature, will be contingent on the performance rating of individual employees and will require the discretion of the unit/managers to manage their budget. Typically, the legislature sets the exact increase that every classified employee with an acceptable performance rating receives. However, in the new HR plan, the academic or administrative unit is given an overall pool amount, and employees will receive varying increases based on their performance rating. Someone who has received an extraordinary performance rating may be eligible for a higher increase while a satisfactory



FAQ *continued*

performer may receive a lower-percent increase. It will be up to the school/unit's leadership team as to how to manage and allocate their pool of money.

Where do the market ranges come from?

We utilize the data from a market pricing software tool that houses the results of the salary surveys that the university purchases and/or participates in to benchmark the job and establish the market median. The market median is used as the midpoint for the developed ranges.

Have you discussed the fiscal impact on the university from the new leave plan?

Yes, from an initial review it was determined that there are no significant financial impacts from the proposed changes. However, we have also engaged an external consulting firm to do an actuarial analysis of the fiscal implications of the proposed changes.

How will the new financial model affect the HR Redesign?

While both of these happening at about the same time means significant change for the university, it is appropriate that they be done together. Departments will have increased flexibility under both the HR plan and the new financial model. So, for example, if a department is incented under the new financial model to create a new program or to improve efficiency in an existing program, using merit pay, the increased revenue or savings can be shared with the employees involved in the success.

Enrollment

When can I enroll in the new plan?

Our current focus is collecting feedback on the proposed policy. As we move closer to the enrollment opening date of Jan. 1, 2018, more resources will be available to help classified staff make the decision that is right for them. There will be a 90-day enrollment period, January to March 2018, in which to make decisions. Additional resources provided during that time will include such things as side-by-side plan comparisons, web resources, a new HR plan highlights brochure, group presentations and one-on-one consultation opportunities.

What happens to my benefits if I switch?

While the proposed policy enhances the leave program, other benefits — retirement, health insurance, workers compensation, life insurance, etc. — will stay the same. If you opt in to the new plan, you remain a state employee with the same retirement benefits.

If I stay classified during the enrollment period, will I have another opportunity to convert?

Yes, VCU is required to provide an enrollment option at least every two years. However, we can do it more often if we choose. Other Tier III institutions eventually went to rolling or open enrollment, where employees can elect to switch at any time. Whether or not VCU can do this more often than every two years will depend on how the implementation of this first enrollment period goes.

