



VCU

Executive Position Profile

Dean of Libraries & University Librarian

2026



The Position

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) invites applications and nominations for a visionary, innovative, and collaborative strategic leader to serve as the Dean of Libraries & University Librarian. VCU Libraries is a people-centered, mission-driven community within a leading urban, public research university, supporting student success, research and innovation, scholarly and creative expression, and clinical care. The Libraries encompass the James Branch Cabell Library (Monroe Park Campus), the Health Sciences Library (MCV Campus), and the VCU Medical Center Health and Wellness Library, with global collaboration through VCUarts Qatar.

VCU Libraries has earned national recognition, including Library Journal's 2016 New Landmark Libraries Award for Cabell Library, the 2018 ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Award, and the 2020 MLA Research Advancement in Health Sciences Librarianship Award. Reporting to the Executive Vice President and Provost, the Dean will provide strategic leadership for VCU Libraries' mission of transforming our communities by enriching scholarship, learning, creative endeavors, and clinical care through inclusive and equitable teaching, collections, and leadership. The Dean will lead VCU Libraries colleagues through promoting learning and teaching success; advancing research, collaboration, and discovery; fostering scholarly and creative expression; invigorating collaboration and intellectual pursuit; and improving health and wellbeing. The Dean will steward budgets and facilities; recruit, develop, and retain exceptional library faculty and staff; and serve as an effective advocate and communicator for the Libraries' mission, achievements, and impact. As part of VCU's senior leadership, the Dean collaborates with VCU Deans and VCU Health leaders to realize One VCU aspirations.



Leadership Opportunities

Provide Visionary Leadership for VCU Libraries

The Dean will contribute to, shape, and implement the [VCU Libraries Strategic Framework 2028](#), aligning with [Quest 2028: One VCU Together We Transform](#). This includes maintaining commitment to access while elevating VCU Libraries' national reputation as one of the preeminent research library systems in the country. The Dean will be forward-looking, anticipating shifts in scholarly communication, data and AI, digital scholarship, and health sciences information dynamics, building on current successes and driving future growth and impact.

Advance the Profile of VCU Libraries

The Dean will embrace the distinctiveness of VCU Libraries and work to build its reputation and visibility in a competitive environment. This requires articulating a compelling value proposition to students and parents, championing research support and community impact, conveying the Libraries' unique advantages to faculty, clinicians, and partners, supporting library faculty and staff as thought leaders, and promoting the success of alumni and Friends of VCU Libraries.

Foster Impactful Research, Digital Scholarship, and Publishing

Research is central to VCU's mission. The Dean will develop and implement a vision for research support and scholarly expression: strengthening research lifecycle services (data planning, curation, sharing and compliance), expanding digital libraries initiatives and repository and publishing services, advancing open scholarship and rights education, and increasing visibility of library-enabled impact across disciplines and the health sciences.

Enhance Student Success and Learning

The Dean will scale library-enabled pedagogy and student-facing services, including open and affordable course content initiatives, information and data literacy, systematic review training, makerspaces, and multimedia support. The Dean will embrace online and hybrid learning and innovative methods that enrich the educational experience for undergraduate, graduate, and first professional students.

Grow Increased Philanthropic Support for VCU Libraries

In partnership with Development and Alumni Relations and Friends of VCU Libraries, the Dean will be an energetic relationship builder and storyteller who makes fundraising a top priority. The Dean will engage alumni, friends, foundations, and corporations to grow philanthropic support, including endowments for strategic priorities such as open and affordable course content.

Facilitate Enhanced Engagement and Partnerships with VCU Health and the Richmond Community

Richmond is home to diverse sectors, and VCU Health anchors regional clinical excellence. The Dean will actively engage with community and clinical partners, forming strategic collaborations, embedding librarians in interdisciplinary initiatives, and facilitating experiential learning opportunities that address real-world needs in health, arts, culture, and civic life.

Embody Collaborative Leadership

The Dean will foster a collaborative and inclusive culture of integrity and transparency across the Libraries. The Dean will create a synergistic environment where faculty and staff work toward shared objectives, align academic excellence with student-centered support, and promote professional development and career progression.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration

The Dean will encourage interdisciplinary collaboration in instruction, research support, and publishing within VCU Libraries and across schools and colleges, including VCU Health and VCUarts Qatar. This culture of collaboration will enable broader societal impact and enriched academic and research experiences for students and faculty.





Qualifications, Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

The successful candidate has a record of distinguished academic library leadership, innovation in teaching and research support, and/or strong leadership experience in complex information organizations. Applicants should have experience in planning, budgeting, team building, problem-solving, and project management. Candidates should have a proven record of accomplishments and effective leadership and have demonstrated the ability to foster a climate where learning, research, discovery, and respect flourish. The Dean will balance strategic leadership with external relationship-building and resource development through effectively articulating the Libraries' diverse accomplishments and aspirations with a sense of common purpose and pride.

Preferred qualifications include substantial administrative experience; demonstrated leadership and collaboration; success in external fund development; commitment to shared governance; experience aligning unit goals to the larger organizational vision; and credentials that merit appointment at the appropriate library faculty rank.

- An earned terminal or post-graduate degree in library/information science or a closely related field
- Administrative leadership experience in an academic or research library, that may include strategic planning, infrastructure development, budget oversight, and organizational effectiveness with an entrepreneurial, innovative and global orientation
- Ability to articulate the Libraries' vision, goals, accomplishments, and needs to constituents
- Demonstrated ability to foster deep engagement with the Libraries through building community/university collaboration and partnerships

- A demonstrated commitment to developing and promoting quality research support and scholarly communication
- A student-centric focus with deep investment in student outcomes and the learning experience
- A record of advancing open education, affordable course content, and digital scholarship
- Experience working within library environments that support academic health sciences programs, clinical partners, and related stakeholders
- Fundraising experience and success
- Experience working with global partners
- Demonstrated ability to work in a dynamic environment
- Exemplary personal and professional integrity
- Commitment to cross-disciplinary programs

Specific Responsibilities

- Serve as the chief academic and administrative officer of VCU Libraries, reporting directly to the Executive Vice President and Provost.
- Supervise and support faculty and staff across library units
- Create a climate that promotes professional civility and meets the goals of the Libraries' Strategic Framework
- Support student success at undergraduate, graduate, and first professional levels through providing services that ensure success and support innovative teaching
- Lead the advancement of a strategic vision for VCU Libraries and articulate it to internal and external constituents
- Oversee collections strategy, budget management, space planning, external resource development, and alumni and community relations
- Recognize, reward, facilitate, and advance the scholarship, publishing, and research support endeavors of the Libraries
- Partner with Deans in their strategic plans for research growth in line with promotion and tenure policies, creating a culture of research excellence across schools
- Establish new and expand existing partnerships with academic units, VCU Health, and community organizations
- Develop global strategies for collaboration with Education City and other international partners
- Develop long-term planning for recruitment, professional development, and evaluation of library faculty and staff
- Represent VCU Libraries on the Council of Deans and to external constituents and partners
- Engage actively with Friends of VCU Libraries and development boards

About VCU Libraries

VCU Libraries serves the Monroe Park and MCV campuses and the broader Richmond region. The James Branch Cabell Library is an award-winning, user-centered facility; the Health Sciences Library is a top-tier health sciences library with extensive collections and research support; and the Health and Wellness Library provides consumer health information for patients and community members. VCU Libraries has received national recognition including Library Journal's New Landmark Libraries Award (2016) for the Cabell Library expansion, the ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Award (2018), and the MLA Research Advancement in Health Sciences Librarianship Award (2020).

Strategic Framework

VCU Libraries Strategic Framework 2028 emphasizes: (1) Promoting learning and teaching success; (2) Advancing research, collaboration and discovery; (3) Fostering scholarly and creative expression; (4) Invigorating collaboration and intellectual pursuit; (5) Improving health and well-being; (6) Developing VCU Libraries staff; and (7) Stewarding assets strategically. These pillars align with Quest 2028: One VCU Together We Transform.

Memberships & Partnerships

- Association of Research Libraries
- Association of Southeastern Research Libraries
- Center for Networked Information
- Center for Research Libraries
- HathiTrust, Library Publishing Coalition
- Network of the National Library of Medicine
- SPARC
- Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA)

Facilities & Amenities

- Collaborative learning spaces, including a large lecture hall, group study rooms, and classrooms
- Creative technologies with makerspaces at each location, multimedia studios, and a data visualization wall
- Inclusive spaces featuring lactation rooms, all-gender restrooms, a sensory room, and a reflection room
- Special Collections and Archives with distinctive collections in book art, comic arts, medical artifacts, and rare medical books
- Digital libraries, including an institutional repository, digital collections, and open access/open educational resource publishing platforms



Timeline of VCU Libraries Milestones

Year	Milestone
1897	Health Sciences Library opens on medical campus
1970	Cabell Library opens
1976	Cabell Library formally dedicated after three floors added
1998	VCUarts Qatar Library opens
2002	Community Health Education Center (CHEC) opens in MCV Hospital
2016	Cabell Library expansion completed; wins New Landmark Libraries Award
2018	VCU Libraries becomes the 125 th member of the Association of Research Libraries and receives the Association of College and Research Libraries Excellence in Academic Libraries Award
2019	CHEC renamed VCU Medical Center Health and Wellness Library
2020	Health Sciences Library receives MLA Research Advancement in Health Sciences Librarianship Award
2020	MCV Campus library renamed Health Sciences Library
2024	VCU surpasses \$500M in sponsored funding; \$524M research expenditures



About Virginia Commonwealth University

We are the university for Virginia. We know that the unique backgrounds and life experiences of the VCU community are what drive the university forward. Together, we're forging a future that is built by us. Here, artists and engineers, doctors and designers come together to reimagine the human experience and tackle the problems of tomorrow.

VCU dates to 1838 with the formation of the Medical Department of Hampden-Sydney College, whose mission was to educate physicians in central Virginia, and which was later renamed Medical College of Virginia. In 1968, Richmond Professional Institute merged with the Medical College of Virginia to become what is now known as **Virginia Commonwealth University**.

Located in downtown Richmond, the state capital of Virginia, VCU enrolls more than 28,000 students in more than 200 degree and certificate programs across its urban campuses: the downtown Monroe Park and MCV campuses in Richmond; the Rice Rivers Center in Charles City, Virginia; satellite locations in Fairfax, Virginia, and Abingdon, Virginia; and a campus in Doha, Qatar, for the School of the Arts.

Ignited by the energy of the city, we're ready to lead industries — or disrupt them. We seek out the unexpected, the experimental, the never-been-tried. VCU is designated as a research university with very

high research activity by the Carnegie Foundation, garnering more than \$500 million in sponsored research from federal and other agencies in FY2024. The National Science Foundation ranked VCU among the top 50 public research universities in the country, and we are one of only 69 public universities nationwide to be designated by the Carnegie Foundation as "Community Engaged" with "Very High Research Activity."

This research enterprise, and the influence of having one of the nation's top-ranked public graduate arts schools, ensures students receive unique educational experiences that equip them with a creative mindset that sets them apart.

VCU's contributions in talent, innovation and entrepreneurialism, regional stewardship, and local culture shape the economic impact and overall quality of life in the region. VCU as a whole generates more than \$9 billion in economic activity. It is the largest employer in Richmond with more than 26,000 employees at VCU and VCU Health, and it supports approximately 58,000 jobs in Virginia. In addition, Virginia classifies VCU with a Tier III status — the highest possible status for universities and colleges — allowing VCU more flexibility in managing its operations to implement best practices and streamline processes.



VCU Mission: Why we're here.

Virginia Commonwealth University and its academic health sciences center serve as one national urban public research institution dedicated to the success and well-being of our students, patients, faculty, staff and community through:

- Real-world learning that furthers civic engagement, inquiry, discovery and innovation
- Research that expands the boundaries of new knowledge and creative expression and promotes translational applications to improve the quality of human life
- Interdisciplinary collaborations and community partnerships that advance innovation, enhance cultural and economic vitality, and solve society's most complex challenges
- Health sciences that preserve and restore health for all people, seek the cause and cure of diseases through groundbreaking research and educate those who serve humanity
- Deeply ingrained core values of diversity, inclusion and equity that provide a safe, trusting and supportive environment to explore, create, learn and serve

Values: What we hold dear.

- **Accountability:** Commit to the efficient and transparent stewardship of our resources to achieve institutional excellence.
- **Achievement:** Pursue excellence in learning, research and scholarly pursuits; service; and patient care.
- **Collaboration:** Foster respect, collegiality and cooperation to advance learning, entrepreneurship and inquiry.
- **Freedom:** Strive for intellectual truth with responsibility and civility, respecting the dignity of all individuals.
- **Innovation:** Cultivate discovery, creativity, originality, inventiveness and talent.
- **Service:** Engage in the application of learning and discovery to improve the human condition and support the public good at home and abroad.
- **Opportunity:** Uphold a climate of mutual trust and respect where individuals of different backgrounds, identities, abilities and life experiences are embraced, engaged and empowered to drive excellence and success.
- **Integrity:** Adhere to the highest standards of honesty, respect, and professional and scholarly ethics.



Facts and Rankings

VCU is a community of more than 250,000 Rams — each a unique mix of style, story and attitude — that is forging a future that is built by us. Every day, we blend discovery and creativity to generate new ideas, all in pursuit of a better tomorrow. Our impact can be felt in more than 200 academic programs, from our world-renowned arts and advertising programs to our top-ranked hospital and health science schools. And it's all happening in a city that's teeming with opportunities to make real and lasting change.

Quick facts

- **29,288** students enrolled
- **17:1** student-faculty ratio
- **2,464** full-time faculty
- **233,411** alumni

Programs and schools ranked in U.S. News & World Report's Top 50

These rankings are based on the latest U.S. News & World Report [Best Graduate Schools](#), [Best Online Colleges](#) and [Best Colleges](#) rankings.

Graduate programs

- **1st** Fine Arts — Sculpture
- **2nd** Fine Arts — Printmaking
- **4th** Fine Arts
- **4th** Fine Arts — Graphic Design
- **4th** Rehabilitation Counseling
- **5th** Time-Based/New Media
- **6th** Homeland Security
- **6th** Nurse Anesthesia
- **7th** Health Care Management
- **9th** Occupational Therapy
- **12th** Fine Arts — Painting/Drawing
- **18th** Nuclear Engineering
- **19th** Pharmacy
- **24th** Best Education Schools
- **28th** Social Work
- **33rd** Physical Therapy
- **33rd** Public Management and Leadership
- **36th** Public Affairs
- **44th** Biostatistics

Online programs

- **10th** Online Master's in Mechanical Engineering Programs
- **18th** Online Master's in Engineering Programs
- **36th** Online Master's in Education Programs

Undergraduate programs

- **40th** Nursing



About Richmond, VA

As the commonwealth's capital, Richmond, Virginia, offers a vibrant mix of history, culture, and real-world opportunities. Distinct neighborhoods, cozy restaurants and cafes, and quaint local markets give the city an intimate feel, but theaters, galleries, music festivals, sports attractions, and a steady stream of annual events bring RVA — as locals call the region — to life. Established in 1780, its rich history can be seen in the architecture, the Capitol grounds and the cobblestone streets around the city. With the historic James River and 600 acres of parks bordering it, bike trails, wineries, breweries, a flourishing arts, entertainment and restaurant scene, (Food and Wine called Richmond a “culinary powerhouse”) and affordable suburbs, this small city punches well above its weight in terms of attractions and buzz. In fact, Travel + Leisure named Richmond the best place to live in Virginia in 2023 and Southern Living named Richmond one of the 20 best cities to live in the South in 2024.

Richmond's location in the middle of the state allows for day or weekend trips to the beach, the Blue Ridge Mountains or Virginia's many wineries. It's within a two-hour drive of Washington, D.C., and a multitude of excellent institutions of higher education. The Richmond metropolitan area is also home to several Fortune 500 companies, a broad base of financial companies, hospitals and media firms, high-tech manufacturing companies, and state and local government agencies. Entrepreneurs and artists put down roots in Richmond, and Thrillist named it one of the best U.S. cities for creatives in 2022.

Beyond Richmond, CNBC has named Virginia as the No. 1 state in the country to do business six times since the study began in 2007. It has accomplished this by bringing in billions in capital investment and thousands of new jobs; investing in education; expanding access to quality health care for all; making sure everyone has access to opportunity; and more. Business Facilities magazine named Virginia the 2024 State of the Year. Suffice to say, Virginia is full of growth and opportunity, making it the perfect location for a university determined to erase barriers and provide students with robust learning experiences that will make them unstoppable.

Applications, Nominations and Expressions of Interest

For best consideration, please submit application materials by March 22, 2026. Applications should include: (1) a curriculum vitae or resume; (2) a letter of interest addressing leadership opportunities and desired experiences and attributes in this profile; and (3) contact information for five references (to be contacted later in the process with candidate consent).

Applications, nominations and expressions of interest can be submitted to:

Buffkin / Baker

Martin M. Baker, Managing Partner

Chelsie Whitelock, Associate Partner

vculibrariesdean@buffkinbaker.com



Photo by Jay Paul