

Convocation

2021



VCU

September 2, 2021
Grace Street Theater

39th Annual Faculty Convocation Program

Welcome

Fotis Sotiropoulos, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Remarks

Michael Rao, President

Presentation of Awards

University Award of Excellence

LaRon A. Scott, Ed.D.

School of Education

*Presented by Andrew P. Daire, Dean
School of Education*

Distinguished Scholarship Award

Pin-Lan Li, M.D., Ph.D.

School of Medicine

*Presented by Betsy Ripley, Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
School of Medicine*

Distinguished Teaching Award

Alan Dow, M.D., M.S.H.A.

School of Medicine

*Presented by Betsy Ripley, Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
School of Medicine*

Distinguished Service Award

A. Omar Abubaker, D.M.D., Ph.D.

School of Dentistry

*Presented by Ellen Byrne, Senior Associate Dean
School of Dentistry*

Outstanding Early Career Faculty Award

Jeanine Guidry, Ph.D.

College of Humanities and Sciences

*Presented by Jennifer Malat, Dean
College of Humanities and Sciences*

Outstanding Term Faculty Award

Peyton Rowe, M.F.A.

College of Humanities and Sciences

*Presented by Jennifer Malat, Dean
College of Humanities and Sciences*

Closing Remarks

Art Kellermann, Senior Vice President for Health Sciences and
CEO of the VCU Health System

Reception

Scott House

909 West Franklin Street

For social media coverage, or to share photos
or memories from the event, use #VCUconvocation.

University Award of Excellence

The University Award of Excellence recognizes a faculty member who has performed in a superior manner in teaching, scholarly activity and service. This award is one of the highest honors the university can bestow on one of its faculty and is awarded only to an exceptional individual.

Distinguished Scholarship Award

The Distinguished Scholarship Award recognizes an outstanding scholar who has demonstrated a pattern of productive scholarly activity, which has been recognized nationally or internationally, as appropriate. Traditional research, creative endeavors and other scholarly activity are included in this category.

Distinguished Teaching Award

The Distinguished Teaching Award recognizes an outstanding teacher. This may be evidenced by being an inspiration to students; by utilizing stimulating techniques, materials and methods designed to promote learning; by outstanding attention to the development of curriculum, learning materials and teaching strategies; by serving in a teaching capacity outside the classroom and university; or by any combination of the above.

Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes a faculty member who has performed superior service to the university, the profession and/or the wider community. This may be evidenced by activities which extend beyond normal expectations, unique contributions or long-standing leadership and impact on the university and beyond.

Outstanding Early Career Faculty Award

The Outstanding Early Career Faculty Award recognizes a full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member (rank of associate professor and below) who has been in rank at the university, or at another institution, for a total of five years or less, and has achieved superior accomplishment consistent with Quest 2025, and in the areas of teaching, research and scholarship, and service. This award was established in 2016.

Outstanding Term Faculty Award

The Outstanding Term Faculty Award recognizes a full-time faculty member (rank of instructor and higher) who has at least three consecutive years of employment at the university, and has achieved superior accomplishment consistent with Quest 2025, and in the areas teaching, research and scholarship, and service. This award was established in 2016.

For more information, please visit president.vcu.edu/nominations.

University Award of Excellence

LaRon A. Scott, Ed.D.

School of Education

LaRon A. Scott, Ed.D., is an associate professor of special education, as well as the founder and executive director of the Minority Educator Recruitment, Retention and Equity Center at Virginia Commonwealth University. His research focuses on the intersections of race and gender in attracting, preparing and retaining special education teachers. His research also focuses on postsecondary transition experiences of youth of color with an intellectual and developmental disability. His work has been funded by more than \$6 million in grants, and he has published in over 40 peer-reviewed journals, and has written two books and 14 chapters. He is the co-editor of *Inclusion*, a peer-reviewed journal for the American Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities that focuses on evidence-based interventions and strategies that promote the full inclusion of people with IDD.

Scott serves as the co-principal investigator on multiple Office of Special Education Programs grants. His current leadership grant supports the preparation of Ph.D.-level special education personnel to help institutes of higher education fill the need for capable faculty educators who will be able to apply evidence-based instruction that leads to transformative instructional practice in teacher preparation programs, and also contribute to the development of effective policy and research that will influence teacher certification, and the teacher education program accreditation and development process.

Scott holds leadership positions across a multitude of organizations, including co-chair of the Project 20/20 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion project for the Council for Exceptional Children, the largest international organization his field.

For his effort in scholarship, teaching and service, Scott has received numerous awards, including the School of Education's Charles P. Ruch Excellence in Teaching Award, a student-nominated award that "recognizes faculty that stimulates learning and encourages intellectual growth, including current knowledge and research findings, modeling effective teaching methods, supportive and accessible to students, and exerts a positive influence on students."

"Dr. Scott is, without question, one of the finest faculty members I have ever had the pleasure to work with," said Andrew Daire, Ph.D., dean of the VCU School of Education. "Dr. Scott has had an immense impact on the School of Education's faculty and students through his work as a researcher studying minority educators and as an instructor of special education. In addition, Dr. Scott is truly a tireless member of the academy, providing unparalleled levels of service to his school, the university, and the profession."





Distinguished Scholarship Award Pin-Lan Li, M.D., Ph.D.

School of Medicine

Pin-Lan Li, M.D., Ph.D., is a tenured professor and vice chair in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at Virginia Commonwealth University. Joining the university in 2005, she was appointed the Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Chair in 2013.

Li's major focus in the laboratory is on cardiovascular and renal pharmacology.

Her research philosophy is, "The more we know about our cells, the better therapy for diseases we can have." To that end, she shares what she has discovered by publishing more than 220 scientific papers and 10 book chapters with about 20,000 citations, many of them in high-impact journals in her research field. There are seven research articles honored with editorial commentary in different journals or commented by Faculty of 1000 Biology — whose purpose is to help scientists identify research trends and highly regarded papers — to encourage the scientific community to engage in related research areas, indicating the leading role of Li's research work.

Li's laboratory also created a Summer Research Program for undergraduate students. This training program provides systematic basic research training, and a vast majority of these trained students joined Ph.D. and M.D. programs at VCU and other universities upon graduation from the university.

Since joining VCU, Li has been continuously funded by four active NIH R01 grants as a principal investigator every year over the last 15, some years receiving six R01 grants as the PI or co-PI, which resulted in more than \$33 million for her outstanding research programs.

Li has been invited to serve as associate editor and on the editorial board for more than 10 scientific journals and has served on numerous professional society and grant review committees as member or chair. In research training, Li has trained more than 45 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, and more than 28 of them became faculty members and professional researchers, including 14 of them in U.S. universities.

"Dr. Li has firmly established herself as one of the most accomplished scientists at VCU. She is an internationally recognized leader," said Peter Buckley, M.D., dean of the VCU School of Medicine. "[She] has earned the admiration and respect of outstanding researchers around the world. Her keen intellect and exceptional productivity, collaborative work ethic, commitment to mentoring young scholars, and leadership in scholarly writing and presentations are furthering the goals of VCU and the goals of scientific research at the international level."

Distinguished Teaching Award

Alan Dow, M.D., M.S.H.A.

School of Medicine

Alan Dow, M.D., M.S.H.A., is the Ruth and Seymour Perlin Tenured Professor of Medicine and Health Administration at Virginia Commonwealth University. Beginning in 2021, he serves as the interim division chief for hospital medicine, reprising a role he held as the founding director of the academic hospitalist service from 2004 to 2008.

Dow directs the Center for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Care through which more than 2,000 learners and 100 faculty participate in interprofessional programs annually. In addition, he heads the University Health Services-Professional Education Programs, VCU Health's continuing education enterprise, which produces and credits thousands of hours of programs each year.

In all of these roles, he seeks to translate needs defined by practice and the community into high-quality educational and clinical programs that advance health services and improve health. "Dr. Dow has developed and implemented a truly remarkable list of innovative and effective educational programs for health sciences learners at all levels," said Peter Buckley, M.D., dean of the School of Medicine. His educational programs, which focus on the importance of team-based learning, prepare learners from different disciplines to work collaboratively in today's interdisciplinary health care environment.

Buckley went on to say, "Dr. Dow is known as a 'teacher of teachers,' developing high-quality

and convenient programs to support continuing learning at VCU and the medical community." For example, Dow created programming to help disseminate critical information regarding COVID-19 in a convenient, time-saving way for those who had an overwhelming amount of information to stay on top of while also having very little time to learn it all. He developed a series of 30-minute webinars that he hosts and produces — the COVID Bolus, which focuses on the most up-to-date information on COVID, and the Health Bolus, a variety of continuing education topics. To date, more than 80 episodes have been disseminated, with a reach of over 15,000 views.

Dow has presented locally, nationally and internationally, and has authored more than 50 articles in peer-reviewed publications and seven book chapters. He also wrote the "Handbook of Interprofessional Practice: A Guide for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Care" in 2018. He serves as associate editor for the Journal of Interprofessional Care, associate editor for the Journal of Interprofessional Education and Practice, and reviewer for nine other journals.

Dow attended medical school at Washington University and completed residency in internal medicine and a health administration degree at VCU.





Distinguished Service Award

A. Omar Abubaker, D.M.D., Ph.D.

School of Dentistry

A. Omar Abubaker, D.M.D., Ph.D., is the Elmer Bear Professor and Chair of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. Abubaker joined the faculty at the schools of Dentistry and Medicine at Virginia Commonwealth University in 1991 as an assistant professor of oral and maxillofacial surgery. Five years later, he was promoted to an associate professor with tenure.

Abubaker earned his D.M.D and Ph.D. in head and neck anatomy from the School of Dental Medicine, University of Pittsburgh. He also completed his residency training and a fellowship in oral and maxillofacial surgery from Presbyterian University Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is board certified by the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery.

Clara Spatafore, D.D.S., interim dean of the School of Dentistry, said that Abubaker is “an innovative teacher, prolific writer, and generous volunteer,” and went on to note that, “Dr. Abubaker has shown a unique ability to see opportunities for improving the treatment of underserved populations who are unable to obtain care in the private sector, and to develop innovative programs that effectively combine the educational and clinical service components for the benefit of both patients, students and oral

and maxillofacial surgery and other residents at VCU.”

After a devastating personal tragedy, he earned a Graduate Certificate in Addiction Studies in 2015 from the International Program in Addiction Studies, which is jointly based in VCU, The University of Adelaide, Australia and Kings College London, England.

Abubaker’s service history is an impressive one that reaches far beyond the university. He has offered his expertise at the local, regional, national, and even international levels, with his most recent contributions in the area of addiction being both unique and timely. Since 2017, Abubaker has become active in education and advocacy in the area of addiction, the opioid epidemic and pain management and has been called upon by professional organizations, the media, and the U.S. Senate as an expert on the opioid crisis.

Of Abubaker, it has been said that, “When asked to serve, irrespective of who asks, or where his service is needed, Dr. Abubaker is prepared to serve and he serves with distinction. Moreover, when faced with unthinkable personal tragedy, at a time when many would retreat, he refocused and directed his efforts to yet another arena, expanding his impact and his reach to new areas and still greater heights.”

Outstanding Early Career Faculty Award

Jeanine Guidry, Ph.D.

College of Humanities and Sciences

Jeanine Guidry, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture in the College of Humanities and Sciences, director of the school's Media and Health Lab, and a member of the VCU Institute for Women's Health Sexual and Domestic Violence Research Development Group.

Described as having unlimited potential, Guidry has already established herself as an ambitious researcher while just completing her fourth year on her tenure track at the Robertson School. Her work focuses on health communication message design, testing, and evaluation, particularly in the realm of social and mobile technologies. She regularly presents at national and international conferences for organizations such as the International Communications Association, American Public Health Association, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, and International Public Relations Research. Guidry has also published 45 peer-reviewed journal publications on the impact of visual social media on the field of health communication. Her publications are in high-impact mass communication and medical journals, including the American Journal of Public Health, Public Relations Review, Vaccine, the Journal of Social Marketing, Health Communication, PRism and Communication Teacher. She has also published three book chapters and two

editorials and has nine manuscripts currently under review at peer-reviewed journals.

In addition to her scholarly work, Guidry has also made a significant impact with her teaching. A prolific educator highly valued by her students, she uses her research to inform her teaching and thereby brings cutting-edge health communication messaging strategies into her classroom. Guidry has already taught a variety of undergraduate and graduate classes, including a new course she created during the early stage of the pandemic, Digital Media Strategies for the COVID-19 Crisis, which was opened for enrollment from the community, especially for health communication professionals, and widely praised for its timeliness and impact.

"Guidry is one of the most productive junior faculty members in the overall field of mass communications, who had a national impact with her research and teaching during the current COVID-19 pandemic and the Zika virus outbreak," said Jennifer Malat, Ph.D., dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences. "Her talent, expertise, and innovation have made tremendous contributions to the national and international prominence of the Robertson School and VCU and to the advancement of public relations education and research."





Outstanding Term Faculty Award

Peyton Rowe, M.F.A.

College of Humanities and Sciences

Peyton Rowe, M.F.A., is a professor of design and creative advertising in the VCU College of Humanities and Sciences' Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture, and currently serves as its interim director. For the past three years, she served as the school's director of undergraduate studies, providing leadership and policy for the Robertson School's five undergraduate academic concentrations, three main academic sequences and their faculty coordinators, and more than 800 students.

Rowe has distinguished herself as an award-winning educator who has had a tremendous impact on her students and on the Richmond community with her service-learning classes. As executive director of this program and founder of CreateAthon at VCU, Rowe has focused her energy on inspiring, motivating and teaching as many creative groups as possible how their advertising and marketing talents can serve local nonprofits. In the 14 years since CreateAthon at VCU began, 130 Richmond-area nonprofit organizations have received \$2.4 million in pro bono strategic

and creative work. More than 1,100 student and professional volunteers have been involved in this program, which enjoys a stellar reputation in the advertising industry. Her work has made significant contributions to VCU's Quest 2025 strategic plan by preparing students to become creative innovators and entrepreneurs who make a difference in the world.

"Her teaching has earned her a nationwide reputation as a leader in experiential learning and pro-bono work in the classroom for nonprofit organizations," said Jennifer Malat, Ph.D., dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences. "She is also valued as a dedicated and trusted colleague by her peers who has worked selflessly to advance the mission of the Robertson School and VCU."

Rowe is a passionate and effective teacher, as well as a dedicated and productive faculty member. A highly regarded collaborator, she has not only provided a stunning amount of academic and professional service, but also has left a profound and impactful legacy already, and her students, faculty and university colleagues, as well as nonprofit organizations around the country are much the better for it.

PAST AWARD RECIPIENTS

For a list of past award recipients,
please visit president.vcu.edu/nominations.

