

Dear VCU faculty, students and staff,

Earlier today, President Rao announced at the Board of Visitors retreat that VCU has now [passed \\$500 million in sponsored research funding for the fiscal year 2024](#). This is a truly monumental achievement for our research enterprise and the sum of years of tireless work in various disciplines as well as transdisciplinary and collaborative efforts within and across our campuses.

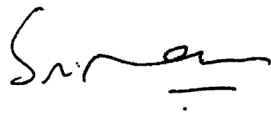
When I joined VCU in 2018 to serve as vice president for research and innovation, I knew then that I was joining an institution poised for exponential research growth. It was clear that the collective talent and desire of our faculty, postdocs, students and staff could take us to great heights.

As one of just five R1 institutions in Virginia, we hold the great responsibilities of pushing the boundaries of human knowledge, spurring economic growth and fostering innovation and development. Through our focused and transdisciplinary efforts in the arts, humanities, social sciences, as well as the cutting-edge advances and discoveries in STEM and health science fields, we are addressing society's grandest challenges and lifting lives in Richmond, across the country and around the world.

Research at VCU is impactful and our sponsored funding milestone would not have been possible without the efforts of our dedicated faculty, postdocs, students and staff, and our internal investments in the form of grants and other infrastructure support. In total, our \$506 million in sponsored awards was in large part driven by 1,953 grant proposal submissions and more than \$1.5 billion in funding proposals from all our faculty.

But this milestone is not the end, it is the continuation of our quest for excellence. To our research faculty, and postdoctoral fellows: thank you for your drive, creativity and innovation, I encourage you to think even grander on your continued next efforts; to our research staff: thank you for your professionalism and dedication to ensuring that our research enterprise can be both dynamic and precise, if you see ways we can improve our processes, do not hesitate to let us know; and to our students: every year more and more of you are engaging in research. Tell your friends and classmates to engage in the pursuit of curiosity and experiential learning, and let's not stop until Every Ram's a Researcher.

I look forward to joining you for the next chapter of our UNEqualed journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Srirama", with a horizontal line underneath.

P. Srirama Rao, Ph.D.,  
Vice president for research and innovation