



# VCU

Health Administration  
College of Health Professions



**VCU Health  
Administration  
Ranked  
Third in Nation**

**U.S. News & World Report places  
VCU up two spots from  
previous rankings.**

## Eyes on mission amid transition



### A NOTE FROM PAULA H. SONG, Ph.D.

RICHARD M. BRACKEN CHAIR  
AND PROFESSOR OF  
HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

To say healthcare is undergoing rapid change is an obvious cliché. As leaders, we have used such phrasing for decades now. Despite the challenge and opportunity in healthcare, and while the world may look and operate differently than it did a century ago, change is a constant. True leaders adapt.

We bear that in mind as VCU Health Administration undergoes its own positive changes that will lead our program and the College of Health Professions forward.

**“Our alums are our outcomes,  
and their successes speak for  
themselves.”**

Susan Parish, Ph.D., MSW, dean of the College of Health Professions and Sentara Professor of Health Administration, has been a huge advocate for our departmental initiatives since I started here three years ago. She has championed our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in hiring and admissions, the development of our new certificate programs, the recruitment of diverse and experienced faculty, and a

restructuring of our MHA and MSHA programs to offer more flexibility in how and where students learn.

We wish her the very best as she moves north as president of Mercy College in New York.

VCU was again ranked among the top health care management programs in the nation this spring in *U.S. News & World Report*. We were named a No. 3 program in America for 2023, moving up from the No. 5 spot in rankings from 2019.

This ranking is a reflection of our entire team — not merely the faculty, staff and students in the building, but the alumni and supporters out in the world who are national and global healthcare leaders. Our alums are our outcomes, and their successes speak for themselves. Putting aside the critical questions surrounding the methodology of such rankings, at the end of the day, this is a recognition of how our peers view our program and the strengths of our people.

— continued on page 2.

### LECTURE SERIES

## White speaks on ‘co-creation of learning’ in Mick Lecture

Kenneth R. White, Ph.D., AGACNP, ACHPN, FACHE, FAAN, dean and professor of the MGH Institute of Health Professions School of Nursing in Boston, delivered the Stephen S. Mick Lecture earlier this spring. White spoke on “Co-Creation of Learning: Curiosity, Authenticity, and Serendipity.”

A former VCU administrator, White directed the MHA program and served as the inaugural Charles P. Cardwell, Jr. Professor of Health Administration from 2001 to 2008, and he served as associate director of the MHA and MSHA programs from 1995 to 2001.

White also served as the inaugural Sentara Professor in Health Administration at VCU. He has held other leadership roles with the University of Virginia and Mercy Health Services.

The lecture honors Mick, faculty emeritus, who served as the Arthur Graham Glasgow Endowed Chair of the Department of Health Administration for a decade, ending in 2009. The program supports the department in bringing in guest speakers to address current and relevant topics in the industry.



**Kenneth White, Ph.D., presented the  
annual Stephen S. Mick Lecture this spring.**

## Eyes on mission amid transition, *continued from page 1.*



**Saleema Karim, Ph.D.**

Ensuring we continue to offer a curriculum and an exceptional student experience will remain a top priority for Saleema Karim, Ph.D., who will succeed me as interim chair of VCU Health Administration. Saleema's appointment is effective July 1. That's the same day I step into the role of interim dean, succeeding Susan, who leaves us in a position of strength.

Saleema joined the department in 2021 from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Her research focuses on financial sustainability of rural hospitals, and she teaches courses in healthcare financial management. In the relatively short time she has been at VCU, she has served as interim MSHA program

director, is leading our CAHME self-study accreditation process, and has served on a number of important department and college-wide committees. Saleema is already very familiar with the department and college and is very well-positioned to assume this role. The department and I look forward to supporting her in this new role.

As a college and as a department, we will continue to deliver the highest caliber of healthcare leaders and professionals — whether they are in the C-suite, operating room, or clinic — and ensure they can successfully navigate the (yes, always evolving) challenges and opportunities they will face.

## ON THE COVER

# Health Administration Ranked Third in Nation

The Department of Health Administration has been ranked among the top healthcare management programs in the nation, according to rankings *U.S. News & World Report* released in April. VCU is ranked as a No. 3 program in America for 2023, moving up from the No. 5 spot in the previous rankings from 2019.

"It is a true honor to be viewed so favorably among our peers. We've built our reputation on developing graduates who can readily step into health system leadership roles and positively impact their organizations and communities," said Paula H. Song, Ph.D., the Richard M. Bracken Chair and Professor of Health Administration. "This ranking is a testament that our program is delivering the high caliber of leaders that healthcare systems need to successfully navigate the ever-growing challenges they face today. We continue to refine our curriculum so that our students are prepared to immediately step in and make a difference."

VCU has consistently been ranked among top healthcare management programs since the 1990s. U.S. News rankings reflect how peers view VCU Health Administration and its two jointly accredited graduate degree tracks: the MHA and the MSHA.

VCU secured the No. 3 spot in a tie with Rush University College of Health Sciences, the University of Michigan School of Public Health, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health.

"It is a crowded field at the top, which shows the strength of the healthcare management education field and is a great sign for the profession at large. Collectively, our peers at health administration programs have really taken note of the strength and diversity of our faculty leadership, their research, and teaching experience. With each new faculty hire, we deepen our program and broaden our profile," Song said. "That bears out with equally diverse and talented students, the strength of our unique third-year residency program, and the excellent job placement of our graduates."

**Cardwell Comments** is named for Charles P. Cardwell, Jr., who established the original curriculum for the VCU Department of Health Administration. Cardwell became director of the Medical College of Virginia's hospital division in 1947 (what is now known as VCU Health). He was awarded MCV's first honorary doctorate (in hospital administration) in 1962. For 22 years, he served as director of the teaching hospitals until his 1969 retirement. After his retirement, Cardwell was active in the MCV alumni society, served on several administrative councils, and still found time to teach once a week.

## Mick Lecture, *continued from page 1.*



**Stephan Davis, DNP, MHSA, FACHE, interim associate dean of diversity, equity and inclusion; Nathan W. Carroll, Ph.D., associate professor; Laura McClelland, Ph.D., associate professor and director of the Ph.D. Program in Health Services Organization Research; Dolores Clement, Dr. P.H., MS, MA professor emerita; Kenneth R. White, Ph.D.; Paula H. Song, Ph.D., Richard M. Bracken Chair and Professor of Health Administration; M. Paige Powell, Ph.D., MHA, program director and associate professor; and Stephen S. Mick, Ph.D., former chair and faculty emeritus.**



**Ann Shih, Ph.D., MSc, MBA, recently won an Excellence in Interprofessionalism award from the VCU Center for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Care. Alan Dow, MD, MSHA '05, presented the award.**



**Laura McClelland, Ph.D., (left) with Amy Armstrong, Ph.D., CRC, associate dean of faculty development for the College of Health Professions.**

## McClelland receives College of Health Professions teaching award

Laura McClelland, Ph.D., was awarded the College of Health Professions Teaching Excellence Award at the May 13 graduation ceremony. The latest recognition is one of many teaching awards bestowed in the past year on McClelland, an associate professor of health administration and Ph.D. program director.

McClelland was also honored with a 2022 Teaching Excellence Award from the Association for University Programs in Health Administration. Last summer, McClelland won the Teaching Excellence Award from the Academy of Management's Health Care Management Division. She also received our department's Dolores Clement Teaching Award in 2022.

McClelland says teaching and mentoring "truly bring me joy!" She begins each academic year filled with the hope of making a positive impact on students and alumni.

### Atherly named to Perlin Professorship



Adam Atherly, Ph.D., has been named Seymour and Ruth Perlin Professor of Health Administration and Internal Medicine. Established in 2014, this endowed position rotates between those respective departments in the College of Health Professions and School of Medicine.

Atherly is an active researcher whose work spans numerous methodological and topical areas, including choice modeling, healthcare spending, cost-effectiveness analysis, and

evaluation of efforts to improve quality of care and patient outcomes. His research particularly focuses on consumer decisions regarding health insurance plan choice and more recently on value-based healthcare.

Jonathan and Donna Perlin created the professorship to honor his parents, Dr. Seymour and Ruth Perlin. Last year, Jonathan Perlin, Ph.D., MD, MSHA, was named president and CEO of The Joint Commission. Donna Perlin, MD, HS, also received her medical degree from VCU and is a pediatric emergency physician.

### Santa Ana named residency director



Coleen Santa Ana, MHA '05, became residency director in April. She brings more than 20 years of experience to the role, having served as hospital president for Sentara Healthcare following successive promotions through the HCA and UHS healthcare organizations. She's currently CEO and partner for Alere Care Solutions and founder of Luminary Lens, LLC, a coaching and consulting company.

Modern Healthcare named Santa Ana an "Up and Comer," and she was celebrated in Inside Business among "Women in Business." She chairs the American Hospital Association Equity of Care Committee and recently finished serving on the VCU Board of Visitors. Santa Ana also serves on our Alumni Advisory Council and is excited to work with students in her role leading the residency placement process.

As Santa Ana takes on her new role, we want to extend best wishes to Rachel Haga, MHA '10, our outgoing residency director who relocated to North Carolina with her family. Under Haga's leadership, the diversity and strength of the MHA and MSHA student cohorts grew tremendously, and all second-year students received successful residency placement offers.

### NAHSE, Health Administration partner on inclusive leadership education



In August 2022, Lisa Mallory, Ph.D., CEO of the National Association of Health Services Executives, and Stephan Davis, DNP, MHSA, FACHE, executive director of Inclusive Leadership Education for the department, had a breakfast meeting where an idea was born: launching a webinar series offered through a partnership between their two institutions.

This past spring, their idea came to fruition with a three-part webinar series focused on the advancement of Black leaders in healthcare.

"NAHSE is thrilled to be partnering with VCU's leading Department of Health Administration to advance our educational mission," Mallory said. "Given that Dr. Davis is now joining NAHSE's education committee, I am confident that this is only the beginning of our work together to advance diversity, inclusion, and belonging in the field."

Davis also recently began a two-year term on the American Academy of Nursing Diversity & Inclusivity Committee. The committee comprises AAN fellows appointed by the board to recommend strategies and goals for increasing diversity and inclusivity.



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# Tournament honors beloved professor Ann Johnston



VCU Master of Health Administration students knew Ann Johnston, Ed.D., MHA, as a beloved professor who mentored them along the path of launching and growing their careers.

After Johnston passed away in June 2022 following an illness, students searched for a way to continue honoring her legacy.

“It was important for us to have a way to remember her beyond a traditional class gift and create something that continues to grow with each class,” said Rebecca Jacobs, the MHA ‘23 class vice president.

Students found that lasting tribute in the form of a golf tournament in Johnston’s memory that was held on April 21. The event used a sport the leader loved playing to raise \$26,500 for a cause she cared deeply about: supporting the professional development of MHA students.

Students and alumni of the MHA program along with donors, sponsors, and volunteers gathered that day at Brickshire Golf Club at Providence Forge, Va. outside Richmond for the inaugural Johnston Memorial VCU MHA Golf Classic. Many members of Johnston’s family were there to share the day with attendees, including Becca Taubel, Johnston’s daughter who gave a keynote address.

About 70 golfers took to the greens for the 18-hole event. The tournament was among a series of events held during April’s alumni reunion weekend.

Visit [ha.chp.vcu.edu](https://ha.chp.vcu.edu) and click “Featured News” to read more about alumni and student achievements.



**Perkins (center), was named a winner of the “We Believe in You Award” from the National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE).**

## NAHSE presents ‘We Believe in You Award’ to MHA student

Maya Perkins, MHA ‘25, was recently named a winner of the “We Believe in You Award” from the National Association of Health Services Executives.

The award is given to an exceptional graduate student striving to become a future leader in health care management and NAHSE. It also is one of four distinct scholarships developed by NAHSE to support and encourage minority students to pursue a career in healthcare leadership or a related field.

“As an African American woman striving to become a healthcare leader, I am committed to the journey of working to break health disparities,” said Perkins, a native of Chesapeake. She was also elected DEI director for her cohort last fall.



**Mosher**

## MSHA student wins scholarship for selfless service

Stephen Mosher, MSHA ‘23, earned the Tim Campbell Scholarship for Selfless Service to Others and the Community by the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education.

Students in CAHME accredited or certified programs are eligible for the scholarship named in memory of Campbell, a CAHME board member who personified a commitment to service and volunteerism. Campbell believed in hard work and selfless service in his professional and personal life and that true success is measured through relationships which help others reach their full potential.

Mosher, an Omaha, Neb., native, earned a bachelor’s degree in biomedical engineering from Marquette University. He worked for the Veterans Health Administration in Jackson, Miss., before coming to Richmond in 2015. In 2020, he was promoted to chief engineer at the Central Virginia VA Healthcare System. His responsibilities include the hospital’s day-to-day building maintenance operations and construction projects.

# Taiwan health administration students experience U.S. healthcare

## How does the U.S. healthcare system compare to Taiwan's?

Health administration students from Taiwan's Kaohsiung Medical University traveled to Virginia in March to find answers and experience the strengths and challenges of healthcare in America.

For more than two decades, VCU Health Administration has hosted students from KMU under a partnership that originated under the department's former chair Thomas Wan, Ph.D., MA. This year's visit was the first since before the pandemic.

The tour was led by Paige Powell, Ph.D., MHA, VCU's MHA/MSHA program director and associate professor. Taking place over VCU's spring break, the KMU students spent nearly a week in Richmond, Williamsburg, and Charlottesville where they toured medical facilities and met with healthcare leaders across specialties.

"It's a highly valuable cultural exchange where we each learn from one another," Powell said. "For our own faculty and for me personally, I learned a lot about the Taiwanese system that I didn't know before, and it helped me learn more about our systems here in Virginia."

Taiwan has a single-payer system with one government agency controlling healthcare for all. Enrollment is mandatory though citizens can use private insurers for certain procedures and maintain autonomy within the system to choose their own doctors and facilities. Still, Taiwanese healthcare is not without its own challenges.

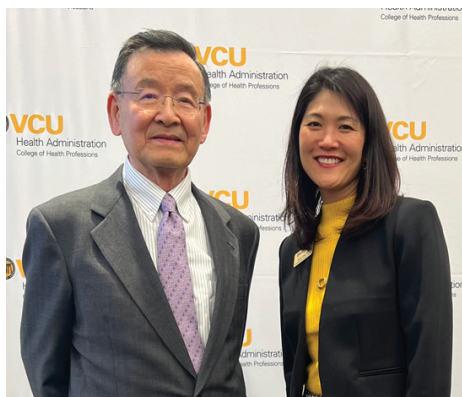
**"It's a highly valuable cultural exchange where we each learn from one another."**

"But America spends about three times what the Taiwanese do on healthcare each year," Powell said.

The KMU students and faculty had a lot of interest and questions surrounding cost-effectiveness and quality of care, the latter widely viewed as a weakness in the Taiwanese healthcare system.



**"This year's workshop holds particular significance for us as it marks KMU's return to VCU after the pandemic, making it a truly unique and memorable experience for our students to learn, visit healthcare systems, and witness various aspects in person."**



Thomas Wan, Ph.D., MA, and Paula Song, Ph.D.

"And they were impressed with the technology we have and the amount of technology we have, but they also recognize that it is a high cost driver in our healthcare system," Powell said.

A professor emeritus of both VCU and the University of Central Florida's School of Global Health Management and Informatics,

Wan came to Richmond for the KMU visit and held a student workshop. Wan is also a visiting distinguished professor of KMU's Department of Healthcare Administration and Medical Informatics, and a gift to VCU from the university helps support doctoral students.

"This year's workshop holds particular significance for us as it marks KMU's return to VCU after the pandemic, making it a truly unique and memorable experience for our students to learn, visit healthcare systems, and witness various aspects in person," wrote I-Te (Yiter) Chen, chair of KMU's Department of Healthcare Administration and Medical Informatics, in an email to VCU faculty following the visit. "We extend our heartfelt appreciation and thank you for making this workshop a success and look forward to a continued collaboration between KMU and VCU."



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## Residency sites named for MHA Class of 2024

**Austin Andersen**

HCA Florida Orange  
Park Hospital  
Orange Park, FL

**Saagar Bhikha**

Baptist Health  
Jacksonville, FL

**Kelly Black**

Pinnacle Living  
Richmond, VA

**Karis Cha**

VCU Health  
Richmond, VA

**Tanner Couch**

HCA Healthcare  
Mid-America Division  
Kansas City, MO

**Emma Creech**

Duke University Hospital  
Durham, NC

**Jared Dawson**

HCA Healthcare  
Ambulatory Surgery  
Division  
Dallas, TX

**Ryan Denzler**

Bon Secours Mercy Health  
Richmond, VA

**Juan Garza**

Riverside Health System  
Newport News, VA

**Drashti Ray**

Siemens Healthineers  
Cary, NC

**Rafid Kabir**

Johns Hopkins  
Home Care Group  
Baltimore, MD

**Braden Keller**

Children’s Hospital of the  
King’s Daughters  
Norfolk, VA

**Skyler Kent**

Sovah Health - Danville  
Danville, VA

**William Keyt**

Sentara Healthcare  
Norfolk, VA

**Sammy Krejdovsky**

University of Pittsburgh  
Medical Center  
Pittsburgh, PA

**Fiona Maxwell**

Medical University of  
South Carolina  
Greenville, SC

**Miyanla McConner**

Riverside Health System  
Newport News, VA

**Victor Melo**

HCA Florida Northwest  
and Westside Hospitals  
Fort Lauderdale, FL

**Lance Mendoza**

Central Virginia VA  
Healthcare System  
Richmond, VA

**Zoe Moyer**

Central Virginia VA Health  
Care System  
Richmond, VA

**Noah Peton**

VCU Health  
Richmond, VA

**Kriti Pradhan**

CommonSpirit Health  
San Francisco, CA

**Brennan Rasmussen**

Valley Health  
Winchester, VA

**Alexandria Ritchie**

Sentara Healthcare  
Norfolk, VA

**Deepika Sarma**

RSM US  
McLean, VA

**Deidre Skerritt**

Emerson Health  
Concord, MA

**Justin Truitt**

CBRE Healthcare  
Richmond, VA

## MHA students vie in case study competitions

VCU first-year MHA students Lauren Mulholland, Nate Puffer, and Sydney Belt reached the finals at The Ohio State University’s 12th Annual First-Year Health Administration Case Competition held April 13-14 in Columbus.

The VCU team was among 21 health administration teams competing. Designed to give students the opportunity to examine a real-life issue within a healthcare system, this year’s case focused on inpatient and outpatient surgery capacity at Yale New Haven Hospital. The VCU team advanced to the final round with five other programs, and Mulholland won a “Best Presenter” award.

In other case study competitions this spring, rising third-year students Jared Dawson and Tanner Couch joined Mulholland at Baylor University, where Dawson won a “Best Presenter” award. Rising second-year students Brian Britt, Jordan Cosey, and Maya Perkins took part in a National Association of Health Services Executives competition, and first-year students Victor Melo, Alexandria Ritchie, and Emma Creech represented VCU at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Health Administration Case Competition.



Lauren Mulholland, Sydney Belt, and Nate Puffer present at The Ohio State University case competition.

## Visionary entrepreneur, veteran leader share experience

Under Health Administration's new Executive-in-Residence program, students and faculty gain a direct link to healthcare leaders who can complement their MHA and MSHA education. The program establishes a partnership with a healthcare leader who has an interest in assisting students in preparation for transition from an academic setting to a practice environment. The leaders mentor students virtually and are on-site at VCU at least once a year.

"What the executive does from there is really in their court and based on their unique area of expertise," said Paula Song, Ph.D., the Richard M. Bracken Chair and Professor of Health

**"Students are able to access and be mentored by these professionals who graciously give us their time, explain industry culture and practice, and help faculty evolve the departmental curriculum and programs to best prepare our students for leadership roles in the world of healthcare."**

Administration. "Students are able to access and be mentored by these professionals who graciously give us their time, explain industry culture and practice, and help faculty evolve the departmental curriculum and programs to

best prepare our students for leadership roles in the world of healthcare."

For 2023, the Executive-in-Residence program engaged two Health Administration alumni — each of whom has carved their own path.

### ON THE TRADITIONAL TRACK:

#### Howard Kern, MHA '81, Former CEO of Sentara Healthcare

Howard Kern said the opportunity to serve as an Executive-in-Residence at VCU came at the perfect time.

Kern retired as President and CEO of Sentara Healthcare on Sept. 1 but will consult with the Hampton Roads health system until his official retirement at the end of 2023.

"After 43 years as a practicing healthcare leader, I decided to transition from a full-time chief executive, but I feel that I still have much to contribute to improving healthcare and want to give back to current and aspiring healthcare leaders," Kern said.

As the past CEO of the Norfolk-based, nationally ranked health system with \$12 billion in revenue and 32,000 employees, "guiding students on health leadership is a natural extension of my work with fellows and young executives in the field and a logical next step for serving in an EIR role," he said. "I believe I can give something to students that is really complementary to what the school already provides, which is a framework for how to apply what they're learning in a practice setting."



### A QUALITY EXPERT AND VISIONARY:

#### Sheronica (Barcliff) Burgess, MSHA '13, Entrepreneur

Since graduating from Health Administration a decade ago, the time since has been "phenomenal, marked with great transition and seasons of harvest and sowing seeds," Sheronica Burgess said.

She founded The Barcliff Group (named after her maiden name), an Atlanta-based consultancy focused on helping clients nationwide improve health outcomes and "understand the connective tissue between corporate culture and making an impact in the community."

She left a corporate job in Washington, D.C., to become an entrepreneur, and she looked to her wheelhouse: healthcare quality, not necessarily management. She founded her own firm to focus on National Committee for Quality Assurance accreditation and regulatory compliance, plus management consulting, strategic planning, communications, and health tech. The Barcliff Group has served clients such as Kaiser Permanente and Imperial Health.

"I will be more vocal about my journey to entrepreneurship so that the path can be accessible to others," Burgess says. She notes some level of traditional experience is needed for an entrepreneur, but there is a growing chorus of healthcare leaders who dream of innovating the field and carving their own path. She wants to help steer VCU's curriculum to more topics that explore entrepreneurship in collaboration with faculty.



Visit [ha.chp.vcu.edu](https://ha.chp.vcu.edu) and click "Featured News" to read more about the Executive-in-Residence program.



## OUR 2023 MHA GRADUATES

Row 1: Jordan Helms, Malea Riley, Delaney Mayette, Sierra Brockwell, Vallerie Lockwood  
 Row 2: Usman Haseeb, Eric Charlton, Elizabeth Dudley, Kyle Santillan, Melissa Yeboah, Anthony Betz  
 Row 3: Austin Chapman, Rebecca Jacobs, Erin Fenton, Delaney Tsacoumis, Mady Starke, Manneja Cordray, Quetel Sellers  
 Row 4: Rebecca Crider, Tanner Young, Brendan Hames, Michael Philippone, Claudia Riddle, Sydney Lynch, Khalilah Cuff  
 Not pictured: Mayesha Alam

## CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

Row 1 (bottom row): Allison Young, Christine Garrett, Gary Simmons, and Ryan McCorry with Saleema Karim, Ph.D., associate professor and incoming chair of the Department of Health Administration

Row 2: Shannon McCarthy, Carolyn Abbot, MacKenzie Louth, Stacy Rogowski, and Natalie Lerch with M. Paige Powell, Ph.D., MHA, VCU's MHA/MSHA program director

Row 3: Carrie Kovacik, Katie Ilch, Porsha Bennett, Adam Civils, Jennifer Reed

Row 4: Stephen Mosher, Jaydeep Dhaduk, Shilen Thakrar, Ray Hudson, Jenny Anna Chiariello.

Not pictured: Deb Burley, Megan Klingler, Noopur Mehta.



## OUR 2023 MSHA GRADUATES

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