

LETTER TO THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY | OCTOBER 2020

Dear Colleagues:

Over the last seven months, Old Dominion University has had to abruptly respond to factors beyond our control. In doing so, we learned the breadth of our capabilities and witnessed the resilience of our faculty and staff and perseverance of our students. If we have learned one thing from this year, it is that working together, we can overcome any hurdle.

As we continue to look at the future of higher education in these ever-changing times, it is our responsibility to position Old Dominion as a leading and innovative research university that is creating knowledge, solving complex challenges and preparing students for success. In that spirit, **I am pleased to announce the launch of the Program Prioritization Initiative**, which aims to position our administrative and academic programs to thrive regardless of fiscal and enrollment uncertainties.

This initiative will be a collaborative effort, driven by faculty, to identify administrative and academic programs that can be strengthened and suggest opportunities for cost savings and investment. A task force, co-chaired by Dr. Brian Payne and Dr. Desh Ranjan, will lead this process and report its findings and recommendations to me, Academic Deans, and the Faculty Senate. Task force members include:

- Dr. Vinod Agarwal, Professor, Strome College of Business, Deputy Director, Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy
- Dr. Tom Allen, Professor, College of Arts and Letters
- Dr. Nina Brown, Professor and Eminent Scholar, Darden College of Education and Professional Studies
- Ms. Nina Gonser, Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Dr. Wayne Hynes, Professor, College of Sciences
- Ms. Heather Huling, Assistant Vice President, Office of Distance Learning
- Dr. Vishnu Lakdawala, Associate Professor, Batten College of Engineering and Technology
- Dr. Norou Diawara, Professor, College of Sciences
- Dr. Tisha Paredes, Assistant Vice President for Assessment
- Dr. Brian Payne, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
- Dr. Desh Ranjan, Professor, College of Sciences
- Dr. Lynn Ridinger, Professor, Darden College of Education and Professional Studies
- Dr. Jay Scribner, Professor, Darden College of Education and Professional Studies
- Dr. Deanne Shuman, Professor, College of Health Sciences
- Dr. Mileta Tomovic, Professor and Mitsubishi Kasei Endowed Professor, Batten College of Engineering and Technology
- Ms. Karen Vaughan, Head of Scholarly Communication & Publishing Dept., University Libraries
- Dr. Charles Wilson, Professor, College of Arts and Letters
- Dr. Xiushi Yang, Professor, College of Arts and Letters
- Dr. Wie Yusuf, Professor, Strome College of Business

Recommendations from the task force will be shared with the academic affairs community and used to inform resource reallocation and investment decisions.

The following tenets will guide this process:

- Shared governance will be embraced, with faculty owning the prioritization process, and academic policies will be followed for all final decisions.
- The task force will focus on the future of administrative and academic programs and what is best for the entire institution, rather than what might be best for a specific program or administrative unit.
- The task force will work in a collaborative, open and transparent manner, reporting regularly on its activities and progress.
- The inclusive process will seek, welcome and value input from all faculty and staff.

- Academic quality will be central to all decisions.
- Recommendations will be informed by evidence, faculty insight and contributions from stakeholders, and marketplace factors, including current and future enrollments.
- Student success and social mobility, which are central to our work at ODU, will be vital parts of the discussion.
- We will honor and embrace ODU's culture and faculty expertise.

Here is a link to the [Program Prioritization Initiative website](#) we created to keep you informed of the task force's activities and progress. This initiative will help shape our academic enterprise, and its benefits will extend beyond our institution for years to come. I look forward to sharing our progress. If you have any questions about the process, please reach out to Dr. Brian Payne, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (bpayne@odu.edu).

Sincerely,

Austin O. Agho, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs