The University's Strategic Plan called for the establishment of a Richmond Research Institute and a Founders’ Committee to help implement the Institute’s founding (Strategic Plan, p.35). Accordingly, the Provost appointed a committee and in a July 22, 2003 memo charged the Committee with preparing a report addressing a number of focal points in connection with the Institute’s founding. (See attached copy of that memo.) Set forth below are the Committee's responses to the requested items.

1. **RRI Mission Statement.** The Richmond Research Institute will encourage and facilitate collaborative and interdisciplinary faculty research, both theoretical and applied, on social and public policy issues across the schools of the university. The Institute serves as a resource to involve students in research, and to recognize and disseminate results.

2. **Activities That Might Realize RRI’s Mission.** The mission statement is intentionally general and is expected to evolve as the RRI matures. The specific kinds of activities in which the institute engages will evolve over time as well. Consequently, the following list is intended to illustrate the types of activities and goals that would help the Institute realize its mission over time. The activity list is organized around the goals outlined in the mission statement.

**Build an Information Base with respect to social and public policy research.**

- Inventory ongoing faculty research and faculty research interests.

- Identify and inventory external funding sources to support research.

- Identify and inventory external partners for research collaboration (e.g., VCU research centers/labs; alumni).

- Inventory student research competencies and interests.

- Prioritize activities and goals through consultation with the Founders Committee, capitalizing on near-term opportunities while laying a foundation for long-term success.

**Encourage collaborative and interdisciplinary research on social and public policy issues.**

- Introduce the role of the Institute at departmental faculty meetings.
• Hold research meetings and seminars involving faculty from the schools of Arts & Sciences, Business, Continuing Studies, Law, and Leadership.

• Host forums/symposia for issue identification and debate. The participants and audience for symposia might extend beyond UR to include, for example, state and federal agencies; regional (VCU, UVA, William and Mary, etc) and national (e.g., DC area) universities; and global visitors.

• Develop practical applications of research to address public policy problems (community outreach).

Facilitate collaborative and interdisciplinary research on social and public policy issues.

• Develop programs to keep faculty current with evolving research methods and technologies.

• Seek external funding to support research.

• Fund faculty research fellowships.

• Develop strategies to leverage the university’s location, physical assets and research capabilities.

Involve students in research.

• Develop strategies for attracting, involving, and developing student research competencies.

• Serve as a clearinghouse to match student research competencies (e.g., statistical) to faculty research needs.

• Develop strategies for incorporating the Quest question into aspects of the Institute's research programs, thereby encouraging students and faculty to collaborate on theoretically driven projects exploring social issues.

• Develop strategies for embedding selective dimensions of social science research methods courses taught across the university into the Institute, thereby encouraging faculty in different schools/departments to collaborate in teaching methods and making methods more relevant and meaningful to students.
Disseminate the results.

- Periodically disseminate research activities and results through various means, e.g., a Richmond Research Institute WEB site, a working papers series, symposia, and other media.

- Sponsor programs that make research accessible to the public and governing officials and connect scholarship to the larger community.

- Fund travel to public policy meetings that fall outside of the academic scope of the standard travel budget.

3. Initial Organizational Structure.

- Institute Director: Qualifications-terminal degree with background/experience in quantitative research methods, especially in the areas of social, and public policy. Strong leadership and organizational skills. Established connections to key government officials, legislative and policy forming units, and funding agencies/foundations. Consider giving a joint appointment with an academic department that includes faculty status. Fundraising experience would be a plus. Reports to Provost.

- Research/Administrative Assistant

- Advisory Council or Board: Membership could consist of representatives from each school, a student representative, advancement (Associate VP for Corporate, Business and Foundations), Communications, state and local non-profit agencies and local universities.
4. Assessment Plan. The following assessment criteria are proposed for the Richmond Research Institute and its Founding Director. These criteria were developed by the Founders’ Committee with guidance from the Provost. Also, the criteria can be expected to evolve with the Institute. The assessment criteria by which Director and the Institute will be evaluated are organized around the goals outlined in the mission statement.

**First-year activities and third-year sunset review.**

- The production of an inventory of ongoing faculty research and faculty research interests by the end of the first year.

- The submission of viable planning document at the end of the first year, including timelines for the accomplishment of important objectives, such as a goal of 25 percent external funding by the third year.

- The initiation of at least one highly visible, interdisciplinary collaborative research project by the end of three years.

- Undergo a sunset review at the end of three years.

**Encourage and Facilitate collaborative and interdisciplinary research on social and public policy issues.**

- The success of the Director in finding and developing new, synergistic collaborations of interdisciplinary research where funding could be gained.

- The extent to which the Director has been successful at bringing in new money to fund the faculty’s research.

- A pattern of increasing grants funding, including both the number of grants and the amount of grant money.

- The extent to which the Director has succeeded in getting legislatures and other governmental agencies to seek research, reports, or other forms of scholarly assistance (e.g. expert testimony) from the University.

**Involve students in research.**

- The degree of student involvement and the role played by the Institute as a broker of internships for students.
Disseminate the results.

- The extent to which the Director and the Institute have brought the University of Richmond to the attention of the outside world. (Tangible evidence of success in raising the University’s research profile, as indicated by publications, media coverage, and other forms of recognition.)

- The extent to which the Institute has sought grants for new, collaborative interdisciplinary research. (The University will not receive all the grants it applies for. However, the fact that it applies for higher-level research grants will receive the attention of peer-review groups.)

- Whether or not the Institute has produced a document, such as a Richmond Report, or hosted an event, such as a symposium, that draws attention to University research accomplishments.

Respectively submitted by:
Pat Brown
Betsey Curtler
Jennifer Erkulwater
Ann Hodges
Fred Jablin
Kirk Jonas
George Kindel
Bob Schmidt
John Whelan

Attachment:

Provost’s Charge to the Founding Committee for the Richmond Research Institute (July 22, 2003)

Concept (reference Richmond Strategic Plan, Chapter IV, section IID)

The Richmond Research Institute is envisioned as an organizational umbrella that would seek to relate scholarly research to problem-solving and policy-making in the local community, the state, the nation, and the world. Specific research projects would be defined by faculty expertise and interest, available funding, and relevance to important societal problems. While the research agenda would be driven by public need and faculty interest, student involvement in the research will be a key measure of mission success.

Our geographic location in a fast growing suburban area, in a state capital with a rich heritage, and just two hours from Washington D.C. is viewed as an advantage for enabling the connections that will help to make this venture successful.
The RRI will better position faculty and the university as a whole to gain external funding from a range of sources. RRI will also offer mechanisms for recognition and dissemination of research findings. The Institute might host important symposia, global visitors, research fellows and the like.

Space for the RRI is planned in Weinstein Hall.

**Committee Charge**

Prepare a brief report by October 15 that includes:

- RRI mission statement (purpose).
- The specific kinds of activities that will realize the mission.
- An initiating organizational structure (necessary personnel, e.g. Founding Director and Admin Assistant).
- A roughed out budget.
- An assessment plan—expected outcomes and how to measure success
- Continue as advisory to the Director during the implementation phase

**Committee Support:** Provost’s Office