The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.

I. The minutes of the November meeting were approved as presented.

II. Don Gehring (VCU Vice President for Government Relations) spoke on the results of the recent elections and the impact on VCU priorities at the upcoming legislative session beginning in January. He questioned if there was any change in philosophy reflected by the elections in Virginia. Both Virginia Senators (Webb and Warner) have an interest in science, which can be good for VCU. One area that may be
good for VCU in the national picture is that we are working with the Atlantic Rivers Project which is related to the Rice Centers work, and funding for that is important. Protecting funding for academic medical education is a big concern; it was threatened last year at the Federal level through proposed regulations. Twenty-nine million dollars was involved, and a priority this year is to protect this funding once again.

Potential Medicaid cuts are also of concern. On the state level we have an election coming – 100 House seats, the Governorship, the Lt. Governorship and the Attorney General. A budget shortfall of $1.5 billion or more is anticipated. Key issues related to VCU are:

- Medicaid budget state funds which will be dug into; this can impact VCU Health Services System
- Campus safety/guns on campus
  (VCU seeks to keep control of this in its facilities)
- Certificate of public need
  (VCU is interested in maintaining the status quo instead of having changes related to health facility authorization)
- Medical malpractice cap (now at 2 million). Malpractice attorneys will likely seek an increase.
- Mental health reform (to be monitored by VCU during the session)
- Degree requirements (there may or may not be legislation introduced on this.)

OTHER
- General Classroom building – there is hope for this in a bonding package
- Medical education operating funding
- Base adequacy
- Faculty/Staff salary increases are off the table (dead)
- Financial aid
III. VCU Ombudsman Dr. Frank Baskind presented information on the Ombudsman role he is filling. In Virginia three universities—VCU, William and Mary, and University of Virginia have this position. He mentioned he has enjoyed meeting a number of good people across the University since taking on this position. There are four principles involved in the office: 1) confidentiality, 2) neutrality, 3) impartiality, 4) independence. These determine what can and can not be done with the role. A good bit of problem solving and coaching is involved. Any contact with the Ombudsman is voluntary. The Office offers a safety valve. He can be reached on a confidential line 804 828 1040. E-mail address is ombuds@vcu.edu. A web page entry can be found at www.provost.vcu.edu/ombuds/

IV. President Dan Ream reported:

- Terrorism and security awareness orientation is now a requirement for state employees, and according to the Provost that includes faculty. You can find the Terrorism and Security Awareness Orientation online at http://www.emergencymanagement.vcu.edu
- Ethics forums are being held on both campuses—Dec 3rd at the MCV campus and January 13th at the MP campus.
- The Senate leadership had time with the Board of Visitors Committee on Academic and Health Affairs (Ream, Corey, Fauri, Szari attended). Time was severely restricted, but he was able to address the topic of two surveys on best universities to work for and implications for VCU.
- The Presidential Search continues; there is no report as the Committee operates with confidentiality. There is a question concerning if closed interviews would be used if
requested by candidates, and he will urge they be open if this comes up.

- At the February 3 meeting at the Student Commons Theatre President Trani will visit, his last such visit as VCU President.
- He had invited the Provost attend the meeting today to share information on the budget situation, but the Provost was already booked. Instead he will meet with him Friday, and a follow-up e-mail to Senators will follow this.

V. The Faculty Senate is hosting AAUP and the Faculty Senate of Virginia for the January 15, 2008 Advocacy Day beginning at 9:00 at the School of Dentistry Student Lounge. Senators are urged to participate. At 9:00 a.m. there will be orientation, with coffee and muffins followed by visits to legislative offices. At noon there will be box lunches.

VI. There was no new business

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

David Fauri, Recording Secretary
Recording Secretary