

# Strength in unity



Our school pin boasts the motto: Strength through Diversity. While the diverse range of professions found among our nine departments is what produces unparalleled educational experiences, there must also be unity in order to capitalize on this feature. Collaboration among our students, faculty members, alumni and leadership is what makes this school's astounding successes possible. As you will discover throughout the third edition of our annual publication, our motto is upheld by our tightly knit, interdisciplinary community. One of the main components of Virginia Commonwealth University's strategic plan, Quest for Distinction, is interdisciplinary

community outreach. Our school, by virtue of its diverse programs and student population, has facilitated our leadership in meeting the high standards of VCU's Quest for Distinction, in not only community outreach, but also in research, development and diversity.

Through topics ranging from student engagement, research and technology, to alumni loyalty and generosity, it's easy to see how we band together for success. Our students are eager to collaborate and engage. Nowhere is this more evident than in my Student Executive Board. I have always maintained that collaboration is the mainstay of our students' futures, and this proves more important today than ever before as our health care system continues to change. The interdisciplinary experiences found throughout our school are preparing our students for real-world success. Opportunities for interactions among disciplines grow as they gather around new technologies and relationships are deepened as faculty and students serve throughout the VCU Medical Center.

The history and strength of our diversity are rich, and examples can be found throughout this publication's news section. Without limitations, I am convinced that we could highlight many more successes — stories made possible largely due to the strong loyalty and caring relationships of our alumni. As alumni and friends join in the efforts like the Clinical Laboratory Sciences and the Department of Gerontology's fundraising challenges, deans, department chairs and program directors work with our loyal donors in pairing their desires of supporting students and faculty. This generosity and support is evidenced in graduation rates of 95 percent and five programs that are ranked among the top 20 in the nation — including three in the top 10 and one that's No. 1. I am quite certain that, should categories exist for our other programs, the School of Allied Health Professions would produce a clean sweep. Our students continue to place us in the national limelight, through presentations, student competitions, certification exam scores and leadership positions held within their professional organizations.

With the university's 175th anniversary kicking off in April and the School of Allied Health Professions continuing to excel as a national leader, now is the time for our community to proudly gather around its motto and apply a firm pat on the back. There is indeed strength in diversity, and together in unity we will continue to hold steadfast to this value with our strength, loyalty, caring and generosity. I look forward to celebrating with you at events throughout this anniversary year!