



VCU

Equity and Access Services

**2024-
2025**

Public Notice of Coordination of Title VI Program

Virginia Commonwealth University (“VCU” or the “university”) is committed to maintaining academic, housing, and work environments that are free of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. VCU prohibits unlawful discrimination in the workplace, academic setting or any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin (including ethnicity and actual or perceived shared ancestry), age, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, lactation and related medical conditions), parenting status, marital status, political affiliation, military status (including veteran status), genetic information (including family medical history), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or disability. The [Preventing and Responding to Discrimination policy](#) is designed to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008; the Virginia Human Rights Act; and other state or federal laws and university policies. Retaliation against a person for reporting or objecting to discrimination or harassment or for participating in an investigation or other proceeding is a violation of the Preventing and Responding to Discrimination policy, whether or not discrimination or harassment occurred. The Preventing and Responding to Discrimination policy is not intended for, and will not be used to, infringe on academic freedom or to censor or punish students, faculty, employees, or staff who exercise their legitimate First Amendment rights.

Title VI programs, to include civil rights compliance, training, outreach, investigations, and supportive services are implemented in the Equal Opportunity & Title VI office within Equity and Access Services. If you have questions regarding Title VI, contact Cleopatra Magwaro, associate vice president of Equity and Access Services at VCU at equity@vcu.edu.

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A year of unprecedented change

Equity & Access Services Team



EAS is comprised of four distinct units:

- ADA & Accessibility
- Equal Opportunity & Title VI
- Protection of Minors
- Title IX

Compliance Operations personnel support the entire office.

The EAS team continues to cultivate a supportive and welcoming environment for the entire VCU community. Our team proactively works to ensure that VCU is a place of equal opportunity and access for *all*.

I would like to express gratitude to the EAS team for navigating complexity with unwavering determination, and commitment. I dedicate the story about the excellence of St. Philip Nursing School to this incredible team. Special thanks to Loan Nguyen, who brings

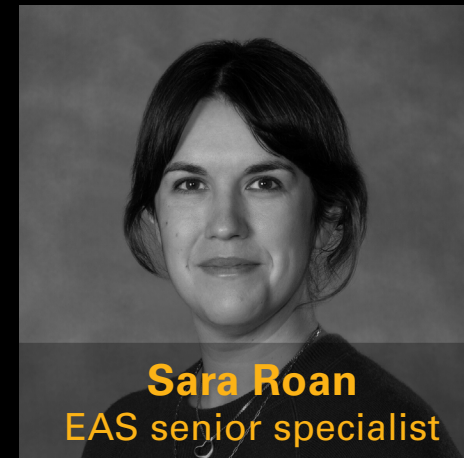
the vision and purpose of these end of year reports to life, and Dr. Marcelle Davis, whose wisdom *rings with the song of humanity* as she shares her journey as a VCU Health System employee on the shoulders of St. Philip nurses who went before her.

I look forward to the future with unbridled hope, working together with our campus community and partners. Thank you for all you do.

Cleopatra Magwaro

Cleopatra Magwaro, B.A., LL.B., LL.M.

Associate vice president
Equity and Access Services



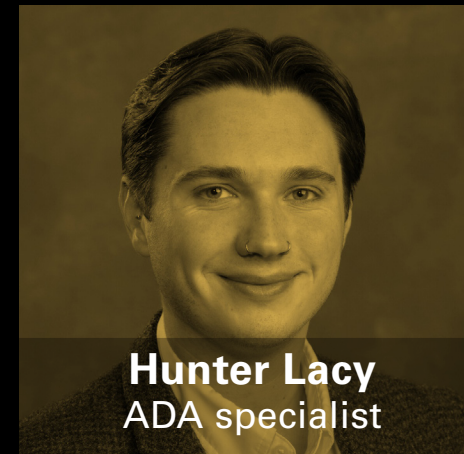
Sara Roan
EAS senior specialist



Kent Holden
Administrative assistant



Katy Washington
Chief accessibility officer



Hunter Lacy
ADA specialist



Todd Faltin
Equal opportunity case specialist



Alazzia Hasty
Senior civil rights investigator



Jeffrey Turnbull
Civil rights investigator



Claire Becker
Training and compliance manager



Elizabeth Scott-Francis
Title IX coordinator and director of outreach and support



Beth Paris
Senior civil rights investigator



Dana V. King
Title IX outreach, support, and informal resolution specialist



Melanie Pringle
Title IX case coordinator

ADA & Accessibility Services

Title II: Advancing digital accessibility compliance at VCU

Overview of Regulatory Changes: ADA Title II New Rule on Accessibility of Web Content and Mobile Applications

On April 24, 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) issued its final rule revising Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), introducing comprehensive requirements for digital accessibility at state and local government entities. These regulations impact all operational areas of VCU that publish or manage digital content accessible to students and the public, post

information on social media, and utilize mobile applications to engage with students and the public.

Examples of University Departments and Services Affected

The rule covers a broad array of digital resources, including university websites, mobile applications, learning management systems, library databases, digital public archives, procurement services' purchases of third-party digital products, patient interfaces such as billing and records, research portals,

institutional communications, and athletics web spaces and ticketing systems.

Compliance Standards and Implementation Timeline

The DOJ has formally adopted WCAG 2.1 Level AA as the technical standard for digital content accessibility under Title II. State and local government entities, including VCU, must meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA success criteria and conformance requirements by April 24, 2026. Furthermore, these entities are responsible for ensuring that any contractors or third-party

vendors providing digital services also adhere to the new accessibility standards.

Federal Deadline for Compliance

Public entities must demonstrate full compliance by **April 24, 2026**. All web content and mobile applications provided, directly or via contractual or licensing arrangements, must meet Level A and Level AA success criteria and conformance requirements of WCAG 2.1, unless doing so results in a fundamental alteration or undue burden. After the deadline, public entities must continue to monitor and ensure that compliance obligations continue to be met.

Campus Engagement and Awareness Efforts

Throughout FY2025, ADA & Accessibility Services (ADA Services) has made significant progress in raising awareness and facilitating dialogue on compliance requirements associated with the new DOJ rule. ADA Services has proactively collaborated with campus leaders and stakeholders to disseminate information on the federal digital accessibility standards and the upcoming April 24, 2026 deadline.

Some examples of those efforts include:

- Worked with an informal workgroup comprised of multiple VCU offices who began meeting

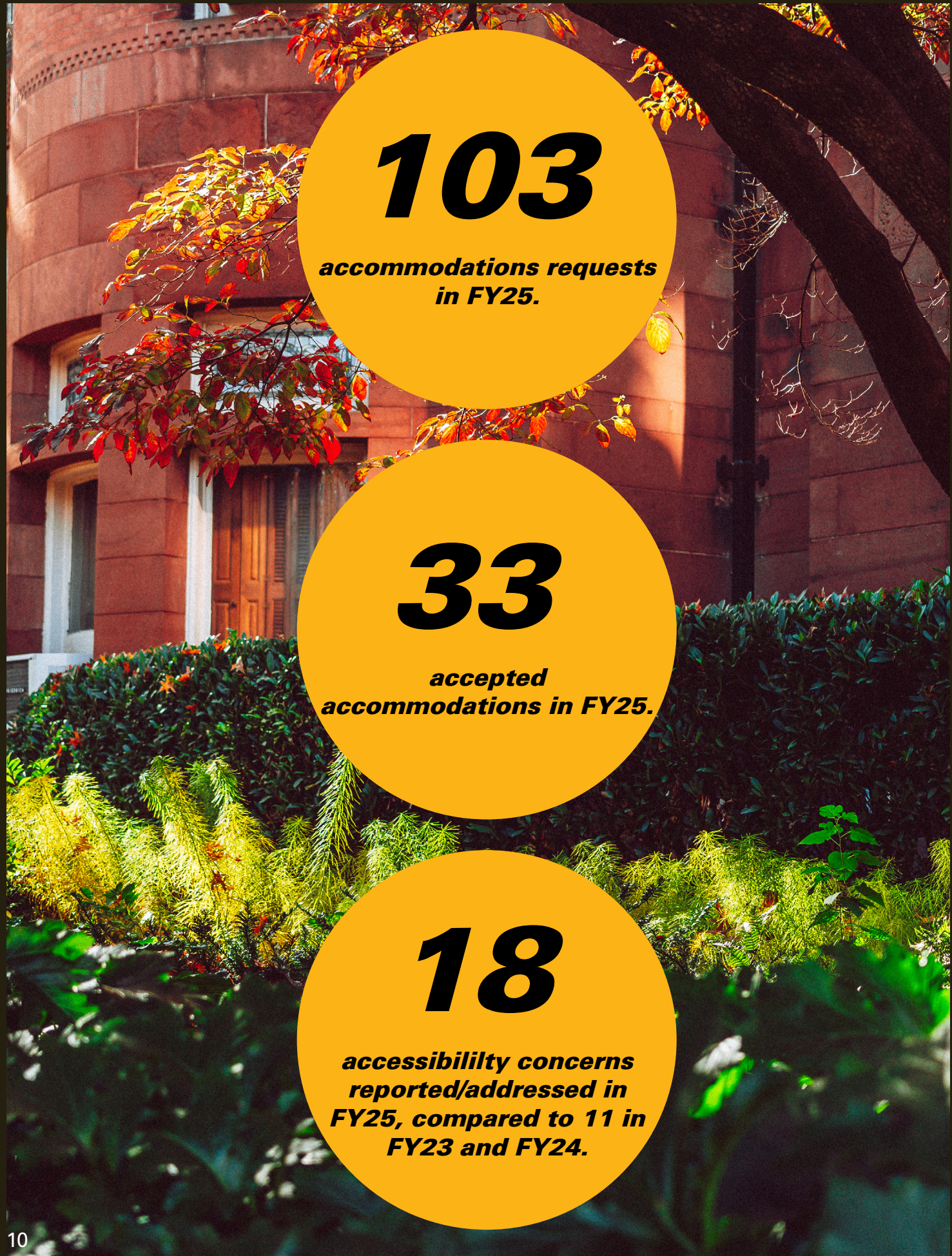
in January to develop resources and training opportunities about creating accessible academic digital course material.

- Published [VCU Compliance Update: New ADA Title II Rule on Digital Accessibility](#) by Katy Washington (May 2025).
- Informal workgroup collaboration culminated in the creation of VCU's [Digital Accessibility website](#) for valuable resources and guidance for faculty (Summer 2025).

- LEDstudio and Technology Services have developed [digital accessibility resources and training opportunities](#) to help faculty ensure digital course materials are accessible.

These efforts have strengthened VCU's commitment to equitable access for all users and established the foundation for successful compliance with federal regulations in the coming year.





103

***accommodations requests
in FY25.***

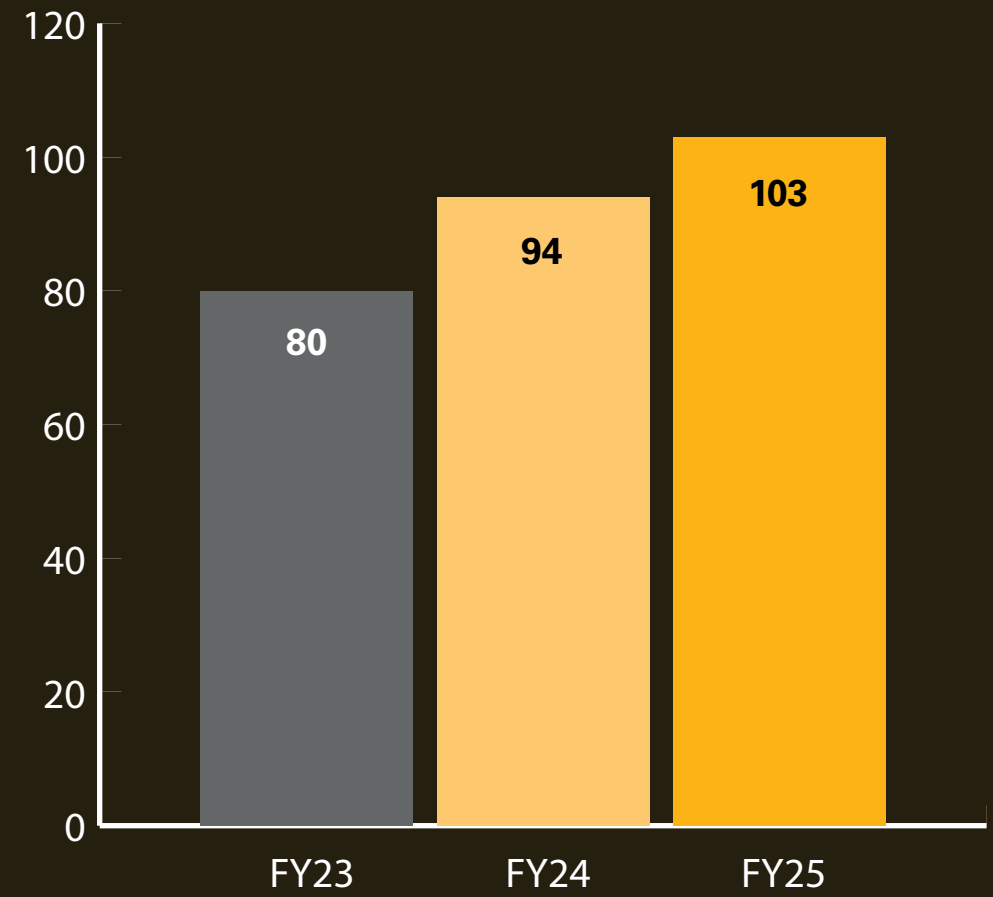
33

***accepted
accommodations in FY25.***

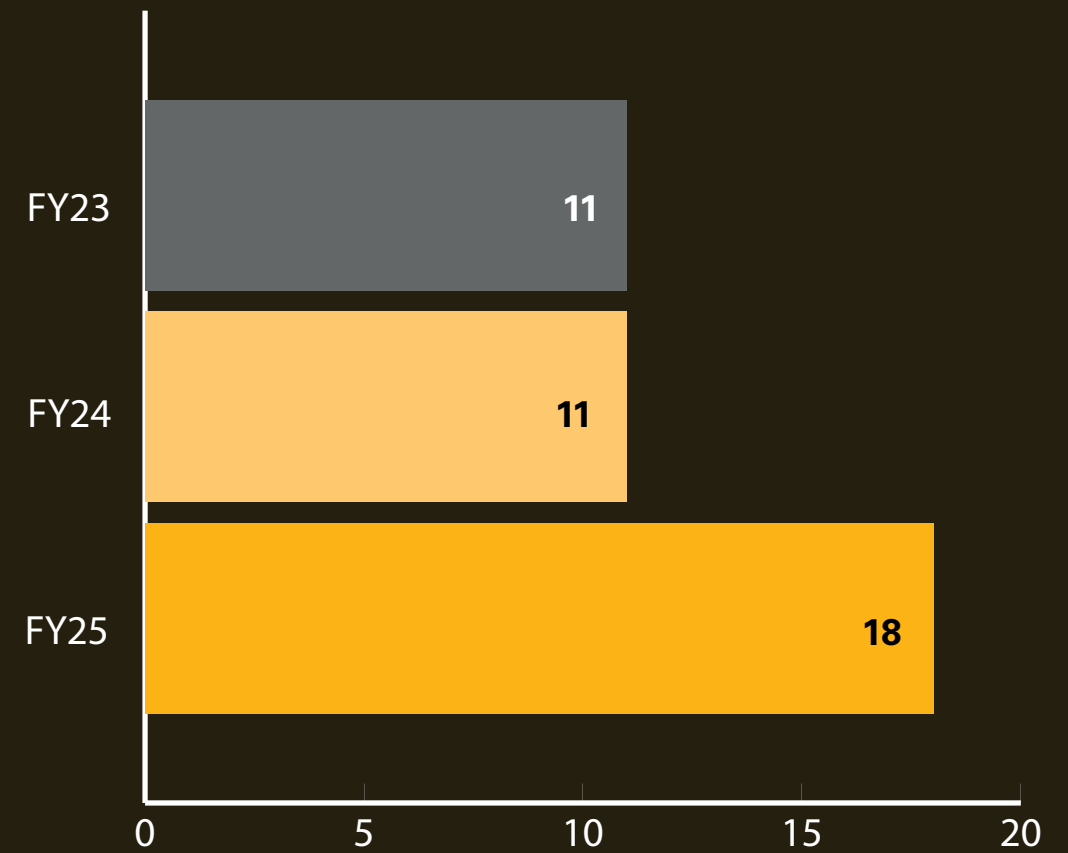
18

***accessibility concerns
reported/addressed in
FY25, compared to 11 in
FY23 and FY24.***

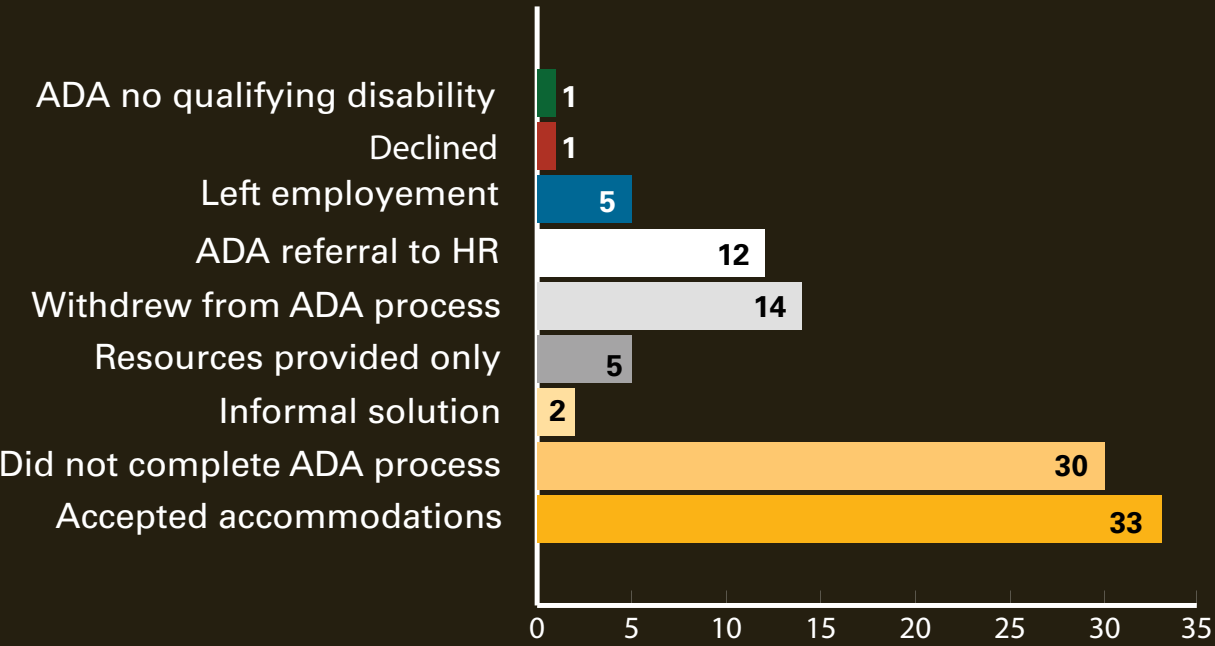
Count of Accommodations Requests:
Yearly Comparison



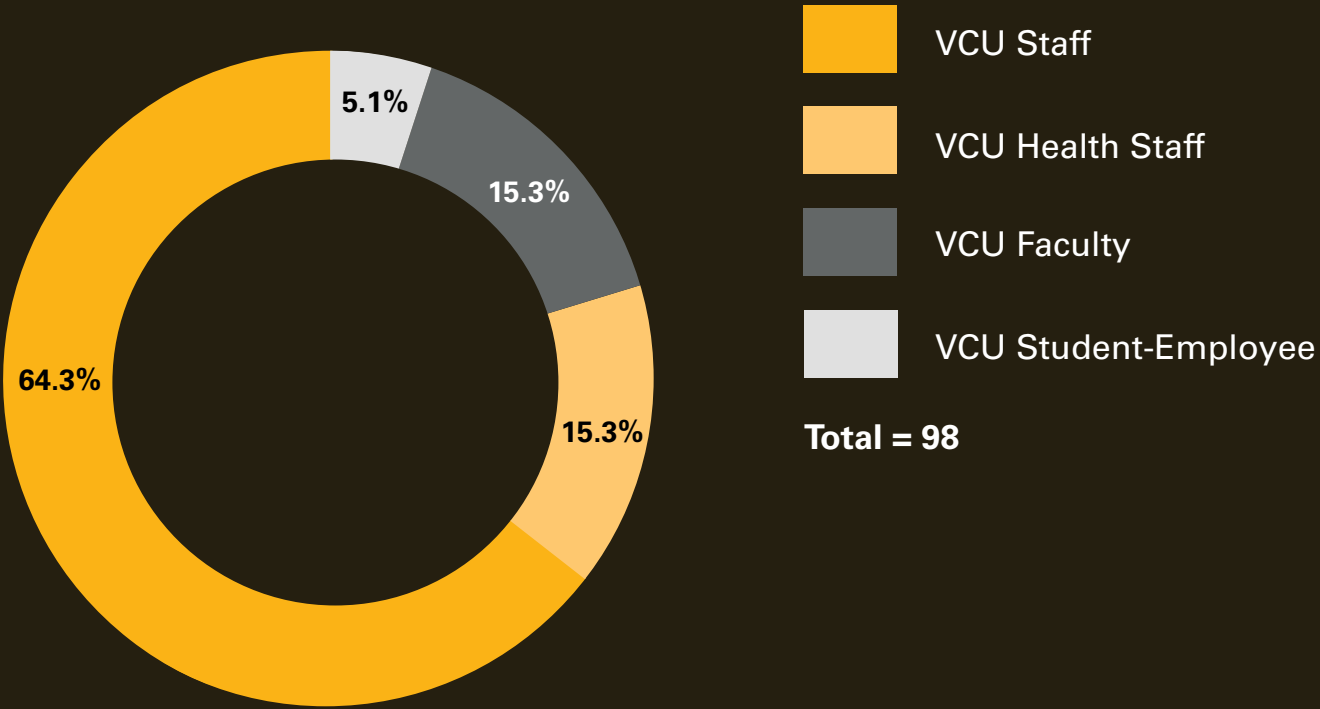
Accessibility Concerns Reported/Addressed



Outcomes of ADA Requests

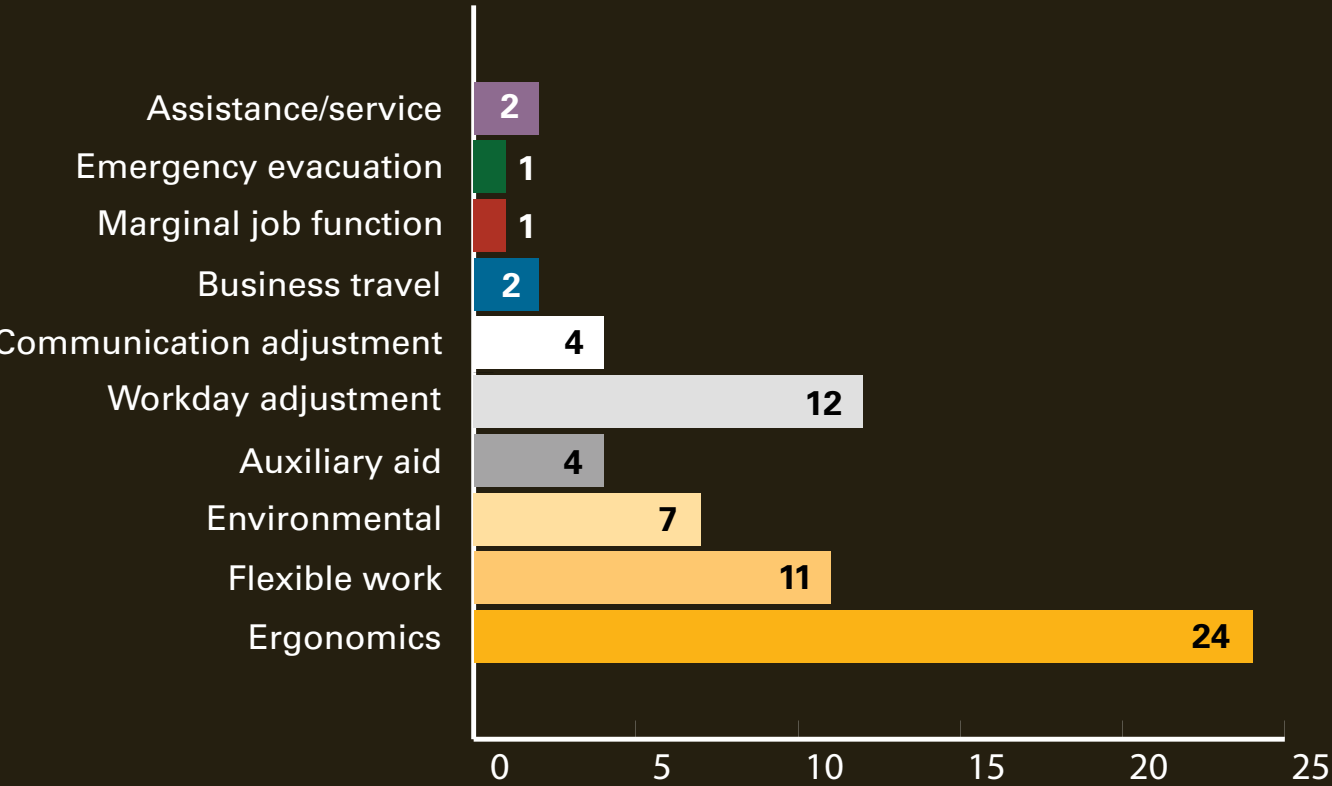


Employee Types



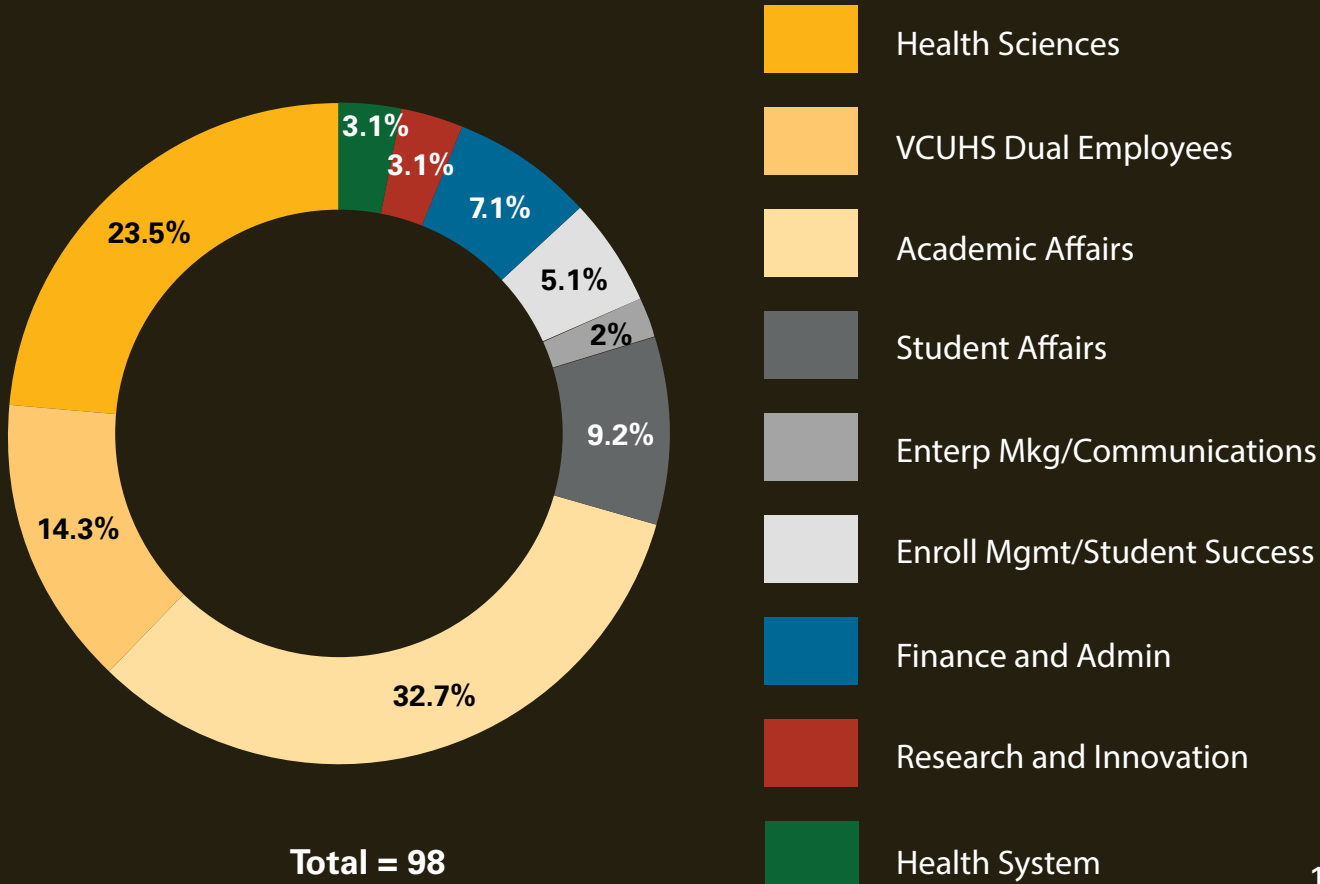
One employee may have more than one accommodation request.

Types of ADA Accepted Accommodations



The ADA & Accessibility Services Office had 33 cases that resulted in accepted accommodations between 7/1/24 and 6/30/25.

Count of MBUs (Division-Level)





Equal Opportunity and Title VI

Title VI: Policies and updates to combating antisemitism and Islamophobia

Policy and Legal Framework

Virginia Commonwealth University (“VCU” or the “university”) prohibits unlawful discrimination in the workplace, academic setting or any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin (including ethnicity and actual or perceived shared ancestry), age, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, lactation and related medical conditions), parenting status, marital status, political affiliation, military status (including veteran status), genetic information (including family medical history), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or disability. This policy is designed to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008; the Virginia Human Rights Act; and other state or federal laws and university policies.

At VCU, the Office of Equal Opportunity (EO) and Title VI oversees the implementation and enforcement of VCU’s [Preventing and Responding to Discrimination policy](#), as well as the [Notice of Nondiscrimination](#). This office also has shared responsibilities under the university’s [Sex-Based Misconduct Policy](#).

The core functions of this EO and Title VI Office

include, but are not limited to:

1. Providing mandatory, non-discrimination training for all university employees and student leaders.
2. Investigating allegations of discrimination or harassment that fall under the Preventing and Responding to Discrimination policy or allegations against employees that fall under the Sex-Based Misconduct Policy. The policy provides for both formal and informal resolutions, as well as Administrative reviews. The mechanisms for deploying helpful supportive measures and resources, as well as resolving issues is all done within a civil rights compliance program and follows state and federal laws and regulations.
3. VCU’s Equal Opportunity and Title VI Office promotes an environment where everyone at VCU can work, learn and live without discrimination based on their legally protected status.
4. Providing prevention-oriented consultations to schools and business units across the university on issues related to equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

Consistent with the [Code of Virginia](#), VCU has adopted the non-legally binding [Working Definition of Antisemitism](#) adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance on May 26, 2016, which states that “[a]ntisemitism is a certain perception of

Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

VCU has also adopted the [American Psychology Association](#) (APA) definition of Islamophobia, which is defined as: “[P]rejudice, negative sentiments, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims. Islamophobia may be based on ideas about Islam as a religion and on ideas about Muslims as a cultural and ethnic group. Islamophobic ideas portray Islam and Muslims as a threat to non-Muslims” (Berntzen & Rambøl, 2020, Key Definition section). Hateful rhetoric often leads to discriminatory behavior toward Muslims. In addition, Muslims with overlapping gender and other demographic characteristics may experience intersectional discrimination and stereotyping. For example, Muslim men may be stereotyped as terrorists and violent, whereas Muslim women may be stereotyped as lacking control over their own lives (Clay, 2017). People who present as being from Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African countries may experience Islamophobia regardless of whether they identify as Muslim.”

The [EO and Title VI website](#) has additional FAQs that are public facing and provide information on reporting, supportive resources, policies, FAQs and training.

How does the nondiscrimination policy apply to hate and bias incidents?

VCU’s nondiscrimination policy prohibits discrimination. Incidents in which an individual demonstrates hate or bias against one or more individuals because of one of the protected characteristics described in the policy may fall within the definition of

discrimination. But the First Amendment to the United States Constitution generally protects hate speech and biased speech, unless the speech also falls into a legally-defined category of unprotected speech, such as fighting words or true threats. The university upholds and will not infringe upon an individual’s First Amendment rights. Accordingly, some forms of hate or bias fall outside of the definition of discrimination and are not prohibited by this policy.

The university encourages all students, faculty, staff and others to refrain from demonstrating bias or hate in the educational environment and is committed to engaging in education about the effects of hate and bias. The following examples demonstrate how the university uses certain terms as a tool and guide for training, educating, recognizing, and combating hate or bias. Incidents of discrimination based on a person’s protected characteristic, such as religion, ethnic origin, actual or perceived shared ancestry, for example, should be reported to the EO and Title VI Office.

Reporting Process

Complaints may be filed using the [Discrimination incident reporting form](#). Individuals also may email equity@vcu.edu or use the [VCU Helpline](#). Concerns may be raised by any applicant, employee, student, alumnus or third party who feel they have been discriminated against by a member of the VCU community. Anyone can file a report using one of the following methods:

- **Online:** Use the Maxient Discrimination Incident Reporting Form. This database is protected and cases are only viewable by the EO and Title VI staff.
- **Email:** Send an inquiry/set up meeting: equity@vcu.edu.
- Visit in-person or mail a report to the Grace Street Center at 912 W. Grace St., 2nd Floor, Richmond, VA, 23220.

Frequently Asked Questions

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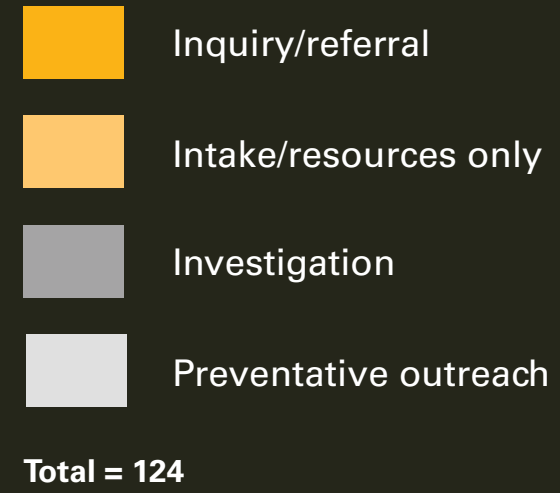
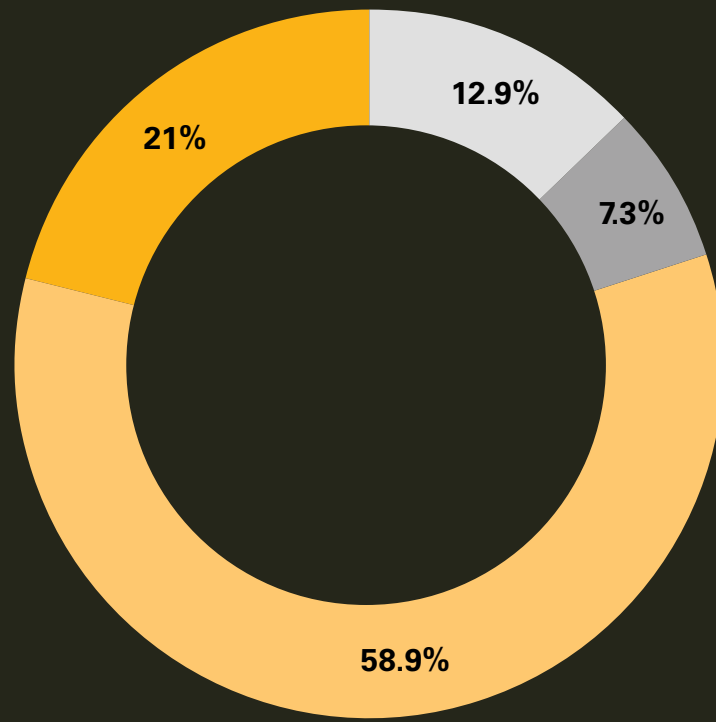
Is there a time limit on reporting?

Current or former VCU student, applicant for admission, or participant in the university’s educational programs or activities within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory or retaliatory conduct; Current or former VCU employee or applicant for employment within 300 days of the alleged conduct; or Third party who is not a VCU student or employee within 300 days of the alleged conduct.

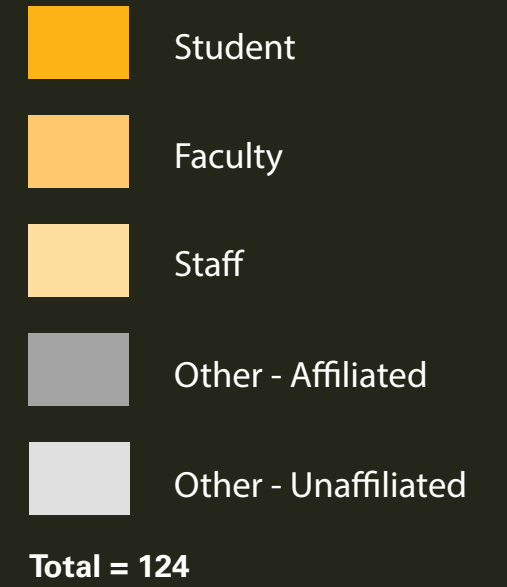
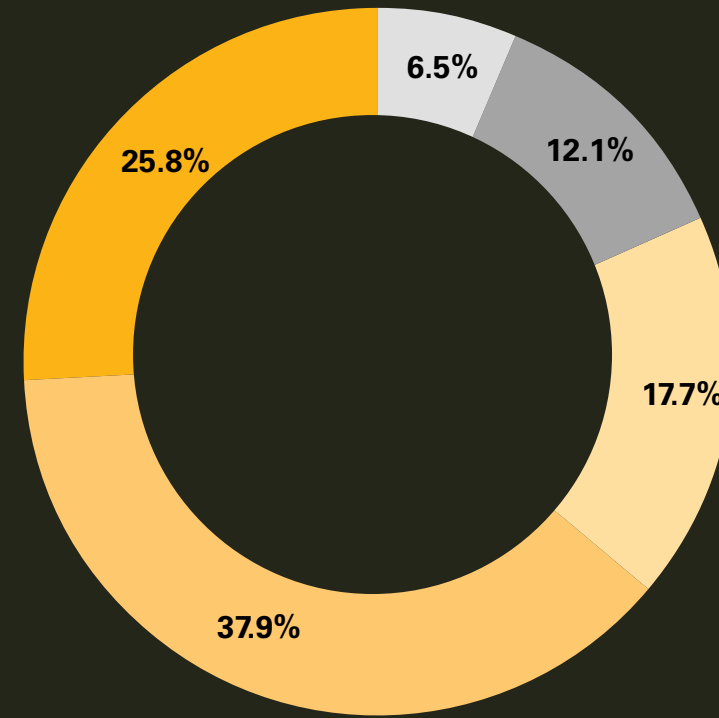
Can I file an anonymous report?

You may file a report and request anonymity if you wish. However, the remedies available through anonymous reporting may be limited, as VCU’s civil rights policies require that respondents (individuals against whom a complaint has been filed) be provided due process. This means respondents generally must be made aware of who raised the civil rights concern in order for an appropriate investigation to be conducted.

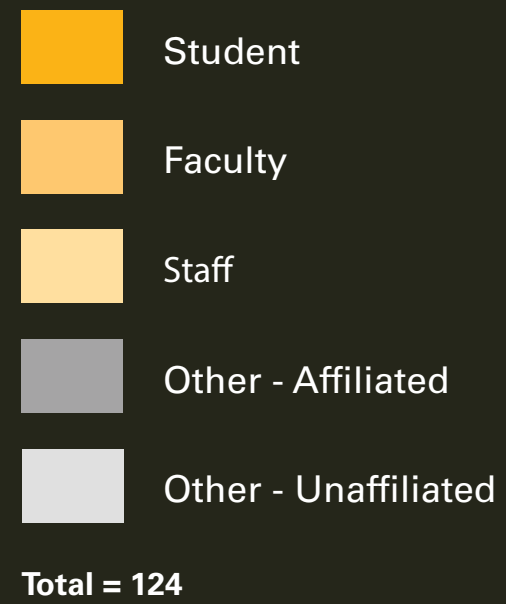
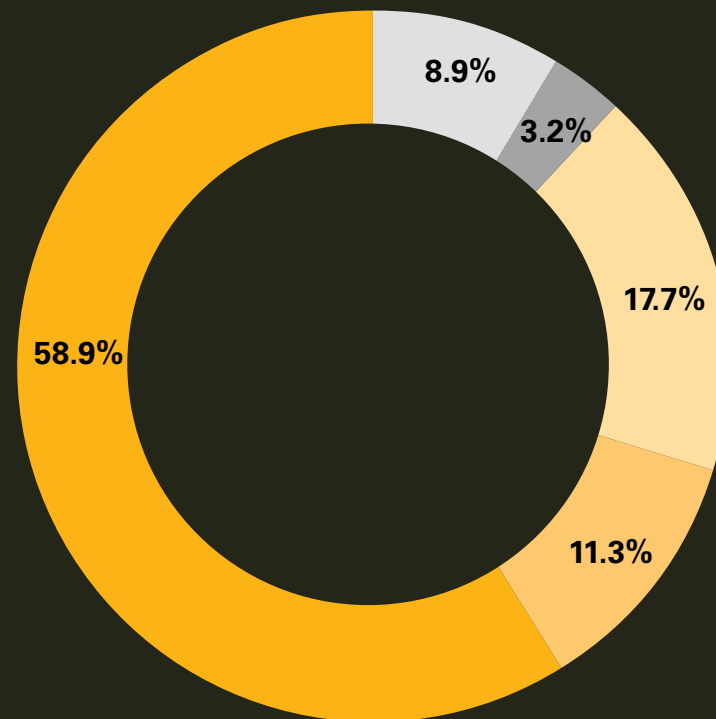
Case Type



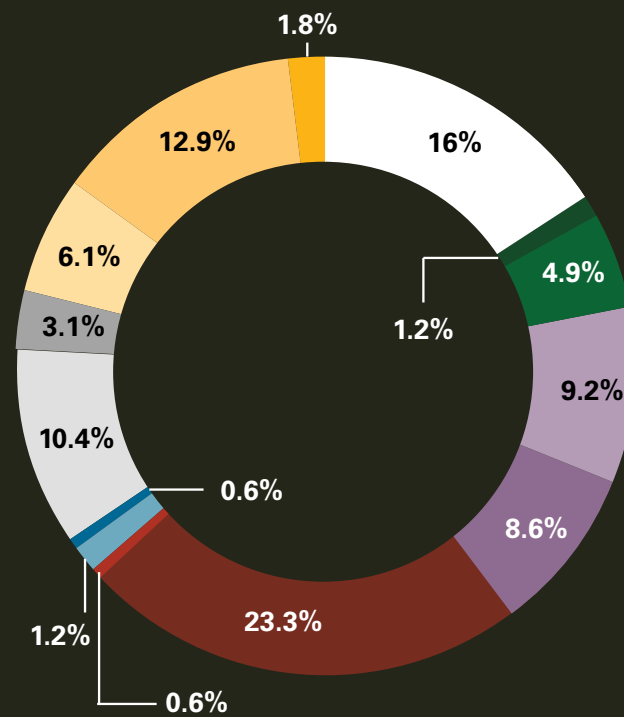
Respondent Type



Complainant Type



Protected Class Allegations





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**Engaging with
campus gives
youth the
opportunity
to learn new
skills, find their
passions, and
explore the world
in an educational
setting.**

//

Mat Scott

Aquatics and safety coordinator
VCU Recreation and Well-Being

Protection of Minors

Spot Program Reviews

The Protection of Minors Office restarted its service of conducting routine program site visits during the 2025 summer season. Site visits allow EAS the opportunity to observe youth programs in action and answer questions regarding best practices.

During

During the site visit, EAS and Program Supervisors collaborate to continuously improve youth program quality and safety at VCU. By observing youth programs across the university, EAS gains valuable knowledge on effective procedures in each area of campus, which helps other and future programs build on past successes. Site visits also aid in relationship building with program supervisors and helps EAS better understand the program for future sessions or inquiries.

Post-visit

Post-visit, EAS provides Program Supervisors with the visit feedback form, improving program quality and compliance by suggesting program-specific guidance to assist with identified areas of opportunity and recognizing the existing strengths of programs.

Value

Site visits add an additional layer of protection for youth in VCU programs by confirming individuals interacting with minors are trained and screened, minors are properly supervised, and participant documentation is prepared in case of emergency. Eleven university and non-university programs were visited in July 2025, though site visits are not limited to summer programs.

Updates

Updated Youth Protection training video (in Minors registration portal). Updates and combines previous trainings in a user-friendly format while adding knowledge on grooming, appropriate boundaries and red flag behaviors, and hazing.

New Incident Report form (in Minors registration portal). Easy-to-use, confidential form for any unexpected occurrence within a youth program. Tracking incidents improves youth safety by identifying areas (locations, activities, individuals) of repeated concern.

New Youth Programs Directory. Provides the public with contact information and brief descriptions of youth programs currently or soon to be offered.

New and updated resources. Includes sample Parent Consent Form, sample Communication and Notification Plan, sample Over-The-Counter Medication Consent Form, Guidelines for Virtual Youth Programs, and Policy 1-Pager. Also included new and updated FAQs, including for student organizations and non-compliance.



10,856

estimated youths enrolled
in programs

6,150

youths enrolled in admissions
activities such as campus tours,
open houses and recruitment fairs

4,706

youths enrolled in other university
programs such as youth camps,
mentorships, public school visits,
youth research and athletic camps

160

registered youth programs
(62% increase over previous year)

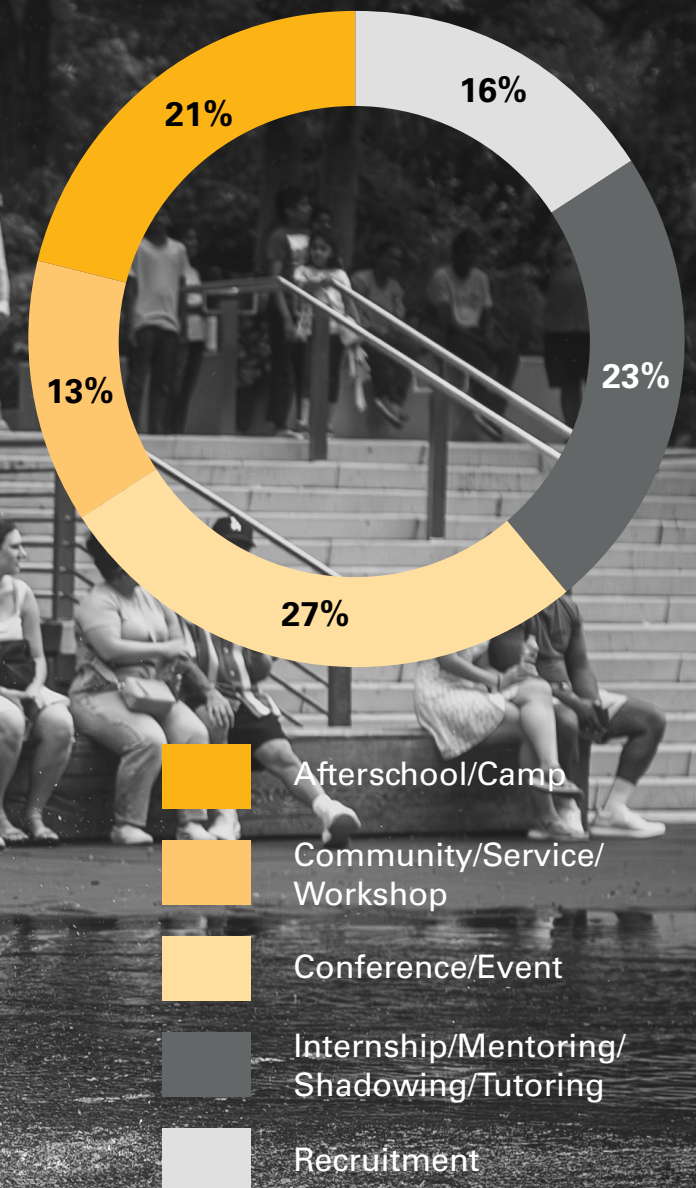
71

departments sponsoring youth
programs
(68% increase over previous year)

990

Safety and Protection of Minors
trainings completed as of 7/8/25

Types of Youth Activities/
Programs Offered



21

department trainings/info sessions



Title IX

Informal resolution is a voluntary, adaptable pathway within VCU’s Title IX and Sex-Based Misconduct resolution processes that allows parties involved in a report to resolve concerns without a formal finding of responsibility. It is not appropriate for every case but can offer a meaningful alternative—especially when restorative justice practices are desired by those impacted.

The Role of Restorative Practices

- At its core, restorative practices emphasize:
- A focus on accountability rather than a focus on punishment;
 - Repairing harm to individuals and the community;
 - Empowering impacted individuals to express their needs;
 - Creating space for dialogue and mutual understanding.
- Restorative practices in IR might include:
- Restorative conferencing (facilitated dialogue or a shuttle negotiation)
 - Impact statements
 - Mutual agreements to repair harm
 - Educational reflection processes for the responding party

How the Program is Developing

- At VCU, the IR process continues to evolve through:
- Cross-training between Title IX and other university staff members involved in similar efforts;
 - Policy refinement to align with relevant state and federal guidance;

- Increased education across campus about IR availability, purpose, and limitations.
- Best practices being established include:
- Ensuring neutral facilitation
 - Screening cases for suitability and power dynamics
 - Collecting participant feedback post-resolution
 - Clearly defining resolution agreement terms and follow-up monitoring

When does a case go to Formal vs. Informal Resolution?

- Formal**
- One or more parties decline IR or the case is not appropriate.
 - Alleged behavior involves sexual assault and occurs alongside another risk factor (examples include a pattern of behavior from a respondent, use of a weapon, etc.).
 - Accountability needs require formal findings or sanctions.
 - Outcome may include discipline, findings of responsibility.
 - The Title IX coordinator or policy prohibits IR for certain alleged behaviors.

- Informal**
- All parties agree to participate voluntarily.
 - No on going violence or ongoing threat of physical harm involved.
 - Participants prefer dialogue, reflection, or mutual agreements.
 - Desired outcome is behavioral change, acknowledgement, or healing.
 - Title IX coordinator deems the case appropriate for IR.

Title IX Informal Resolution

Process

Participation Agreement

Either party can initiate a request for informal resolution. Parties individually meet with the informal resolution specialist to learn about the process and have questions answered. Parties sign a participation agreement to officially refer the case to informal resolution.

Parties meet individually with the informal resolution specialist to discuss the incidents with a focus on accountability, reflection, and harm experienced by the Complainant or larger community. Parties begin to discuss potential outcomes.

Shuttle Negotiation

Parties review and potentially sign the agreement. The Title IX Office then enforces any necessary outcomes, such as educational assignments, sharing impact statements, or enacting agreed upon restrictions.

Individual Meetings

The informal resolution specialist “shuttles” back and forth with parties to assist with negotiations by sharing information about harm, accountability and desired outcomes. An agreement is drafted after outcomes are mutually agreed upon and deemed appropriate by Title IX.

Signed Agreement & Implementation

Definitions

Voluntary Participation

All parties must provide written, informed consent to proceed with informal resolution. Either party can withdraw at any time and return to a formal process.

Informal resolution does not include a hearing and does not determine formal responsibility.

No Hearing

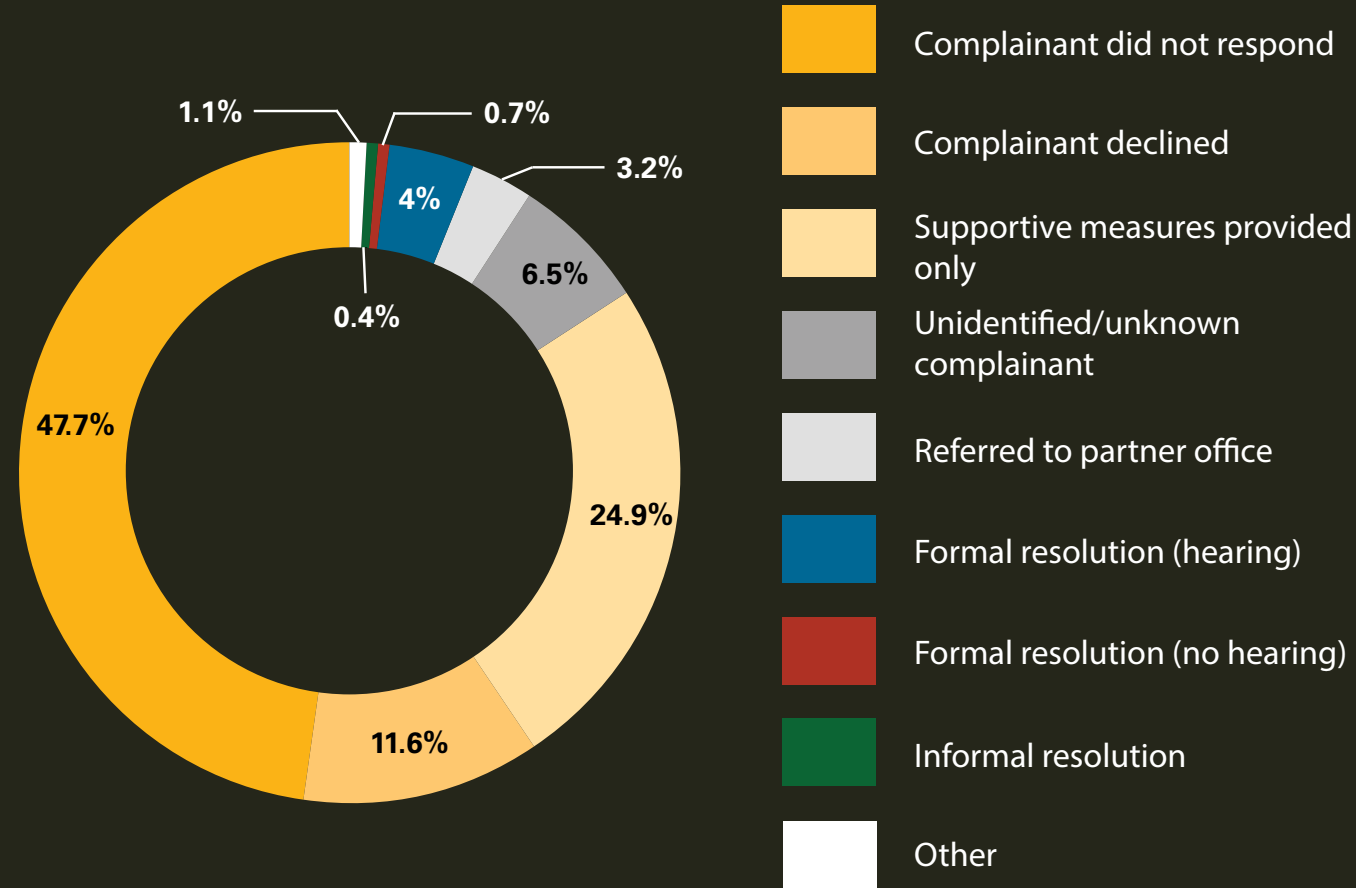
The process is managed by the Intake and Informal Resolution Specialist, a staff member in the Title IX Office, who is trained in conflict resolution, trauma-informed practices, and restorative models.

Facilitated by Trained Staff

Agreements may include safety planning, facilitated dialogue, educational interventions, mutually agreed-upon restrictions to activities and/or spaces and projects, impact statements, no-contact directives, or other community-focused responses.

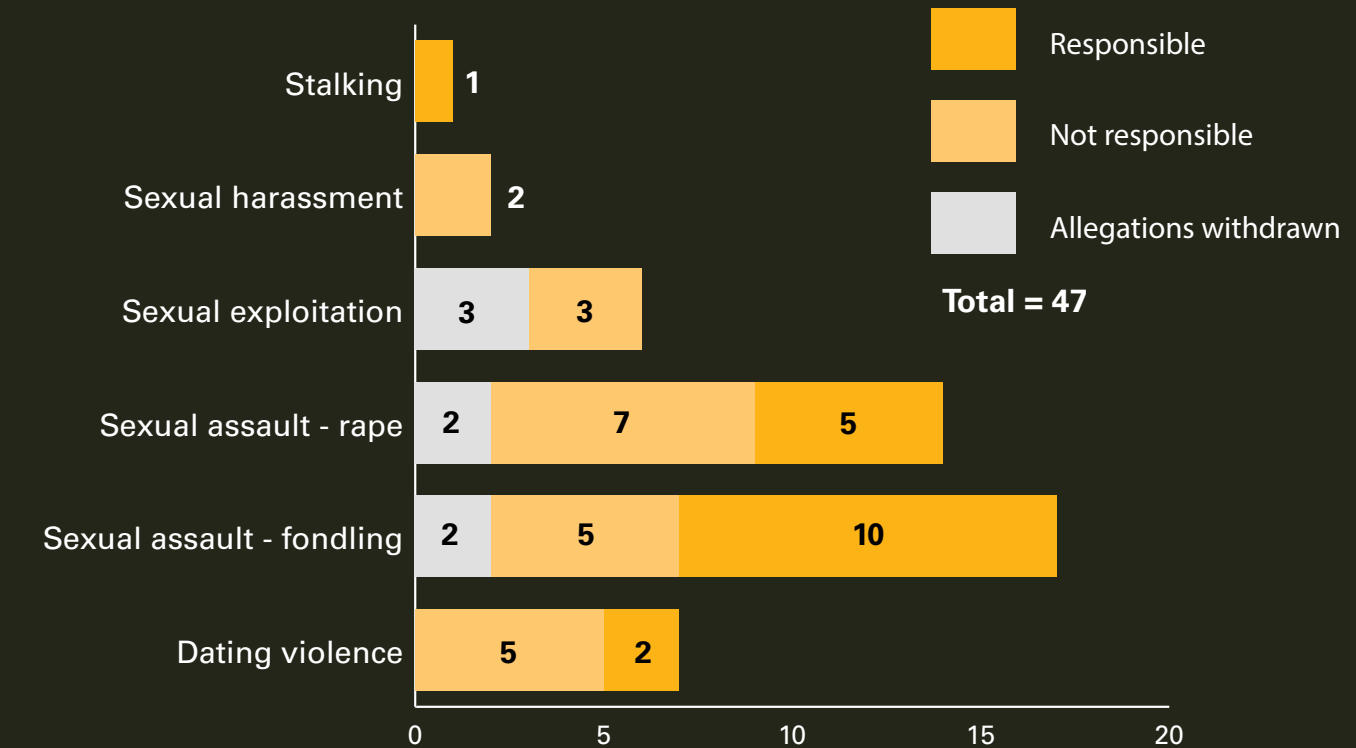
Outcomes-Oriented

Resolution Types



Total = 277

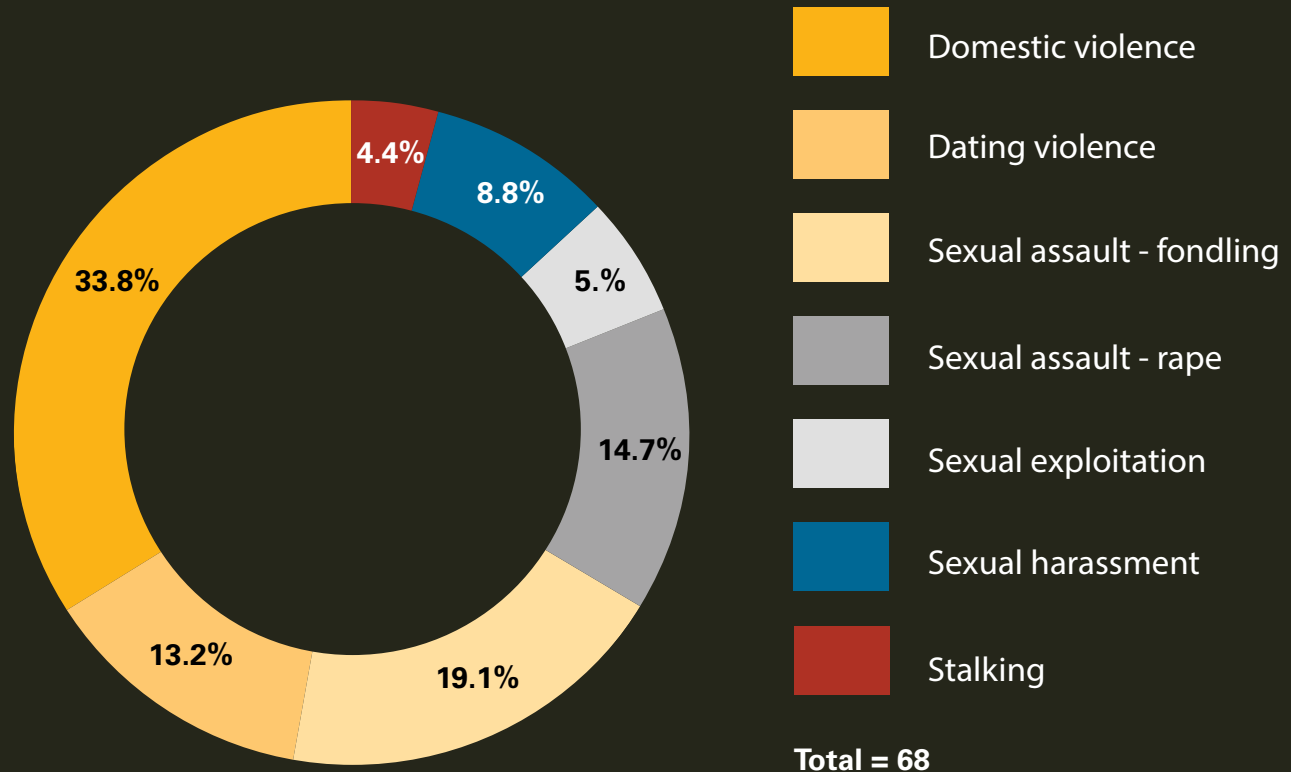
Formal Resolution Case Outcomes



The Title IX Office received 277 cases between 7/1/24 and 6/30/25. Of these cases, 13 went to formal hearings.

A case can include multiple allegations and therefore can result in multiple case outcomes.

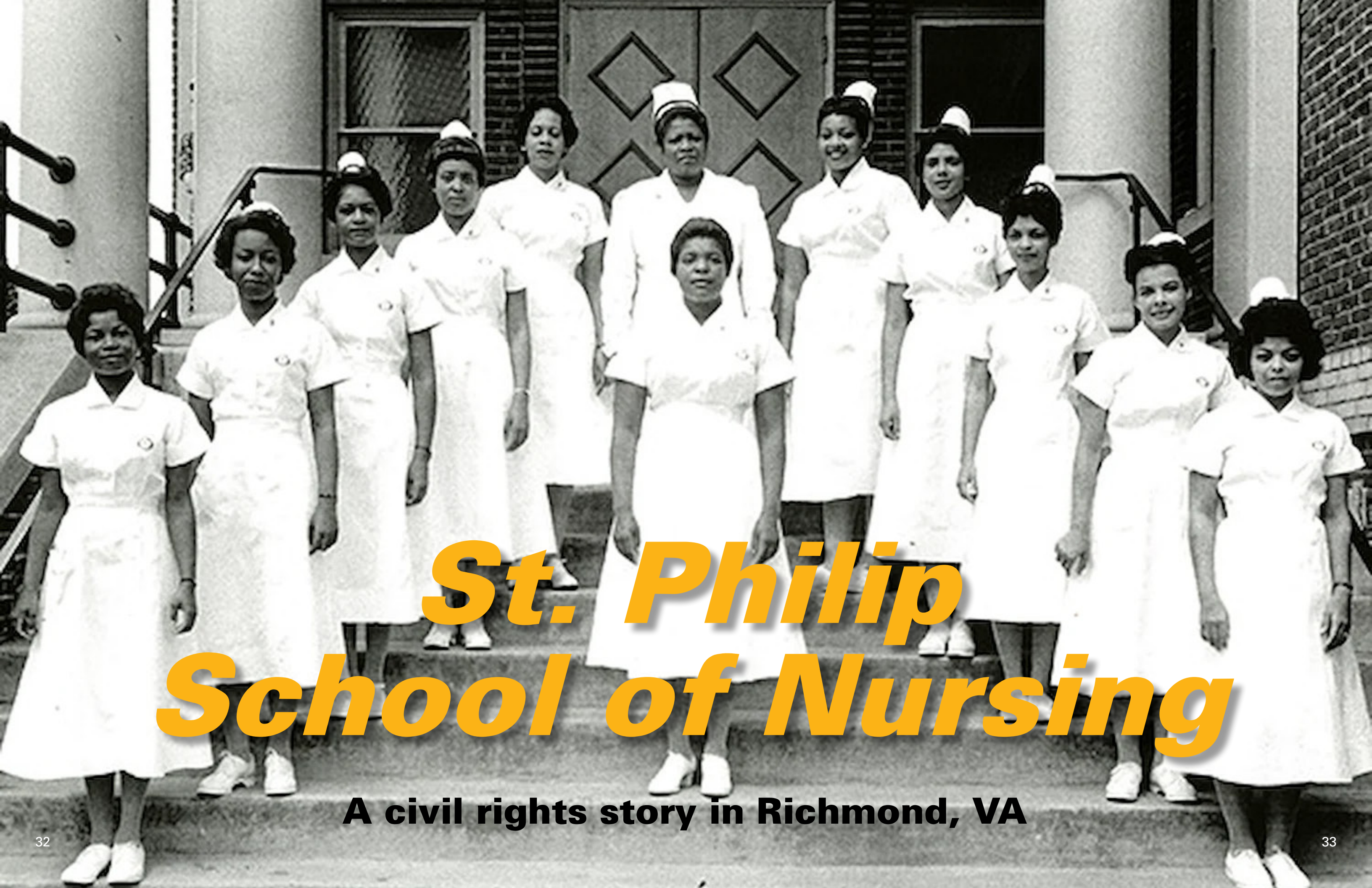
Allegations Pending Resolution



Total = 68

Party Affiliation

	Complainants	Respondents
Anonymous	1	-
Applicant/Prospective Student	-	1
Former Affiliate	2	10
Non-Affiliate	9	58
Undisclosed Affiliate	5	16
Undisclosed	7	65
Unknown	-	14
VCU Faculty	3	7
VCU Health Faculty	-	2
VCU Staff	2	-
VCU Health Staff	-	1
VCU Student	237	95
VCU Student-Employee	7	4
Total	273	273



St. Philip School of Nursing

A civil rights story in Richmond, VA



St. Philip

1920-1962

//

*We must be intentional in everything we do
and hold ourselves accountable to living our
values out loud.*

//

In 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Sixty years later, we recognize the Civil Rights Movement as a symbol of resilience and hope.

For many, including those in our Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) community, civil rights protections provide that individuals have equal opportunity under the law to work, live and have an education without being discriminated against due to their protected characteristics. Aspirationally, people can pursue a better future for themselves.

At VCU, situated in Richmond, VA—the former heart of the Confederacy—this legacy carries profound significance. Our city's difficult past challenges us to reflect while striving to create a more equitable and just future; a future we can see as we stand on the shoulders of the giants of the Civil Rights Movement.

Cleopatra Magwaro, associate vice president of Equity and Access Services, the VCU civil rights office, shared that EAS policies are founded in civil rights laws which have changed the trajectory of America. EAS is honored to share in the legacy of civil rights and fairly implement the laws, regulations and statutes embodied in our policies so

our community can remain mission-focused, innovative and foster an environment free from discrimination. Centering the context in which VCU students and the VCU Health System are core pillars in the Richmond community is a reminder that nondiscrimination and equal opportunity have not always been the law of the land.

VCU and VCU Health—including our students, faculty and staff—have an established history within the civil rights movement. Take the St. Philip School of Nursing, for instance. St. Philip was designated a hospital for Black patients and was established in Richmond within the Medical College of Virginia—

which eventually merged with Richmond Professional Institute to become VCU—as a separate school of nursing for Black women to serve at St. Philip Hospital.

While the school was designed under the segregationist principle of “separate but equal,” equal opportunity did not exist between St. Philip and its all-white School of Nursing counterpart. The Black nurses at St. Philip faced many challenges that their MCV counterparts did not, from discrimination from patients, doctors and staff, to student housing bedbug infestations—to name a few.

Despite these challenges, the St. Philip School of Nursing graduated 791 nurses before closing in 1962. Although the opportunities afforded St. Philip’s nurses were inequitable, their access to education and work was life-changing and demonstrated excellence, perseverance and a desire to serve historically underserved communities in Richmond.

These women cemented their legacy in VCU’s history and the nation’s history, becoming “some of the first trained professionals to serve communities of color.”

Theirs is just one of many civil



rights stories that took place in Richmond. Civil rights echoes throughout our city, our campus and our community. It has been 248 years since the Declaration of Independence, which was ratified by Congress in 1776. The Civil Rights Act is only 60 years

old, and has had a profound impact on Richmond and VCU. Just two years after the St. Philip School of Nursing shuttered its doors, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed.

In 2020, 56 years after the passing of the seminal 1964 Act, VCU Health hired its inaugural chief inclusive excellence officer, Marcelle Davis, DSL. Davis currently serves as the vice president of inclusive excellence. Like many, her family was profoundly impacted by the Civil Rights Movement.

“For me and my family, the Civil Rights Movement made it possible for my stepfather to get a job and eventually start his own business when he returned home from Vietnam,” Davis said. “It made it possible for my mom to get a job as a legal secretary after bringing me and my sister to the U.S. from Georgetown, Guyana. Were they treated equally? No. But as a family, we always had hope that one day we would be.”



Marcelle Davis, Ph.D., speaks at VCU’s Martin Luther King, Jr. community walk and celebration, 2025. (Allen Jones, Enterprise Marketing and Communications)

In her role, Davis benchmarks and implements policies that contribute to VCU Health’s efforts, striving to ensure that all voices have the opportunity to be heard. It is work that has many ties to the Civil Rights Movement. “President John F. Kennedy said it best during his 1963 televised civil rights speech when he said, ‘The rights of many men are diminished when the rights of one man is threatened.’ As a nation, we stood shoulder to shoulder to fight against segregation and discrimination,” Davis said. “The Civil Rights Movement provided the building blocks that we currently stand on

today as we fight for inclusive excellence. I approach my work here at VCU Health on the principle that every voice matters and I encourage those around me to think about the voices that aren’t at the table before making decisions. We must be intentional in everything we do and hold ourselves accountable to living our values out loud.” While we have made clear progress as a university in the past 60 years, our journey is far from over. Progress is not always linear. However, we can always strive for improvement in creating dialogue and fostering a sense of belonging for every person

on our campus. “The history of VCU/VCU Health is one that’s important for us all to be aware of to ensure we remember the mistakes of the past and celebrate the progress we have made,” Davis said. “Today, I often stop by the archway for St. Philip’s Hospital in the Kontos Building to reflect on the history of my ancestors as a reminder that to whom much is given, much is required.” In the 1954 St. Philip’s School of Nursing yearbook, the students state, “The year of 1954 can and will be a great year for nurses everywhere.”

With the constant threat of impending war and with anticipated meetings and research investigations much can be expected. When the graduating class of Saint Philip School of Nursing enters the profession as registered nurses, we too are looking forward to taking our 'stand' in the progress that is inevitable."

Progress is inevitable, but it is also built upon many years of consistent work. The hard-fought victories of the Civil Rights Movement paved the way for a more equitable future.

At VCU, we remain committed to championing equal opportunity so that the progress of those who came before us endures for future generations.

Dr. Davis' journey as an employee of the VCU Health System, while unique because of her lived experiences, is thankfully not isolated because of it. At VCU, equal employment opportunity is not just the law—it is at the center of how Richmond continues to evolve

out of a history of separation, discrimination and exclusion, into a community that is welcoming of diverse human experiences and viewpoints. VCU values intellectual freedom and the open exchange of ideas, and is at the center of innovation and health excellence for our community.

VCU students have access to EAS and can file complaints about alleged discrimination while being protected against unlawful retaliation. Unlike St. Philip students, today's VCU students, whether they are seeking degrees in medicine or the arts, can bring their authentic views and ideas into the classroom, regardless of their protected characteristics.

Written by Loan Nguyen with contributions from Marcelle Davis, Ph.D., and Cleopatra Magwaro, LL.B., LL.M.

As part of this interview, we asked Davis to write a letter to a Civil Rights Movement leader. Flip the page to read her letter to Malcolm X.



Dear Malcolm,

You don't know this but as a young immigrant girl who came to this country when I was 11, I followed your work. The thing that drew me to you was your boldness and fearlessness to fight against discrimination and segregation for Black Americans. I wanted to be just like you and always wondered what it would've been like to work with you.

Ironically, the work I now do continues what you started with the Civil Rights Movement. The only difference now is that there are laws on the books that protect historically marginalized individuals which gives us a leg to stand on, so to speak. As a nation, many of us have embraced civil rights but we still fight for our rights against those who are threatened by what we bring to the table and refuse to lean into equity and inclusion.

My position at VCU Health is an honor and a privilege and it is not one I take

lightly. In fact, without your sacrifices, I would not be able to lead inclusive excellence at an academic medical center in Richmond, VA, a place that was the capital of the confederacy from 5/8/1861 to 4/2/1865. We have done some amazing work like (1) developing and delivering numerous learning modules to build knowledge and increase awareness about different dimensions of diversity, (2) building and hosting scaled events to increase access to healthcare, (3) creating and hosting a podcast that spotlights leaders and their commitment to health equity, (4) creating safe spaces for brave conversations, (5) building relationships and leveraging them to discuss how to achieve equity in healthcare for tribal nations, (6) ensuring inclusive excellence is integrated into all human resource functions and programs, and (7) creating tools and resources to foster and advance a culture of belonging and psychological safety.

Despite the progress we've made, I know we've barely scratched the surface. I will not rest until our children and our children's children are free to be themselves, not judged and not seen as less than, simply because their skin has a different hue.

Sincerely,
Marcella Davis



***Moving
forward with
unbridled hope***

