



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
9TH FLOOR, GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING
CAPITOL SQUARE
POST OFFICE BOX 406
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23218
804-698-1590

LACEY E. PUTNEY, CHAIRMAN
ROBERT P. VAUGHN, STAFF DIRECTOR

September 9, 2008

The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox, Chairman
Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission
Suite 1100, General Assembly Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Kirk:

The House Appropriations Committee received a report on September 9, 2008, from Dr. Dan LaVista, Executive Director of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, on degree conferral practices and policies at our public colleges and universities. The Committee continues to have many questions and concerns regarding the recent issue at Virginia Commonwealth University regarding the degree awarded to the former City of Richmond police chief Rodney Monroe.

Therefore, I am requesting that the Joint Legislative Audit Review Commission (JLARC) undertake an examination of the events leading up to and following the awarding of the degree to Mr. Monroe. In particular, the Committee would like JLARC staff to address:

- (1) How a degree could be awarded under the existing policies and procedures at VCU which call for a student-initiated request for waiver of the 25% rule and a review by an academic committee of such requests and who specifically waived the published policy requirements;
- (2) The conduct of the investigation conducted by the Board of Visitors and the VCU Department of Assurance Services;

(3) What services the Commonwealth received from the firm of Deloitte and Touche for the \$14,000 emergency contract for which a written report from the firm was not produced; and,

(4) Recommendations on actions that can be taken to enhance the Boards of Visitors' role in granting exceptions to policies and procedures that are required to earn a degree.

It is my firm expectation that Virginia Commonwealth University's administrators, faculty and employees will fully cooperate with JLARC's investigation. The Committee would like JLARC staff to submit their findings at its October 20, 2008 meeting. Please have Phil Leone coordinate this presentation with Robert Vaughn, the Committee's Staff Director.

Sincerely,



Lacey E. Putney
Chairman

cc: Members, House Appropriations Committee
Mr. Phil Leone
Mr. Thomas G. Rosenthal, Rector, VCU Board of Visitors
Dr. Eugene P. Trani, President, Virginia Commonwealth University