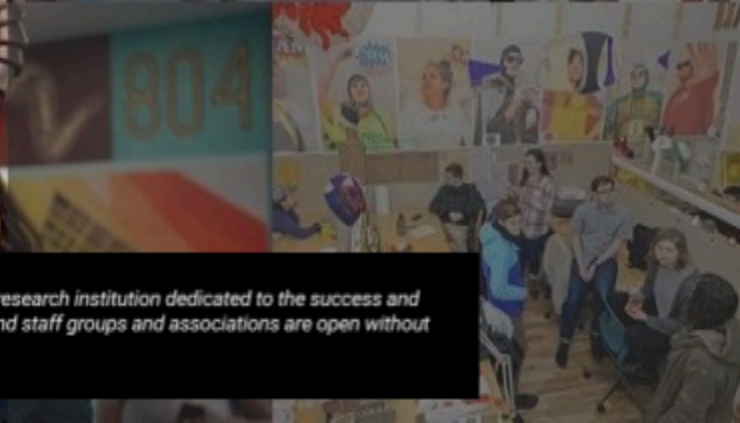# QUEST 2028

ONE VCU: TOGETHER WE TRANSFORM

Virginia Commonwealth University is a nationally renowned public research institution dedicated to the success and well-being of all members of its community. VCU student, faculty and staff groups and associations are open without regard to any characteristic or identity protected by law.

One VCU: Together We Transform

Vision

As a leading national, urban, public university and academic health center, Virginia Commonwealth University will be distinguished by its commitments to access and excellence; innovative and transformative learning; impactful research; exceptional patient care; and beneficial community impact.

Values

VCU values exhibit how we work with each other and as an organization.

- Accountability: Commit to the efficient and transparent stewardship of our resources to achieve institutional excellence
- Achievement: Pursue excellence in learning, research and scholarly pursuits; service; and patient care
- Collaboration: Foster respect, collegiality and cooperation to advance learning, entrepreneurship and inquiry
- Freedom: Strive for intellectual truth with responsibility and civility, respecting the dignity of all individuals
- Innovation: Cultivate discovery, creativity, originality, inventiveness and talent
- Service: Engage in the application of learning and discovery to improve the human condition and support the public good at home and abroad
- Opportunity: Uphold a climate of mutual trust and respect where individuals of different backgrounds, identities, abilities and life experiences are embraced, engaged and empowered to drive excellence and success
- Integrity: Adhere to the highest standards of honesty, respect, and professional and scholarly ethics

One VCU Charge

"We are VCU, a public research university and health care system where opportunity combines with excellence to produce exceptional educational and healing results.

Together, we are dedicated to serving the needs of students and patients.

We impact lives through focused global partnerships and commitment to our communities. We research solutions to societal challenges and ignite transformative innovation that matters to the people who need us most.

We prove every day that different works.

As One VCU, we are united by purpose, devoted to our communities and driven by impact."

Themes, Goals and Strategies

Theme 1: OPPORTUNITY DRIVES EXCELLENCE

Champion uncommon excellence in all that we do and advance a conscientious drive to support a climate where excellence and success for all individuals are valued and differences are equally respected. This theme is integral to the goals and strategies of all themes and is woven throughout the plan because it is foundational to the success and excellence of our students, faculty, and staff.

Goals and Strategies

Nurture an institutional culture and climate that fosters opportunity.

- Assess the continuous improvement in culture and climate for all units across the enterprise.
- Administer biennial organizational culture and climate surveys across academic and medical enterprises.
- Implement a phased approach to education and training.
- Fully integrate leadership competencies in management and performance systems for all employees across the enterprise.

Implement an organizational infrastructure to support, sustain, and scale initiatives that infuse an appreciation of all people into clinical care, curriculum, scholarship, and practice.

- Employ federal, state, and institutional data to set faculty and staff hiring benchmarks based on identified workforce needs.
- Utilize internal expertise to guide accrediting bodies and national organizations in developing compliance standards and best practices for engaging all students and patients.

Demonstrate national and international thought leadership.

- Engage in developmental, transitional, and transformational change management processes to build enterprise-wide teams that focus on goal attainment.
- Institutionalize faculty and student pipeline programs, particularly in STEM and health professions, to address deficits in expertise.
- Promote, develop, and scale curricular initiatives related to innovative pedagogy and experiential learning.
- Create opportunities that increase the engagement of all faculty and students in transdisciplinary research.

Metrics of Success

- Training Completion: 100% of employees complete Title IX and nondiscrimination training.
- Organizational Culture and Climate: Positive results in biennial culture and climate survey.
- Faculty Retention: Positive percent change in the retention of faculty members.

- Staff Retention: Positive percent change in the retention of staff members.

Theme 2: STUDENT SUCCESS

Ignite student success through curricular innovation, a holistic culture of care, and an engaged and empowered workforce.

Goals and Strategies

Transform curriculum so that all students engage in inquiry, discovery, innovation, experiential learning, civic engagement, and creative expression to prepare them for the future of work.

- Foster interdisciplinary collaboration by engaging multiple knowledge communities in developing new undergraduate and graduate academic programs and credentials.
- Support undergraduate and graduate curricular innovations that align with 21st-century workforce needs and VCU's research strengths and priorities.
- Redesign undergraduate curriculum to expand the integration of transformative experiences (i.e., internships, clinicals, placements, undergraduate research, etc.) focused on the future of work and student engagement in research.
- Redesign general education to include expected competencies for the future of work: digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and other essential skills.
- Foster a hybrid university environment focused on improving student learning that integrates technology with teaching and learning innovation in courses and programs.
- Deliver high-quality educational opportunities and services that are responsive to the needs of learners (i.e., traditional, nontraditional, and lifelong learners) and are attractive and accessible to communities across Virginia and beyond.
- Reshape graduate education to strengthen the attraction, reach, and education of master's and highly qualified Ph.D. students.
- Develop approaches and initiatives that enhance the global competency of students, faculty, and staff, and also facilitate differentiation of VCU's education, research, and engagement in the global academic marketplace.

Enhance the university culture of care and responsiveness that supports student engagement, success, and sense of belonging.

- Empower and sustain a university-wide culture of collaboration, adaptability, and innovation focused on student success.
- Develop approaches and programs that strengthen student academic, financial, and career planning, readiness, and agency.
- Increase institutional financial aid.
- Strengthen and provide intentional opportunities and conditions for purposeful student engagement, growth, physical/mental well-being, and belonging among all students (undergraduate, graduate, and first-professional).
- Create an environment that supports and strengthens student success through faculty/staff-student mentorship and faculty/staff development and engagement.

Retain and attract a highly qualified community of faculty and staff that reflects a

culture where everyone matters and belongs, and career satisfaction and growth are supported.

- Strengthen a cross-organizational culture of appreciation that is expected of all academic and administrative units and is reflected in day-to-day behaviors, activities, clarity of goals, rewards, and accountability.
- Develop and scale innovative employee recruitment, advancement, and retention programs that contribute to a highly qualified faculty and staff.
- Develop a culture through appropriate institutional shared governance structures to promote excellence in teaching and learning across the curriculum and within co-curricular programming.

Metrics of Success

- Retention Rate: Achieve a 90% one-year retention rate.
- Graduation Rate: Achieve a 78% six-year graduation rate.
- Post-Graduation Outcomes: Within six months of graduation, 70% of graduates are employed and/or enrolled in graduate/professional school.
- Enrollment: Maintain an enrollment of 32,000 students.
- Faculty: Increase the number of tenure-track faculty positions.
- Faculty Retention: Improve faculty retention rates.
- Staff Retention: Improve staff retention rates.

Theme 3: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION TO ADDRESS SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

Distinguish VCU as a vibrant public research university where researchers, educators, practitioners, and entrepreneurs innovate together to improve lives and address societal challenges.

Goals and Strategies

Amplify VCU's impact on society through excellence across all disciplines, knowledge creation, and transdisciplinary research.

- Fully implement the One VCU Research Strategic Priorities Plan and its four key initiatives — (1) Enriching the human experience, (2) advancing societal wellbeing, (3) optimizing health, and (4) supporting sustainable energy and environments — and align transdisciplinary strengths with societal grand challenges impacting our community, region, and the globe.
- Invest in promising research aligned with VCU's strengths and emerging research areas as a catalyst for increased external research awards, including federal research awards and research expenditures as a measurement of knowledge creation.
- Improve VCU processes and procedures supporting the tracking and reporting of VCU research expenditures.
- Expand and amplify the societal impact of VCU-led innovations, including market and startups launched in the Commonwealth.
- Develop a comprehensive communications approach to disseminate public impact results and their role in knowledge creation and experiential learning for the next generation of innovators across all disciplines.

Build a collaborative research culture that powers meaningful change and impact and is based on ethics, integrity, and critical and analytical thinking.

- Prioritize research that advances the creation of new knowledge and public impact.
- Advance community engagement as a standard for knowledge co-creation and public impact.
- Develop approaches and mechanisms that support knowledge creation is a prominent opportunity for students and trainees.
- Implement strategies where collaboration and team science-based approaches yield public impact across disciplines.

Implement a research infrastructure model that is scalable, nimble, and ready for growth.

- Implement strategies where collaboration and team science-based approaches yield public impact across disciplines.
- Expand training grants and trainee positions.
- Prepare for growth by establishing performance metrics, analytics, and infrastructure strategies (e.g., reduced administrative burden).

Metrics of Success

- Research Funding and Portfolio
  - Achieve over $400 million in annual external sponsored awards.
  - Attain a 3% to 5% increase in total federal research awards per fiscal year.
  - Double the number of patents, licensing agreements, partnerships, and startups.
  - Achieve a 5% annual increase in clinical research and trials.
- Ranking
  - Rank among the top 50 U.S. public research universities, as measured by the National Science Foundation (based on total research expenditures).
  - Public Impact (Impactful Research Across All Disciplines)
  - Increase faculty effort and the number of new faculty hires.
  - Increase the number of students (undergraduate and graduate) and postdoctoral fellows engaged in research.
  - Increase the number and quality of publications, scholarly articles, proceedings, and communications.

Theme 4: THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Deliver on our commitment to addressing social and health challenges in partnership with communities.

Goals and Strategies

Collaborate to build an adaptive infrastructure that meets the evolving needs of VCU and communities.

- Enhance strategic investments in infrastructure to expand operational capacity and management to oversee and implement policy reform, communications, and universitywide coordination and execution of strategies.
- Implement continuous improvement and sustainability of community and economic

practices throughout VCU and VCU Health.
- Develop community and economic engagement leadership and leadership pathways.
- Enable a collaborative community and economic engagement enterprise that includes clinical care, curriculum, scholarship, practice, and student initiatives.
- Establish a cross-organizational team to guide VCU's continued competitiveness for the Carnegie Community Engaged classification.
- Establish a sustainable process for reviewing and developing policies, practices, principles, and ethics for transformation.

Partner with communities to help inspire authentic gains in health, education, and economic prosperity.
- In collaboration with community stakeholders, develop a process to identify partnership neighborhoods, including an audit of existing VCU and partner activities to be aligned and leveraged.
- Build relationships and partnerships to foster civic agency and community resiliency.
- Foster community trust through open, transparent, and timely communication.
- Work with community partners and stakeholders to determine strengths, assets, and resources to inform the development and implementation of a model and identify success and baseline metrics.
- Collaboratively partner with community stakeholders to design and implement comprehensive health, education, and economic strategies.
- Galvanize the academic and health system enterprise around a priority RVA social issue to catalyze bold transformation.

Create and leverage pathways that demonstrate that our academic and health care goals and innovations benefit and complement the objectives of our community partners.
- Drive local workforce opportunities in student and employee recruitment, development, and advancement within VCU and VCU Health.
- Work with partners to strengthen the educational pipeline for career success.
- Collaboratively cultivate an economic ecosystem for the growth and development of community and student entrepreneurship and small business development by leveraging VCU assets, processes, and student experiences.
- Lead research, innovation, and practice in art, social, health, and technology fields that are informed by community priorities.

Actively seek community partnerships and opportunities to elevate awareness and collaborative action between VCU and communities.
- Collaborate with community organizations in offering conferences and workshops on topics of mutual interest.
- Establish citywide dialogue and lecture series with community partnership organizations.
- Formalize community feedback and information loop.
- Integrate return on investment/return on trust perspectives in all engagements with community partners.

Metrics of Success

This plan was modified in 2025 based on the March 21, 2025 Resolution of the VCU BOV

- Certified Suppliers: Increase percentage of discretionary spend with certified suppliers.
- Community Engagement: Increase coordinated programs/interventions.
- Training in Standards of Excellence: Increase the number of staff, students, and faculty trained (certified/badged) in community-engaged research best practices.