

VCU

V i r g i n i a C o m m o n w e a l t h U n i v e r s i t y

Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University

The decade of the 1990's has been a vigorous period of university-building.



VCU approaches the end of the century secure in its mission and guided by an ambitious vision for its future.

Virginia Commonwealth University aspires to be an innovative leader among the nation's major research universities. In addition, VCU's mission of teaching, research, public service, and patient care is specially oriented to the challenges and opportunities of metropolitan America. Our goal of national leadership and our unique mission formed the basis for the *Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University*, which was approved in 1993 by the VCU Board of Visitors.

In 1996-97, VCU celebrated the conclusion of a very successful first phase of the strategic plan. This phase incorporated 15 strategic directions encompassing more than 160 specific actions that prepared the University for new circumstances in support for higher education while identifying, for the first time, its major strengths.

During 1996-97, VCU also laid the groundwork for Phase II of the strategic plan. The objective of Phase II is to bring VCU's major academic and administrative divisions together to work on mutual initiatives that will accomplish VCU's goal of national leadership. Phase II also will integrate all planning at the University as well as continue to identify resources and accountability measures that will ensure our success. To accomplish these objectives, VCU's 15 strategic directions have been organized into five comprehensive strategic themes that define who we are and who we can become in the twenty-first century.



There is no question that the VCU community is fully capable of succeeding in accomplishing our ultimate strategic goal. It is my own priority to ensure that the University achieves, through its commitment to quality and excellence, the national recognition that it so richly deserves.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eugene P. Trani". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eugene P. Trani
President

INTRODUCTION

Virginia Commonwealth University was established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1968 through the merger of the Medical College of Virginia and Richmond Professional Institute. Though relatively young, the University has drawn on the rich history and accomplishments of those two institutions, joining their two histories, campuses, faculties and staffs, and academic programs into a single institution shaped by a common mission, shared goals, and innovative, new initiatives. The decade of the 1990's has been an especially vigorous period of university-building for this new institution. The catalyst and blueprint for this growth has been the *Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University*. Now, the University approaches the end of the century secure in its mission and guided by a unified vision for the future.

THE PAST *The Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University, Phase I*

In 1992, Dr. Eugene P. Trani, President of Virginia Commonwealth University, established a Commission on the Future of the University and charged it with developing a strategic plan to guide the University through the end of the decade. Following a year of work by the commission under the leadership of Dr. Grace E. Harris, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and after extensive discussion by all of the University's constituencies, the *Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University* was approved by the Board of Visitors of Virginia Commonwealth University in September of 1993.

The plan included fifteen strategic directions and more than 160 specific actions, all shaped by a realistic assessment of the financial, political, and competitive environment of higher education at that time. The consistent goal of the plan was to advance the University in that environment as a leader among urban research universities.

After four years of implementation, the majority of the proposed actions in the strategic plan have been completed or are well under way. Now it is time to plan the next phase of the University's growth.

Accomplishments include:

- the elimination of several academic programs, consolidation of programs in the School of Community and Public Affairs in other schools, and merger of the School of Basic Health Sciences with the School of Medicine;
- the creation of a School of Engineering;
- the enhancement of specific academic programs resulting in the creation of the Adcenter in the School of Mass Communications, a master's degree in history, doctoral degrees in art history and biomedical engineering, initiation of a PharmD program, and new faculty positions and other resources added to strengthen select programs;
- the establishment of university-wide centers to focus interdisciplinary work in public policy, cancer, neuroscience, environmental studies, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, and other areas;
- improved administrative efficiency through process re-engineering and elimination of duplicate functions;
- the enhancement of faculty and staff recognition and awards programs;
- the reorganization of enrollment services and the creation of a one-stop services center;
- the implementation of a new university-wide general education plan;
- the appointment of a Dean of the Graduate School to provide leadership in graduate education;
- increases in research funding, approaching \$100 million;
- the creation of new research-oriented institutes in relation to the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park;
- the creation of a new Office for Information Technology with a Vice Provost for Information Technology;
- the expansion of community service activities through reorganization of the Division of University Outreach;
- the creation of a new Office of Faculty Affairs to support faculty development, instructional enhancement, and administrative leadership;
- streamlining of the University's committee structure while strengthening faculty and staff participation in institutional governance;
- the implementation of the new *Faculty Roles and Rewards Policy* and *Promotion and Tenure Policy* to provide for clarity and flexibility in roles, equity in rewards, and accountability in work;
- the development and approval of the *Master Site Plan* to guide the growth and improvement of the University's facilities; and
- the initiation of a major capital campaign with a goal of \$125 million.

THE FUTURE *The Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University, Phase II*

Virginia Commonwealth University aspires to be an innovative leader among the nation's major research universities. To achieve that vision, critical choices must be made within the context of new economic realities. At a time when public support for new initiatives is limited, the University must be efficient in the use of its resources; it must be prepared to reallocate resources to support its priorities; and it must be creative in developing new resources. The ability of the University to achieve and sustain excellence depends upon its willingness to establish such priorities and be guided by them. Strategic planning is a dynamic process, however, and if it is to guide the University's future, such planning must respond to changing conditions by resetting these priorities and allocating resources accordingly.

Continuing to pursue its strategic direction, the University is faced with four main reasons for embarking on this second phase of strategic planning.

MISSION Virginia Commonwealth University is a public, urban, research university, supported by Virginia to serve the people of the state and the nation. The University provides a fertile and stimulating environment for learning, teaching, research, creative expression, and public service. Essential to the life of the University is the faculty actively engaged in scholarship and creative exploration – activities that increase knowledge and understanding of the world and inspire and enrich teaching.

The University is dedicated to educating full-time and part-time students of all ages and backgrounds in an atmosphere of free inquiry and scholarship so they may realize their full potential as informed, productive citizens with a lifelong commitment to learning and service.

The University serves the local, state, national, and international communities through its scholarly activities, its diverse educational programs, and its public service activities. As an institution of higher learning in a metropolitan center that is also the state capital, the University enjoys unique resources that enrich its programs. The University also contributes its intellectual and creative expertise in the development of innovative approaches to meet the changing needs of our society.

First, the accomplishments of the past four years point to a more ambitious position for Virginia Commonwealth University among the nation's major research universities, thus raising the level of expectations and aspirations.

Second, the University needs to capitalize on new opportunities that spring from what has been accomplished so far. The new School of Engineering, for example, opens up collaborative teaching and research opportunities and economic development possibilities that did not exist previously. The new general education program offers important opportunities for recruiting students to a high quality undergraduate program. The university-wide centers provide a structure for greater collaborative teaching, research, and service in key areas of institutional strength. Establishing the Office of Information Technology makes possible university-wide planning and support for the use of technology in instruction and administration.

Third, the University must refocus its efforts in relation to altered circumstances. The environment in which Virginia Commonwealth University must compete and succeed has changed during the past four years. There has been significant alteration in the projections of growth in the college-bound population that guided the enrollment management strategy in the original planning process, and recruiting potential students is increasingly competitive. The financial environment for higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia is somewhat improved, but competition for state revenue remains keen and public scrutiny of the cost of higher education has grown. While there is growing public recognition of the importance of higher education in the Commonwealth, especially for its economic development, such recognition has come with a demand for greater accountability in all areas of the University. Traditional federal sources for support of research and creative work of the faculty are either increasingly competitive or experiencing decline. The demographic profile of the coming generation of faculty is different enough from the current professoriate that it raises issues of the compatibility of new faculty expectations with traditional institutional supports. Rapid advances

in technology make even more urgent the need to integrate academic, technological, and financial planning. Finally, the revolutionary changes in health care have created enormous challenges for academic health sciences centers.

Fourth, the University needs to reinvigorate its planning process, incorporating it into the daily operations of the institution, moving from strategic planning as a separate activity to strategic decision-making as an integral part of all levels of the University. It must also re-engage the university community in the processes of priority setting and implementation of strategic initiatives.

The initial *Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University* was developed to advance the **mission** of the University, to embody its **goals**, and to pursue an ambitious **vision** of the University's future. These continue to guide the planning process in Phase II.

In refocusing the planning process, the fifteen strategic directions of the original strategic plan have been consolidated under five over-arching **strategic themes**.

- I. The University will provide the highest quality academic programs, services, and facilities for students.
- II. The University will foster excellence in teaching, research, and public service that will establish the University as a leader among the nation's major research universities.
- III. The University will position the academic health center and clinical enterprise as a leader in the creation and application of health care knowledge and as a provider of quality

VISION The initial *Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University* articulated a series of guiding principles that constitute the University's vision for the future.

The Virginia Commonwealth University community of students, faculty, and staff will draw from the rich intellectual, cultural, and human resources they share to provide the highest quality programs of instruction for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students of diverse backgrounds and interests.

Virginia Commonwealth University will advance a climate of scholarly inquiry in all its forms, including the propagation of new knowledge and the integration and dissemination of knowledge, creative activity, and scholarly reflection.

Virginia Commonwealth University will serve as a model of diversity in higher education and for creative responses to the issues that it generates.

The University, inseparable from its urban environment, will use its partnership with the Richmond community (taking advantage of its proximity to the nation's capital) to exercise Virginia Commonwealth University's expertise in addressing urban issues in the nation and the world.

Virginia Commonwealth University will build upon its substantial foundations in the biomedical sciences, the visual and performing arts, and the applied social sciences.

Finally, Virginia Commonwealth University will manifest a level of excellence and innovation that leads to its recognition as a leader within the ranks of the nation's major research universities.

- IV. The University will provide an environment for working and learning that attracts, retains, and supports outstanding, diverse, and dedicated staff, administrators, and faculty.
- V. The University will foster recognition of Virginia Commonwealth University as an innovative leader among the nation's major research universities.

The second phase of the planning process also has enunciated three **tactical strategies** that must be pursued to advance these themes and to accomplish the strategic initiatives enumerated in Phase II.

- I. The University will create an integrated planning process that links budget, information technology, staff, facilities, and space management planning processes to strategic planning.
- II. The University will assure the institutional infrastructure necessary to support strategic initiatives.

- III. The University will develop and apply institutional accountability measures to assess the results of these strategic initiatives.

Together, these strategic themes and tactical strategies form a process of implementation and evaluation that will allow Virginia Commonwealth University both to achieve the specific initiatives enumerated and to respond to changing circumstances and opportunities within the overall framework of its planning process.

GOALS The goals for Virginia Commonwealth University in carrying out its mission are:

- to provide undergraduate education that includes a broad and rigorous foundation in the arts, sciences, and humanities, and explores the ideas and values of humankind;
- to offer nationally and internationally recognized professional and graduate programs leading to doctoral, master's, and other terminal and advanced degrees in the professions, the sciences, humanities, and arts;
- to foster a scholarly climate that inspires creativity, a free and open exchange of ideas, critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, freedom of expression, and intellectual integrity;
- to expand the boundaries of knowledge and understanding through research, scholarship, and creative expression in the sciences, arts, humanities, and professional disciplines;
- to value and promote racial and cultural diversity in its student body, faculty, administration, and staff to enhance and enrich the University;
- to develop and sustain a faculty of the highest quality by providing an environment conducive to their achieving and maintaining national and international stature and by continuing to attract both recognized scholars and other outstanding individuals with a high potential for scholarly achievement and excellence in teaching;
- to provide an optimal environment for educating and training health care professionals, for conducting research to improve health care and delivery, and for meeting the needs of patients and the community in a comprehensive health care setting;
- to use the urban environment as a laboratory for studying and developing new approaches to problems pertaining to the public and private sectors;
- to support (through its commitment to public exhibitions, performances, and other cultural activities) the imaginative power of the liberal, visual, and performing arts to express the problems and aspirations of humanity and to enrich the lives of individuals;
- to develop innovative programs for continuing education that establish permanent intellectual connections between the University and its constituents, enhance professional competence, and promote dialogue on public issues;
- to offer diverse opportunities for individuals to benefit from higher education through a variety of avenues including flexible scheduling for part-time undergraduates and graduate students, open admission for nondegree-seeking students with appropriate preparation, advanced degree programs for working professionals, selected programs in diverse locales, admission of graduates with appropriate associate degrees in arts or sciences, and support programs for specially admitted students; and
- to promote interdisciplinary studies within the University to bring new perspectives to bear on complex problems, and mobilize creative energies and expertise in meeting the needs of society and individuals through its unique role as Virginia's major urban university.

I The University will provide the highest quality academic programs, services, and facilities for students.

Virginia Commonwealth University will provide high-quality undergraduate, professional, and graduate programs; it will maintain its historic commitment to accessibility, while enhancing its reputation for quality and excellence; it will maintain and enhance its distinctive reputation for offering instruction that bridges theory and practice; and it will continue to provide innovative instructional programs in continuing and executive education. The academic experience in the classroom, learning experiences outside of the classroom, the environment in which students learn, and the experience of being a part of the University – participating in its governance, developing leadership skills, and developing responsibility as members of the community – will be enhanced to improve the quality of life for students.

Virginia Commonwealth University will provide its undergraduate, graduate, and professional students with **outstanding academic programs**. Toward that end, it will continue promoting targeted areas of excellence among its education programs, including the reallocation of resources where appropriate; it will continue to enhance programs identified as having strong potential; and it will merge or eliminate programs as appropriate while developing new undergraduate and graduate programs consistent with the University's mission.

1. University resources will be reallocated or identified to enhance excellence through support of the following priority initiatives from Phase I: general education, graduate student assistantships and fellowships, technology support for instruction, and advising and retention initiatives.
2. A management plan for recruitment and enrollment will be implemented that will achieve the University's growth projections, approved by the State Council of Higher Education, of approximately 24,000 students by the academic year 2002-2003. The plan will be guided by the

University's commitment of aggressively recruiting high quality students, diverse in terms of race, gender, age, and national origin; and will maintain the University's commitment to effective accommodation of part-time, evening, and off-campus students.

3. Guided by the Honors Program's strategic plan, the Honors Program will be more centrally established as a "leader for excellence in undergraduate education." More effective use of the Honors Program will be made in recruiting undergraduates.
4. Connections will be strengthened among the life sciences within the undergraduate curriculum and in relation to the biomedical sciences on the MCV Campus. Undergraduate research opportunities in the life sciences, the University's strengths in the life sciences, and the planned Life Sciences Building will be stressed when recruiting undergraduates.
5. A more coherent undergraduate experience will be achieved by integrating the general education program, the proposed Academic Success Center, and expanded experiential opportunities for undergraduates. These learning opportunities will be enhanced through service-learning, international experience, cooperative education, and undergraduate research. A more effective use will be made of these aspects of undergraduate education in student recruitment.
6. A comprehensive program review process will be implemented and a long-range planning process will be initiated to identify areas in which new undergraduate and graduate programs will be developed, in addition to which existing programs should be enhanced to achieve national standing, and which existing programs should be merged or eliminated.
7. The feasibility of restructuring doctoral education in the biomedical sciences will be determined. A plan for interdisciplinary graduate education in engineering will be developed as well as a

process to explore the feasibility of developing other graduate programs.

8. A policy will be pursued to limit tuition increases for graduate students, to establish funds to offset high out-of-state tuition costs for graduate students, and to explore means to reduce the number of credit hours required of graduate students during the summer or during the thesis stage of their program.
9. The University will undertake an initiative to educate the public and political leaders in the Commonwealth about the importance of graduate education to the mission of higher education, to work force preparation, and to research and economic development with the goal of promoting policies that enable the University to compete effectively for graduate students.
10. The University will increase and publicize study abroad programs for students, enhance faculty development in international teaching and research, and strengthen an international perspective in the curriculum.

The **University's academic medical center** is among a select number of comprehensive health sciences centers in the nation and includes nationally recognized educational programs in medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, and the allied health professions. The rapidly changing health care environment has created extraordinary



demands as well as important new opportunities for Virginia Commonwealth University. Traditional funding sources in support of health sciences education are less predictable and educational costs continue to rise. Programs such as the "Generalist Initiative" and the move to more outpatient care and off-site clinics have increased the cost and complexity of health professional education. The changing demand for and practice scope of health care professionals requires changes in curriculum and new teaching methods. This changing health care environment will require new strategic initiatives in health sciences education.

11. Increased support for undergraduate medical education and the added costs of the "Generalist Initiative" will be a legislative and budget priority for the 1998-2000 biennium.
12. A task force will be appointed to explore ways of achieving greater interdisciplinary teaching among the University's health sciences programs in order to respond to the changing health care marketplace, and to incorporate topics related to the changing nature and business management of health care in all education programs.
13. The University will work in partnership with Northern Virginia Community College as it develops its health sciences campus. Its goal will be to provide on-site and distance-learning programs for health professional education.

Instructional technology is increasingly important for enhancing the educational experience of our students, for equipping them with the technology skills they will require when they leave the University, and for Virginia Commonwealth University to be competitive for the best graduate, professional, and undergraduate students.

14. Consistent with the goal of instructional technology across the curriculum by the year 2000, Virginia Commonwealth University students will be computer literate. This goal will be accomplished by expanding student access to computing, providing faculty development to

support curricular priorities, and establishing benchmarks against which to assess the impact of technology on learning.

15. A distance-learning strategy will be created that targets specific academic programs and market opportunities, including emerging distance-learning brokers such as the Southern Regional Electronic Campus and Western Governors University. This initiative will develop a university-wide distance learning infrastructure and secure funding sources.



Virginia Commonwealth University will foster a **quality of life for students** and the entire university community that supports their success and well-being. Essential for a high quality of university life is a campus climate that is service-oriented; facilities that are clean, well-maintained, accessible, and safe; adequate parking and alternative transportation; adequate campus green space and open meeting and social spaces; an aesthetic that gives the University a defined “sense of campus;” and cultural activities that make the University more than just a place to take classes.

16. Short and long-range housing plans will be developed that are consistent both with enrollment growth projections and with institutional expectations for the quality of residential experience of our students. Strategies for university and private sector collaboration will be included.

17. Student services on the Academic Campus and the MCV Campus will be centralized on each campus to ensure a uniform level of service and the availability of services for students consistent with the needs of an urban campus.

18. Guided by the *Master Site Plan*, a comprehensive planning process will be initiated to address the need for more green spaces on both campuses; to provide more school-based and program-based space for students to meet, congregate, and socialize; to take advantage of opportunities

provided by new buildings being constructed on the Academic Campus; and to collaborate with the City of Richmond on a plan for the use of Monroe Park, located adjacent to campus.

19. The University will provide additional improvement in parking and bus services and campus safety, including collaboration with the City of Richmond Police Department in areas surrounding the campuses.
20. More recreational and athletic activities in which students, staff, and faculty can meet in a casual setting will be provided through university-sponsored events.

II The University will foster excellence in teaching, research, and public service that will establish the University as a leader among the nation's major research universities.

In order to achieve its vision of being a leader among the nation's major research universities, Virginia Commonwealth University will consistently pursue excellence in its missions of teaching, scholarship, creative work, and public service. The University's *Faculty Roles and Rewards Policy*, annual evaluation of faculty and administrators, and review for promotion and tenure will support and reward faculty and administrators in the diverse roles they assume in pursuit of excellence.

Teaching and learning are central to Virginia Commonwealth University's mission as a public research university. One purpose of the University's strategic planning process is to develop an institutional strategy that builds upon its defined mission and existing strengths while responding creatively to trends influencing higher education. This strategy should enable the University to have a clearly defined role within Virginia's system of higher education; to develop regional, national, and international reputations in certain fields of instruction; to become a national leader in defining the role of urban universities in the 21st century; and to provide a learning environment supportive of a diverse and increasingly international student body.

1. A university-wide initiative will be undertaken to strengthen the skills of the faculty in teaching a student population that is diverse in age, ability, racial and ethnic background, international origin, religious affiliation, in addition to many other ways. Through this initiative, the University plans to achieve a

national reputation for the effectiveness of its faculty in teaching diverse students.

2. The skill of the faculty in using new and emerging instructional technologies to enhance student learning will be strengthened.
3. Guided by the *Faculty Roles and Rewards Policy*, a faculty task force will review current evaluation of teaching and recommend guidelines that include an effective student evaluation process and that incorporate evaluation consistent with the diversity of teaching roles. The impact of instructional technology on teaching through the use of new pedagogy, new teaching venues, teaching responsibilities, and assessment of student learning will be a part of this review.
4. A comprehensive review of summer school will be undertaken which addresses its role within the overall academic program, faculty compensation, and its place in faculty teaching assignments.

Scholarship, research, and creative work

are essential for Virginia Commonwealth University's vision of becoming a leader among the nation's major research universities. Essential to the life of the University is a faculty fully engaged in research and creative exploration. These activities increase knowledge and understanding of the world, inspire and enrich undergraduate, professional, and graduate teaching, and assist community and economic development. Research and creative endeavors require a scholarly climate that



permeates the sciences, arts, humanities, and the professional disciplines.

5. The University will seek to achieve a research budget of \$135 million by the year 2002. Achieving this ambitious goal is contingent on implementing the strategic initiatives that follow as well as a faculty hiring process

that fosters increased scholarship. It also requires that the new School of Engineering set and achieve research funding goals for its faculty and that schools, centers, and institutes establish and achieve more ambitious goals for externally funded research.

of their progress in meeting the goal of enhancing multi-disciplinary research, developing links with entrepreneurial initiatives, and obtaining external funding. Support will be discontinued for university institutes not making appropriate progress towards these goals. New university institutes that show significant potential for advancing the research goals of the University will be identified and created.

6. Technology support will be enhanced for research, including computational and scientific instrumentation support.

7. Funding will be increased for the research grants-in-aid to support scholarship, research, and creative activity in all forms at the University, to stimulate new funded-research initiatives, and for start-up costs for new faculty, capital equipment purchases, and graduate student research fellowships.

8. The University will seek to alter the Commonwealth's practice of applying a portion of the indirect costs generated by university research to the University's education and general fund budget and use any recovered indirect costs to support strategic research priorities.

9. The University will increase the amount of private foundation support for faculty and student scholarship and program activities.

10. In support of research goals, start-up funds will be provided to establish six university institutes. Policies and guidelines will be developed that govern the relationship of university institutes to other entities in the University, including sharing overhead costs and staffing resources, and faculty and student roles. Institutes will be regularly evaluated in terms

11. Regular review of the university-wide centers (initiated during the first phase of strategic planning) will continue, and criteria will be employed for the identification of future centers that further their interdisciplinary nature; their contribution to the comprehensive mission of teaching, research, and public service; their requirements for external funding; and their reporting relationships. Support will be discontinued for university centers not demonstrating effective use of resources in pursuit of these goals.

University Centers

- Massey Cancer Center
- Neuroscience Center
- HIV/AIDS Center
- Center for Environmental Studies
- Center for Public Policy
- Heart Center
- Liver Center
- Clinical Research Center for Periodontal Disease

University Institutes

- Institute for Drug and Alcohol Studies
- Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics
- Institute for Structural Biology and Drug Discovery
- Institute for Clinical Trials
- Institute for Outcomes Research
- Institute for Oral and Craniofacial Molecular Biology

12. The University will take full advantage of the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park and the new Virginia Microelectronics Center, affiliated with the School of Engineering, to enhance its research and economic development activities.

13. Increased commercialization of faculty research will be fostered, including facilitating faculty interaction with business and industry, pursuit of venture capital to provide start-up support, and the enforcement of policies to ensure that profits from commercialization of faculty intellectual properties are reinvested in university scholarship.

14. Space planning for both campuses will include the expansion, improvement, and redistribution of space for scholarly research by improvements to existing space and the inclusion of new research space. More accurate information about research space needs will be generated. Criteria and procedures for the allocation of new space will be developed. Appropriate space will be allocated to multi-disciplinary research centers and institutes.



Public service is a defining characteristic of an urban university. Public service and outreach serve to link teaching and research expertise to community needs. By refocusing its service mission, Virginia Commonwealth University will capitalize on the strengths of its diverse student body and academic programs, a high-quality faculty and staff, and its location in the state capital and near Washington, D.C. A strong and dynamic public service mission will encourage greater involvement by faculty, staff, and students in the community, thereby broadening their experiences and providing them with important connections to the places in which they work, live, and study.

15. Guided by the *Faculty Roles and Rewards Policy*, a faculty task force will be established to develop university-wide guidelines for evaluating and rewarding public service and community outreach activities.

16. A long-range planning process for public service, off-campus instruction, and outreach will be initiated that includes:

- continued development of distributed campuses including locations south of the

James River, the far West End, and the I-95 corridor;

- strategies for developing off-campus program initiatives with the Southwest Virginia Center for Higher Education; in the health sciences through collaboration with Northern Virginia Community College and area hospital systems; and graduate program possibilities in collaboration with other universities;
- expansion of service-learning opportunities to better connect students' education with community needs and the service mission of academic departments;



- identification of the University's niche in continuing education in the Richmond area and strategies for marketing continuing education;
- a plan for expanding the Virginia Commonwealth University-Carver Community Partnership and identification of other such initiatives;
- work force training initiatives, incorporating the Center for Public Policy and other targets in area industry; and
- plans for providing appropriate facilities for training initiatives and continuing education.

The **University Library Services** is integral to the teaching, scholarly, and public service missions of the University. The quality of a university is measured, in part, by the quality of its library resources and services. To achieve its vision of being an innovative leader among the nation's major research universities, Virginia Commonwealth University requires a library

system capable of supporting this plan. Using Association of Research Library standards as well as characteristics of libraries of the University's peer institutions, the University Library Services will develop standards of excellence appropriate for Virginia Commonwealth University. These standards will guide future growth.

17. The University will provide support for the University Library Services' staff, collections, and technology necessary to achieve the teaching, research, and public service missions of an innovative leader among the nation's major research universities.

As an urban university which aspires to be **a model of diversity in higher education** and as an innovative leader among the nation's major research universities, Virginia Commonwealth University must expand and capitalize on the diversity of its students and its faculty's reputation for achieving excellence. Its academic programs, its systems of recognition and rewards, its campus climate, and its scholarly expertise should reflect and support intercultural understanding and community responsibility.

18. The University will undertake a comprehensive initiative to achieve curricula, scholarly opportunities, public service activities, and a campus climate that truly supports diversity. This initiative is central to realizing the University's strategic goals.



The University will position the academic health center and clinical enterprise as a leader in the creation and application of health care knowledge and as a provider of quality patient care and health services in a highly competitive marketplace.

Dramatic changes in the health care environment in recent years have placed new demands on academic health centers. Changes in public policy as well as the emergence of private sector managed care have put traditional revenue sources for medical education, health sciences research, clinical practice, and indigent care at risk. The move to outpatient clinical sites has increased the cost and complexity of both education and patient care in the health professions. In addition, the changing expectations and practice scope demanded of health care professionals call for a more interdisciplinary approach to the education of these professionals.

The creation of the MCV Hospitals Authority opens a realm of new opportunities to enhance patient care and to become more competitive in today's health care market. Virginia Commonwealth University, through the health sciences, will pursue strategies to increase the quality of patient care, to enhance the link between basic research and clinical application, and to establish innovative partnerships that establish it as a leader among academic health centers.

1. The University, in conjunction with MCV Hospitals and MCV Physicians, will develop external partnerships and affiliations (such as our current connection with the Bon Secours Health System) that improve its competitive advantage in educational and clinical markets.
2. The University will develop new collaborative strategies with affiliated health care providers and the City of Richmond to provide quality health care for patients who are unable to pay.
3. The University's clinical enterprise will seek to remain competitive and achieve strong market

positions in the City of Richmond, the suburban metropolitan marketplace, and the state-wide health care market.

4. The University will be positioned to be more competitive in the managed care environment by providing cost-effective, high quality health care services.
5. The University will be able to respond quickly to changes in federal policy for Medicare, Medicaid, and payment for graduate medical education by closely monitoring current policy and anticipating future alterations.
6. Health care services of the MCV Hospitals and MCV Physicians will be consolidated and integrated to create a coordinated, patient-friendly, and “seamless” service delivery system. This consolidated patient care system will allow the sharing of risk and reward by providing incentives for delivering high quality patient services.
7. The University will transfer new health care knowledge created through research to benefit our patients’ care and long-term health thus providing a competitive advantage for the academic clinical enterprise.
8. The interdisciplinary efforts of the five health sciences schools with the MCV Hospitals Authority, MCV Physicians, and the Virginia Biotechnology Park will be leveraged to further promote the University as a leading academic health center.
9. The University will partner with current health care related insurance products or create their own.
10. The University will use the flexibility and independence gained through the creation of the MCV Hospitals Authority to foster collaboration and create new health care markets and service delivery opportunities.

IV The University will provide an environment for working and learning that attracts, retains, and supports outstanding, diverse, and dedicated staff, administrators, and faculty.

Great universities are characterized by a **strong sense of community**. Staff, administrators, and faculty work together with a unified sense of purpose and a shared vision for the University. The diversity of faculty, staff, and administrators at Virginia Commonwealth University (diversity of roles as well as racial, ethnic, and religious diversity) is one of our strengths. That diversity also presents challenges when developing programs that serve all employees, communicating across the institution, and creating a shared sense of purpose. Virginia Commonwealth University will foster the diversity of faculty, administrators, and staff, draw strength from this diversity, and develop programs that support the varied roles and backgrounds of its employees.

Recruiting and retaining **staff, administrators, and faculty of the highest quality** is essential for realizing the strategic direction of the University. The University will coordinate the recruitment of new faculty, administrators, and staff among departments, schools, university-wide centers, and research institutes in a manner that is consistent with the themes and priorities identified in the strategic plan. It will



aggressively recruit and promote outstanding scholars with a view toward national recognition. Because adjunct faculty are an important part of this institution, the University will assure the quality of adjunct faculty, provide appropriate support for them, and seek to integrate them more fully into the university community.

1. Procedures will be established that include a review of school recruiting needs in terms of strategic priorities; coordination of positions and recruitment of faculty among departments and university-wide centers and institutes; and an evaluation of the level of recruitment success.
2. A university-wide initiative to aggressively recruit and retain outstanding and promising minority and women faculty, staff, and administrators will be established. This initiative will allocate resources to recruit faculty identified through this procedure, and use the resources of organizations such as the Black Education Association.
3. The Division of Human Resources services will be used routinely to support these recruitment efforts by providing information about the University and the Richmond area. Such services will include developing a search packet/checklist of Human Resources services, the production of a video to market the University and Richmond area, spousal relocation assistance in partnership with the Career Center, and staff to brief search committees about these resources.
4. Explicit targets will be established for the funding of University Professorships and Endowed Chairs to ensure support for the positions in the University's capital campaign and to monitor the level of success in achieving these goals.
5. Issues related to the use of adjunct faculty and their roles in the University will be examined.

Providing **faculty and staff development** is fundamental for achieving the strategic direction of the University.

6. A base line of appropriate technology access will be provided for all faculty and staff.
7. Faculty mentoring and faculty development activities through the Office of Faculty Affairs will be enhanced to ensure retention and ongoing professional development. Special attention will be given to women and minority faculty.
8. A competitive, university-wide study/leave program will be funded to support ten or more faculty per year at full pay for a semester or half pay for a full year. A program will be funded to support research leave for tenure-eligible faculty following their third-year review.

The **quality of the work environment** for employees is essential for retaining faculty, administrators, and staff and is an important measure of the University's success in fulfilling its mission. Supporting and retaining a diverse work force will require new behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes that include embracing, celebrating, and promoting diversity. Virginia Commonwealth University will facilitate a climate in which all employees may contribute and feel valued.

9. The Office of Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action will redefine its mission, placing greater emphasis on actively educating the university community about issues of diversity through a comprehensive initiative that focuses on diversity in teaching, curriculum, scholarship and service opportunities, and campus climate.
10. The Division of Human Resources will undertake periodic surveys to determine staff and faculty satisfaction with the University's work environment and the results of the surveys will be used for improving the quality of the work environment.

V The University will foster recognition of Virginia Commonwealth University as an innovative leader among the nation's major research universities.

Virginia Commonwealth University will **achieve national recognition** for the quality of its students, staff, and faculty, its innovative education programs, and its public service initiatives. In order to foster such recognition, the University will develop a focused strategy for advancing select programs. The University's corporate identity and unique strengths will be clearly articulated in order to position it as a leader among the nation's major research universities. While particular initiatives will be developed to promote recognition of the quality and innovation of select programs, the goal will always be to place recognition of those programs within the framework of the University's overall quality, its shared identity, and its collective goals.

1. Programs identified through the strategic planning process as innovative and nationally competitive will be aggressively promoted in order to enhance national recognition of Virginia Commonwealth University and to position the University as an innovative leader in American higher education.
2. A university-wide Office of Publications, under the direction of the Vice President for External Relations, will be established to coordinate the various publication activities of the University and to provide quality control and consistency for the University's official publications.
3. Athletics programs will be used as part of the strategy for achieving national prominence, taking advantage of the new Siegel Center and the new track and soccer stadium.
4. Alumni organizations will be established in the Richmond area and in other parts of Virginia. The University's alumni offices will be reviewed in terms of their organizational structure, mission, and support. Alumni activities, the goals of

university foundations, and fund raising strategies will advance and be consistent with the University's image and position.

5. A federal relations strategy will be created that both enhances the University's reputation and secures funding for selected priorities.
6. The University's economic development impacts the Commonwealth through initiatives such as the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park, the School of Engineering, and the Virginia Microelectronics Center. Such economic impact, and the research and creative work of the faculty generally, will be aggressively publicized.
7. A task force of university leaders will conduct an analysis of current marketing efforts going on throughout the University. The task force will proceed to make recommendations on a comprehensive, university-wide approach to support and expand these efforts, including suggestions regarding appropriate staffing and funding mechanisms.

TACTICAL STRATEGIES

Historically, Virginia Commonwealth University has been able to develop effective plans for its major management areas, but the planning processes have often been conducted in isolation, with limited or no consideration of the impact of the plans on other areas or activities of the institution. In order to achieve the goal of incorporating strategic planning into the daily operations of every level of the institution, the University will develop an integrated planning process and will collectively pursue key tactical strategies that support the overall strategic direction of the institution.

I The University will create an integrated planning process that links budget, information technology, staff, facilities, and space management planning processes to strategic planning.

1. Virginia Commonwealth University will develop an integrated planning process that ensures that the strategic plan can be successfully implemented. The process will include:

- ▶ a matrix of planning processes that integrates the mission, the strategic plan, and functional area plans (facilities, staffing, technology, financial, capital projects, and biennial budget plan), ongoing evaluation and assessment;
- ▶ a planning calendar that coordinates the timing of all major planning activities;
- ▶ a clearly articulated statement of the scope and purpose of each level of planning, including its relationship to other planning activities; and
- ▶ a clearly identified effectiveness criteria, a plan for evaluation, and a mechanism for using evaluation results in future plans.

2. The University's Vice Presidents, under the direction of the Provost, will be charged with ensuring that the planning processes are adequately and effectively integrated. The University's financial plan and available resources will be the final arbiter for implementing the strategic plan.

II The University will assure the institutional infrastructure necessary to support strategic initiatives.

1. Administrative restructuring will continue in order to improve customer service and increase efficiency. Restructuring will include precise targets and benchmarks for administrative cost savings.
2. A planning process will be undertaken to assure that the priorities and timetables for enhancing information technology are integrated with strategic priorities, and include realistic cost requirements to implement the plan.
3. A strategic planning process will be undertaken for University Library System. This plan will incorporate technology planning and be integrated with the University's academic priorities.

III The University will develop and apply institutional accountability measures to assess the results of these strategic initiatives.

1. The University will use its approved list of peer institutions to establish accountability measures and benchmarks for performance in areas such as student retention and graduation rates, faculty work load and salaries, research funding, community outreach, instructional technology, and a periodic review of academic programs.
2. The University will create a formal process for academic program development consistent with the State Council for Higher Education requirements. This process will respond to:
 - ▶ the relationship of the program to the University's mission and a description of how the proposed program fits with the University's strategic planning direction;
 - ▶ specified resource needs for the proposed program (including faculty, staff, equipment,

and other operating costs, as well as the need for new and/or renovated space), and identified funding sources (including possible termination of existing programs and strategies to reallocate resources);

- the anticipated impact of student enrollment on existing programs, including increased demand on some academic departments;
- the estimated head count and full-time enrolled students, including the sources for this projection, which portion of the projected enrollments are anticipated to be new to the institution, and which portion represents migration from existing degree programs;
- a description of the recruitment process for the proposed program, including the anticipated gender and racial mix of students and how, specifically, under-represented groups will be recruited and retained in the program; and
- the benchmarks by which the program will be deemed successful, when they will be applied, and what actions will be taken if the program does not meet these benchmarks (these benchmarks will include meeting enrollments, job placement and satisfaction of graduates, and other measures in addition to student learning).

3. The University will implement its plan for periodic review of undergraduate, professional, and graduate programs. The review will include:

- a description of the program mission and an analysis of the program's position within the school and the university mission as well as the strategic plan;
- the program costs as analyzed by the State Council of Higher Education productivity review;
- the actual and projected student enrollments, retention and graduation rates over the past five years, and employment or post-baccalaureate study data of its graduates;
- the quantity and quality of faculty in teaching, research, and discipline-related public service;

- an assessment of student attainment of the program learning goals;
- student and alumni satisfaction information using university-wide survey instruments (to be coordinated with the Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation);
- an identification and study of similar programs from the University's peer institution list for comparison and benchmarking in areas such as curriculum, number of majors, graduation rates, and number and quality of faculty;
- an evaluation of educational support resources including staff, advising, teaching space, equipment, computing facilities, and technical assistance;
- program goals for the next three to five years; and
- specialized accrediting reports where appropriate.

4. The University will undertake a benchmarking process for assessing progress as it implements the strategic plan. Appropriate data from the official list of peer institutions will be used.

5. The University will incorporate other review criteria as appropriate to ensure financial accountability including: beneficial (either to the program or financially) collaborations and partnerships; out-sourcing and privatization; process analysis to increase efficiency and reduce waste; and use of technology to enhance student learning, provide distance-learning opportunities, or improve operations.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The purpose of strategic planning is to establish the vision for the University and to identify initiatives to achieve that vision. It is a means by which the University builds consensus about its direction and future, identifies actions, coordinates decision-making, and focuses resources. Implementing a strategic plan involves **making hard choices among important initiatives**, setting priorities, identifying or reallocating resources, holding people accountable for carrying out initiatives, assessing results, and regularly communicating progress to the university community. The success of strategic planning rests on the success of implementation planning.

The following principles will guide implementation of the *Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University, Phase II*.

- ▶ Responsibility and authority for strategic initiatives will be clearly identified and communicated, and responsible individuals will be held accountable for completion.
- ▶ There will be an oversight process established for ongoing evaluation and revision of strategic initiatives.
- ▶ Key stake-holders throughout the university community will be involved in establishing priorities and timetables for implementation and will be fully represented in planning activities called for in Phase II.
- ▶ The *Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University, Phase II* will be the basis for decision-making throughout the University and will be the framework for unit planning activities.
- ▶ Resources will be allocated in accordance with the strategic directions articulated in the plan.
- ▶ There will be regular and frequent communication to the university community.
- ▶ There will be annual implementation progress reports.
- ▶ The university community will be engaged, periodically, in the process of refocusing and refining the strategic planning process.

Dr. Grace E. Harris, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, will have ultimate responsibility for the implementation plan. She will lead a university-wide process that establishes priorities, sets timetables, identifies resource implications, and identifies the persons responsible for each initiative. With the assistance of an oversight council, she will monitor progress and periodically evaluate implementation of the strategic plan.



Questions and comments about the *Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University, Phase II* can be directed to:

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