

Virginia Commonwealth University

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*Quest for Distinction*

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Discovery. Impact. Success.  
2011-2017

**Approved by the Board of Visitors on May 20, 2011.**

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## **I. VCU Quest for Distinction: Success. Discovery. Impact.**

Since its inception in 1968, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) has marched toward this moment in its history -- poised to take its place among the nation's preeminent public universities in one of the most challenging times to face higher education.

VCU's achievements under the most recent phase of its strategic plan<sup>1</sup> resulted in high regard for our nationally ranked academic programs and academic medical center, research and scholarly productivity, and engagement with the communities we serve.

This next phase of the strategic plan – *VCU Quest for Distinction* – embraces our vision as a premier urban, public research university focused on student success. It does so responsibly, with a renewed focus on how VCU will pursue excellence at every level even in the face of dwindling resources and increasing calls for accountability and demonstrable value for higher education.

VCU has demonstrated its intellectual and creative mettle to achieve the plan. In a difficult economic climate, VCU strengthened its position as a top-ranked urban, public research university and is listed by the Carnegie Foundation as a Research University – Very High Research Activity as well as a Community Engaged Institution, one of only 40 national public research universities that hold both distinctions. We will continue to strive toward improving our placement in the annual report of the Top American Research Universities and will hold ourselves accountable to the highest of standards in teaching, research, and service.

Our proposed plan, *VCU Quest for Distinction*, provides a strategic framework for capitalizing on the outstanding assets that form the VCU experience – a commitment to educational quality, an environment that embraces diversity, an evolving research program with substantial increases in extramural funding, preeminent programs an

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<sup>1</sup>VCU's strategic plan is an ever evolving document providing guidance toward the current and future priorities. Phase 1 of the plan was called *Strategic Plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University* (1993-1998); Phase II, *Strategic Plan For the Future Phase II* (1998-2006); Phase III, *VCU 2020: Vision for Excellence* (2006-2011); and Phase IV, *VCU Quest for Distinction* (2011-2017).

engaged community, and a growing alumni base. Our *Quest for Distinction* builds upon the achievements realized from the current strategic plan as we aspire to a future of heightened excellence. It is an aggressive call to focused action and will require a disciplined concentration on strategic priorities and a commitment to accountability through agreed upon measurements. Progress will be tracked annually with metrics associated with each of the 14 goals identified in the plan. In addition, we will utilize a select group of peer institutions to serve as external benchmarks of distinction.

The diversification and expansion of resources is a vital action required for the success of our new vision. Furthermore, the thoughtful deployment of resources in meeting the aspirational goals of the *Quest for Distinction* is essential in the current climate. We will ensure that the investment made by our students and their families goes hand-in-hand with a demonstrable institutional commitment to productivity, efficiency, and cost containment. Over the last five years, VCU has clearly demonstrated its commitment to cost containment and efficiency, and every effort will be made over the next six years to identify even more administrative efficiencies to streamline our efforts to help ensure the most meaningful education for all students.

The *Quest for Distinction* embodies VCU's commitment to advancing knowledge and student success –a dual commitment that is exceptional among research universities. Our *Quest* sets the stage for VCU to become the nation's preeminent urban, public research university.

## II. The Planning Process

In April 2010, President Michael Rao charged a task force with the re-design of VCU's strategic plan, *VCU 2020: A Vision for Excellence*. The following charge was delivered to the task force:

- Assess the current progress in meeting the themes/initiatives in *VCU 2020: Vision for Excellence*; specifying themes/initiatives that have been met and those that have not;
- Determine the resources invested in themes/initiatives that have been met and the costs to achieve unmet themes/initiatives;
- Determine the impact of the decline in state funding on achieving yet unmet goals and continuing those goals that have been met;
- Pose new strategies for achieving excellence in the current fiscal climate; and
- Prioritize continuing VCU 2020 priorities and proposed new priorities for consideration in a new VCU Vision for the Future.

The twelve-person task force was co-chaired by Interim Provost Beverly Warren and Vice President for Health Sciences Sheldon Retchin and included representation from senior leadership, faculty, staff, and students. (See Appendix A) Following 10 weeks of intensive meetings, the task force submitted its preliminary report to President Rao in July 2010. An update on the preliminary report was presented to the Board of Visitors in August 2010, and a subsequent Board of Visitors Retreat was held on October 14, 2010.

The university community was actively engaged in the strategic planning process. In May 2010, three community forums were held to seek broad input from the VCU community regarding progress made on the current 2020 strategic plan and aspirations and goals for the development of the next phase of the plan. In addition, an interactive website was developed to seek input from faculty, staff, and students over the summer months of May – July 2010.

In August 2010, the Strategic Planning Task Force co-chairs held meetings with numerous VCU leadership groups including: Student Leadership (Student Government

Association on the Monroe Park and MCV campuses, Graduate Student Association, Emerging Leaders), Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Development and Alumni Relations, VCU Foundation, Executive Council for Division of Community Engagement, and University Council. In addition, nine community forums were held with more than 500 individuals attending one or more sessions.

In late November, four work groups were formed to propose strategic initiatives for each theme and to address broad resource needs to accomplish the aspirational goals within each theme. Each work group was comprised of approximately 25-30 members of the university community including students, faculty, and staff. In addition, the Theme IV work group held a forum work session with more than 50 community leaders in the greater Richmond region. Each work group produced a summary report and recommendations to the task force.

The final task force report incorporated the comments/suggestions from the university community regarding themes, goals, and strategic initiatives and was submitted to President Rao on January 24, 2011.

With leadership from President Rao and the Board of Visitors, the senior administrative team of the university met to determine the specific strategic initiatives that will frame the university's direction over the next six years.

The Board of Visitors participated in a Strategic Planning Retreat on April 18, 2011. At this time, President Rao presented the shared vision and priorities of his leadership team guided by the comments and suggestions presented in the current version of the report.

Following the Board retreat, a series of community hearings were held to share the framework of the new strategic plan with the university community and to seek input regarding the proposed plan.

The final draft of the plan was presented for approval by the Board of Visitors at the May 2011 full Board Meeting.

### **III. An Environmental Scan**

The purpose of an environmental scan is to support and inform the strategic planning process. A good environmental scan will help an organization understand and respond effectively to changes in its environment.

This environmental scan informs Phase IV, *VCU Quest for Distinction*. The environmental scan presents the key highlights of opportunities and challenges facing Virginia Commonwealth University as it charts a vision and strategic priorities that will frame the next six years.

The scan (Appendix C) was developed by a work group using the results of focus groups with senior leadership in the university; demographic and comparative data from a variety of sources including an assessment of the progress on the current strategic plan presented as supplemental background to the VCU Board of Visitors in August 2010; and, an economic impact study - *Virginia Commonwealth University-Delivering Talent; Creating Economic Benefits* - developed with the assistance of Chmura Economics & Analytics in January 2011.

The university's environment changes continuously and reflecting the most recent opportunities and challenges will be important to the university's future. Therefore, it is the intent of the work group and the senior leadership that the environmental scan will be updated periodically and will be used as the foundation for the university's response to any challenges representing fundamental risks to the university.

#### ***Key Highlights: Opportunities***

- Building on the university's nationally ranked programs
- Seizing on the successes learned from the advising and teaching in the University College to strengthen retention and student engagement in the sophomore, junior and senior years
- Promoting our existing and longstanding relationship and our articulation agreements with the Virginia Community College System and its 40 campuses

- Leveraging the diversity of our students to enhance the diversity of our faculty and our community's health care professionals
- Building on our exceptionally productive, collegial, and collaborative faculty as we attract new faculty colleagues to peer groups of excellence in the disciplines
- Strengthening areas of research excellence that could be consolidated into existing or new research centers
- Utilizing our unique combination of a health sciences campus and our wide and diverse array of undergraduate and graduate academic programs to collectively contribute to health care solutions
- Embracing the vibrancy of a metropolitan center undergoing a cultural renaissance that is within two hours of the nation's capital
- Capitalizing on the need and ability to build new student housing to incorporate learning spaces for our students
- Turning exceptional community support for our building capital into respect for our intellectual capital and its even greater power to transform our community and its economic vitality

***Key Highlights: Challenges***

- Attracting the next generation of students with innovative academic programs, outstanding faculty, online opportunities, and enhanced career placement without creating an excessive financial burden on the students' futures
- Meeting accreditation measures, including student retention and graduation rates, that ensure adherence to SACS, SCHEV, and other Institutional Performance Standards (IPS)
- Managing enrollments, recruitment, and retention by refining our applicant pool in order to address a flattened college age
- Attracting new stellar faculty with salary packages that may not be competitive
- Cultivating the professional growth of the existing faculty with limited mentoring, an imbalanced teaching load to full-time faculty ratio, limited time to master emerging technology and inadequate training with regard to administrative and professional faculty
- Increasing the diversity of our research portfolio within federal sponsors and more aggressive cultivation of nonfederal funders

- Establishing a robust comprehensive mechanism for compliance oversight in research practices and fiscal research administration
- Building the infrastructure for broad, sustained private giving
- Managing aggressive legislative oversight at both the State and Federal levels in various areas of the university's operations
- Creating a balance between providing the VCU community with the open vibrant Richmond experience and maintaining its safety and security

#### **IV. Guiding Principles**

The following *Guiding Principles* were framed to ensure our fidelity to what defines VCU and shapes the VCU experience.

1. VCU will commit its resources to strategic priorities to ensure a return on its investment and will hold itself accountable for the efficient and transparent use of its resources to achieve institutional excellence.
2. VCU's multiple campuses will work collaboratively toward achievement of a unified vision, mission, and strategic priorities.
3. VCU embraces its commitment as a major urban, public research university and will direct its efforts, enrollment, and institutional resources toward achievement of national/international prominence for its research, scholarship, and creative expression.
4. VCU is a learning-centered university that fosters discovery and innovation by bringing the resources of a major urban, public research institution to bear on the learning opportunities it makes available to its high quality, diverse, and dynamic community.
5. VCU is strongly committed to diversity, equal opportunity, and nondiscrimination, and to the concept that as members of the university community, we will be guided by principles of professionalism and respect for each other in all aspects of our work, study and life within the university environment.
6. VCU is committed to the core concepts of sustainability and will infuse those concepts in the stewardship of the university's resources, in research endeavors and in curricular offerings related to sustainability and environmental ethics.

## V. The Planning Framework

There are many ways to organize and frame a strategic plan. The existing Phase III *VCU 2020: Vision for Excellence* presented five themes and 40 initiatives that launched an ambitious agenda for the university. The architecture proposed in this Phase IV *VCU Quest for Distinction* continues to utilize the framework of strategic themes and builds upon the progress made in the current plan while refining our vision toward preeminence as a major urban, public research university.

### ***Themes, Goals and Illustrative University Initiatives***

The four proposed themes in *VCU Quest for Distinction* not only collectively capture the core elements of our mission as a research university but also are intended to sharpen our focus on achieving recognition as a preeminent learning-centered, urban, public research university. The focus and character of each theme are further refined by a set of goals that, when taken together, address the core aspects of our mission as an urban, public research university and chart a strategic direction for the next six years.

The university did not stand still while the planning process was underway. In fact, a number of important university level initiatives are on-going and are aligned within the umbrella of *VCU Quest for Distinction*. These initiatives are illustrative of significant, university commitments and represent an investment of human resources, re-allocation of existing financial resources, and in many cases, adjustments and re-alignment of university infrastructure support mechanisms. As such they require on-going attention and focus during implementation and are identified here so that they can demonstrate illustrative examples for meeting the identified priorities. However, the full engagement of university stakeholders around the aspirations and visions of *VCU Quest for Distinction* will occur following full approval of the Phase IV strategic plan by the Board of Visitors. Following Board approval, we will engage individual academic and administrative units in aligning their work and resources toward the goals of the university's strategic priorities.

## ***University Metrics***

Metrics for each goal are identified to guide and gauge our progress. The university level metrics are generally expected to be of a limited number, oriented toward outcomes, and strategic evidence to key external stakeholders (e.g. alumni and donors, the local community, state government officials, parents and families) regarding our progress toward excellence. These goal metrics will not address all measures of interest, and other considerations should include a blend of indicators that are financial as well as non-financial, leading and lagging, and short- as well as long-term focus. The metrics will serve as the measures by which we will gauge our progress toward a vision of preeminence as a learning-centered, urban, public research university.

## VI. Mission, Vision and Values

During the development of *VCU Quest for Distinction*, a necessary component of the planning process involved the opportunity to affirm our commitment to a mission of education, research, service, and patient care. The current university mission statement was revised to reflect a more succinct and targeted focus on the university's mission as a premier urban, public research university. Additionally, a university vision was formulated with a transparent and firm commitment to a core set of values.

### ***Mission Statement***

As the premier urban, public research university in Virginia, VCU's mission is to advance knowledge and student success through its commitments to:

- an engaged, learner-centered environment that fosters inquiry, discovery and innovation in a global setting;
- research that expands the boundaries of new knowledge and creative expression and promotes translational applications to improve human health;
- interdisciplinary collaborations that bring new perspectives to complex problems and mobilize creative energies that advance innovation and solve global challenges;
- health care that strives to preserve and restore health for all people, to seek the cause and cure of diseases through groundbreaking research, and to educate those who serve humanity;
- diversity that provides a climate of inclusion, a dedication to addressing disparities wherever they exist, and an opportunity to explore and create in an environment of trust;
- sustainable, university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of the communities VCU serves in Virginia and around the world.

## ***Vision Statement***

VCU will be a premier urban, public research university distinguished by its commitment to:

- the intellectual and academic success of a diverse student body;
- research and discovery that advances knowledge, inspires creativity and improves human health;
- the global engagement of students, faculty and staff that transforms lives and communities.

## ***Core Values***

1. **Accountability** – committing to the efficient and transparent stewardship of our resources to achieve institutional excellence.
2. **Achievement** – ensuring distinction in learning, research and scholarly pursuits, service, and patient care.
3. **Collaboration** – fostering collegiality and cooperation to advance learning, entrepreneurship, and inquiry.
4. **Freedom** – striving for intellectual truth with responsibility and civility, respecting the dignity of all individuals.
5. **Innovation** – cultivating discovery, creativity, originality, inventiveness, and talent.
6. **Service** – engaging in the application of learning and discovery to improve the human condition and support the public good at home and abroad.
7. **Diversity** – ensuring a climate of trust, honesty and integrity where all people are valued and differences are recognized as an asset.
8. **Integrity** – adhering to the highest standards of honesty, respect and professional and scholarly ethics.

## VII. VCU Quest for Distinction -- The Plan

**Theme I: Become a leader among national research universities in providing all students with high quality learning/living experiences focused on inquiry, discovery, and innovation in a global environment**

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VCU has the opportunity to create distinction by focusing on the infusion of inquiry-based instruction, collaborative work, and multidisciplinary engagement across all academic levels — from the first year through post-graduate study. Through a curriculum that fosters critical thinking and encourages innovation and discovery, VCU students will take advantage of the unique opportunities that are available only at a major research university. Students will be engaged in an integrated community in which learning is active, sequential, and supported through strong mentorship at all levels.

As recommended in *The Boyer Report*, the university will embrace its role as an “ecosystem” in which inquiry, discovery, and innovation are “the heart of the enterprise, whether in funded research projects or in undergraduate classrooms or graduate apprenticeships.” (p. 9). The engaged student will be an essential ingredient of the high quality student experience, one that will require a supportive campus environment, high impact learning experiences, a campus infrastructure that is defined by quality living/learning spaces, and a university climate that embraces diversity and civil discourse.

Recruiting and retaining a diverse and high achieving student body remains a top priority. While our first commitment must continue to be the provision of an affordable education for Virginia students, we must also embrace the opportunity to diversify our student profile by recruiting nationally and internationally with the goal of increasing the state’s workforce potential, economic vitality, and quality of life. To prepare students to assume leadership positions and to become engaged citizens, the inquiry-based/discovery model of learning should begin in the first year and continue through the senior capstone experience. The capstone course will be a culminating experience

that brings together faculty, graduate students, and/or senior undergraduates in the pursuit of unique projects, performances, internship experiences, or field work that expands learning and makes a contribution to the student's field of study.

Theme I embraces the concept that learning and personal development occur as a result of productive classroom experiences that are coupled with meaningful engagement in both academic and non-academic experiences outside of the classroom. By linking multiple productive learning/living opportunities, students will experience VCU as a "seamless web of learning across classroom and out-of-class settings."

The university's vision for excellence stems from the quality of its human capital – exceptional faculty, staff, and students. High quality faculty members are the drivers of excellence in the classroom, in the laboratories, in the studios, and in the community where we reside. Our faculty and staff must epitomize the vision for excellence for our students, a vision that promotes VCU's core values of accountability, achievement, collaboration, freedom, innovation, service, diversity, and integrity. Likewise, the university must embrace teaching excellence as a core expectation across all academic units with teaching excellence defined as a more active, learning-centered, collaborative, and interdisciplinary approach to the process of teaching and learning. Doctoral students who are preparing for a university-level faculty position must be provided the professional development and experience necessary to blend quality teaching and cutting-edge research. Likewise, all faculty should engage in Faculty Learning Communities (FLC) that expand understanding of inquiry-based learning and foster a culture of engagement.

To achieve this level of excellence, we must not only recruit exceptional faculty, staff and students, we must also provide the environment, infrastructure, mentoring, inspiration, high standards, rewards, recognition, and appropriate support to retain them. This intentionality of support must include a careful review of promotion and tenure guidelines, the faculty rewards system, and a method for enhancing the professional development of faculty and staff. VCU will focus on the quality of place through its policies, its programming, its support for diverse perspectives, and its cultivation of a sense of community.

## Theme I – Goals, Metrics and Initiatives

	Goals	Metrics	Illustrative University Initiatives
<b>I.A</b>	Recruit and retain talented and diverse students who will graduate at a higher rate and will contribute to a highly skilled workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduation rates</li> <li>• Retention rates</li> <li>• % of under-represented minority students</li> <li>• 75<sup>th</sup> Percentile scores for SAT, GRE, and professional school entrance exams</li> <li>• % of undergraduates going on to graduate or professional school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a university-wide strategic enrollment plan focused on enhanced diversity and quality of students at all academic levels</li> </ul>
<b>I.B</b>	Provide students a quality education through rigorous and innovative academic programs that support and prepare students for civic engagement and careers in a 21st century global environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of nationally ranked programs</li> <li>• % of students with internships, practicum, etc.</li> <li>• % of programs with a high quality capstone experience</li> <li>• # of online credit hours generated</li> <li>• Job placement rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate Online@VCU to coordinate and support online learning initiatives at all academic levels</li> <li>• Require a culminating capstone experience for all students</li> </ul>
<b>I.C</b>	Engage students, the alumni of tomorrow, in high impact academic and extra-curricular experiences that expand learning, promote civic discourse, and engage students in self reflection and creative expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement Factor/Index by student level</li> <li>• Student Satisfaction Index (Noel Levitz)</li> <li>• % students living in residence halls</li> <li>• # of students studying abroad</li> <li>• # of students participating in service learning</li> <li>• # of undergraduate students participating in research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop unique residential colleges (Grace St Village)</li> <li>• Construct and develop School of Medicine new building and cutting edge curriculum</li> <li>• Provide research opportunities through the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) and graduate research opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>I.D</b>	Recruit and retain faculty, staff, and senior leadership with the skills and talents to increase quality teaching and learning, high impact research, and diversity at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of full-time teaching and research faculty</li> <li>• % student credit hours generated by T/TT faculty</li> <li>• Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index</li> <li>• Employees per FTE student</li> <li>• Under utilization by employee category* (e.g. minority faculty, staff, and senior leadership)</li> <li>• # of employees involved in professional development</li> <li>• Alumni giving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide intramural funding initiatives (e.g. PRIP, AD Williams, etc.)</li> <li>• Develop recruitment strategies focused on attracting diverse and productive faculty</li> <li>• Provide professional development and mentoring to enhance faculty and staff skills and talents (e.g., Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars)</li> <li>• Develop multi-cultural academic and extra-curricular experiences</li> </ul>

\* An analysis of the expected representation of women and minorities versus the actual utilizes workforce data; an example can be found at <http://www.equalopportunity.ilstu.edu/underutilization/>

**Theme II: Attain preeminence as an urban, public research university by making contributions in research, scholarship, creative expression, and clinical practice to advance knowledge and enhance the quality of life**

VCU has made great strides in increasing its profile as a major research university both in extramurally funded research and in scholarly and creative contributions across a broad spectrum of academic disciplines. Long recognized for excellence in the arts, social work, health sciences, and medicine, the university is poised to reach greater heights in its research, scholarship, creative expression and clinical practice over the next six years.

With the initiation of the MCV Campus Strategic Research Initiative (SRI) in 2006, external funding and the amount of assigned square footage for research space increased significantly over the last five years. With a focus on oncology, the MCV campus has significantly increased the number of cancer-focused researchers and has continued to invest in the Massey Cancer Center with the goal of achieving National Cancer Institute (NCI) Comprehensive Status. The emergence of core centers and institutes has provided an avenue for supporting further research growth in medicine and the health sciences.

However, recent economic trends have begun to erode federal grant funding capacity, creating an uncertain future that most likely will be characterized by reduced or flat federal support for research. It is imperative that VCU continue to diversify its research expenditures to include non-federal sources such as private foundations and corporate-sponsored research. While the MCV campus has developed a comprehensive research plan, the Monroe Park Campus has not created a focused agenda for sponsored research and high level scholarship. It is imperative that the Monroe Park Campus develop a focused research plan that includes growth across a broad spectrum of academic disciplines.

The goals of Theme II have been developed against this backdrop of national concern and constrained resources. Embedded in Theme II is a mandate to the institution to consider and implement change in the academic administrative system to promote,

support, and enhance faculty research and scholarship. We must critically examine policies and practices and creatively address the urgency of sustaining and growing, wherever possible, our research activities to reach preeminence. In particular, we must enhance the structure that defines and supports faculty development. This will mean evaluating and modifying, if necessary, faculty appointment tracks, research expectations and metrics, and the process and timing of promotion and tenure. The landscape by which scholars are attracted to and retained at VCU is going to change, and we must meet the competitive challenges by optimizing our environment to enable faculty to conduct important and meaningful research and scholarship.

Theme II articulates four major goals designed to move VCU toward attaining preeminence as a learning-centered, urban, public research university. These goals are built upon values that affirm a balance between research and teaching and celebrate their interdependency at our institution. The goals revolve around current successes in our research and scholarship and are grounded in unprecedented strategic research planning across the institution. First, to achieve the goals it will be necessary to recruit research-focused deans, department chairs, and faculty at every available opportunity in the next six years. Second, it is essential to the vitality of the university research enterprise to continue the institutional support of the Strategic Research Initiative. The success to date of the SRI makes this support critical to broadening the research enterprise of the institution. Finally, this theme mandates the development of campus- and school-based strategic research plans across the entire university.

All university strategic research planning should be grounded in the goals of this theme. Further, strategic research plans must embrace these guiding principles. In particular, strategic research plans should consider mechanisms to enhance interdisciplinary research as well as to develop and retain faculty who conduct high impact scholarship.

## Theme II – Goals, Metrics, and Initiatives

	Goals	Metrics	Illustrative University Initiatives
<b>II.A</b>	Contribute to the discovery of new knowledge and the advancement of clinical applications by increasing and diversifying the university's sponsored research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of sponsored awards</li> <li>• Total R&amp;D expenditures</li> <li>• % of R&amp;D expenditures that are non-federal</li> <li>• Sponsored awards per full-time faculty</li> <li>• Comprehensive Cancer Center designation for Massey Cancer Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve National Comprehensive Cancer Center status for Massey Cancer Center</li> <li>• Build Center/Institute strength to support targeted multi-disciplinary projects and proposals</li> </ul>
<b>II.B</b>	Increase university-wide productivity in high impact research, scholarship, and creative expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty Scholarly Productivity (Index)</li> <li>• # of faculty national awards</li> <li>• Association of Research Libraries (ARL) rank</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete construction of the Institute for Contemporary Art</li> <li>• Establish a central mechanism to increase faculty nominations for prestigious awards</li> </ul>
<b>II.C</b>	Grow the next generation of researchers and scholars who will focus on the discovery of new knowledge and the advancement of clinical applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of post-doctoral scholars</li> <li>• # of students participating in research at all levels</li> <li>• # of faculty mentors</li> <li>• Doctoral enrollment</li> <li>• Doctoral degrees awarded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategically align graduate student enrollment and quality with lines of inquiry that are strengths/emerging strengths of the university</li> <li>• Implement the University Research Incentive Program (URI)</li> </ul>
<b>II.D</b>	Increase the commercialization of intellectual property and university-based technologies to advance innovation and economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of patents issued</li> <li>• # of active licenses</li> <li>• Licensure income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide university-wide intramural research incentive awards for faculty</li> </ul>

### **Theme III: Achieve national recognition as a fully-integrated research university with a commitment to human health.**

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VCU has a rich history of contributing to community-based participatory research and ameliorating health and social disparities. Few urban research universities can match the emerging strengths and established areas of excellence in such a diverse array of academic disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and biomedical sciences complimented and enriched by an outstanding academic medical center. Unifying the university around the achievement of collaborative and innovative approaches to health care and health promotion can focus our instruction, scholarship and practice across diverse disciplines and bring distinction to VCU as an institution committed to interdisciplinary teaching, research, service, and patient care. Our commitment to interdisciplinary research and study is not new. We will continue to support an environment of collaboration across the university. We also recognize the strengths of our emerging branch campuses with distinctive foci in medicine, professional programs, and the arts.

With a more coordinated approach to instruction within pre-health and basic science academic programs as well as the development of other emerging undergraduate programs that could potentially provide quality and diversity for our health science pipelines, VCU is poised to become a national leader in the preparation of the next generation of leaders in fields of health care and human health. Additionally, the recent Clinical and Translational Science Award positions VCU for enhanced levels of distinction in fostering community-based participatory research that will improve delivery of care to the underserved members of our community and throughout the world. Such distinction will require the combined expertise of multiple disciplines and a culture of collaboration that uniquely blends the art and science of health and wellness in the preparation of the next generation of health care professionals and in the transformation of clinical practice. To achieve this distinction will require a partnership between scholars who are the disseminators of knowledge and practitioners who are the disseminators of services. Under this goal, VCU will become a community of scholars and practitioners working together to educate, to serve, and to improve the human condition.

Not all academic study, research, scholarship, and community service will be focused on the health care spectrum. We will continue to strive for excellence in all areas of our work. However, providing the opportunity for all disciplines to engage in creative and innovative collaboration around a common theme will not only improve the quality of health care delivery but will advance our understandings of the power of transdisciplinary approaches to improve the human condition.

### Theme III – Goals, Metrics, and Initiatives

	Goals	Metrics	Illustrative University Initiatives
<b>III.A</b>	Increase the number and quality of initiatives that prepare students for careers that advance health care, improve health status, and contribute to STEM related fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of degrees awarded in health related disciplines</li> <li>• # of degrees awarded in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) disciplines</li> <li>• % of pre-health and STEM students who matriculate into a health related degree program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance efforts to attract diverse K-12 students to health related careers and matriculation to VCU</li> <li>• Establish a comprehensive pre-health advising mechanism that tracks students to pre-professional programs and offers health career options to meet the needs of a diverse student population</li> <li>• Enhance the Honors College Guaranteed Admissions Program to Health Sciences</li> </ul>
<b>III.B</b>	Increase interdisciplinary/inter-professional scholarship and practice focused in areas of public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of public health focused externally funded interdisciplinary/inter-professional proposals</li> <li>• # of interdisciplinary/inter-professional national/international publications</li> <li>• # of students and faculty who engage in interdisciplinary and inter-professional projects in public health related areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit faculty with expertise and demonstrated interests which create and support interdisciplinary and inter-professional work</li> <li>• Enhance curricula at all levels to facilitate opportunities in interdisciplinary and inter-professional ventures</li> </ul>
<b>III.C</b>	Achieve national recognition for significant advances in clinical and translational research focused on important issues across the health care spectrum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of program project/center awards which involve multiple schools</li> <li>• # of investigators using the Center for Clinical and Translational Research (CCTR)</li> <li>• # of externally-funded projects using the CCTR</li> <li>• # of externally-funded projects in community-engaged and community-based participatory research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operationalize the Clinical Trials Implementation Plan</li> <li>• Enhance the degree programs in Clinical and Translational Science</li> </ul>

## **Theme IV: Become a national model for community engagement and regional impact.**

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Becoming a national model for community engagement and regional impact will require VCU to deepen and expand its existing partnerships in the local community as well as in national and international venues. As a major research university in an urban environment, the university serves as an anchor institution for the Greater Richmond Region, contributing to the economic vitality and health of the region. From the initiation of VCU by the *Wayne Commission Report*, the major role of the institution is to serve the urban region of which it is a part. In 1967, the Wayne Commission reported, “Rarely has any university been afforded a more timely opportunity to confront on an intellectual and practical level the social environment which surrounds it.” (p.12) The same opportunity holds true in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and over the next six years we have the opportunity to revitalize and reframe our mission and vision of improving the human condition.

VCU is fortunate to reside in a region with entities that are willing to engage in mutually-beneficial partnerships. Through these partnerships, we embrace our community as critical to the learning, research, and service endeavors of our faculty, staff, and students. Together we can address the opportunities and challenges that confront the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world while preparing the citizens of tomorrow.

The formation of the Division of Community Engagement in 2006 served as concrete evidence of our commitment to the community and our focus on becoming a national model for community engagement and regional impact. Much has been accomplished over the last five years, and the recognition of VCU as a community-engaged institution by the Carnegie Foundation is a testament to those targeted accomplishments. VCU is one of only 40 institutions nationally to receive Carnegie designations as Research University – Very High Research Activity and Community Engaged.

Over the next six years it will be imperative that VCU embrace its designation as a community-engaged institution throughout the fabric of the university. While the Division of Community Engagement will continue to serve as the portal to community engagement, each academic unit must determine how to foster a culture of community

engagement through enhancing students' understanding of their civic and social responsibilities, collaborating with community partners to address challenging local issues, and enriching the scholarship and research activity that will extend the boundaries of understanding in a complex and increasingly global environment. The Global Education Office must determine the strategies necessary for broadening understanding across diverse cultures and for maximizing the university's involvement in international partnerships.

Over the next six years the Division of Community Engagement will become more focused and strategic in its efforts to partner and engage with the community both locally and globally. The Division will refine its mission of serving as a portal for access to engagement opportunities within VCU and with the community. At present, VCU does not comprehensively track data on community engagement, indicating a need for mechanisms that systematically collate the community needs and targets university partnership opportunities that can be brought to bear in ameliorating the challenges faced. In addition, the Division will partner with other university units to enhance and deepen faculty development opportunities for engaged scholarship with the community at the local, regional, national and international levels.

Although a number of community partnerships will be available across the broader VCU community, we will focus on the university's partnerships in the following areas: **education** – improving the quality of education in the region from cradle to career with a particular focus on enhancing middle school education; **access to health** – increasing the number, diversity, and competence of the health workforce and improving access to health in urban communities; and **economic development** – continuing to serve as an anchor institution and economic engine for the region.

Another factor of influence in a community-engaged institution is the commitment to a core belief in the concepts of sustainability. VCU is working to reduce greenhouse emissions in all areas of campus life – from educational programs to green facilities to dining and residential life – as part of its plan to become climate-neutral by 2050.

**Theme IV – Goals, Metrics, and Initiatives**

	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Metrics</b>	<b>Illustrative University Initiatives</b>
<b>IV.A</b>	Expand community engaged scholarship and service learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of students participating in service learning</li> <li>• # of community outreach programs for underserved</li> <li>• # of externally-funded community-engaged scholarship proposals and projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a residential college with focus on service learning and community engagement</li> </ul>
<b>IV.B</b>	Create university-community partnerships with a focus on the key targeted areas of : K-12 Education (with a focus on Middle School), Access to Health, and Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of community programs focused on improvement of community health</li> <li>• # faculty involved in advancing K-12 learning and support services</li> <li>• # students engaged in service learning, practica, internships in Richmond Area K-12 schools</li> <li>• % of VCU alumni in Richmond, Metro, and State</li> <li>• Economic impact in region -- number of jobs</li> <li>• Economic impact in region -- fiscal impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target community engagement in three critical areas: Education, Access to Health, and Economic Development</li> <li>• Improve VCU's participation in regional economic development activities</li> <li>• Ensure VCU presence at key local events and meetings, and through key leadership on critical community initiatives/programs/services</li> </ul>
<b>IV.C</b>	Provide strategic leadership in addressing sustainability challenges through curricular and service innovations and green facilities and operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade on sustainability report card</li> <li>• # of curricular programs addressing sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop interdisciplinary curricular options for students in areas of sustainability</li> <li>• Develop sustainability initiatives and provide students with funding for student-led sustainability projects</li> <li>• Ensure that the Campus Master Plan adheres to LEED construction and best practices in sustainability</li> </ul>

## VIII. Benchmarking Progress

Selecting a group of peer institutions allows a comparative analysis, on a regular basis, to national universities that have similar characteristics. Peer universities are not alike in every way and are intended to act as a benchmark for evaluating our progress on selected university level metrics. The peer universities listed below are all public universities with a medical school and are classified as very high research within the Carnegie classification.

	VCU	U Alabama Birmingham	U Illinois Chicago	U of Louisville	U of SC Columbia	U of South Florida	U of Cincinnati
<b>Total HC</b>	36,862	19,455	29,301	23,999	30,549	46,348	35,005
<b>UG Headcount % of Total</b>	69%	64%	60%	73%	69%	75%	69%
<b>% of under- represented minority students</b>	21%	23%	22%	14%	14%	26%	11%
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year Retention</b>	85%	80%	78%	78%	87%	88%	83.0%
<b>6 Year Graduation Rate</b>	49%	39.8%	48.1%	45.7%	66.7%	48.1%	54.9%
<b>% STEM Degrees</b>	13%	17%	24%	15%	14%	15%	18%
<b>% Health Science Degrees</b>	11%	19%	7%	8%	4%	5%	18%
<b>NSF R&amp;D Expend (mill)</b>	\$150,989	\$431,732	\$341,655	\$146,874	\$186,966	\$309,456	\$356,752
<b>NSF Rank</b>	73	24	37	75	69	44	34
<b>Library ARL Rank (of 114)</b>			70	79	88		71
<b>Endowment per FTE</b>	\$1,014	\$21,737	\$6,065	\$34,425	\$11,927	\$7,599	\$31,654
<b>% FT Faculty</b>	65%	93.2%	62.4%	72.8%	71.9%	87.6%	58.1%
<b>% of FT Faculty who are Tenure or Tenure Track</b>	44%	61%	66%	64%	67%	69%	50%

## **IX. Resourcing the Strategic Plan**

*VCU Quest for Distinction* will require a wise utilization and redistribution of existing resources and the creation of new revenue streams. To achieve this ambitious plan for the future of VCU, the following will be necessary:

- **Human Capital** – invest in our greatest asset, our workforce, to hire and develop the needed leadership, skills, talent and knowledge to achieve our ambitious vision;
- **State-of-the-Art Infrastructure** – align investments in our technology, capital, and information assets with strategic priorities;
- **Fiscal Resource Allocation** – develop, diversify, and re-allocate our fiscal resources to align with strategic priorities; and
- **Positive Climate and Stewardship** – foster a climate and culture of honesty, integrity, professionalism, fair dealing, and sound stewardship of resources to effect change, serve our students, and participate effectively within the VCU community.

### ***Investing in People***

Just as the current *VCU 2020: Vision for Excellence* required a focus on infusing support for infrastructure systems and capital projects to build and sustain the footprint of the university, the *VCU Quest for Distinction* will require a commitment and investment in building the human capital of the institution. VCU has the unique opportunity to create a transformative environment by attracting, supporting, and retaining students, faculty, and staff who are committed to excellence and collaboration. To take advantage of this opportunity, the institution must be prepared to meet the intense competition for faculty of superior quality, to reduce the loss of valued faculty through enhanced retention efforts, and to take advantage of an historic opportunity to increase the diversity of our faculty. To that end, we must hire to enhance excellence, not simply to fill a position. This strategy will require intentional hiring, competitive compensation including necessary start-up packages, and attention to facilitating spousal and partner hires. At the same time, we must offer continuing rewards to those who pursue and achieve excellence in research and scholarship. We must be willing to

match competitive offers to retain high quality faculty and staff, and we must provide an environmental culture that supports professional development and optimal working conditions.

Attracting, supporting, and retaining a staff of exceptional quality is equally important. To achieve a level of preeminence among urban, public research universities, it will be imperative that we hire and promote a highly competent staff, and we must engage staff as partners in education, research, patient care, and service. Appropriate professional development must be provided to ensure a commitment to service excellence and to provide avenues for staff to grow and develop as professionals.

### ***Strengthening Infrastructure Support***

Achieving preeminence as an urban, public research university will require the university to enhance its research infrastructure. This enhancement includes ensuring that the campus has state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, ranging from performance studios to laboratories, from greenhouses to vivaria, and from libraries to innovative information technologies. In addition, the sub-committee for research strategic planning has recommended changes in the allocation of Facilities and Administrative Cost Recoveries (FACR) from sponsored research to provide incentives for enhanced extramural funding associated with new faculty hires over the next six years. Operational support must be provided to university centers and institutes including support for core facilities and research computing.

A commitment to infrastructure support also involves the promotion of an internal culture of service. We must find ways to create a proactive and agile organization that can respond quickly to internal challenges and opportunities. Examples of such measures include building capacity to reform pre- and post-award contract and grant administration to enhance efficiency; creating a more efficient and effective pathway for commercialization of intellectual property; improving accountability, eliminating redundancy, and promoting a culture of collaboration and service excellence among and within academic and university administrative units.

An important component of infrastructure support involves building capacity within the VCU Libraries. Resource allocation to the VCU Libraries must be structured to provide increased access for students, enhanced study environments for undergraduate, graduate and professional students, and increased funding for key allocations to support the research agendas of a diverse faculty. Achieving excellence as a major urban, public research university will require a substantial investment in the VCU Libraries over the next six years to support the development of collections, technology infrastructure, and new forms of service. Achieving membership in the Association of Research Libraries must be a goal in the new vision for VCU.

### ***Fiscal Resource Allocation***

Legislation passed in the 2010 session of the General Assembly requires the university to submit a six-year financial plan (2011-2017) with a targeted July 1, 2011 submission date. While the official parameters of the plan have yet to be identified by the State, VCU will utilize its strategic planning priorities to frame the components of the plan. A fully developed Six-Year Financial Plan will be submitted and reviewed by the Board of Visitors prior to the July 1, 2011 submission date.

In addition to state appropriations, the university will also rely on a diversified funding base to include: educational and general funds derived from student tuition and fees; auxiliary enterprise program funds; facilities and administrative cost recoveries (FACR) from sponsored program funds; as well as private funds.

The success of the *VCU Quest for Distinction* depends in large part on the success of University Development and Alumni Relations in galvanizing donors around the primary themes of the new strategic plan. This Phase IV plan will be a critical step in raising the bar for philanthropy and will guide VCU's development priorities. A comprehensive campaign must be launched to assist in the transformation of the university's vision. In seeking an unprecedented goal in annual giving, there must be sufficient infrastructure support for University Development and Alumni Relations to shift its engagement paradigm from cultivation of a small number of significant donors to engaging a large number of friends and alumni who will give at varying levels. This paradigm shift will require appropriate resources to expand the breadth, depth, and quality of the donor

pipeline and to engage in significant recruitment beyond the greater Richmond region. Likewise, all academic units must invest in their development infrastructure to enhance annual giving profiles.

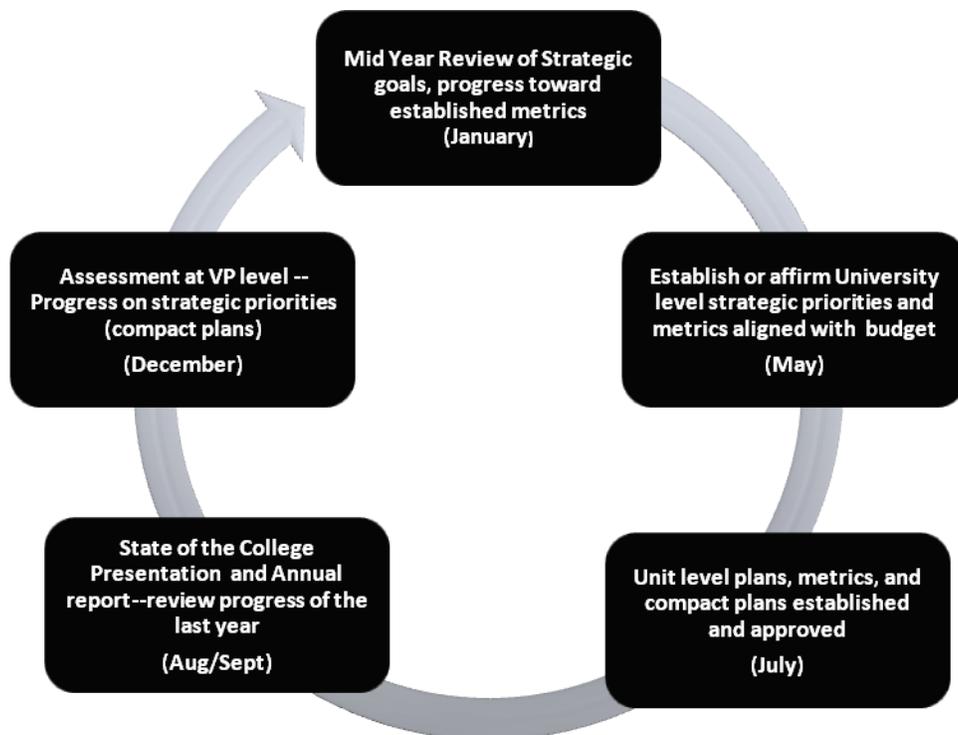
The next university campaign must reflect a commitment to quality and increasing the university's endowment with a focus on scholarships, fellowships, endowed professorships and chairs. Likewise, a focus on new capital projects that will expand the instructional and research space is a key priority to realizing a vision of preeminence as a major, public urban research university.

### ***Positive Climate and Resource Stewardship***

In considering the resources that will be necessary to achieve the strategic themes addressed in this phase of the strategic plan, the university must address its current administrative and academic practices to ensure policies are in place for the most efficient and responsible allocation of our limited resources. A *Cost Containment Task Force* has been established to demonstrate to students, their families, and the Commonwealth of Virginia that the university has taken steps to contain costs and improve productivity wherever possible. Task force members have been asked to be mindful of VCU's mission, priorities, goals and achievements as it conducts its work. By doing so, the results can continue to strengthen the university's focus on our core academic mission of enhanced student learning and achievement through not only our instructional delivery but in our research, scholarly activities, creative expression, and service contributions. A preliminary report of the Cost Containment Task Force is included in Appendix D of this document. As can be noted, a number of key strategies have been implemented to continue the cost containment and efficiency that has defined VCU over the last decade.

## **X. Implementation and Accountability for Results**

The value in a strategic plan is in setting the prioritized direction for the university, taking deliberate action, and demonstrating accountability through evidence-based evaluation of progress (performance metrics) to advance the vision and mission of the university. The effectiveness of achieving the strategic themes and goals of the plan is founded upon regular attention to progress and results by all stakeholders. In a large, complex research university, creating alignment of university level goals with the annual budget process is a critical component to successful progress. Likewise, ensuring alignment of broad university themes and goals with the strategic directions, investments, and actions of the academic and service units of the university is vital to the success of the plan. Compact planning will be employed to ensure an on-going process with regular updates in a continuous improvement cycle to include: compact plan development – reflecting strategic imperatives and current year goals (July), articulation of plans to broad stakeholders – assessing prior year and charting goals for current year (Aug/Sept); performance assessment intervals and tactical adjustments (Dec/Jan); and affirming progress and adjusting strategies where necessary (May).



### ***Compact Plans – A Mechanism for Assessing Progress and Ensuring Accountability***

A compact planning process will be utilized to ensure alignment of broad university themes and goals with the strategic directions, investments, and actions of the academic and service units of the university. Each vice president will formulate compact plans for the academic and service units that report to them. Compact plans are short-term (18-24 months) and document focused planning agreements between an academic or service unit and the senior administrator to whom the unit reports.

Compact plans are an outgrowth of an iterative planning process involving regular and thoughtful engagement of all key stakeholders resulting in shared understanding and commitment to the mission and goals of the university. They provide autonomy in the planning process but require strategic alignment of unit goals and priorities with the overarching themes of this Phase IV, *Quest for Distinction*. Compact plans also serve as a mechanism for accountability through the development of performance indicators and careful alignment of resource deployment with strategic goals and initiatives.

Compact planning is an on-going process with regular updates to ensure an emphasis on continuous improvement and alignment with VCU's priorities. The compact plans will guide each unit's overall strategy and allocation of resources.

Each vice president will be responsible for reporting outcomes and contributions from all academic and service units in achieving the agreed upon university level key performance indicators.

## **XI. References**

### ***Reports:***

The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University --  
“Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America’s Research  
Universities”

([http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf/673918d46bf653e852565ec0056ff3e/d955b61ffddd590a852565ec005717ae/\\$FILE/boyer.pdf](http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf/673918d46bf653e852565ec0056ff3e/d955b61ffddd590a852565ec005717ae/$FILE/boyer.pdf))

Wayne Commission Report -- [http://dig.library.vcu.edu/cdm4/index\\_wcr.php?CISOROOT=/wcr](http://dig.library.vcu.edu/cdm4/index_wcr.php?CISOROOT=/wcr)

“Virginia Commonwealth University-Delivering Talent; Creating Economic Benefits”  
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[http://www.budgetupdate.vcu.edu/pdf/Edited\\_VCU\\_Impact\\_FY2010\\_final.pdf](http://www.budgetupdate.vcu.edu/pdf/Edited_VCU_Impact_FY2010_final.pdf)

Greene, Jay P. *Goldwater Institute Policy Report: Administrative Bloat at American Universities: The Real Reason for High Costs in Higher Education*. August 17, 2010  
(<http://www.goldwaterinstitute.org/article/4941>)

Kuh, G.D., Douglas, KB, Lund, JP, and Ramin-Gyurnek. *Student learning outside the classroom: Transcending artificial boundaries*. Jossey- Bass Publishers: 1993.

### ***Strategic Plans:***

- University of South Florida -- <http://system.usf.edu/system-overview/strategic-plan.asp> and their Compact Plans: <http://www.ods.usf.edu/Plans/Compact/>
- University of Illinois Chicago -- <http://www.uic.edu/depts/oa/2010/report.html>
- University of Cincinnati -- [http://www.uc.edu/president/strategic\\_plan.html](http://www.uc.edu/president/strategic_plan.html)

## **XII. Appendices**

- *Appendix A: The Strategic Planning Task Force Members*
- *Appendix B: Strategic Planning Timeline*
- *Appendix C: Environmental Scan*
- *Appendix D: Cost Containment: A Preliminary Analysis*

## Appendix A

### **Strategic Planning Task Force Members Virginia Commonwealth University**

#### **Co-chairs**

**Beverly J. Warren, Ed.D., Ph.D., FACSM**  
Interim Provost and Vice President for  
Academic Affairs

**Sheldon M. Retchin, M.D., M.S.P.H.**  
Vice President, Health Sciences  
Chief Executive Officer, VCU Health System

#### **Members**

**Kevin Allison**  
Associate professor, L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

**Fajir Amin**  
Undergraduate student, Monroe Park Campus

**Pat Branch**  
Administrative support, Records & Registration

**Delores Collier**  
Financial manager, School of Nursing

**Linda Corey**  
President, Faculty Senate

**Tobias Guennel**  
Graduate student, MCV Campus

**Russell Jamison**  
Dean, School of Engineering

**Jerome Strauss**  
Dean, School of Medicine

**Kevin Sutherland**  
Associate professor, School of Education

**Susanna Wu-Pong**  
Associate professor, School of Pharmacy

## Appendix B

### **Strategic Planning Timeline Virginia Commonwealth University**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Work Assignment</b>
April 17-19, 2010	Task Force Co-Chairs meet
April 26-30, 2010	Convene Task Force – Provide charge, Timeline, Discuss Work Strategy
May 3-7, 2010	Assess current VCU 2020 Strategic Plan/Address New Priorities
May 12, 2010	Meet with President Rao to discuss strategic priorities
June 1- June 30, 2010	Recalibrate VCU Strategic Plan and Form Draft Report
July 15, 2010	Submit Preliminary Report to President Rao
August 26, 2010	Presentation of Preliminary Report to Board of Visitors
August 30- September 15, 2010	Presentations to VCU Leadership Groups
September 15, 2010	Task Force Update with President Rao
October 14, 2010	BOV Retreat on Strategic Plan Draft
October 19- November 3, 2010	VCU Community Forums on Strategic Planning (9 Events Held)
November 19- December 17, 2010	Theme Work Group Meetings and Report Submissions
January 14, 2011	Task Force Meeting to Review Final Draft
January 24, 2011	Submit Final Report to President Rao
January 24- March 2011	President works with Senior Leadership Team to Refine the Strategic Planning Document
April 18, 2011	BOV Retreat to Discuss/Edit/Refine Phase IV: <i>Quest for Distinction</i>
May 5-12, 2011	Public Hearings on <i>Quest for Distinction</i>
May 20, 2011	Approval of <i>Quest for Distinction</i> by Board of Visitors

## Appendix C

### **Environmental Scan Virginia Commonwealth University**

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The purpose of an environmental scan is to support and inform the strategic planning process. A good environmental scan will help an organization understand and respond effectively to changes in its environment.

This environmental scan informs Phase IV, *VCU Quest for Distinction*. The environmental scan presents the key highlights of opportunities and challenges facing Virginia Commonwealth University as it charts a vision and strategic priorities that will frame the next six years.

The scan (Appendix C) was developed by a work group using the results of focus groups with senior leadership in the university; demographic and comparative data from a variety of sources including an assessment of the progress on the current strategic plan presented as supplemental background to the VCU Board of Visitors in August 2010; and, an economic impact study - *Virginia Commonwealth University-Delivering Talent; Creating Economic Benefits* - developed with the assistance of Chmura Economics & Analytics in January 2011.

The university's environment changes continuously and reflecting the most recent opportunities and challenges will be important to the university's future. Therefore, it is the intent of the work group and the senior leadership that the environmental scan will be updated periodically and will be used as the foundation for the university's response to any challenges representing fundamental risks to the university.

#### ***Key Highlights: Opportunities***

- Building on the university's nationally ranked programs
- Seizing on the successes learned from the advising and teaching in the University College to strengthen retention and student engagement in the sophomore, junior and senior years

- Promoting our existing and longstanding relationship and our articulation agreements with the Virginia Community College System and its 40 campuses
- Leveraging the diversity of our students to enhance the diversity of our faculty and our community's health care professionals
- Building on our exceptionally productive, collegial, and collaborative faculty as we attract new faculty colleagues to peer groups of excellence in the disciplines
- Strengthening areas of research excellence that could be consolidated into existing or new research centers
- Utilizing our unique combination of a health sciences campus and our wide and diverse array of undergraduate and graduate academic programs to collectively contribute to health care solutions
- Embracing the vibrancy of a metropolitan center undergoing a cultural renaissance that is within two hours of the nation's capital
- Capitalizing on the need and ability to build new student housing to incorporate learning spaces for our students
- Turning exceptional community support for our building capital into respect for our intellectual capital and its even greater power to transform our community and its economic vitality

**Key Highlights: Challenges**

- Attracting the next generation of students with innovative academic programs, outstanding faculty, online opportunities, and enhanced career placement without creating an excessive financial burden on the students' futures
- Meeting accreditation measures, including student retention and graduation rates, that ensure adherence to SACS, SCHEV, and other Institutional Performance Standards (IPS)
- Managing enrollments, recruitment, and retention by refining our applicant pool in order to address a flattened college age
- Attracting new stellar faculty with salary packages that may not be competitive
- Cultivating the professional growth of the existing faculty with limited mentoring, an imbalanced teaching load to full-time faculty ratio, limited time to master

emerging technology and inadequate training with regard to administrative and professional faculty

- Increasing the diversity of our research portfolio within federal sponsors and more aggressive cultivation of nonfederal funders
- Establishing a robust comprehensive mechanism for compliance oversight in research practices and fiscal research administration
- Building the infrastructure for broad, sustained private giving
- Managing aggressive legislative oversight at both the State and Federal levels in various areas of the university's operations
- Creating a balance between providing the VCU community with the open vibrant Richmond experience and maintaining its safety and security

## Supporting Demographic Data, Statistics and Information

### **Academic Programs**

VCU offers a diverse and wide range of academic programs – a total of 216 degree or certificate programs. Of these 216 programs, 68 are unique in Virginia. Over the past 10 years, VCU has added 54 program offerings, of which 24 were unique in Virginia.

<b>VCU Degree Program Expansion</b>					
<b>Degree Programs</b>	<b>2000-2001</b>		<b>2010-2011</b>		<b>10-year Change</b>
	<b>Number at VCU</b>	<b>Unique in Virginia</b>	<b>Number at VCU</b>	<b>Unique in Virginia</b>	
Baccalaureate	50	12	63	14	+13
Master's	60	23	73	35	+13
Doctorate	21	8	38	18	+17
First Professional	3	1	3	1	-
Certificate	28	n/a	39	n/a	+11
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>+54</b>

Source: VCU Center for Institutional Effectiveness

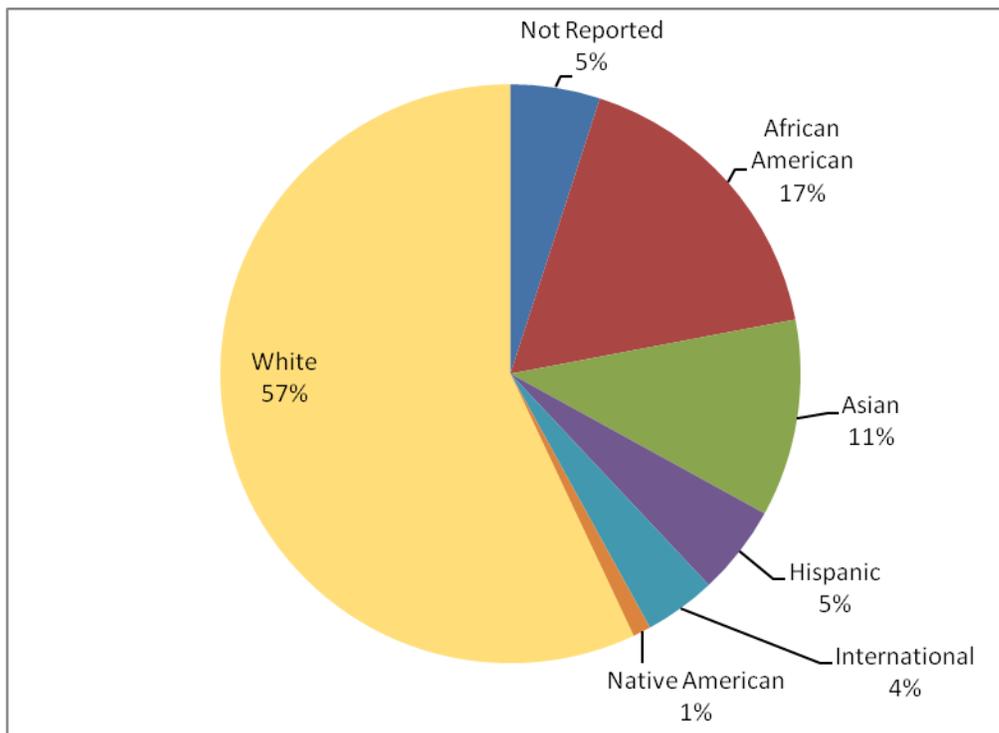
### **Nationally Ranked Programs**

<b>Top-ranked Graduate and First Professional Programs U.S. News &amp; World Report April 15, 2010</b>		
	<b>Current ranking</b>	<b>Last ranked</b>
<b>School of the Arts</b>		
• Master of Fine Arts	4th	2008
• Sculpture	1st	2008
• Fiber Arts	4th	2008
• Graphic Design	4th	2008
• Glass	5th	2008
• Painting and Drawing	8th	2008
• Metals and Jewelry	10th	2008
• Multimedia/Visual Communications	9th	2008
• Ceramics	12th	2008
• Printmaking	17th	2008

<b>School of Allied Health Professions</b>		
• Nurse Anesthesia	1st	2007
• Health Services Administration	4th	2007
• Occupational Therapy	13th	2008
• Rehabilitation Counseling	13th	2007
• Physical Therapy	24th	2008
<b>School of Social Work</b>		
• Social Work	14th	2008
<b>School of Education</b>		
• Education	28th	2010
• Teacher Preparation	Top 50	2008
<b>School of Nursing</b>		
• Nursing	47th	2007
<b>School of Medicine</b>		
• Medicine	66th	2010
<b>School of Pharmacy</b>		
• Pharmacy	21st	2008
<b>College of Humanities and Sciences</b>		
• Public Affairs	57th	2008
• Clinical Psychology	57th	2008
• Statistics	67th	2010
• Psychology	74th	2009
• Chemistry	107th	2010
• Biological Sciences	144th	2010

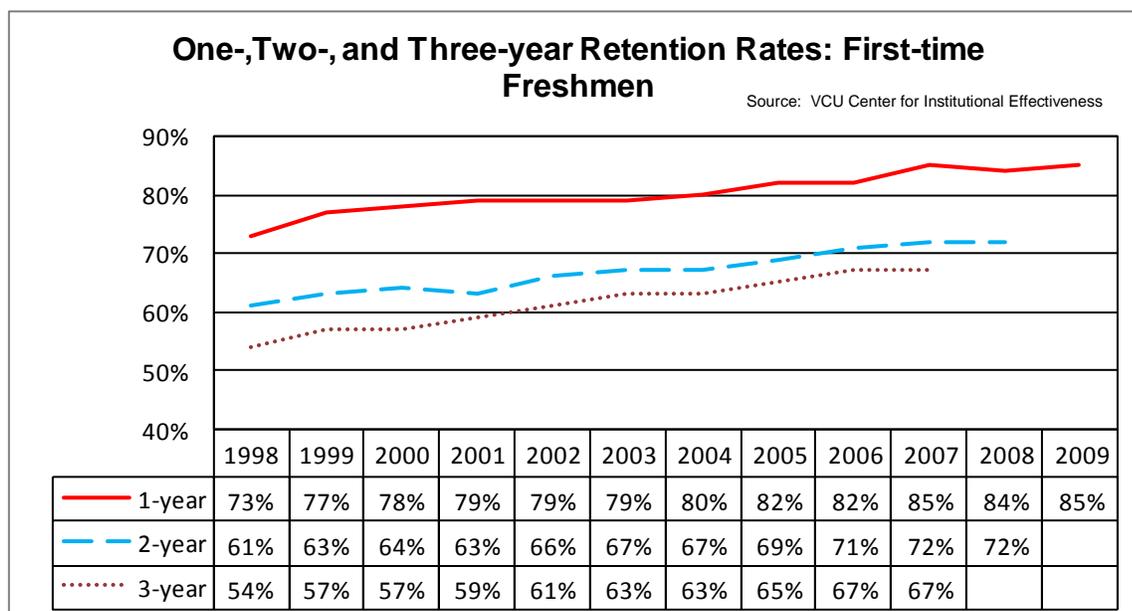
## Student Population

VCU's student population is ethnically diverse.

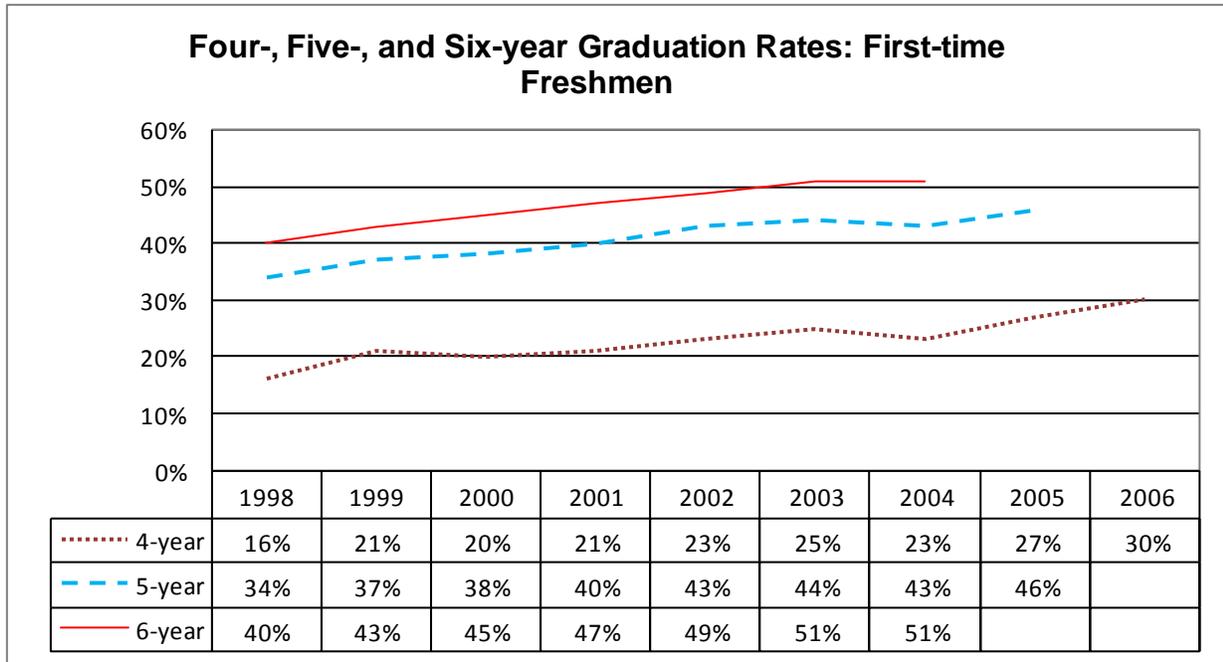


**VCU Student Diversity: Fall 2010 Student Demographics**

Student retention rates have increased over time. Over the period examined in the chart below, the one-year retention rate increased from 73% to 85%, the two-year retention rate increased from 61% to 72% and the three-year retention rate increased from 54% to 67%.



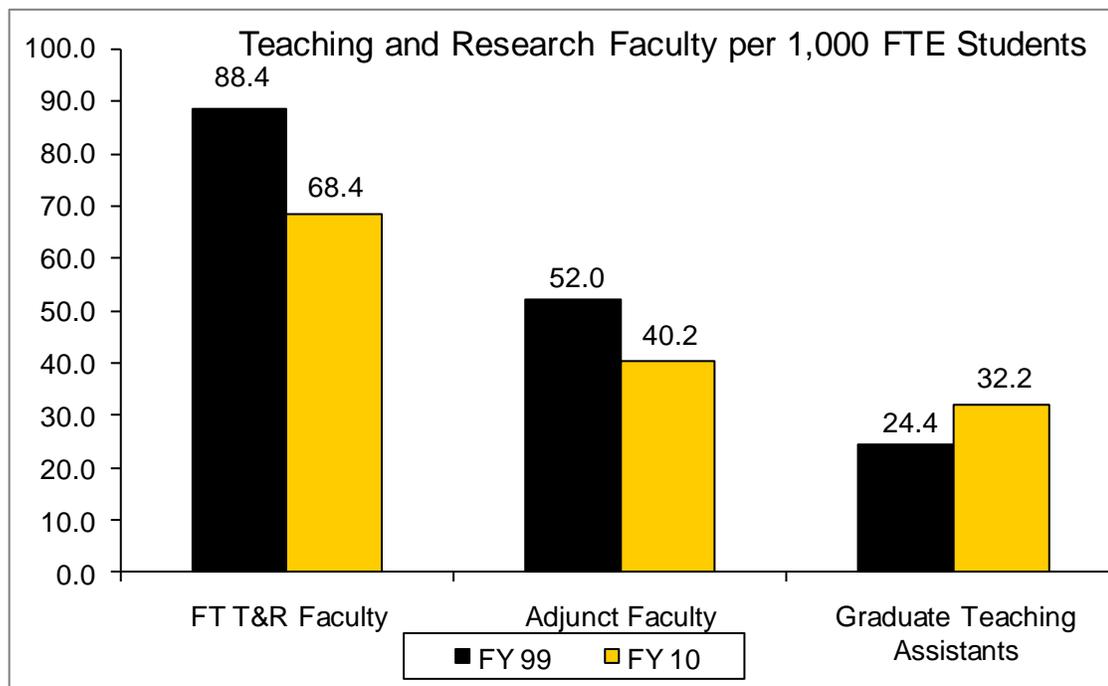
Student graduation rates reflect the increased retention of students. Over the period examined below, the four-year graduation rate increased from 16% to 30%, the five-year graduation rate increased from 34% to 46% and the six-year graduation rate increased from 40% to 51%.



Source: VCU Center for Institutional Effectiveness

## Faculty

The number of full-time teaching faculty has declined from 88 per 1,000 students to 68 per 1,000 over the past 10 years; the percentage of tenure-track and tenure-eligible faculty has declined; and faculty salaries have lost competitive ground.

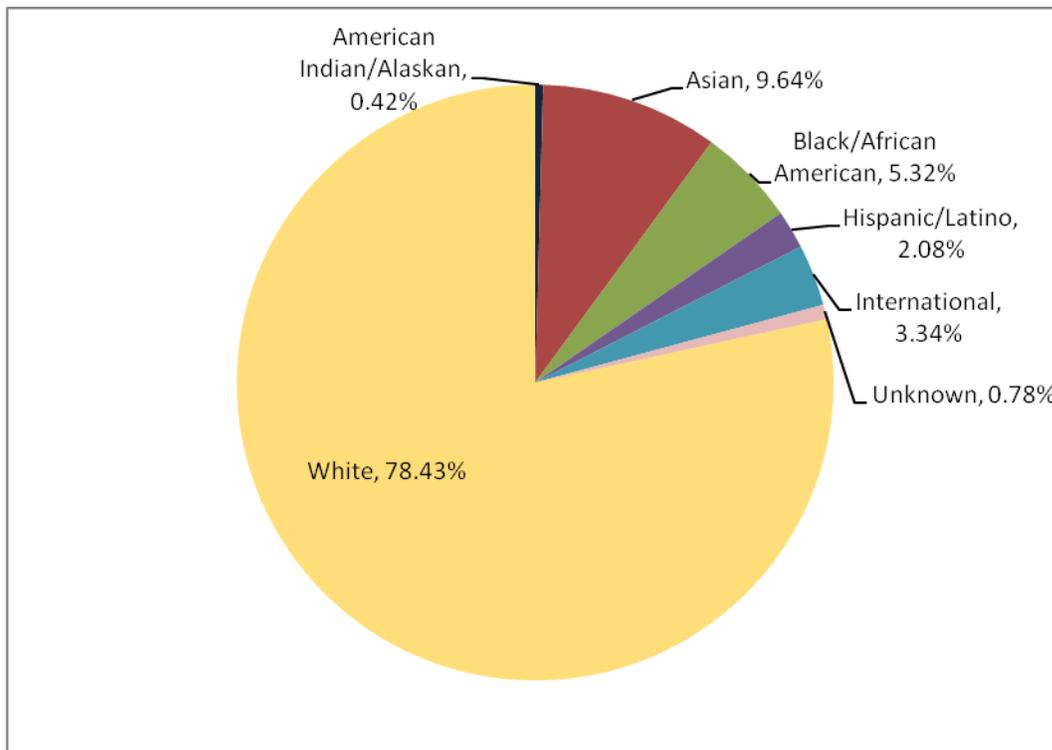


Faculty salaries at VCU are low and have lost ground, compared to other Virginia doctorals and VCU's peers nationally.

Doctoral Institutions	Professor	Associate	Assistant	Instructor	All Ranks	Compared to VCU	
						1998	2009
University of Virginia	\$ 134.7	\$ 92.7	\$ 75.2	\$ 53.3	\$ 103.9	\$ 3.9	\$ 25.1
William and Mary	113.4	80.3	70.4	47.2	89.1	1.1	10.3
George Mason	126.4	82.4	69.6	55.8	89.0	1.2	10.2
Virginia Tech	115.9	82.9	70.4	45.3	87.4	2.7	8.6
<b>VCU</b>	<b>114.2</b>	<b>80.2</b>	<b>65.9</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>78.8</b>	n/a	n/a
Old Dominion	102.7	74.1	64.2	44.2	73.5	(6.0)	(5.3)
<b>Va. Peer Group Mean</b>	<b>\$ 118.6</b>	<b>\$ 82.5</b>	<b>\$ 70.0</b>	<b>\$ 49.2</b>	<b>\$ 88.6</b>		
<b>Diff. from Mean</b>	<b>\$ (4.4)</b>	<b>\$ (2.3)</b>	<b>\$ (4.1)</b>	<b>\$ (2.2)</b>	<b>\$ (9.8)</b>		

VCU's faculty is less diverse than its student population.

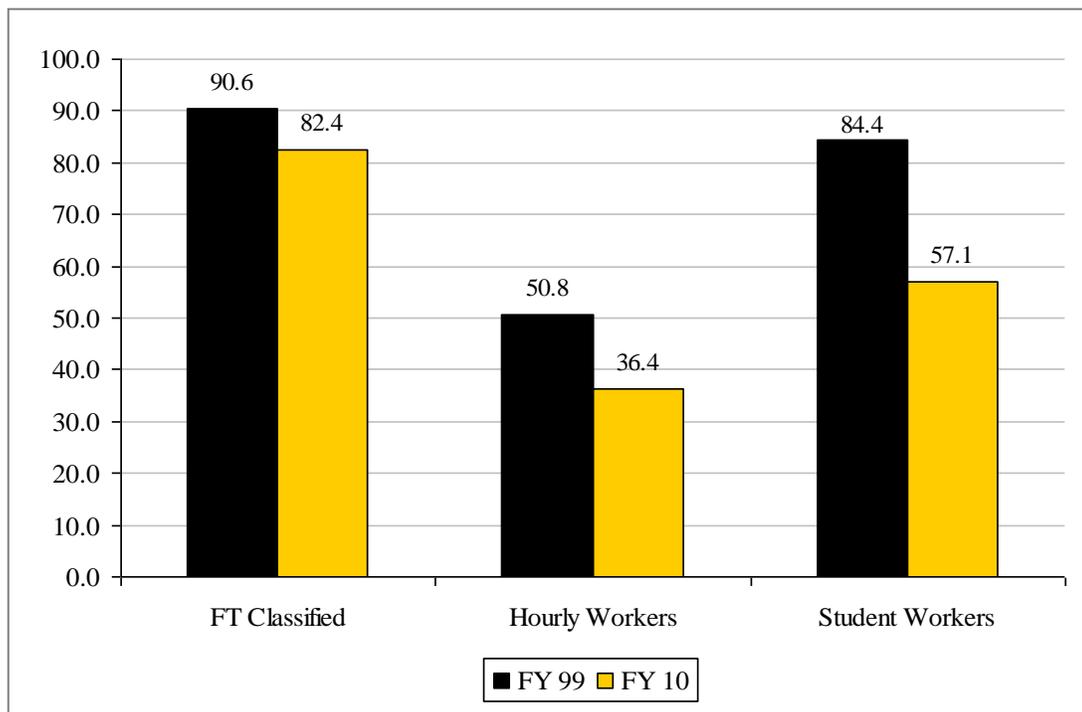
**Full Time Faculty Diversity  
Fall 2009 (before implementation of new categories)**



## Support Staff

The number of full-time classified staff and hourly and student workers per 1,000 students has also steadily declined over the past decade. VCU has been acknowledged nationally for the leanness of its classified staff – being acknowledged as extremely efficient by the Goldwater Institute in an August 2010 policy report. But, at what point does that efficiency result in inefficiency? When are faculty and researchers spending time doing things that would be more cost effectively done by support staff?

### Employees per 1,000 Headcount Students

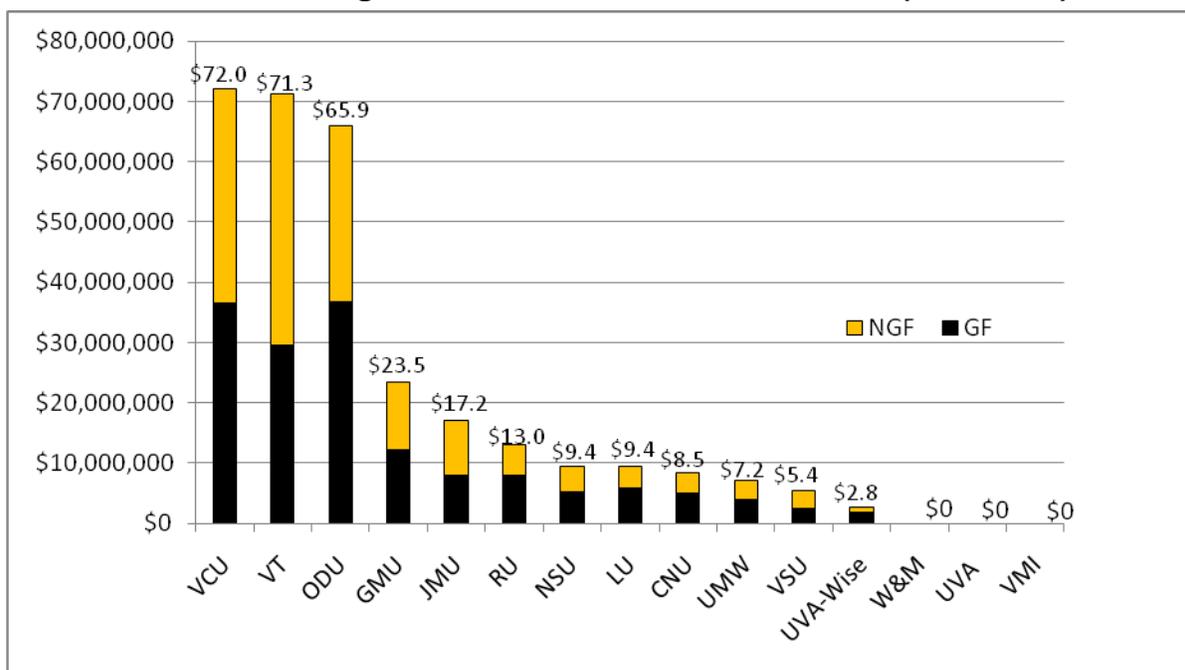


Source: VCU Center for Institutional Effectiveness

## Funding

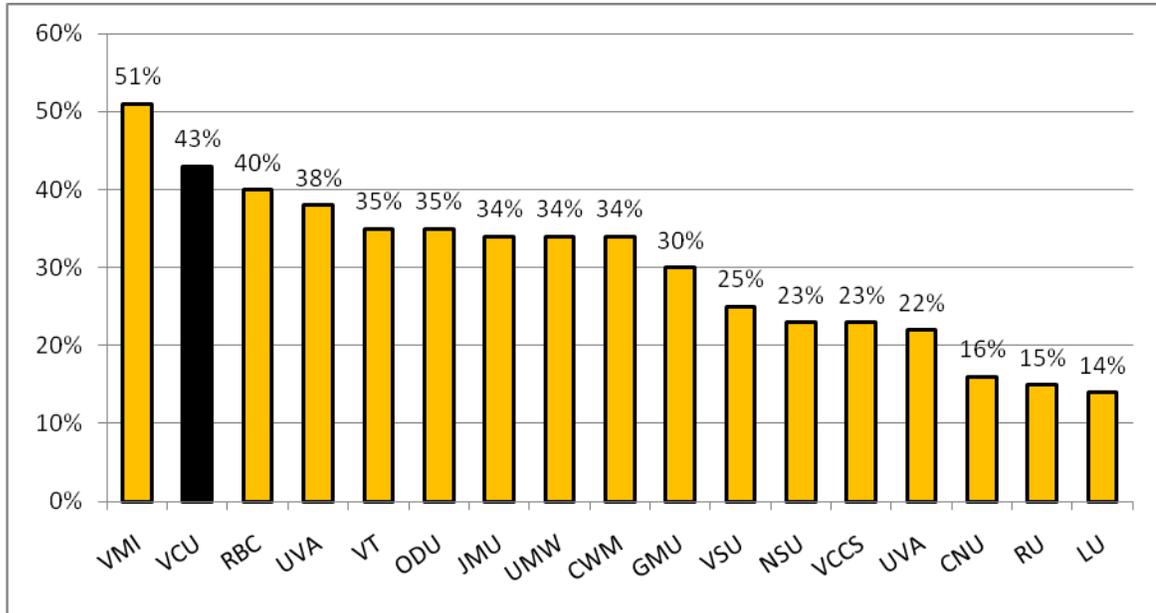
While VCU continues to educate the largest number of Virginians of any institution, total state funding for the university is lower than any other doctoral degree granting institution in the Commonwealth. As an example of the significant decline in state support, VCU received almost \$13 million less in state support in FY 2010 than it received at the beginning of the decade, despite enrolling nearly 8,400 more students. According to Virginia's State Council of Higher Education, in FY 2010 VCU had the largest funding deficiency of any four-year institution -- \$72.0 million.

**SCHEV Funding Guideline Calculation for FY 2010 (Oct., 2010)**



Between FY 2001 and FY 2012, VCU will have been cut \$4,353 per in-state student – more than any Virginia institution except VMI.

**Percent Reduction in State Support per In-state Student, FY 01-FY 12**



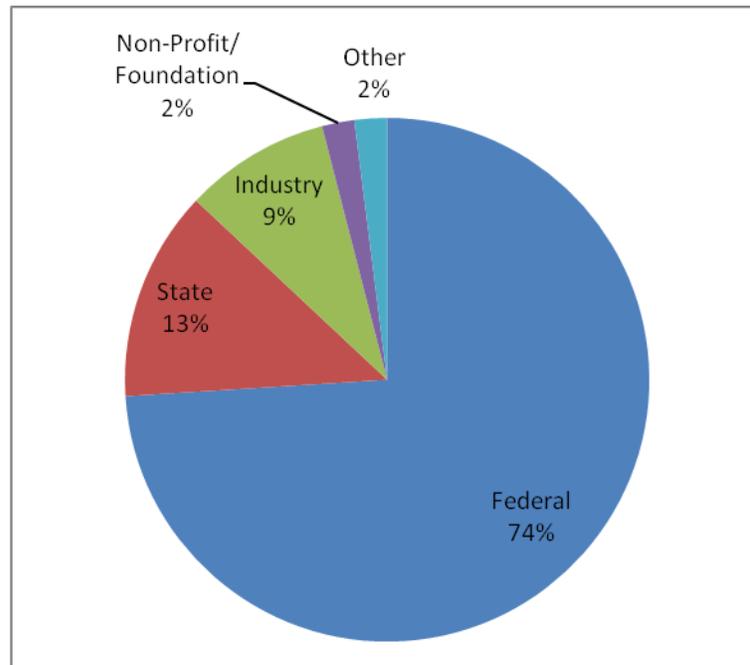
VCU provides less institutional financial aid than other Virginia public higher education institutions.

Cost & Financial Aid	In-State Tuition	% Pell Recipients Among Freshmen	% Pell Recipients Among Undergrads	Avg. Institutional Grant Aid
College of William and Mary	\$9,164	8.00%	9.40%	\$11,288
University of Virginia – Main Campus	\$8,690	8.00%	8.30%	\$10,861
George Mason University	\$6,840	20.00%	18.90%	\$7,343
James Madison University	\$6,666	9.00%	9.60%	\$5,325
Old Dominion University	\$5,262	21.00%	25.90%	\$4,641
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	\$7,397	10.00%	11.70%	\$4,168
Virginia Commonwealth University	\$6,196	23.00%	19.60%	\$3,427

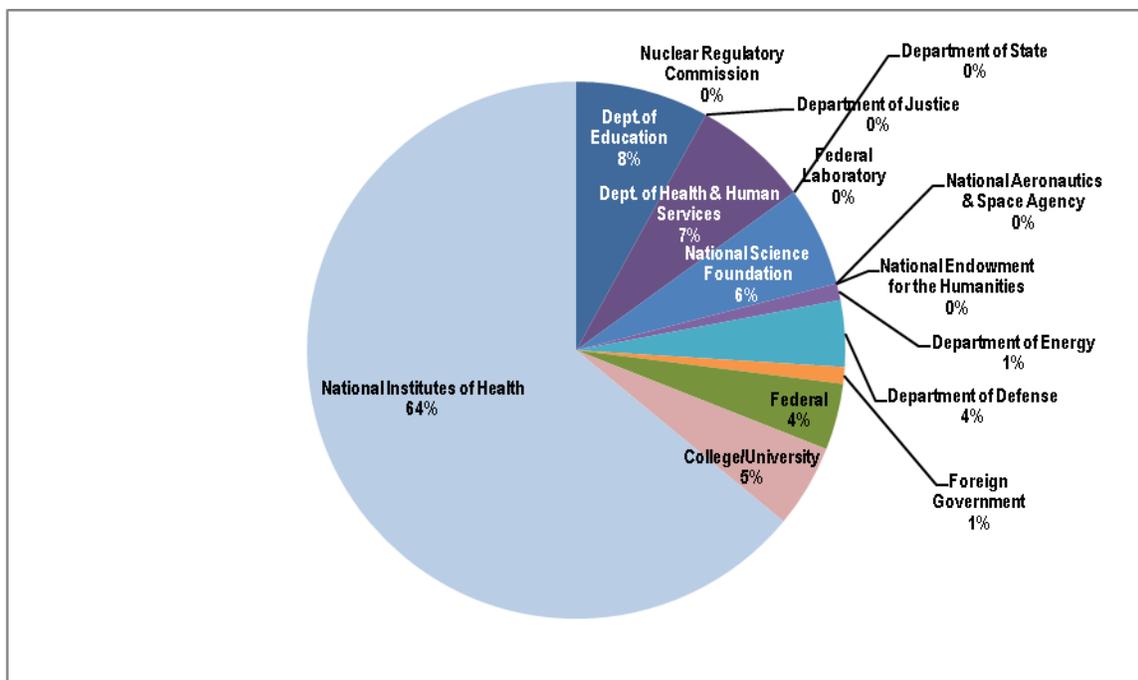
## Research

VCU's research portfolio is highly dependent upon federal sources, in particular funding from the National Institutes of Health.

**Current Funding by Funding Type  
FY2011 to Date**



**Current Federal Funding by Agency  
FY2011 to date**



## ***Health System***

The only academic medical center in Central Virginia, the health system encompasses the clinical activities associated with the MCV Hospitals, MCV Physicians, the clinical components of the VCU School of Medicine, and Virginia Premier. The 779-bed VCU Medical Center is a regional referral center for the state and is the region's only Level I Trauma Center.

## Appendix D

### **Cost Containment Virginia Commonwealth University**

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At the beginning of the decade, VCU took up the challenge by Virginia's state leaders to educate more Virginia students. VCU began "growing" its enrollment – increasing by 8,370 the number of students on VCU's campuses between 2001 and 2010. This increase in enrollment was accompanied by uneven support in state funding. In fact, by FY 2010, VCU received \$12.6 million less in state support than it did in FY 2001.

As a consequence, VCU was forced to re-examine the way it conducted business. The university took advantage of technology to increase productivity. Business practices were reexamined to increase efficiency. Collaboration across units and with other universities occurred to reduce costs.

These strategies to deal with the dual pressures of state budget reductions and enrollment growth meant that as the number of students increased by almost a third, the number of staff actually declined. A Goldwater Institute report, released in August 2010, found that VCU had the largest decline in administrative employees per student – a 75 percent decrease between 1993 and 2007 among four-year, doctoral, high level research universities. VCU went from 12 full-time administrators per 100 students in 1993, dropping to three per 100 in 2007.

Toward the end of VCU's significant growth in student enrollment, the national recession had a dramatic negative effect on the Virginia economy, and the state began a steady reduction in support for institutions of higher education. While this reduction in state support was partially mitigated by federal stimulus funding, the federal funding is temporary, ending in FY 2011. By FY 2012, state operating support for VCU's educational and general programs will have been reduced by a net \$63.5 million since FY 2008 – over 30 percent.

As a result, academic and service units across VCU experienced budget reductions. To meet increasing student demand for services, with reduced personnel, equipment, and

supplies, the university took additional steps to refine operations and gain even more efficiencies. A few examples highlighted below illustrate the types of actions taken most recently to reduce operating costs.

- Installed digital scanners with email capability for students and faculty to reduce the need for paper, additional printers and photocopier machines in the VCU Libraries. The scanners have supported 129,761 scans since first installation in January 2009; have reduced paper use by 90,000 sheets per year; eliminated six photocopiers; have saved \$41,510 per year when compared to scanning costs; eliminated staff time in maintenance of photocopiers and supplies; and sharply reduced charges paid by students for photocopies.
- Reduced costs through a cooperative procurement process. VCU has joined with eight other higher education institutions in order to better leverage economies of scale and eliminate administrative effort because only one institution conducts the procurement process. Since July 2008, the number of cooperative procurement contracts has increased 56%, from 831 to 1,302.
- Discontinued printed versions of the schedule of classes and class rosters. This reduced printing and postage costs.
- Coordinated with the state's Department of Risk Management to transfer property insurance responsibility for certain VCU related foundation buildings occupied by the university, which achieved an estimated savings of over \$150,000 annually.
- Reduced credit card merchant fees by implementing TouchNet Pay Path service for tuition and fee credit card payments. This increases the number of students using alternate payment methods (e-check, paper, check, cash) that carry no cost to the university. Savings to VCU is significant.
- Outsourced student email by implementing hosted Google Apps for Education for VCU students, which reduced current and future hardware costs, allowed the reallocation of staff to other institutional priorities, and increased user satisfaction.

- Moved all employees to a single payroll cycle, which reduced the number of payrolls from 100 per year to 24 per year, significantly reducing manpower demands.
- Implemented a web-based time keeping system for the Student Commons to improve student work schedule management, reduce overtime pay and meet Fair Labor Standards Act requirements on breaks and work hours. Cases of unscheduled and unapproved overtime have decreased since implementation.
- Moved to eW2's (Paperless Tax Forms), which reduced the number of paper W2s produced and mailed by 6,262 (63 % of active employees) in 2010.

Even without actual budget reductions, units at VCU are continuously looking for ways to do more with less. To ensure that the university has an established centralized way to review costs on a continuing basis, the president appointed a standing university-wide cost containment task force in 2010.

One of the first efforts undertaken under the auspices of this task force was a review of adjunct faculty contracts. All adjunct faculty contracts in the university where payment exceeded \$10,000 from state or tuition revenue sources were examined to determine if the job responsibilities and professional abilities of each adjunct would warrant the amount of compensation received. Each vice president and the president reviewed position justifications and workload documentation for the adjuncts in their areas.

The conclusion from the review was that adjunct contracts are well justified and that hiring full-time faculty or administrators to provide these services would be much more costly than the use of adjuncts for these responsibilities. In addition, the use of adjuncts is often an important management tool for the university because:

- the amount of work needed was not sufficient to warrant hiring a full-time faculty member;
- the urgency of providing the services needed would not allow the hiring of a full-time faculty member in time;

- the engagement was a temporary need of the university, not known, or not expected to be, ongoing; or
- a short-term engagement was temporarily used to determine if the amount of work would justify full-time employment.

As a follow-up to the review, guidance was provided to vice presidents and deans/unit heads and training was provided to university personnel administrators regarding what defines extraordinary adjunct faculty contracts. For extraordinary adjunct faculty contracts, including those where the cost would be considered above the standard used by the school or area, prior approval of the president and the board of visitors is required.

The next effort expected to be undertaken by the task force is an examination of efficiency strategies that have been used with success in one area that could be exported to other areas.