

# VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY 2014 – 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

Building a Better World



Excellence, Engagement, Commitment

## OUR MISSION

Virginia State University, a public, comprehensive 1890 Land Grant institution and historically black college/university, is committed to the preparation of a diverse population of men and women through the advancement of academic programs and services that integrate instruction, research, extension, and outreach. The University endeavors to meet the educational needs of students, graduating lifelong learners who are well equipped to serve their communities as informed citizens, globally competitive leaders, and highly effective, ethical professionals.

## PRESIDENT'S VISION

Virginia State University will be recognized as a University of choice for students, faculty, staff, and future employers of our graduates. It will be renowned for its outstanding teaching and research, exceptional academic programs, and globally competitive graduates. As a pre-eminent land grant institution, VSU will enrich the lives of people through its outreach, economic and human development programs while staying true to its historic commitment to "building a better world since 1882."

## OUR VALUES

**Student Centered** – Promoting the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of students in all facets of University life.

**Integrity** – Displaying the highest degree of ethical commitment in the pursuit of knowledge.

**Engagement** – Developing civically engaged citizens who value all persons and demonstrate the desire to positively impact their immediate surroundings, nation, and world.

**Customer Service** – Creating an atmosphere of respect, collegiality, and responsiveness to provide excellent service to our internal and external constituents.

**Excellence** – Utilizing a balanced approach to create a high expectation of achievement, awareness, and intellectual development among our students, faculty, and staff.

**Scholarly Research** – Conducting scholarly activity at the forefront of our disciplines and applying translational discoveries and intellectual pursuits to benefit the community.

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**Global** – Preparing globally aware citizens that respect and appreciate cultural differences of all people through service and the dissemination of knowledge to the world.

**Teaching** – Providing learning environments and activities consistent with best educational practices to create a framework where scholarship is intentional, transformational, and deepens understanding in the preparation of future leaders.

**Diversity** – Fostering a community that identifies, values, and respects differences of all people by creating a positive experience for students, faculty, staff, and the community.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**T**he Virginia State University Strategic Plan describes how, over a period of six years, VSU will move into the future and contribute significantly to the realization of the Commonwealth's objectives for higher education.

A progressive institution, VSU seeks to foster the growth and development of the region, state, and nation through teaching, research, creative expression, and public service. This plan focuses resources on the advancement of student success and graduation. In doing so, it embraces the concept of "student-centered" as a core institutional value, the goal of increasing access to higher education for Virginia residents, and the removal of impediments to student retention, progression, and timely graduation.

This plan challenges VSU to optimize its resources, maintain a level of academic program quality compliant with State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Instructional Performance Standards, and provide an enriching academic environment in which students can study, learn, and develop through their interaction with fellow students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community leaders. The premise of the University's Strategic Plan is "building a better world" through a commitment to excellence and the provision of a teaching/learning environment that promotes and encourages high levels of student achievement.

Five priorities provide the organizing framework for the Strategic Plan:

- 1) Expanded Constituent Services and Productivity**
- 2) Programmatic Sustainability and Sponsored research**
- 3) Global and Civic Engagement**
- 4) Infrastructural Innovation**
- 5) Entrepreneurship for the Millennial Academic Enterprise**

## INTRODUCTION

The 2014-2020 Strategic Plan is an, ambitious plan to elevate Virginia State University as one of the nation's leading land grant institutions. Virginia State University stands on a legacy of extraordinary achievement and academic excellence provided by past generations of faculty, students, staff, and other key stakeholders. This plan recognizes and capitalizes on VSU's legacy and distinctive strengths to create a brilliant future for VSU as we seek to build a better world. The strategic initiatives in this plan will lead to the University being internationally recognized as a premier land grant institution renowned for its outstanding teaching and research, with exceptional academic programs, and globally competitive graduates. It provides the VSU community with clear visions, goals, strategies, and measures to promote alignment and success. It is directed at ensuring student success and optimizing resources in order to provide an enriching academic environment for students, faculty, and staff.

One of the major objectives of the strategic planning process is the establishment, communication, and execution of the fundamental priorities of Virginia State University. It is the lens through which challenges and opportunities are examined and analyzed, issues framed, and strategic goals articulated. The strategic plan will enable VSU to adapt, take advantage of its opportunities, and manage the strategic issues that are critical to achieving its vision in an environment characterized by increasing competition for the best students, faculty, staff, funding, and other resources.

This plan provides a "roadmap" for the next six years utilizing a set of goals and objectives designed to address each of the strategic initiatives described in the Executive Summary. The ultimate goal is to ensure the plan is fully actualized and that the University continuously accounts for its implementation.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING INITIATIVE AND PLANNING PROCESS

VSU initiated a strategic planning process and established a Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) to provide leadership and oversight. The university awarded a contract to MGT of America, Inc. (MGT) and Transformation Consulting, LLC to assist the SPTF in facilitating the development of the VSU Strategic Plan. MGT and Transformation Consulting worked in partnership with VSU to complete the strategic planning process.

During the project initiation stage, meetings and interviews were conducted with key stakeholders including the President, Senior Administrators, Deans, and SPTF members about the strategic planning process. Opinions and perceptions about key issues, concerns, and expectations were solicited, and reports, plans, and information pertinent to the strategic planning process were identified for review and consideration. Relevant documents included the Vice Presidents' Council Priorities and the Six-Year Plan prepared for SCHEV.

In March 2010, Governor Bob McDonnell established the *Governor's Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation, and Investment* to maintain and enhance the quality of higher education in Virginia. The Commission was charged with increasing the percentage of college-age Virginians enrolling and attaining degrees in higher education, especially in "STEM" areas—science, technology, engineering, and math. In order to succeed, the Commission focused attention on forging effective public-private partnerships and regional strategies for business recruitment, workforce preparation, and university-based research; expanding higher education opportunities to military personnel and veterans; and developing innovative ways to deliver quality instruction, cost-saving reform strategies, and affordable new pathways to degree attainment for Virginians regardless of income or background.

In support of these goals, the 2011 General Assembly enacted *Preparing for the Top Jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act (Opportunity Act)*, which calls for expanding economic opportunity by increasing degree attainment by 100,000 degrees in 15 years; investing in high-demand, high-earning degrees in STEM and healthcare areas; and increasing research and development through public-private initiatives. Strategies to increase degree production include expanding enrollments in public and private colleges, encouraging Virginians with partial college credit to complete their degrees, and boosting graduation rates for colleges in the Commonwealth. The act established a six-year planning process that consolidates and streamlines institutional reporting.

The State Council on Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) translated the directives of the *Opportunity Act* into target goals, performance measures, and funding incentives. In response to the 2011 Act and work of SCHEV, VSU prepared *Academic and Support Service Strategies* for the six-year period (2014-2020) that details the University's initiatives associated with each objective of the legislation. The *Academic and Support Service Strategies* estimates the financial impact of each strategy, i.e., anticipated cost increments, savings, and reallocation. In addition, VSU's President initiated a strategic planning process that solicited input from university

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constituents through town hall meetings. Following these meetings, the President and Vice Presidents' Council prepared a set of priorities and established the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) comprised of five work groups with representation from across the University to guide the planning effort.

The synthesis process which resulted in the refined priorities was a critical step in aligning the Vice Presidents' Council Priorities and SPTF efforts to define the future of the University both programmatically and operationally over the next six years and alignment with the University's Six Year Plan submitted to SCHEV. The synthesis process resulted in five strategic priorities shown below. These five strategic priorities frame the University's direction over the next six years.

### Strategic Priorities

- 1: Expanded Constituent Services and Productivity
- 2: Programmatic Sustainability and Sponsored research
- 3: Global and Civic Engagement
- 4: Infrastructural Innovation
- 5: Entrepreneurship for the Millennial Academic Enterprise

## PRIORITY 1: EXPANDED CONSTITUENT SERVICES AND PRODUCTIVITY

VSU will strengthen enrollment through the strategic design and implementation of integrated enrollment management programs to attract and retain a diverse student body.

As a public four-year land grant institution, VSU has the combined responsibility and opportunity to serve and enhance the quality of life and the economic conditions of the surrounding communities of Southside Virginia. Given these circumstances, one of the University's top priorities must be the preparation of students for the future needs of the Commonwealth. Consistent with the University's mission as an HBCU is the desire of the VSU community and leadership to continue to recruit students from diverse populations who will persist to goal completion—most commonly defined as degree attainment. Effective and sound enrollment growth requires the establishment and implementation of a comprehensive enrollment management approach touching all facets of the University in order to achieve enrollment goals. Enrollment growth and increased graduation rates supported by our activities respond to the Governor's call to increase degree production by 100,000 by year 2020.

### Objectives:

1. Implement services and programs that facilitate economic development in Southside Virginia;
2. To prepare an expanded workforce for the Commonwealth in accordance with Virginia's Top Jobs for the 21st Century (TJ21) legislation, specifically, the production of 100,000 new degrees.

### Assessment Measures and Implementation Strategies:

- A. By fall 2017, produce 1,000 new degrees.
  - ♦ Marketing/branding exercise.
  - ♦ Establish the Office of Enrollment Management.
  - ♦ Cultivate new core student markets.
  - ♦ Expand the scope of the University's student services to better meet the needs of current and new core students as well as internal/external stakeholder groups.
- B. By fall 2018, increase freshman retention rate to at least 75%.
  - ♦ Establish the University College.
  - ♦ Enhance enrollment and recruitment processes to recruit and retain a diverse student body that will produce a highly qualified workforce.
- C. By fall 2017, increase the graduation rate to at least 55%.
  - ♦ Develop three-year degree programs.
  - ♦ Offer MOOC-style courses.



## PRIORITY 2: PROGRAMMATIC SUSTAINABILITY AND SPONSORED RESEARCH

VSU will achieve recognition for academic excellence through the development of high quality and innovative educational programs supported by faculty and staff members who are active learners and researchers.

In order to respond to the challenges of the changing educational and technological environment, we will develop and enhance programs, structures, and processes to maximize faculty and student success. Because access to research positively affects student performance and successful research programs can generate significant revenue for their host institutions, we seek to maximize these benefits of research by strengthening our research capacity, particularly in the translational research space. In order to accomplish this we will leverage our capacity to build partnerships that span disciplines and involve regional and national collaboration.

### Objectives:

1. Academic and co-curricular programs will be fiscally self-sustaining (i.e., comply to an pre-determined profitability formula);
2. Increase translational and pure/applied research productivity toward new revenue streams;
3. Establish translational and applied research as parts of VSU's pursuit of academic excellence.

### Assessment Measures and Implementation Strategies:

- A. By fall 2016, each college will implement plans for inter- and/or cross-disciplinary sponsored research that is integrated with teaching and learning.
- B. By fall 2020, increase sponsored research portfolio to at least 20%.
  - ♦ Establish translational and pure/applied research agendas.
  - ♦ Expand the number and the scope of viable, sustainable research opportunities for students and faculty.
  - ♦ Develop a technology transfer program;
  - ♦ Increase the number of grant applications submitted by 5% each year.
  - ♦ Implement a hiring plan commensurate with pure and translational research foci.
- C. By fall 2016, all academic programs will meet or exceed pre-established VSU benchmarks for academic profitability.
  - ♦ Develop, implement, and maintain nationally recognized (accredited) programs;
  - ♦ Implement a consistent, comprehensive program review process;
  - ♦ Increase the number of available terms for offering course work in a calendar year;
  - ♦ Create differential tuition for graduate programs;
  - ♦ Establish strategically located off-campus programs;
  - ♦ Establish distance education programs.
  - ♦ Employ responsibility-center management model for non-traditional academic programs and terms.

### PRIORITY 3: GLOBAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

VSU will foster the development of an enriching campus culture to support student success by preparing civically engaged and globally competitive students.

VSU is dedicated to promoting the development of humane and productive citizens, prepared for personal fulfillment, and sensitive to the needs of others. We believe that civic learning and engagement is an integral component of the students' educational experiences at VSU. VSU believes that global competence is a fundamental skill critical to successfully meeting the challenges of today's international community.

#### Objectives:

1. Students will complete their respective academic programs having demonstrated an understanding of effective Cross-Cultural Communication;
2. Students will demonstrate an appreciation for the value of engagement in civic action and leadership;
3. Students will understand the value of individual and cultural differences; and
4. Students will demonstrate an ability to communicate and interact effectively across cultures.

#### Assessment Measures and Implementation Strategies

- A. By fall 2018, increase international student enrollment by at least 20%.
  - ♦ Develop working relationships with international institutions, alumni, sponsoring organizations, and embassies seeking US host institutions.
  - ♦ Establish an International Student and Scholar Services component to enhance the transition and retention of international students.
- B. By fall 2018, at least 3% of all VSU students will participate in an international/global Study Abroad Program.
  - ♦ Promote the comprehensive internationalization of VSU curricular and co-curricular experiences.
  - ♦ Enhance the Honors Program for global education.
  - ♦ Identify foreign language acquisition strategies beyond classroom instruction.
- C. By fall 2018, the University students will participate in 45,000 hours of community service annually.
  - ♦ Fully implement service learning program.
  - ♦ Create an environment where students value and model civic responsibility in and out of the classroom.

## PRIORITY 4: INFRASTRUCTURAL INNOVATION

VSU will invest in state-of-the-art Information Technology infrastructure to support teaching, learning, research, and administration.

The dynamic nature of the modern academy means that success of faculty, staff and students cannot be achieved without a renewed commitment of the University community to a more robust infrastructure, which embraces the effective and efficient use of technology. Administrative policies and procedures should facilitate progress towards the university's goals and objectives.

### Objectives:

1. A hallmark of VSU will be its customer-service oriented culture of collegiality and efficiency via cutting-edge, cloud-based IT solutions;
2. Enhance operational infrastructure, addressing such processes as academic advisement, early intervention, fundraising, enrollment management, and human resources management.

### Assessment Measures and Implementation Strategies

- A. By fall 2018, 75% of VSU personnel-related operations will be "cloud-based".
  - ♦ Create mobile apps for improved stakeholder services.
  - ♦ Banner (cloud) off-site hosting.
  - ♦ Provide incentives for on-line/on-time registration.
- B. By fall 2016, VSU will be a Level II institution.
  - ♦ Implement Banner 9.
- C. By fall 2017, utilize a suite of Banner-relevant/related software products to automate operations in each of the University's major units.
  - ♦ Increase university-wide learning and business technology capabilities.
  - ♦ Improve access to University data for mid-level managers' decision making, using such tools as predictive analytics.
  - ♦ Implement Degree Works, Course Signals, EMS, Banner Advancement, Banner Admissions, Blackboard Analytics, Predictive Analytics, and Weave Online.
- D. By fall 2016, 95% of internal and external stakeholders will indicate satisfaction with the campus environment.
  - ♦ Cultivate a workplace that is collegial, respectful, and inclusive.
  - ♦ Revise the Faculty Handbook.
  - ♦ Revise faculty evaluation process.
  - ♦ Provide leadership education for all levels of administration.
  - ♦ House disciplines/colleges in contiguous spaces.
  - ♦ Implement a customer service program.
  - ♦ Implement a faculty development program.
  - ♦ Implement a staff development program.

## PRIORITY 5: ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR THE MILLENNIAL ACADEMIC ENTERPRISE

VSU will institute an expanded VSU branding and marketing program to increase points of contact to create awareness and develop working relationships by extending our intellectual, academic, cultural, and research resources to promote sustainable economic growth, prosperity, and quality of life throughout the Southeast region and State.

The current economic and political environment has brought into sharper focus the variety of challenges facing the University. Shifting demographics, rising costs of operation, a changing competitive landscape, alterations in state and federal funding, pressures for accountability, and widespread economic downturn characterize the environment in which we currently operate. These forces require the University to find new ways to serve our many constituents while becoming a more efficient and effective institution. Despite these challenges, these are also times of opportunity in which we must move forward strategically, recognizing that we always have finite resources. A key to VSU's survival and growth will be creating a university that is sustainable across a wide array of dimensions, particularly fiscal sustainability.

### Objectives:

1. The VSU academic enterprise will increase federal and state grant/appropriation funding;
2. Aggressively design academic initiatives/programs toward growth of the Virginia economy;
3. Reduce reliance on tuition and ever-decreasing general-fund appropriations;
4. Increase opportunities for student and faculty research.

### Assessment Measures and Implementation Strategies

- A. By fall 2015, each College will develop and implement at least one initiative that produces an independent revenue stream operating as a profit center.
  - ♦ Establish public-private partnerships.
  - ♦ Diversify and enhance revenue sources in order to decrease reliance on tuition increases.
  - ♦ Continue to establish and cultivate relationships between current students, alumni, faculty/staff, and friends of the University.
- B. By fall 2018, the VSU Research Foundation will have a portfolio of \$5mil.
  - ♦ Develop and promote initiatives to increase and diversify the university's sources of public and private funding.
  - ♦ The VSU Research Foundation will be a self-sustaining entity by 2018.
- C. By fall 2018, private funding will amount to 12% of non-general funding.
  - ♦ Complete a marketing/branding exercise to define the University's brand.
  - ♦ Implement a highly effective program to track graduates.
  - ♦ Increase the numbers of active, contributing alumni by at least 20% annually.

## SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century will require a very different higher education paradigm. The rapid expansion of information technology exchange demands an “anywhere–anytime” deployment of a college’s academic, research, and service mission. No longer is “access” to higher education the most critical gap. Today, and well into the foreseeable future, achievement of educational goals, most notably degree completion, is the paramount objective. At the national level as well as across the Commonwealth (articulated by the Governor’s Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation and Investment), academically prepared citizens with competitive skills for a global marketplace are critical to invigorating and sustaining our economy. Every public or private college and university across Virginia shares this responsibility.

Through this plan, VSU vigorously and strategically addresses that challenge. Subsequently, VSU will continue to provide access to an affordable education for its varied constituents, either locally (on campus) or through distance delivery modes. The University will further develop appropriate mechanisms to ensure its students are prepared and encouraged at each stage of their academic journey to succeed and advance. University administration and faculty will continue to review, rethink, and reshape the academic program mix to better align with critical needs of the region, the state, and the nation, while strengthening basic skills that transcend discipline specific content. Simultaneously, VSU will integrate a global perspective that touches its academic, research, and service roles.

Finally, in order to make the transition required for viability in the “global arena” of higher education, VSU must take appropriate steps to enhance the infrastructure (both physical and intellectual) of the University to accomplish the initiatives identified above. Needed changes will not only require investment in capacity, efficiencies, and utilization of existing assets, but creative strategies for new and innovative solutions. For example, increases to the entering freshmen class will likely require additional residential capacity and both capital and operational improvements. Likewise, distance delivery of programs will require considerable enhancement and upgrades to the VSU technology infrastructure to enable seamless and reliable instructional and support services as well as virtual admission and registration functions. Faculty, staff, and student communication, information exchange, training, and technical support will require further development as well. A targeted increase in international students will require additional specialized services, not typically required of domestic enrollment growth.

Needless to say, University leadership recognizes that all of these important changes require additional resources if they are to be realized. The “new economy” of public higher education will demand that VSU explore creative opportunities to maximize efficient use of resources, while seeking innovative solutions to attract alternative funding sources beyond a traditional state support model. All the while, VSU will strive to provide a quality education at an affordable price.