QUEST 2028

ONE VCU: TOGETHER WE TRANSFORM

Quest 2028
One VCU: Together We Transform

In October 2021, Virginia Commonwealth University launched a recalibration process of its strategic goals to better meet our mission in a changing world. The recalibration is an update to meet the vision, mission and values originally established in the Quest 2025 strategic plan. The global pandemic, sweeping social justice movements, new developments in technology and accelerating effects of climate change have forever changed how we engage, work, learn, and live. Thus, our strategic plan must reflect the vision and aspirational goals required to ensure its realization. Quest 2028: One VCU Together We Transform, harnesses the collective power of our community and stakeholders to do just that.

Vision

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

Values

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

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

Stakeholder Feedback

In November 2021, VCU collected feedback from internal and external stakeholders, and the following six areas of focus emerged:

- Stakeholders are proud of VCU's strong commitment to diversity and inclusivity, but more can be done to comprehensively weave the actualization of that commitment throughout all of our work within the university and beyond our borders.

- VCU needs to focus on using our research and expertise to inform needs and solutions in our region.

- VCU excels in providing real-world learning opportunities by leveraging our urban environment as a classroom for students, but we need to provide more of those opportunities for ALL of our students.

- VCU is innovative, welcoming, accepting and engaging, but we need more innovative curricula to meet student and workforce needs, and personalized support to ensure student success.

- We can and need to do more to recruit and retain outstanding staff and faculty.

- We need to confidently tell our One VCU story in bold, engaging ways to strengthen and deepen key relationships with alumni, employers and the community.

Through the stakeholder engagement sessions and survey, individuals often reaffirmed VCU's mission and identified the need to have an impactful way to bring the stakeholders together when challenges, conflicting priorities and questions of purpose arise. Thus, the One VCU Charge was developed. This charge does not replace VCU or VCU Health mission statements but exists to serve as a rallying cry for our community to remember our why.

One VCU Charge

"We are One VCU, an inclusive public research university and health care system where accessibility combines with excellence to produce exceptional educational and healing results.

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

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

We prove every day that different works.

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

Approved by the BOV as of June 24, 2022

Strategic Plan

The strategic plan is organized into four interconnected themes that address the six focus areas identified by stakeholders, in addition to the significant issues faced by many institutions of higher education, also identified in the Quest 2025 strategic plan. The issues include:

- Growing cynicism that public higher education serves the public good and may not be worth the expense to individuals
- The significant challenge of the rising cost of education and providing affordable access and support for timely degree completion regardless of students' particular demographic or group
- Increased competition in public higher education for students, faculty, government and philanthropic support, and national prominence
- Dependence on urban universities to lead in solving vexing societal issues, including health and economic vitality
- Recognition that resourcing the plan's strategic priorities will require an integrated, university approach and will call for hard choices around resource allocation

The four strategic plan themes are:

- Diversity Drives Excellence
- Student Success
- Research and Innovation to Address Societal Challenges
- Thriving Communities

**Quest 2028 One VCU: Together We Transform
Strategic Themes**
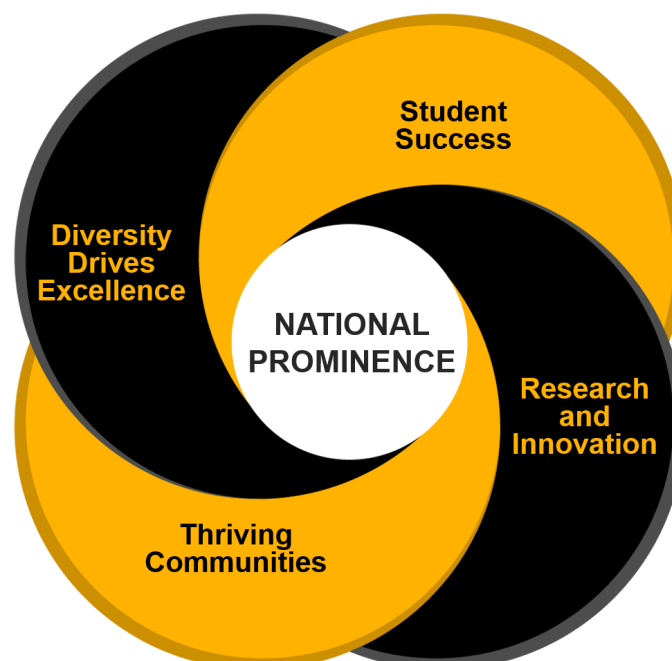
The strategic plan, Quest 2028: One VCU Together We Transform, sets the projected course for VCU for the years 2022 to 2028. Its successful implementation depends upon articulation, integration and implementation of numerous other administrative and academic division and unit strategic plans, which in effect are implementation plans for Quest 2028.

It is expected that by summer 2023 all administrative and academic division and unit plans will be developed and/or updated to align with Quest 2028.

Additionally, several key elements of One VCU are woven into the fabric of this plan. Impact in these areas is essential for VCU to achieve national prominence and maximum success:

- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Philanthropy
- Branding, communications and marketing
- Human resources, engaged workforce

THEME: DIVERSITY DRIVES EXCELLENCE

Champion diversity, equity and inclusion in all that we do and advance a conscientious drive to support a climate where excellence and success for all people are valued and differences are celebrated.

This theme is integral to the goals and strategies of all themes and is woven throughout the plan because it is foundational to the success and excellence of our students, faculty and staff.

Goals and Strategies
DDE 1: Nurture an institutional culture and climate that is diverse, inclusive, equitable and engaged.
- Assess the continuous improvement in culture and climate indices for all units across the enterprise
- Administer biennial organizational culture and climate survey across academic and medical enterprises
- Implement a progressively phased approach to DEI education, training and remediation
- Fully integrate DEI leadership competencies in management and performance systems for all employees across the enterprise

DDE 2: Implement an organizational infrastructure to support, sustain and scale DEI initiatives that infuses them into clinical care, curriculum, scholarship and practice.
- Incorporate National Association for Diversity Officers in Higher Education standards into senior leadership performance goals
- Employ federal, state and institutional data to set faculty and staff hiring benchmarks that are responsive to shortfalls in placement goals for women and minorities
- Set utilization goals for employee hiring that exceed recommendations for persons with disabilities and protected veterans

- Utilize internal expertise to guide accrediting bodies and national organizations in developing compliance standards and best practices for engaging diverse students and patients

DDE 3: Demonstrate national and international DEI thought leadership.
- Engage in developmental, transitional and transformational change management processes to build enterprise-wide teams that focus on DEI goal attainment
- Institutionalization of faculty and student pipeline programs, in particular the STEM and health professions that address deficits in expertise and representation
- Promote, develop and scale curricular initiatives related to inclusive pedagogy and experiential learning
- Create opportunities that increase underrepresented minority and minority faculty and students engaged in transdisciplinary research

Metrics of Success
- Diversity training: 100% of employees complete Title IX and nondiscrimination trainings
- Organization culture and climate: Positive percent change in biennium culture and climate survey results in diversity, inclusion, engagement and performance indices
- Faculty retention: Positive percent change in minority, underrepresented minority and women faculty
- Staff retention: Positive percent change in minority, underrepresented minority and women staff

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THEME: STUDENT SUCCESS

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

Goals and Strategies
SS 1: Transform curriculum so that all students engage in inquiry, discovery, innovation, experiential learning, civic engagement and creative expression to prepare them for the future of work.
- Foster interdisciplinary collaboration by engaging multiple knowledge communities in developing new undergraduate and graduate academic programs and credentials
- Support undergraduate and graduate curricular innovations that align with 21st-century workforce needs and VCU's research strengths and priorities
- Redesign undergraduate curriculum to expand the integration of transformative experiences (i.e., internships, clinicals, placements, undergraduate research, etc.) focused on the future of work and student engagement in research
- Redesign general education to include expected competencies for the future of work: digital literacy, racial literacy and entrepreneurship
- Foster a hybrid university environment focused on improving student learning that integrates technology with teaching and learning innovation in course and program design

- Deliver high-quality educational opportunities and services that are responsive to the needs of learners (i.e., traditional, nontraditional and lifelong learners) and are attractive and accessible to communities across Virginia and beyond
- Reshape graduate education to strengthen the attraction, reach and education of master's and highly qualified Ph.D. students
- Develop approaches and initiatives that enhance the global competency of students, faculty and staff, and also facilitate differentiation of VCU's education, research and engagement in the global academic marketplace

SS 2: Enhance the university culture of care and responsiveness that supports student engagement, success and sense of belonging.
- Empower and sustain a university-wide culture of collaboration, adaptability and innovation focused on student success
- Develop approaches and programs that strengthen student academic, financial, and career planning, readiness and agency
- Increase institutional financial aid
- Strengthen and provide intentional opportunities and conditions for purposeful student engagement, growth, physical/mental well-being and belonging among all students (undergraduate, graduate and first-professional)
- Create an environment that supports and strengthens student success through faculty/staff-student mentorship and faculty/staff development and engagement

SS 3: Retain and attract a diverse community of highly qualified faculty and staff that reflects a culture where everyone matters and belongs, and ensure the culture supports career satisfaction and growth.

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

Metrics of Success
- Retention rate: 90% one-year retention rate and elimination of gaps among student populations (i.e.gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic and/or first generation status)
- Graduation rate: 78% six-year graduation rate and elimination of gaps among student populations (i.e.gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic and/or first generation status)
- Post-graduation outcomes: 70% employment and/or graduate/professional school within six months of graduation
- Enrollment: 32,000 students
- Faculty: Increase tenure-track faculty positions
- Faculty: Increase faculty retention
- Staff: Increase staff retention

THEME: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION TO ADDRESS SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

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

Goals and Strategies

RI 1: Amplify VCU's impact on society through excellence across all disciplines, knowledge creation and transdisciplinary research.

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

RI 2: Build a collaborative research culture that powers meaningful change and impact and is based on ethics, integrity, inclusive practices, and critical and analytical thinking.

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

RI 3: Implement a research infrastructure model that is scalable, nimble and ready for growth.

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

Metrics of Success
- Research funding and portfolio
  - >$400 million in annual external sponsored awards
  - 3% to 5% increase in total federal research awards per fiscal year
  - Double the number of patents, licensing, partnerships and startups
  - 5% annual increase in clinical research and trials
- Ranking
  - Top 50 U.S. public research universities, National Science Foundation ranking (measured by total research expenditures)

- Public impact (impactful research across all disciplines)
  - Increase faculty effort and number of new faculty hires (including URM)
  - Increase students (undergraduate and graduate, including URM) and postdoctoral fellows engaged in research
  - Increase number and quality of publications, scholarly articles, proceedings and communications

THEME: THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Deliver on our commitment to solving social and health inequities in partnership with communities.

Goals and Strategies
TC 1: Collaborate to build an adaptive infrastructure that meets the evolving needs of VCU and communities.
- Enhance strategic investments in infrastructure to expand operational capacity and management to oversee and implement policy reform, communications, and universitywide coordination and execution of strategies
- Implement continuous improvement and sustainability of community and economic practices throughout VCU and VCU Health
- Develop community and economic engagement leadership and leadership pathways
- Enable a collaborative community and economic engagement enterprise that is inclusive of clinical care, curriculum, scholarship and practice, and student initiative
- Establish a cross-organizational team to guide VCU's continued competitiveness for the Carnegie Community Engaged classification
- Establish a sustainable process for reviewing and developing policies, practices, principles and ethics for transformation

TC 2: Partner with communities to help inspire authentic gains in health, education and economic prosperity.
- In collaboration with community stakeholders, develop a process to identify targeted partnership neighborhoods, including audit of existing VCU and partner activities to be aligned and leveraged
- Build relationships and partnerships to foster civic agency and community resiliency

- Foster community trust through open, transparent and timely communication
- Work with community partners and stakeholders to determine strengths, assets and resources to inform the development and implementation of a model and identify success and baseline metrics
- Collaboratively partner with community stakeholders to design and implement comprehensive health, education and economic strategies
- Galvanize the academic and health system enterprise around a priority RVA social issue to catalyze bold transformation

TC 3: Create and leverage pathways that demonstrate that our academic and health care goals and innovations benefit and complement the objectives of our community partners.
- Drive local workforce opportunity in student and employee recruitment, development and advancement within VCU and VCU Health
- Work with partners to strengthen pre-K-16 student success
- Collaboratively cultivate an economic ecosystem for the growth and development of community and student entrepreneurship and small business development by leveraging VCU assets, processes and student experiences
- Lead inclusive art, social, health and technological research, innovation and practice informed by community priorities

TC 4: Actively seek community partnerships and opportunities to elevate awareness and collaborative action between VCU and communities.
- Collaborate with community organizations in offering conferences and workshops of topics of mutual interest
- Establish citywide dialogue and lecture series with community partnership organizations
- Formalize community feedback and information loop on DEI-related matters
- Integrate return on investment/return on trust perspectives in all engagements with community partners

Metrics of Success
- Supply chain diversification: Increase vendor contracts with local minority and women businesses in priority communities
- Community engagement: Increase coordinated programs/interventions in priority communities
- Training in standards of excellence: Increase number of staff, students and faculty trained (certified/badged) in DEI and community-engaged research best practices