Office of the
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
AND PROVOST

Academic Implementation Strategy for
A PLAN FOR A NEW HORIZON
ENVISIONING VIRGINIA TECH 2013-2018

Virginia Tech
Invent the Future
# Envisioning Virginia Tech 2013-2018

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A PLAN FOR A NEW HORIZON
A Plan for a New Horizon: Envisioning Virginia Tech 2012–2018 sets priorities to advance and achieve the university’s mission as a public, land-grant, research institution with national and international prominence. To further the implementation of the ideas developed in A Plan for a New Horizon, college deans and vice presidents developed strategic plans and identified areas of growth and emphasis. This implementation plan highlights initiatives and priorities of immediate strategic importance to the academic progress of the university and serves as a complement to A Plan for a New Horizon and the associated strategic plans.

Within the academic areas of the university, 11 broad areas of emphasis present opportunities for translating the New Horizon vision into action plans. Each area of emphasis outlined in this implementation plan begins with a background and context statement for strategic initiatives and moves to a description of anticipated actions and related investments for the planning period. The areas of emphasis will be reviewed regularly and adjusted as the planning period proceeds. The implementation plan will serve as a guide for priority-setting in annual resource allocation decisions.

Effective strategic planning requires thoughtful consideration and communication of aspirational goals and initiatives. All members of the university community play an important role in advancing Virginia Tech’s mission and commitment to excellence, and many individuals have contributed to imagining the future of the university and creative ways to achieve its goals. Thank you for your continued dedication to Virginia Tech and for your assistance in realizing A Plan for a New Horizon.

Mark G. McNamee
Senior Vice President and Provost
Background and Current Conditions

General education at Virginia Tech, called the Curriculum for Liberal Education, is rooted in the landgrant mission of providing a robust education for all students within a 21st-century liberal education framework. It is focused on learning across disciplines, engaging students as citizens in an increasingly global and networked society, training students to apply computational thinking to real-world challenges, and using best practices in contemporary pedagogy so that students serve as the primary authors of their own educational experience.

During the 2006-2012 strategic planning period, Virginia Tech took significant steps towards advancing its undergraduate programs. A five-year quality enhancement plan was launched to provide undergraduate students with a rich first-year experience that engages them with problem-solving, inquiry, and integration of knowledge. An office of undergraduate research was established to support hands-on, experiential learning by students. New interdisciplinary undergraduate programs, such as the real estate degree and a minor in science, engineering, and law, were developed and formal and informal learning spaces like the SCALE-UP classroom in Derring Hall were constructed to promote active and collaborative learning. Consequently, Virginia Tech is well positioned to develop and implement a bold new program in liberal education.

Virginia Tech will comprehensively evaluate and modify the current curriculum for liberal education to embrace alternate pathways to a general education and to incorporate computational thinking and informatics/digital fluency as basic skills for all students, thereby enabling our students to be engaged citizens and life-long learners.

—A Plan for a New Horizon, p.14
Improve Core and Liberal Education, Including the Incorporation of Computational Thinking

Anticipated Actions and Related Investments During the Planning Period

- The university will launch a new general education curriculum that provides foundational learning in discourse and computational thinking; a capstone experience; and interdisciplinary programs across the sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities to complement a student’s major field of study with a coherent and substantive course of study. This curriculum will engage students in self-authorship, deep reflection, and ethics.

- We will both identify and realign resources from the current general education curriculum to support the new curriculum and will invest in professional development for faculty, staff, advisors, and graduate students to support the new initiatives in general education.

- The university will construct new facilities with state-of-the-art learning environments that will showcase the very best teaching and learning experiences on campus, and we will continue to refurbish and improve existing general assignment classrooms and instructional laboratories.

- Virginia Tech will create new foundational courses in computational thinking required for fulfillment of the general education curriculum and will facilitate the development and implementation of advanced courses that focus on computational thinking for all upper-level undergraduate students.
Background and Current Conditions

Virginia Tech seeks to sustain a culture of learning that reflects the profound opportunities available to students at our university. We believe students can develop habits of interpersonal awareness, intentional actions, and self-reflection that complete and complement academic and professional education. We will be deliberate in designing learning opportunities available in student environments, creating innovative practices for student learning, and assessing the extent to which students are able to apply knowledge to solve problems. We will challenge students to connect knowledge to possibilities for improving humanity both near and far.

We have a responsibility to ensure that every student will have quality educational experiences that provide the opportunity to

- Engage in dynamic learning environments that inspire them to commit to unwavering curiosity, pursue self-understanding and integrity, practice civility, prepare for a life of courageous leadership, and practice *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) as a way of life;
- Live and learn in diverse and inclusive communities that support mutual respect and build intercultural competencies; and
- Participate in applied and experiential learning experiences that foster opportunities for reflection and deep, long-term engagement with faculty, staff, and other students.

Preparing students for this new horizon requires pedagogical models that spark curiosity, facilitate creative thinking, and develop the tools for effective communication.

–A Plan for a New Horizon, p.1
Anticipated Actions and Related Investments During the Planning Period

Virginia Tech will strengthen the depth, breadth, and access points for students to:

- Engage in meaningful undergraduate research opportunities that allow them to explore and discover solutions to the world’s pressing issues, increasing the percentage of students who participate in research with faculty, both as part of a course or program.
- Engage in service-learning opportunities that will enrich their lives through service to others, increasing participation in community service and volunteer work, both within the context of academic courses and outside the academic curriculum.
- Engage in at least one meaningful experience that bolsters knowledge of global issues and nurtures a mindset not confined by United States borders.
- Experience meaningful friendships with others at Virginia Tech who are different from themselves.
- Participate in a living-learning program that provides opportunities to engage in residential communities that foster close interactions with faculty, staff, and other students.
- Participate in experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, externships, co-ops, and practicum experiences, to strengthen career and vocational aspirations.
- Engage in leadership development opportunities that allow them to strengthen leadership capacities.
- Participate in a first-year experience that provides students with a foundation for success at Virginia Tech, both inside and outside the classroom.
Position for Success in Online Education

Background and Current Conditions

Virginia Tech has been involved in distance education since the 1970s. The university’s first online courses were offered in 1994, and its first online graduate degree program was launched in 1997. In 2012-2013, Virginia Tech had 20,000 enrollments in online courses, including more than 25 graduate degree and certificate programs. Virginia Tech has the faculty, instructional design and technology expertise, infrastructure, and international reputation to be a leader in online education for both traditional on-campus students and new populations taught at a distance.

A Plan for a New Horizon includes the goals of developing alternative pathways for the general education of all students; using current and emerging technologies to enhance traditional classrooms, provide mobile access, and expand high-quality online learning opportunities; and reviewing the financial and incentive structures for teaching and learning through distance education with a view to establishing a progressive profile of offerings.

Virginia Tech remains strongly committed to exploring how to best harness technology to improve the quality of education it offers students. Through the continued development of our online and hybrid courses, we will continue to explore and embrace sound pedagogy through a combination of active and engaged learning and appropriately matched technological tools.

– A Plan for a New Horizon, p. 14-15
Position for Success in Online Education

Anticipated Actions and Related Investments During the Planning Period

• Virginia Tech will increase online enrollments by offering new graduate degree and certificate programs, including piloting unique online degree programs such as transdisciplinary studies, problem-based learning, or multi-institution programs and new degree markets such as process-based online programs like Green Manufacturing, Agile Development, and Design Thinking.

• We will provide new pathways for current undergraduates and former students to complete additional credentials that improve their value to employers.

• We will consider requiring all undergraduates to complete at least one fully online course.

• Virginia Tech will seek distinction by accelerating new ways of learning and enhancing teaching and learning practices with technology. Distinctive initiatives for the planning period will include
  • Using online courses as a vehicle for an alternative general education pathway.
  • Implementing a cornerstone-to-capstone Computational Thinking Initiative that blends computer science with creative and analytical work in online participatory cultures.
  • Developing a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) Academy, which will create a pathway for completion of open online courses to be evaluated and applied toward a student’s degree.
  • Involving more faculty members in professional development related to online learning practices, technologies, and environments. We will also enhance incentives and recognize faculty who demonstrate excellence in online education.
  • Examining the current organizational structure and streamlining functional leadership to facilitate the integration of technology into all instructional programs.
Background and Current Conditions

In 2002, Virginia Tech established a goal of growing graduate enrollment by 900 Ph.D. students by the year 2010. Actual graduate enrollment grew by 1,189 students from 2002 to 2010, and A Plan for a New Horizon establishes the goal of growing graduate enrollment by another 1,000 students to 7,800 graduate students by the fall 2018. This growth will be distributed: 75 percent Ph.D., 75 percent STEM-H, and 75 percent located in Blacksburg. All colleges will contribute to this growth in differing ways, and additional faculty, staff, and resources for assistantships will be needed to achieve the goal.

In addition to enrollment size, the university must improve both the diversity and the quality of the graduate student body. We receive about 12,000 graduate applications annually, and while this pool of applications is sufficient, the university must take action to increase the diversity of the applicant pool and to yield an increasing number of highly qualified applicants. To reach this goal, we must continue to offer highly competitive compensation packages, graduate family housing, affordable day care, and additional faculty, support staff, and space.

Increase graduate enrollment toward a target of an additional 1,000 students, mostly at the doctoral level in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and health sciences (STEM-H), broadly defined to include associated subject areas, such as STEM-related entrepreneurship, science, and technology policy and ethics.
– A Plan for a New Horizon, p. 11
Anticipated Actions and Related Investments During the Planning Period

The university will continue to support existing graduate education programs and reallocate and invest new funds to increase stipend levels, continue health insurance coverage, and improve the quality of life for students to attract and retain highly qualified graduate students. The university will need to invest in additional stipends and tuition waivers to achieve its ambitious growth goal. Specifically, the university will

- Provide funding for 50 Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Health (STEM-H) Ph.D. students. These include Ph.D. students and, possibly, master’s students in the colleges of Science, Agriculture and Life Science, Engineering, and Veterinary Medicine and within selected Interdisciplinary Graduate Education Program projects. Another 400 graduate students will be leveraged from growth in sponsored research.
- Invest in 50 additional assistantships for non-STEM-H Ph.D. programs in the colleges of Business, Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and Architecture and Urban Studies.
- Continue funding for IGEPs, which will contribute 110 additional Ph.D. students.
- Provide university funding for up to 30 out of 120 total Ph.D. students in the new Translational Biology, Medicine, and Health program (see page 10).
- Monitor growth and needed investment for master’s enrollments. Assuming the growth in master’s students is approximately 250 across the planning period, additional assistantships for up to 40 percent of these students may be needed. These assistantships will likely be in Blacksburg and located within existing and developing programs in the colleges of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, and Architecture and Urban Studies.
- Pursue new online and extended campus master’s enrollments and new self-supporting master’s degrees and certificates. The university’s expanding presence in the National Capital Region presents a significant opportunity to provide programs in both traditional and executive styles to new cohorts of students in that area with some limited growth (+20) in Ph.D. students supported in part by STEM-H and non-STEM-H grants.
Achieve $680 Million in National Science Foundation Research Expenditures

Background and Current Conditions

Virginia Tech’s research portfolio grew dramatically during the last strategic planning period, from $321.7 million in FY2006 to $454.4 million in FY2012. Continued growth and success in the university’s research programs in today’s highly competitive and resource-challenged environment will require consistent investment over time. University investments in research program expansion, particularly in the health sciences, have positioned Virginia Tech to meet today’s economic challenges with an increasingly diverse research portfolio. This investment has also created significant potential for growth and excellence in new disciplines at the interfaces of traditional disciplines and in areas of existing strength. In the near term, we will identify the areas in which the university can claim distinction and will allocate resources through our colleges, centers, and institutes to enable Virginia Tech to be competitive not only for the research funding but also for the recruitment of the highest-quality faculty and students.

In the spirit of our mission, we will contribute to business-, industry-, and policy-relevant research with a focus on multiple dimensions of security, resilience, health, and sustainability.

– A Plan for a New Horizon, p. 8
Achieve $680 Million in National Science Foundation Research Expenditures

Anticipated Actions and Related Investments During the Planning Period

Virginia Tech’s faculty are currently recognized for the impact of their scholarship across all of the university’s domains of inquiry. Our research addresses fundamental issues, helps shape the direction of knowledge creation, and has a significant impact on practice. As we strive to solve the grand challenges of the future, the continued growth, success, and impact of our research enterprise will be facilitated through several key initiatives:

• Establishing four discovery theme areas that will guide the expansion of our research and outreach. These areas Security, Resilience, Health, and Sustainability.

• Developing strategies to leverage our partnerships with the commercial sector, national laboratories, government agencies, and other universities.

• Reducing institutional barriers to collaboration both internal and external to the university and increasing administrative efficiencies. This will include the deployment of a research administration system for online management of the proposal and award process for sponsored projects, as well as tracking key research indicators and enhancements to our research compliance infrastructure in keeping with federal, state, and institutional policy requirements.

• Increasing the university’s capabilities and recognition as a leader in the area of high-performance computing and data analytics and leveraging Virginia Tech’s capabilities to conduct secure research.

• Promoting the development of an innovation ecosystem and related growth in entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology transfer programs.

• Fostering growth and development of research faculty and postdoctoral associates in support of the university’s research mission.
Build upon Existing and Emerging Research Strengths

Background and Current Conditions

Researchers at Virginia Tech advance knowledge in their scholarly fields, conduct investigations that engage contemporary issues, and shape future possibilities for acquiring and disseminating advanced knowledge. Scholars make contributions through peer-reviewed articles, books, artistic exhibitions and performances, patents, and transformative engineering, scientific, and medical discoveries. Research conducted by faculty members at all ranks, including graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, positions Virginia Tech as a leader in new and emerging interdisciplinary, translational, and applied fields. To continue building on these accomplishments, additional investment is needed in the successful and emerging research programs of academic departments, colleges, centers, and institutes.

To excel in a competitive research environment, we will continue to focus resources on a selected number of strategically important fields that offer significant growth potential, enable us to capitalize on the strengths of our faculty, and best position us to build the resources essential to developing world-class expertise beyond our current domains of scholarship.

– A Plan for a New Horizon, p. 5.
Anticipated Actions and Related Investments During the Planning Period

- Virginia Tech researchers will develop technological, human, and social strategies to ensure community and environmental sustainability through the following areas of strength:
  - Energy, materials, and technology;
  - Water science, policy, and management;
  - Transportation and communication infrastructures;
  - Natural resources, ecosystems, environmental quality, and One Health;
  - Data-intensive, high-performance computing;
  - Bioinformatics, nanotechnology, neuroscience, polymers, and robotics;
  - Geographic-information systems, visualization, computation, and policy informatics.

- Resilience is the ability of organizations, individuals, and communities to prepare for, absorb, recover from, or successfully adapt to adverse, disruptive, and challenging events. Research on resilience involves a broad spectrum of disciplines, including the social and human sciences, technology, health, and translational science. Virginia Tech will contribute to national and local security through research on resiliency in terms of community well-being in response to transformative changes. High-priority areas include responses to natural disasters, gun violence, cybersecurity, demographic shifts, climate change, economic crisis, food safety, public health, veterans, and other security issues.

- Future research activities depend on leveraging collaborations within and beyond the university in ways that compound strengths and broaden impacts. Internal networks connect individuals, programs, centers, colleges, and institutes horizontally on the basis of shared questions that produce new knowledge based on innovative methods. External networks connect Virginia Tech to the business community, community performers, national laboratories, international partners, government agencies, and other universities. Virginia Tech will continue to build networks to promote excellence in research and scholarship.

- Virginia Tech will create and sustain environments for educational and research programs that support innovative, high-quality, and high-impact research by providing the administrative support needed to create, apply, and communicate new knowledge, developing innovative graduate programs that build on interdisciplinary strengths; reward outstanding faculty with disciplinary expertise and openness to innovation; and establish partnerships among research institutes, centers, and other internal and external entities.
Create the Faculty of Health Sciences and a Graduate Program in Translational Biology, Medicine and Health

Background and Current Conditions

The university’s 2006 strategic plan emphasized science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) with a focus on interdisciplinary graduate programs and successful competition for federal research funds by emphasizing health, food and nutrition, social and individual transformation, innovative technologies and complex systems, bioinformatics, biotechnology, high-performance computing, and geographic information systems.

During the planning period, the university, in partnership with Carilion Clinic, created a new medical school and research institute in Roanoke. A university health sciences committee recommended further expansion of the health sciences through new graduate programs and growth of the institution’s health sciences research funding portfolio. The committee’s report, approved by President Charles W. Steger and the Board of Visitors, recommended the creation of a faculty of health sciences and new interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs in the health sciences.

These faculties will promote research and the development of new graduate programs, foster innovative and synergistic interactions among Virginia Tech faculty, assist in setting long-term strategic priorities, and build partnerships with external collaborators in which teams of researchers can compete more effectively for significant levels of external funding.

– A Plan for a New Horizon, p. 11
Create the Faculty of Health Sciences and a Graduate Program in Translational Biology, Medicine, and Health

Anticipated Actions and Related Investments During the Planning Period

• Establish the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) to serve as the organizational framework for health sciences research and graduate education. The FHS will be open to interested faculty from all colleges and will provide the focal point and structure to help increase annual health sciences research expenditures from $64 million to $250 million over the next six years. Providing sufficient funds to support infrastructure for the FHS will advance the achievement of this targeted research expenditure in health sciences and the establishment of the health sciences brand at Virginia Tech.

• Create a new translational biology, medicine, and health (TBMH) graduate degree. This program, anticipated to enroll 120 students by 2018, will be coordinated and administered by the FHS and will attract highly qualified graduate students who currently matriculate at leading academic health centers. The new graduate program will emphasize translational science from introductory courses through completion of the dissertation. The TBMH program will also provide opportunities for undergraduates to participate in translational health sciences research. The success of the program will require a maximum of 30 graduate stipends at levels competitive with leading health sciences and translational medicine graduate programs, along with program coordinator positions and infrastructure.

• Expand and create new strategic partnerships with health systems. This includes accreditation and further development of the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine. Additional partnerships with academic health centers will provide key facilities, reagents, samples, databases, and clinical and educational partners for translational research. Partnerships will increase market share of large-scale health sciences research and training funding and offer enhanced translational educational support to the TBMH program. Financial resources and well-defined formal arrangements with selected academic health centers are also needed.
Background and Current Conditions

The 2006-2012 strategic plan document reaffirmed a commitment to fostering communities that value all cultures, languages, lands, and people and sought international collaborations that would include the establishment of research and education centers and the expansion of study-abroad participation. Progress during the prior planning period in these areas was significant and has positioned the university well to meet the challenges of global interdependence and the goal of increasing the number of our programs recognized as among the best internationally.

To achieve global prominence, Virginia Tech must make targeted investments in global learning, discovery, and engagement to provide an educational experience like no other. In a globally interdependent world, our community must think critically, act responsibly, and debate respectfully. We must invent a future in which ideas across the disciplines and the world can grow, flow, and flourish.
Build and Focus the University’s International Profile

Anticipated Actions and Related Investments During the Planning Period

• Prepare students for global leadership and service by increasing the opportunities to engage in study, research, internships, and participation in service-learning projects that involve international issues.

• Provide all undergraduate students with substantial exposure to international and comparative content and expand and create living-learning language communities.

• Invest in infrastructure, support services, and institutional administrative structures, policies, and staffing and provide robust leadership and coordination of international programs.

• Create faculty development grants to support the infusion of international and comparative content into syllabi and curricula.

• Develop globally adaptive internal administrative processes to be nationally and internationally competitive for grants and contracts.

• Expand our global research portfolio by increasing investment in collaborative research projects relating to food security, global health, sustainability, and gender.

• Broaden our externally funded base through an internal, competitive grant program that will provide seed funding for new research initiatives.

• Develop a global brand by conducting public relations activities beyond the United States, developing an international marketing and student recruitment strategy, developing overseas alumni programs, engaging in global fundraising activities, and fundraising for the university’s international programs and initiatives.

• Invest in bringing preeminent global leaders and scholars to campus for sustained interaction with the campus community.

• Examine and expand the role and function of existing overseas regional centers to serve the learning, discovery, and engagement mission of the university. Expand interdisciplinary program offerings in Latin America.

• Invest in building Arabic and Chinese language and culture into minor programs.
Background and Current Conditions

During 2006-2012 the university launched a comprehensive arts initiative to increase the presence and practice of the arts on campus and across the communities that Virginia Tech serves. The Center for the Arts will open in fall 2013, bringing outstanding new facilities and establishing a major presenting program to attract significant artists and projects of relevance to benefit campus and the community. Other prior investments include the renovation of Henderson Hall to support academic programs in visual and performing arts and the construction of Theatre 101. The Arts Policy Board has developed an Arts Strategic Plan, and the university created the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT), a university-level research institute focused on the intersection of arts, technology, and education. These and other successful arts initiative efforts embed the arts into the fabric of the institution and elevate our reputation as a comprehensive research university.

Leverage the Opening of the Center for the Arts for the Enhancement of Virginia Tech Arts

By creating learning environments, programs, and curricula that broaden and deepen students’ knowledge, Virginia Tech will help students increase their capacity for reasoning and analysis, rational and aesthetic judgment, and oral and written communication, and their capacity to identify problems and contribute to their resolution.

– A Plan for a New Horizon, p. 12
Anticipated Actions and Related Investments During the Planning Period

• Invest in Virginia Tech arts through scholarships, assistantships, faculty lines, visiting artist/scholars, and endowed chairs. The university will establish additional master of fine arts programs to merge the arts and technological and scientific applications and expand enrollments to meet the rising demand for graduates that possess creativity, curiosity, and critical-thinking skills.

• Support the professional development and recognition of exceptionally talented faculty who serve as creative scholars. All academic programs at the university should look to and collaborate with programs in the arts and with ICAT to expand innovative learning models, valuing artistic practice equally alongside other research methodologies.

• Invest in facilities that support academic programs in the arts and enable students across the university to engage in “hands-on, minds-on” opportunities. These creative spaces will contribute to our position as a distinctive and progressive learning community and will include studios for visual arts, fabrication facilities for theatre, rehearsal spaces for music and dance, a screening room for film and digital media, and development of a student living-learning community centered around arts.

• Continue to invest in the Center for the Arts as the university-level focal point for the arts. The center will be positioned as a nationally recognized, major university presenter that provides diverse, multidisciplinary, thought-provoking arts experiences, provides cultural growth and engagement opportunities to communities beyond the campus, and contributes to expanding national and international research on the arts and creative campus innovations.

• Continue to invest in ICAT and support transdisciplinary faculty and projects dedicated to translational research and educational research discoveries. The university will support and encourage technology transfer from ICAT to regional and national industries and organizations by providing resources for promising projects and assisting with intellectual property agreements that reward faculty engaged in such projects.
Background and Current Conditions

The 2006-2012 strategic plan document called for an increase in access and inclusion of students from underrepresented groups, particularly underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities and first-generation, low-income students. During the planning period, the institution met and exceeded goals for underrepresented enrollment as measured in the Institutional Performance Standards of the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia.

In fall 2012, a cross-divisional planning process was initiated to realign the university’s Diversity Strategic Plan with A Plan for a New Horizon. This process identified institutional priorities within each of the four domains of the Diversity Strategic Plan: Access and Success, Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations, Education and Scholarship, and Institutional Infrastructure.

Foster Diversity and Inclusion

We cannot serve without honoring diversity. We cannot be a vibrant community without promoting caring and inclusiveness, respecting individuality, and valuing the unique contributions of each of our members.

– A Plan for a New Horizon, p. 16
Foster Diversity and Inclusion

Anticipated Actions and Related Investments During the Planning Period

- **Access and Success**: The university will expand its engagement with underrepresented pre-college and pipeline opportunities throughout the commonwealth. This will require an investment of institutional funds to nurture and sustain institutional collaborations with K-12 schools, community colleges, and minority-serving institutions. Current pre-college and pipeline efforts at the university often operate independently and would benefit from a structure that facilitates collaboration, communication, and coordinated planning. Institutional investment in broad-based approaches to pre-college and pipeline efforts will enhance the visibility and viability of pre-college programs in order to reach potential students and nurture student preparation and transition into all disciplines, particularly the science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and health (STEM-H) fields. Recruiting and retaining faculty and staff who contribute to a diversity of perspectives within the university remains an institutional priority. As such, the institution will invest in strategies such as college and caucus liaisons to support recruitment and retention efforts.

- **Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**: The university will expand its investment in marketing strategies and programming related to the Virginia Tech Principles of Community. This expansion will focus on greater engagement with teaching, research, and extension faculty while expanding on established approaches within other student, faculty, and staff domains.

- **Education and Scholarship**: The university has established a Diversity Development Institute to provide training and education on fundamental concepts of diversity and inclusion to staff and faculty members across the institution. The Diversity Development Institute will be expanded to implement new programming partnerships that focus on administrators, faculty, and staff as separate target audiences with unique needs.

- **Institutional Infrastructure**: Implementation of the Diversity Strategic Plan will require an investment of institutional funds to facilitate the creation of new initiatives that advance plan strategies. The Diversity Strategic Plan recommends incentives to colleges and administrative units that develop new initiatives that advance plan objectives. Additionally, an investment in human resources to coordinate an institution-wide focus on planning, implementing, and reporting and assessment processes will be essential in maintaining the effectiveness and relevancy of the Diversity Strategic Plan for the next six years.
Streamline and Consolidate Academic Programs

Background and Current Conditions

In 2002-2003, the university undertook a significant review of academic programs that resulted in a major realignment of academic departments and the creation of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and the College of Science. The result of this realignment has been a strengthening of the humanities departments, as well as a stronger focus in the physical sciences and their research potential.

In addition, the College of Architecture and Urban Studies created new administrative structures that encompassed multiple degree programs and faculties into schools while retaining program identities. The resulting schools of Visual Arts, Architecture and Design, Public and International Affairs, and Building Construction are now mature operational units with strong component academic programs that experience administrative efficiencies and additional flexibility. These achievements mirror the successful operation of the School of Education within the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

A Plan for a New Horizon calls for the university to look for opportunities to optimize efficiency, flexibility, and accountability and to also consider new academic organizational structures, such as the faculty of health sciences. Additional opportunities exist for consolidation of multiple academic programs into larger organizational structures and will be pursued during the planning period.

Our goal is to ensure “quality, innovation, and results” by reviewing and revising our current business practices for opportunities to optimize efficiency, flexibility, and accountability without sacrificing our ability to remain innovative and competitive.

– A Plan for a New Horizon, p. 7
Anticipated Actions and Related Investments During the Planning Period

- Create a School of Performing Arts that consolidates the administrative and strategic planning functions of the Theater Arts and Music programs while strengthening the distinctive degrees and faculties of each program.

- Create a School of Animal Sciences and a School of Plant Sciences within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences so as to coordinate the future development of the disciplines.

- Explore the current cross-college structure of the life sciences including biological sciences, biological engineering, and biochemistry, and consider alternative organizational alignments or faculties to enhance coordination among the programs to achieve organizational efficiencies.

- Explore the alignment and creation of additional schools in the colleges of Business, Science, and Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

- The creation of new organizational structures, while anticipated to result in savings in the long-term, may require bridging investments in leadership positions and integrated/interdisciplinary space to support the transition.
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