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# Across the Miles: Engagement Across Distance

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## Introduction



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# Strategic Direction of the University

... **leverage** networked **collaborations** internally...

... **create** and **support environments** for educational and research programs...

... **provide infrastructure**, administrative support, and opportunities for collaboration...

... explore how to best **harness technology** to improve the quality of education [we] offer students...



# President Sands' Vision

***Discovery,  
Learning &  
Engagement***



<http://www.president.vt.edu/about-the-office/statements/101714-installation-speech.html>  
<https://vimeo.com/109597160>

# Defining the Geographic Landscape



<http://hrapps.hr.vt.edu/orientation>

# Blacksburg

Student population: ~25,000  
Blacksburg population: 43,609  
Montgomery Cty population: 96,207



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<http://www.blacksburg.gov/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=3964>



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# National Capital Region



<http://ncr.vt.edu/Locations>

D.C. Metro Area Population: 5,860,342



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## The Northern Virginia Center (NVC)

- History of the National Virginia Center (1969 & forward)
- Existing Services and Spaces - Virtually and physically - all campus locations
- New Services and Spaces - Proactive vs. Reactive

## **NVC - History of the Center**

- 1969 and Moving Forward
- Partnership with University of Virginia
- Graduate Degree Programs Offered
- Research
- Library, Classrooms & Admin Support

## **NVC - Existing Services and Spaces**

- Group Study Spaces
- Small Collection
- Heavy Interlibrary Loan
- Instructional and Reference Support



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## **NCR - New Services and Spaces** **Proactive and Reactive**

- Event Capture
- 3D Printing
- Campus Computing Connection
- Upgraded Group Study Rooms
- Partnership w/ Architecture Dept Library

## Collaborative Efforts

- Historical Context
- Current Strategies & Tasks
- Future Directions

## Historical Context

- Organizational Structure (reporting)
- Distance Librarian
- Existing Relationships (library liaisons)
- Reorganization & Retirements

## Current Strategies (1 year plus)

- Initiate New Face to Face Connections
- Identify Needs and Service Gaps
- Extend Services and Opportunities
- Explore Marketing/Awareness Options
- Plan Next Steps





## Current Tasks

- Assess Spaces and Services
- Understanding Various NCR Sites
- Explore & Extend Services (any geography)
- Persistently Expand In-Class Engagement
- Communicate about Changes in Blacksburg

# Future Directions

Connect, connect, connect . . .

## Future Directions

- Improve Communication Channels
- Develop & Convey a Clear Message (and name)
- Develop a “Research Software Sandbox”
- Advocate for Staff Knowledge & Partnerships
- Explore Outreach to Distance Faculty/Students
- Create Processes & Expand to Other Sites

# Challenges



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- Communication
- Competing Work Responsibilities
- Embedded Cultural Practices
- Change is Effortful & Requires Mindfulness

## **What We Are Learning**

We asked ourselves the question

***What are we learning?***

“it feels like the answers are infinite in terms of  
landscape, interactions & impact”

## What We Are Learning

- Updating requires . . .
  - Expenses for Furniture and Equipment
  - Knowledge of Issues & Opportunities
  - Creating Systems that Didn't Exist Before
  - High Level of Mindfulness and Effort

## What We Are Learning

- People and Relationships are Critical
  - Getting New Employees Connected
  - Face Time
  - Open Communication

# Discussion

