



UPDATING THE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2001

Virginia Tech Strategic Plan

A bridge to new heights

The new library reading room "bridge," a modern version of Virginia Tech's unique collegiate gothic architecture, represents the 2001 Strategic Planning Process. The bridge exemplifies a forward-looking university that embraces innovation and technology while honoring traditional values associated with a land-grant institution. It also reflects the university's aspiration to bridge disciplines and establish new partnerships while identifying creative approaches to enhancing academic quality and stature.

[Virginia Tech 2010](#) strategic planning video

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Prologue

In light of President Charles Steger's challenge to advance Virginia Tech into the list of the top 30 research universities in the nation, a strategic planning steering committee, representing all segments of university, met during the spring semester of 2001 to update the University Strategic Plan. This report provides updated versions of the university mission, core values, and vision statements, along with the strategic plan.

One of the primary indicators of top 30 status is sponsored research. Consequently, achieving Virginia Tech's goal will encompass significant increases in externally funded initiatives. The vision for the university also includes a new intensity of scholarship and outreach — in addition to research — across the current array of academic programs and beyond. The plan calls for building on existing strengths in the research and scholarship, teaching and learning, and outreach and

service missions that enjoy widespread respect, as well as for strengthening all aspects of the university. To move ahead, the university must develop innovative interdisciplinary research and degree programs, foster education of the whole student, and attain a significant global presence.

The future holds much challenge, excitement, and promise for the entire university community as we reach new heights of scholarship, service, and innovation.

President's Message

By Charles W. Steger

Two major forces are affecting the research enterprise in higher education today. The first is the rapid growth of global communication and the resultant mobility of intellectual capital. The second is that the critical mass of resources of intellectual capital, facilities, and sustained financial strength necessary for leading-edge research has grown exponentially during the last decade.

Because of the speed and facility of global communications, funding organizations can go anywhere in the world. The new standard of excellence is “world class.” It is for all practical purposes relatively easy to secure the best talent wherever it may reside.

To be successful in raising its national and international reputation, Virginia Tech must have a cluster of programs that are considered to be among the best in the world. Our programs in wireless communications, power electronics, and polymer science already meet this test. Sustaining this level of excellence requires a high level of investment. Quality is as crucial as scale of activities.

The Top 30 research universities in the nation that already possess this critical mass of resources have research programs growing at an increasing rate. The gap is widening between the top 30 and the top 100 universities. Universities that have large-scale research programs are able to quickly take advantage of emerging opportunities. They also have the ability to assume greater risk and the potential for greater return on investment.

While growth in sponsored research is critical in achieving the top 30 goal, it is not sufficient in its own right. Achieving this goal means that the overall scholarly productivity of all departments will increase. We fully expect the humanities and social sciences to raise the bar for performance along with basic sciences and engineering.

Our obligation is to educate the whole student, to instill a set of ethics and values that establishes a context for the application of discipline-based and professional knowledge for productive citizens of our democratic society.

The structure of higher education in America is at the beginning of a significant transformation. There is under way a financial restructuring not unlike what has happened in business during the past decade. At this stage, it is particularly difficult for smaller liberal arts schools. Changes in instructional technology will alter the pedagogy in fundamental ways as well as the nature of the role of faculty. The need for capital investments will grow, while “consumers” demanding greater value-added results from the educational experience will put tremendous pressure on the finances of higher education.

Those institutions that fail to take action now will miss the curve and may never catch up.

Virginia Tech is aggressively repositioning its research programs to align them with major sources of funding. In addition, we are modifying our management and organizational structure to be more responsive to opportunities and better interface with both the public and private sectors.

The response of the faculty and staff to the Top 30 goal has been very positive. Measurable progress toward the goal is already under way, setting the stage for Virginia Tech to be one of the leading institutions in the country by the end of the decade.

The 2001 Strategic Planning Process

In January, President Charles W. Steger appointed a 52-member [Steering Committee](#) encompassing the entire university community. Members included university administrators, college deans, deans of the graduate school and the libraries, the University Advisory Council on Strategic Budgeting and Planning, and representatives of faculty and staff senates, graduate and undergraduate students, the Academy of Teaching Excellence and University Distinguished Professors, and athletics.

The Steering Committee met six times from January to May, 2001, with additional meetings by subgroups as needed. Committee members received briefing documents on key factors and policy issues related to the goal of attaining increased stature among research universities and assessed trends at Virginia Tech, in the Commonwealth's population and economy, and throughout higher education. They studied the characteristics of top-ranked universities with respect to instruction, research, and outreach activities. They reviewed various university models and enumerated requirements for improving 10 crucial sectors of the university across four strategic goals domains. They worked on revising the mission, vision, and values statements. Finally, they contributed goals, strategies, and objectives for the strategic plan and reviewed multiple versions of the document. Throughout the semester, they considered feedback from many constituents.

A strategic planning web site was established under President Steger's home page on the Internet and articles appeared in *Spectrum*. The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors was apprised of the planning process via updates at quarterly meetings. Colleges, departments, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and other campus groups held meetings to discuss the overall goal and strategies for attaining it. The strategic planning process was coordinated by Rosemary Blieszner, Professor of Human Development, who served as Director of Strategic Planning from December 2000 to September 2001.

<http://www.reports.president.vt.edu/stratplan2001/index.html>





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Strategic Planning Steering Committee

1/19/01

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Dr. Rosemary Blieszner	Director of Strategic Planning
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Mr. Vernon Boggs	Budget and Financial Manager College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Dr. James R. Bohland	Interim Provost
Dean Gregory N. Brown	College of Natural Resources
Ms. Laurie Coble	Director of Business Management and Analysis
Dr. Lanny L. Cross	Vice President for Student Affairs
Dr. David A. deWolf	Electrical and Computer Engineering
Dr. Benjamin Dixon	Vice President for Multicultural Affairs
Dr. Dan Dolan	Wood Science and Forest Products
Dr. J. Michael Duncan	University Distinguished Professor Civil and Environmental Engineering
Dean Peter Eyre	College of Veterinary Medicine
Ms. Kylie Felps	Student Government Association Representative to the Council on Strategic Budgeting and Planning
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Ms. Sharon L. McCloskey	Senior Associate Director of Athletics
Dr. Joe Merola	Acting Dean, Graduate School
Sharonda M. Meade	Graduate Student Assembly Representative to the Council on Strategic Budgeting and Planning
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Dr. Deborah Olsen	Director of Institutional Research and Planning Analysis
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