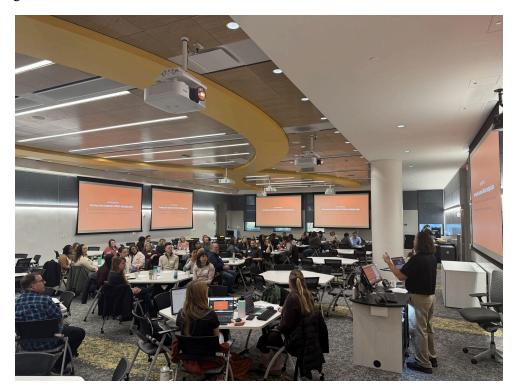# Academic Affairs and
Academy for Interdisciplinary Innovation at University College

2025-2028 Strategic Plan

Baseline Year Prototype

ABOUT THE PROTOTYPE VERSION

Dear Colleagues,

This document presents a baseline year prototype version of the 2025-2028 VCU Academic Affairs and Academy for Interdisciplinary Innovation at University College Joint Strategic Plan.

It originated during a daylong retreat in October 2024 attended by members of academic affairs, the da Vinci Center for Innovation and the Institute for Transformative Learning. Subsequently, I asked other members of the Academy at University College leadership team to contribute to the plan so it could represent all areas.

Everyone's input is valued and essential. Our next in-person retreat will be on October 23, 2025. At that time we will reflect on this launch version and recalibrate it based on our preliminary experiences. In the meantime, please put the plan into action so you can identify what works and what needs changing. This is a living document meant to evolve based on our collective input. It is a minimum viable product to get us going.

Thank you for all you do. It is an honor and privilege to work alongside you in service to our many stakeholders.

Best regards,
Andrew T. Arroyo, Ed.D.
Senior vice provost for academic affairs and interim dean, Academy for Interdisciplinary Innovation @ University College

WHO WE ARE

VCU Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost ensures the stability of VCU's academic enterprise while supporting and driving instructional innovation and student success in partnership with other central units and the schools/colleges.

Teams in Academic Affairs include:
- Academic Planning & Institutional Effectiveness
- VCU Continuing and Professional Education
- Learning Experience Design Studio (LEDstudio)
- Office of the University Registrar (dotted line with SEMSS)

The Academy for Interdisciplinary Innovation at University College is a hybrid academic and university-level service unit that offers interdisciplinary and individualizable curricular and co-curricular experiences for students to prepare them for the future of work.

The Academy includes:
- da Vinci Center for Innovation
- Institute for Transformative Learning
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Student Success and Life Design
- Other academic programs and courses

These two units operate with a single leadership team and oversee multiple university-level initiatives such as the VCU Consortium.

PLAN OBJECTIVE

VCU Academic Affairs and Academy for Interdisciplinary Innovation at University College work with internal and external stakeholders to future-proof the educational experience. Together in a positive work environment, we strengthen VCU's institutional integrity, drive innovation and elevate VCU's reputation for excellence and student success.

INITIATIVES AND GOALS OVERVIEW

Initiative One: Future-Proof Hybrid University

Goal 1: Increase Learner Enrollment, Engagement, and Success

Goal 2: Support & Drive Instructional Innovation

Initiative Two: Optimized Operational Excellence

Goal 3: Foster Internal Collaboration

Goal 4: Ensure Operational Stability

Initiative Three: Great Place to Work

Goal 5: Support Team Recognition and Retention

Goal 6: Cultivate Professional Development & Well-Being

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Initiative One: Future-Proof Hybrid University

We future-proof current VCU students, alumni and the broader community to reach their self-defined goals by fostering multi-modal, technology-rich and relevant curricular and co-curricular courses and programs.

Goal 1: Increase Learner Enrollment, Engagement, and Success

Objectives and Measures

1. Strengthen partnerships with key VCU central units for improved student outcomes
    a. Partnerships by unit and type
    b. Results of partnerships

2. Increase pathways to credentials
    a. Credit pathways by type with enrollments
    b. Continuing education / lifelong learning pathways by type with enrollments

3. Advance transformative learning initiatives (REAL; service learning; Quality Enhancement Plan; Vertically Integrated Projects; Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program; Common Book)
    a. Curricular enrollments by type with relevant assessment results
    b. Co-curricular enrollments by type with relevant assessment results
    c. Dashboards maintained with relevant information
    d. Transformative learning assessment results

4. Foster impactful industry and community-engaged partnerships
    a. Total active academic agreements by type
    b. Active service-learning agreements by community and organization

5. Support external recognition of VCU's academic excellence
    a. Institutional recognitions and awards (local, regional, national, international)
    b. Institutional accreditation in good standing
    c. Federal and state compliance in good standing
    d. Program reviews and accreditations in good standing

Goal 2: Support & Drive Instructional Innovation

Objectives and Measures

1. Implement university-level shared governance academic planning and institutional effectiveness model

    a. Transparent queues established and due dates communicated
    b. Prioritization process established
    c. Eight-year academic program review action plans updated
    d. Annual program productivity results and action plans
    e. Assessment reporting results and action plans
    f. Administrative effectiveness results and action plans

2. Create new Academy for Interdisciplinary Innovation @ University College
    a. Develop brand identity for university-level role
    b. Launch VCU Consortium

3. Innovate with new and existing academic offerings
    a. New program models developed (e.g., competency-based education; 90-credit baccalaureate program; credit for prior learning; stackable credentials)
    b. Interdisciplinary programs reimagined

4. Ensure university-level academic affairs committees and University College committees are high-functioning for innovation
    a. Organizing documents and bylaws current by committee
    b. Committee member surveys
    c. Committee achievements

5. Support faculty in designing innovative, student-centered learning experiences across all modalities
    a. Number of faculty convened to develop interdisciplinary curricula
    b. Attendance at LEDstudio programming
    c. Number of fully online program-level builds
    d. Number of courses by modality that includes emerging technology utilization
    e. Number of design projects supporting other academic affairs initiatives

6. Invest in faculty fellow/director-led initiatives
    a. QEP goals, metrics, accomplishments
    b. VIP goals, metrics, accomplishments
    c. ConnectEd goals, metrics, accomplishments
    d. REAL goals, metrics, accomplishments

Initiative Two: Optimized Operational Excellence

We deliver outstanding results and internal and external stakeholder experiences through a relentless focus on accuracy, creativity and efficiency in all that we do.

Goal 3: Foster Internal Collaboration

Objectives and Measures
1. Ensure that all staff and faculty include the team collaboration goal in Talent and in work plans respectively
   a. Number of staff including the goal
   b. Number of faculty including the goal
   c. Documented accomplishments

2. Empower cross-functional teams for critical projects
   a. Number of teams established
   b. Number of academic affairs and other units involved
   c. Documented accomplishments

3. Deliver consistent, unified information to external stakeholders
   a. Websites updated
   b. Policies and handbooks updated
   c. Trainings delivered by type with enrollments
   d. Number of Academic Affairs Help Desk tickets received / resolved
   e. Stakeholder satisfaction (ADAPTS stories; annual survey)

Goal 4: Ensure Operational Stability

Objectives and Measures
1. Maintain consistent operations across all operations
   a. Protocol gaps identified and addressed
   b. Reports and proposals for external agencies submitted timely and accurately
   c. Student-facing operations (e.g., advising; grading; concerns) handled timely and accurately

2. Maintain software systems and repositories
   a. Software systems updated
   b. Housekeeping performed including records retention compliance

3. Promote end-to-end operational continuity

    a. Employee onboarding and offboarding processes
    b. Employee cross-training and/or succession planning
    c. Regular and ad hoc orientations and trainings for new and continuing academic leaders (associate deans, chairs, program directors)

Initiative Three: Great Place to Work

We recruit and retain a highly qualified and diverse team of experts, provide opportunities for professional development and promote well-being in a culture of care.

Goal 5: Support Team Recognition and Retention

Objectives and Measures

1. Create new bylaws for University College

2. Ensure all staff and faculty work is documented and recognized appropriately
   a. Annual ADAPTS award
   b. Consistent use of ratings in annual staff and faculty evaluations
   c. Staff and faculty engaged in career pathing
   d. Faculty fellows/directors documenting work in annual evaluations and P&T

Goal 6: Cultivate Professional Development & Well-Being

Objectives and Measures

1. Improve team member satisfaction & retention
   a. Annual team retention rate
   b. Faculty fellows/directors survey results
   c. Team survey promoter score

2. Create opportunities for staff and faculty professional development
   a. Total funding dedicated to development
   b. Faculty and staff led sessions

3. Establish "Engagement Committee" to organize well-being and community service events
   a. Number and type of events with attendance
   b. Evidence of community service impact