A. Institutional Mission

The University of Virginia's College at Wise, a public liberal arts institution, provides students with learning experiences that offer opportunities to develop the insight, competence, sensitivity, and integrity necessary for living enriched lives and for enriching the lives of others. Established in 1954 as a college of the University of Virginia, it is guided by the values of citizenship and altruism. Proud of its Appalachian heritage, the College continues to honor its commitment of service to Southwest Virginia, the nation, and the world. The College is guided by a legacy of teaching and scholarly excellence and by a dedication to quality in both the arts and sciences and professional programs. Above all, The University of Virginia's College at Wise is a diverse community of people who believe that information can be transformed into knowledge and that teaching and learning create a foundation for wisdom.

Desired Accomplishments/Goals

Teaching and learning at The University of Virginia’s College at Wise are transformational experiences.

- Students gain the skills necessary to continue to educate themselves.
- Students are prepared to assume responsibility of citizenship.
- Students learn to appreciate and respect diverse cultures.
- Students discover the importance of being involved in the community.
- Students understand the value of education.
- Students acquire an international perspective.
- Students value honor and integrity.
- Students develop leadership skills.

The University of Virginia’s College at Wise is nationally recognized for academic excellence in the liberal arts and specialized programs of study and is the college of choice for Southwest Virginia students.

- The College is a community of learners supported by all constituents, faculty, staff, and students.
• The College attracts and retains a talented faculty.

• The College provides resources necessary for the continued professional growth and development of the faculty.

• The College recruits a talented, culturally and geographically diverse student body.

• The College’s staff believes in its mission, support its programs, and genuinely care about its students.

• The College combines the natural beauty of Southwest Virginia with state-of-the-art campus facilities.

• The Colleges offers nationally recognized science and technology programs, which have a strong foundation in the liberal arts.

The University of Virginia’s College at Wise has built a strong sense of community and improved the quality of life for the region.

• The College is the cultural center for the region.

• The College is an engine for economic growth.

• The College continues to strengthen the quality of K-12 education in Southwest Virginia in partnership with local schools.

• The College is a leader in environmental stewardship.

• The College plays an integral role in improving access to and the quality of healthcare in the region.

B. Strategies

1. Academy

• Develop a one-year residential STEM Early College Academy for high-achieving high school seniors, with no direct cost to the student

• Highly selective program offered to students residing within the southwest Virginia corridor

• Students will be offered admission into the program based upon their high school academic credentials, writing and verbal skills and the successful completion of the application process and personal interview with the selection committee.
• Curriculum will have a strong Science and Math component, with student taking Calculus, Chemistry, Biology, and composition/writing courses as preparation for matriculation into STEM majors at four-year institutions of higher education.
• Upon completion, students will have earned a high school diploma and at least 24 hours of college credit.
• The liberal arts mission of the College will enhance the Academy experience through opportunities in theatre, art, music, and selected programs and lectures offered by the College.
• Engaging in student life and extracurricular programs will also support the Academy’s mission
• Secure funding
• Develop STEM-H courses bearing college credit
• Create full-time positions for director, support personnel, teaching faculty
• Market to school divisions, economic development officials, and constituencies
• Develop policies
• Develop scholarship programs for those returning to UVa-Wise as college students
• Enroll 40 students in Fall 2015

2. Early Alert Program

• Continue to enhance program of academic intervention to identify at-risk students
• Develop a "summer bridge" program for first-time at-risk students enrolling for fall semester
• Continue training faculty in best practices in student advising
• Increase faculty participation rate in identifying and reporting early alert at-risk students
• Develop full-time professional position to extend tutoring to focus on those students who receive an early alert warning

3. High Need Degrees

• Continue to enhance marketing efforts in STEM-H disciplines to include the college website and social media
• Develop an online RN-to-BSN program
• Increase the engagement of teaching faculty in the recruitment of students enrolling in STEM-H disciplines
• Investigate the feasibility of developing collaborative masters level programs in STEM-H disciplines
• Develop a full-time professional position focusing on internship/externship development and career counseling in STEM-H fields
4. **Science Consortium**

- Target community outreach programs in STEM areas, including Healthy Appalachia, Astronomical Observatory visit, and others
- Provide summer in-service workshops for public school teachers in STEM fields in collaboration with the Center for Teaching Excellence
- Cultivate partnerships with regional business and industry to collaborate with instruction
- Seek external funds for expansion, integration, and marketing of STEM outreach/community education programs
- Pilot on-campus lab experience for L. F. Addington Middle School students in Wise, VA during their academic year

5. **Appalachian Prosperity Project (APP)**

- Enhance and expand current initiatives
- Establish annual or biennial academic symposium
- Establish APP Advisory Board
- Increase the number of faculty and students at U.Va. and UVa-Wise involved in research and/or initiatives in Southwest Virginia
- Expand external funding and philanthropic support
- Enhance communication about APP through expanded website and newsletter

6. **Improve K-12 Teaching and Learning Through the Center for Teaching Excellence and Other Outreach**

- Continue to increase the number of Virginia's school districts represented in CTE course
- Increase headcount and student FTE
- Increase awareness of CTE activities, within the college, community, and among public educators across the Commonwealth
- Continue to develop opportunities and capacities to target custom, professional development, and solutions for individual school divisions
- Expand the teacher licensure certification opportunities for K-12 teachers
7. Expand Scope of Summer Programs

- Finalize a new summer schedule based on a core of courses with proven enrollment history in collaboration with the development of a four-year academic schedule to provide students the availability to continue academic progression to graduate in four years or less
- Publish summer schedule in early fall to accommodate both UVa-Wise students and students from other institutions, as they plan their spring schedules based on the course offerings of the Summer College
- Provide guaranteed compensation to faculty for courses offered which the College has determined to be essential to the academic progress of the student

8. Undergraduate Research Initiatives

- The College is developing marketing materials to educate students about opportunities in undergraduate research.
- Continue to support student participation in regional undergraduate research symposia
- Explore collaborative opportunities for undergraduate research through bilateral agreements with international institutions
- Recognize student undergraduate research endeavors through a celebratory week, including student panels and student presentations
- Host a “Research Day” where UVa-Wise students can conduct presentations based on their respective research interests to include all disciplines
- Explore the feasibility of hosting a “Science and Engineering Fair” for Wise County Schools

C. Financial Aid

UVa-Wise is committed to providing a high quality, affordable education to students from far southwestern and the Commonwealth regardless of family income or ability to pay for higher education. In fact, over the past several years the College has demonstrated this commitment through moderate tuition increases and offering substantial financial aid awards to its students.

Students who attend UVa-Wise have consistently demonstrated a need for financial aid assistance at dramatically higher rates than other public colleges and universities in the Commonwealth. Typically, 82% of students applying for financial assistance demonstrate need with 80% of this group possessing an expected family contribution of between $0 and $7,499.

The financial aid packaging philosophy exhausts all possible grant, scholarship, and work-study opportunities before including student loans. For a needy student, a typical financial aid package will consist of 78% in grant, scholarship, and work study funding and only twenty two percent in student loans.
For UVa-Wise, the definition of middle income is possibly very different than that of other state schools because we serve a unique student population. Students classified as middle income would be the 20% of financial aid applicants with an expected family contribution of $7,500 or more. With an endowment of over $50 million, of which 71% percent is designated for scholarships, the College is able to address affordability for all students.

UVa-Wise and Mountain Empire Community College recently partnered to offer students a pathway to earn both associate and bachelor degrees – tuition free. This cutting edge partnership has helped to create a culture of education in far southwestern Virginia and make a college education possible for a greater number of capable students many of whom meet the middle income definition above.

Despite the socioeconomic status of the student body, graduates leave UVa-Wise with a very manageable debt load. On average, graduates leave with a total indebtedness of just over $11,000 – one of the lowest in the nation. This is remarkable when considering the national average indebtedness level is nearly $27,000. The College is consistently recognized by US News and World Report for its low indebtedness level for graduates. The College encourages students to borrow only if they need to and counsels them to borrow conservatively.

UVa-Wise continues to be sensitive to our students’ capacity and ability to meet rising college costs, regardless of family income and is dedicated in keeping student loan debt as low as possible.

D. Evaluation of Previous Six-Year Plan

1. Early Alert Program

  Consultant: Noel-Levitz, a nationally recognized higher education consulting firm, developed a predictive model for student success. The predictive model reviews the profile of those freshmen who enrolled in the fall semesters of 2009, 2010, and 2011 and examines academic, financial, socio-economic, and other factors to help the College better understand those students who can be successful and those who may need access to support services and other academic resources.

  In addition, Noel-Levitz conducted a comprehensive review of the College’s housing operation to assess perceptions, occupancy strategies, new opportunities in regards to learning communities and focused interest groups, and to more formally strengthen the connection of academic program to the co-curricular program to further enhance new student recruitment and retention.
The consultants report is under review. Currently, changes in administrative structure of the Housing staff are being implemented. Student Affairs staff are developing plans for the 2013-14 academic year.

**Advising:** The College’s advising process is requiring all degree-seeking students to seek the counsel of an advisor to register. Students with less than 60 hours or are undeclared must see their freshman seminar advisor or the advising office. Students with 60+ hours must see a faculty member in the declared major. New freshmen and transfers as well as readmits are counseled by the advising office.

The College is implementing the SEE YOUR ADVISOR campaign in preparation for advising for fall 2013. This consists of a two-fold approach: 1) a public relations promotional campaign utilizes posters, emails, campus signage, student portal alerts, contests, college newspaper articles, postcards, faculty trainings, social media sharing and videos across campus, and 2) students are electronically stopped from enrolling until their major advisor clears them for registering for courses in the student information system. Once cleared, students can register, but only after gaining the approval from their advisors.

Because of this campaign, more students register for courses prior to leaving campus for summer break. Registration progress (students pre-registered for fall) is monitored throughout the campaign.

In addition, the Spring Faculty Workshop focused on best practices in student advising, including the need for more intrusive assistance to students.

As of April 15, 2013, 1,023 students were registered for fall 2013. After removing seniors, students who have withdrawn, and those with holds, only 221 students had not registered. Of those not registered, 62 are freshmen, 81 are sophomores, and 78 are juniors.

During the third week of April, a letter was sent from the Provost to all students who were not registered for fall. The letters seemed to have impacted at least 37 students. By April 29, 2013, 1,060 students were registered.

**Admission Standards:** The Office of Admissions is implementing new admission standards for first-time freshmen. In 2010-11, the number of provisionally admitted students decreased from 77 in fall 2010 to 41 in fall 2011, a reduction of fifty-two percent. In 2011-12, the number of provisional students admitted by Admissions was reduced 54% to 19. Such changes improved the fall-to-spring freshman retention rate for provisionally admitted students from 47% for the 2010 cohort to 79% for the 2012 cohort. In addition, provisionally admitted students are grouped together in freshman
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seminar, receiving intensive instruction regarding college success – time management, organization skills, guidance on campus resources for support, and other important topics.

Early Identification of At-Risk Students: The Office of Academic Affairs is implementing an early alert system to identify at-risk students in the first weeks of school.

The Early Alert program begins in the fifth week of classes – after we have processed drop for non-payment in the first week and Roll Verification in the second, third, and fourth weeks of class. During the fifth week, instructors submit an electronic form in which they are asked to list students whose academic progress is a concern for any reason (such as, nonattendance, not doing homework, etc.). Instructors have the full week to submit any concerns. At the beginning of the sixth week of classes, this information is collected and disseminated to the following groups:

- Freshman Advisors
- Academic Affairs Staff
- Advising Office
- Department Chairs
- Academic Support Services Staff
- Counseling Staff
- Threat Assessment Team
- Student Life Staff
- Housing and Residence Life Director
- Athletics Staff

The information that is sent out contains the names and alerts (without any specific grade information) so that all parties who touch the life of the student will be aware of the concerns of faculty.

Each student also receives a letter to their home address in a specially marked envelope that contains a letter stating the courses and instructor and suggesting that the student seek out the course instructor to get help. On the back of the letter, there is also a list of offices that provide support to students and their respective contact numbers and campus locations.

In fall 2012, the College’s instructors submitted 401 alerts on 322 students, with some students receiving multiple alerts. The top three issues sited by instructors included: (1) risk of failure, (2) grade concerns, and (3) attendance/missing assignments. Of the 322 students identified in fall 2012,

- 21 or 6.5% earned a GPA of 0.0
- 66 or 20.5% earned a GPA less than 1.0
• 142 or 44.1% earned a GPA less than 2.0
• 12 or 3.7% withdrew

As a result, the College is currently undertaking a demographic study on students earning a semester GPA of less than 1.0 and those withdrawing from the College. The support services made available to these students will be reviewed to determine use and success after intervention.

2. **High Need Degrees**

The Computer Science and Software Engineering programs are engaged in a program to create targeted marketing to highly qualified students interested in Computer Science/Software Engineering. This effort includes outreach to public school students in the form of after-school programs, a traveling robotics program, and a middle school robotics summer camp. The faculty have also worked with the Admissions Office to design and produce specialized College recruiting materials specific to Computer Science/Software Engineering program. They also are engaged in recruiting events unique to Computer Science/Software Engineering, such as an admitted student day. Nursing has also emphasized the recruitment of highly performing students by beginning to admit freshman students directly into the program based on their superior high school records. The department of Natural Sciences has worked with Student Support Services to create a program of supplemental instruction to increase retention rates in entry-level science courses. In order to increase the number of students gaining admission to the nation’s most selective medical and graduate schools, the College is preparing to offer in 2013-14 financial support for test preparation courses for upper division students applying for first professional and doctoral programs.

The College increased the number of graduates in STEM-H disciplines 3% to 68 from 2011-12 to 2012-13.

3. **Science Consortium**

The College continues to run numerous projects for public school students, including 2 Lego robotics teams, computer science/robotics summer camp for middle school students, astronomy nights for the community, computer science/software engineering traveling demonstrations, Sigma Zeta Math/Science competition. In addition, a supplemental instruction program was piloted for entry-level courses in STEM disciplines. All of this was accomplished without additional state funding. The College is working on the establishment of a STEM Early College Academy (see Strategy 1 – Academy).
A Dominion grant was received through work with the Office of Development for projects such as the development of the Norton River Walk as an outdoor classroom for both public school and college students.

4. Appalachian Prosperity Project

**Appalachians Building Capacity (ABC):** ABC is building an educated workforce through innovate early language and literacy programs in the homes of infants and toddlers and through professional development for early childhood teachers. Faculty members create successful evidence-based intervention models and infants and toddlers gain skills that enable them to enter kindergarten ready to learn to read. Head Start, Early Head Start and elementary school teachers build from the same basic understanding, terminology and evaluation structure, resulting in a seamless transition for the child from home to preschool to the early elementary grades.

**Appalachian Ventures (AV):** The Clinch River Valley Initiative (CRVI) is a pioneering effort to build local economies in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia, focusing on the Clinch River – one of the most bio-diverse river systems in North America. Working at a watershed level with over 60 federal, state and local partners, the effort is being facilitated by U.Va.’s Institute for Environmental Negotiation with funding provided by the USDA Forest Service, Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Blue Moon Fund and the University of Virginia. CRVI connects to the cultural and natural heritage efforts including Appalachian Spring, Heartwood, Round the Mountain, and the Crooked Road. UVa-Wise’s Office of Economic Development is co-leading CRVI’s entrepreneurship activities, which is a key aspect of the effort, along with developing a state park, enhancing water quality, developing and integrating access points, trails and campgrounds, and developing and enhancing environmental education.

*The Blueprint for Entrepreneurial Growth and Economic Prosperity in Southwest Virginia*, published in October 2012, has been cited by Governor McDonnell’s Rural Jobs Council as a model for other regions in Virginia.

**Healthy Appalachia Institute (HAI):** The U.Va. Cancer Center is bringing advanced care and clinical research to Southwest Virginia through an 18-month $965,000 grant, *Cancer Center without Walls*, awarded by the Virginia Tobacco Commission to increase access to clinical trials and specialists and to provide care through its telemedicine network. Through a collaboration with regional healthcare providers, health systems and organizations, increased numbers of patients will have access to screening education, and advanced cancer care, including genetic evaluation.

HAI is coordinating a regional strategic planning process entitled “Health is Right Outside in Southwest Virginia,” a blueprint that will come under the umbrella of *The*
**Blueprint for Health Improvement and Health-enabled Prosperity**, approved by the Southwest Virginia Health Authority and co-developed by HAI. The purpose of the outdoor recreation plan will be to determine effective strategies that encourage Southwest Virginians to more fully enjoy the region’s abundant outdoor recreation assets to improve their health. Twenty initiating sponsors have signed on from national and state parks to regional health systems and planning district commissions. Funding has been secured from County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, with additional support from APP.

Twenty-one undergraduate and graduate students (some for multiple years) have been awarded HAI fellowships in the last five years with the majority pursuing additional education or work in health fields. Fellows are mentored by UVa and UVa-Wise faculty with research and internship projects range from examining healthy food choices to causes for thyroid disease in central Appalachia to motivating factors in the decision to receive breast cancer screenings to substance abuse and dental disease.

In continuing to support regional work in substance abuse and misuse, HAI, UVa and Radford University assisted with the development of U.S. Attorney for Western Virginia’s Tim Heaphy’s report on a Southwest Virginia summit in November 2012: http://www.justice.gov/usao/vaw/presc_drug_summit/summit%20report_final20130417.pdf

In partnership with VPI & SU’s Virginia Cooperative Extension, HAI supported Master Food Volunteer classes in Scott and Dickenson County, with Smart Beginnings Appalachia, HAI sponsoring a May 2013 conference in childhood wellness.

5. **Improve K-12 Teaching and Learning Through the Center for Teaching Excellence**

The Center for Teaching Excellence continues to work directly with school divisions across the state to develop and offer teacher licensure, recertification, and professional development courses and workshops, specifically designed to meet specific needs. Utilizing all types of course delivery, face-to-face, hybrid, 4-day institutes, and entirely online, the Center served 105 Virginia school divisions by offering 104 credit-bearing course sections for teacher licensure or recertification in 2012-13. *(Include enrollment numbers)*

6. **Expand Scope of Summer Programs**

The College has seen summer enrollment increase in excess of 200% since summer 2009. Such growth is attributed to three factors: mass mailings of summer course materials, completion of the summer schedule in November, and summer registration in February as opposed to April.
Currently, the College is finalizing a new summer schedule based on a core of courses with proven enrollment history, planning to pay higher salaries for instructors, and publishing schedule earlier.

7. Undergraduate Research Initiatives

The College has increased opportunities for funded undergraduate research. This includes approximately five Fellowships in the Natural Sciences (FINS) and 5 Healthy Appalachia undergraduate scholars per summer and the addition of 3 new stipends for Summer Scholars in non-science disciplines. Through a new grant, the College was able to pay all expenses to send 10 students to present at national, regional, and international conferences in the 2012-13 academic year. This new grant of $30,000 is in addition to an earlier fund of $60,000 for the support of undergraduate research. Participation in a Teagle Grant through COPLAC (Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges) allows our students the opportunity to work with faculty from other COPLAC institutions, enabling them to conduct research in academic areas outside the specialization of UVAW faculty.

The College continues to showcase undergraduate research through a regional symposium with Emory and Henry College, a COPLAC symposium with four other member institutions, and undergraduate panels at the College’s long-term Medieval Renaissance Conference.

The College is developing a brochure to educate students about opportunities in undergraduate research.

E. Capital Outlay

The College has identified two capital projects as being necessary in meeting the needs of both on-campus and off-campus communities. These projects include the renovation of Wyllie Hall, requiring $6,640,000 in general fund appropriations, and the design and construction of a Proscenium Theatre, requiring $31,700,000 in general fund appropriations.

1. Wyllie Hall Renovation Project: this project would establish the program guidelines and initial designs to convert Wyllie Library into a classroom and faculty office building.

With the College continuing to experience growth in enrollment, the conversion of the existing library into classrooms and faculty offices would aid in addressing the need for additional academic space on campus. This project would allow the College to plan for additional classroom and faculty office space through a thorough analysis of the current structure and needs/projected needs of the College.
2. New Proscenium Theatre Project: this project would establish program guidelines and initial designs, followed by the construction of a proscenium theatre on campus.

A core component of a liberal arts college is its visual and performing arts program, and this project would address the College’s need for a proscenium theatre on campus. Currently there is no proscenium theatre either on campus or in the region. In order to meet the Board’s desire of the College at Wise becoming the top public liberal arts college in the nation, it is critical to have a facility of this type as a basic component of the arts curriculum. In order to properly meet the needs of the College and community, a thorough study of the requirements for a facility of this type is imperative.