An assessment to serve strategic planning

- Relative to institutional goals and the operating environment
- Primary focus is University-wide; not comprehensive study of every school
- Concurrent with accelerated planning process
Strategy in an educational institution must:

- Create comparative advantage
- Motivate external and internal constituents
The Study

- Review comparison documents and data
  - Assessments, surveys, rankings, Art & Science Group price/aid/competitive position study

- Interview BOV members, deans, department chairs, senior administrators (approx. 100)
Examine strategic priorities at 9 universities
- Duke
- NYU
- UC Berkeley
- UCLA
- University of Chicago
- University of Michigan
- UNC Chapel Hill
- University of Southern California
- Vanderbilt
The Study

- Interview 30 thought-leaders
  - Scholars of higher education
  - Heads of education associations / academies
  - Former and current university presidents and provosts, US and abroad
  - National foundation leader
  - Education delivery entrepreneur
  - Virginia business leadership
  - Policy-makers and advisors
The Environment for Public Higher Education
Every revenue source is stressed

Disadvantaged in fierce competition for faculty
Full professors at public doctoral universities make on average **35 percent less** than their private university peers.

Salaries at all but 5 schools/programs at UVA rank below the 60th percentile of peer universities.
“The only strategic planning that universities do that’s really strategic is recruiting faculty. That will shape where you’re going for 30 to 40 years.”
“The key is to start hiring now. Most publics are not in a hiring mode, so there’s advantage to leaping ahead.”

“They’ll have to outwork and outthink richer competitors—they’ll have to be very bold and willing to take risks, and this will require a Board that will stand behind them.”
Technology may be revolutionizing teaching and delivery /

Greater-than-ever need for residential education
“For almost all universities, we are at an inflection point. The question for leaders is how many experiments to run at once.”
“MOOC’s are not the silver bullets—it’s one form of democratization of higher education, but there’s no substitute for interactions among students. Technology can flip the way we use information and then faculty use the information to solve problems with students.”
“The big challenges will be in using Internet access and social media to create blended classroom experiences tailored to the learning habits of this generation of students. But there must be no sacrifice of quality—maintaining closely engaged faculty experience in the classroom is critical.”
“You have to determine what works for each market. One method does not fit all. Focus on the core audience first—undergraduates.”
The Environment for Public Higher Education

- Heightened expectations to innovate, solve problems, operate more efficiently /

- Need for administrative leaders to be public figures /

- Heightened requirements of governance
“If we want to be a great university, what will it take to get us there? Leading with an austerity argument will be a disaster. We have to lead instead with enhancing learning and introducing assessment.”
“It’s not just a matter of being interdisciplinary, nor is it just societal problems. It’s starting with the key questions. Mind-brain development, versus just neuroscience.”
UVA’s Current Position
UVA’s Competition

- Strategic, decisive about direction

- Aggressive around every revenue source
  - Student recruitment, maximizing tuition revenue
  - Competing for federal funding
  - Slowing decline in state funding
  - Fundraising targeted at strategic priorities
  - Partnering
  - Exploring other funding sources
  - Cost-saving, privatizing, leveraging assets
“(UVA) is a wonderful place—that doesn’t feel as driven as others.”

Funding trends and rankings largely support that view.
UVA faculty/staff are anxious for clear, strategic, University-wide direction.
“Don’t go into areas you’re not already in. Period.”
Overarching Message

Build on existing strengths / advantages.

You can’t do everything well.

You’re unlikely to thrive where others already lead.
UVA is seen, externally and internally, as having genuine, rare distinctions which it not only should, but must, nurture and strategically, aggressively build upon.

Don’t neglect your distinctions.

Don’t take them for granted.
Key UVA Advantages

- Undergraduate experience
  - Students highly engaged, taking unusual responsibility

- Distinctive, shared culture among faculty and students

- Areas of leadership in humanities, social sciences, professional schools

- Mid size can mean the best of research / learning
“UVA has been successful not by saying yes but by saying no. Say no to student growth and academically weaker students, say no to graduate programs that don’t fit the model, but also be opportunistic. Play to and leverage current strengths and build new ones very selectively.”
“They have done undergraduate education better than we have. They’re the best at it of any of us.”

- Freshman retention rate: 97%
- Graduation rate: 94%
UVa occupies a reasonably strong market position.

- Students who apply and enroll rate it very highly.
  - Notably on student honor code, beautiful campus, history and tradition

- No in-state institutions represent significant competitive threats.
Competition is stiff: 2/3 of out-of-state admit-declines plan to attend top-25 institutions.

UVA does **not** stand out from its competition on the attributes that are most important in students’ choices:

- strong program in the student’s field of study
- outstanding students
- advising
- exceptional faculty
UVa could raise price significantly in-state and moderately out-of-state without losing market share.

If UVA were to decrease financial aid significantly, it would experience significant declines in the quality and diversity of its matriculating students, especially from out of state.
From Last Year’s Study

What the study shows UVA can do:

• Increase awareness of affordability and AccessUVa

• Provide a more welcoming visit and atmosphere
What the study shows UVA can do, cont.:

- Strengthen reputation for program quality, advising, and student quality
- Increase emphasis on global citizenship
What the study shows UVA can do, cont.:

- Most notably, invest in faculty-student relationships

- Will have strong effect on desirable cohorts
Current Student Surveys and Rankings

UVA students report unusual levels of engagement and growth over their four years.

UVA fares well in highly-watched rankings.
Implications for UVA’s Strategy
Implications for UVA Strategy

Recommit to counter-trending greatness as a collegiate research university

- Students’ academic / residential experience
- Extensive interaction with scholar-teachers
- Development of leadership qualities, skills, and motivation
Implications for UVA Strategy

- Lead change in pedagogy and the student experience to develop “useful knowledge”
  - Delivery
  - Content
  - Path: advising, experiential learning, other engagement
Implications for UVA Strategy

- Reinvest in leadership in humanities and social sciences
- Sustain / develop strengths in carefully selected areas in the sciences
- Incentivize collaboration, including institutional
- Continue to focus on graduate and professional programs of national prominence
Implications for UVA Strategy

- Be mindful of the fact that UVA is in the spotlight.
  - An opportunity to make a mark.
  - A responsibility to set an example.
The strategies should be clear, directional, and decisively supported by all.
Implications for UVA Strategy

Tap the enormous pent-up energy for renewal and revitalization.