

A Faculty Senate Vision for UVa

As a site for cutting-edge research in major scholarly fields and as the home for an unparalleled undergraduate experience, the University of Virginia is ideally positioned to become the number one public research and teaching institution in the United States. To achieve this goal, UVa must invest new resources in targeted initiatives of high ambition that will extend our research and teaching excellence without decoupling the reciprocal relationship between the two. If we excel across the University with this dual distinction, our research-and-teaching academical village will become a paradigm for higher education, both public and private.

The Faculty Senate fully endorses a range of initiatives already underway—including efforts in the **sciences and engineering**, movements toward **internationalization** of the university, a commitment to new initiatives that will enhance current programs in the **visual and performing arts**, investment in growing **libraries** and in **digital technologies** for research and teaching, and a renewed commitment to **public outreach**, especially in K-12 education. To these we add and encourage several concrete initiatives that, if taken together, would lead toward the transformational goals we regard as both necessary and within reach.

Our first and foundational recommendation is:

- **Immediately pursue a minimum 1:15 faculty-student ratio in every school**, to be fully achieved within seven years. Additional faculty would enable UVa to increase the number of classes having fewer than 50 students and, especially, fewer than 20 students, and to extend faculty involvement with students in research. We propose a long-term goal of a 1:12 ratio by 2020.

Accompanying that goal and in large measure building upon it are these core aims:

- **Build internationally prominent research programs**, as assessed by academic metrics like National Research Council rankings, **especially in the sciences and engineering**, while taking steps at every stage to **enhance already distinguished areas in the humanities, social sciences, and professional schools**.
- **Build and sustain a robust, versatile information technology environment**—equipment, networks, facilities, staff—to support scholarship, teaching, and collaboration both globally and locally.
- **Have every undergraduate receive a course in writing instruction and train all students in graduate and professional schools in relevant communication skills** (writing, speaking, presentation technologies, etc.), as part of a resolve to **make UVa the national leader both in the teaching of writing in every school and in engagement with K-12 writing instruction**.
- **Increase the diversity of the faculty and student body with regard to race, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic standing** so as to **achieve a top one-third diversity ranking among comparable AAU institutions** within the next decade.
- **Establish an ambitious program of cross-school exchange** that will promote research and teaching collaborations among faculty, with incentives and rewards for creative collaborative work in targeted areas.
- **Offer exceptional possibilities for undergraduate research**, aiming toward, within seven years, **a tripling of undergraduate research awards** such as the Harrison Undergraduate Research Awards, with funding for students and their faculty mentors.
- **Bring graduate funding up to market rates** within five years by **closing the gap in various disciplines' graduate fellowships between UVa and the nation's most prestigious institutions** in those fields.
- To guarantee sustainability of these and other targeted initiatives, **establish an ongoing academic planning process** that would involve the Faculty Senate, the Office of the Provost, and the Board of Visitors and that would continue to work through and beyond the present capital campaign.

Beginning work soon on these complementary initiatives will ensure the University's ability to fulfill its potential as a premier institution of knowledge and learning, dedicated to human flourishing and engagement in public life.