

Report of the 2020 Commission on Public Service and Outreach

INTRODUCTION

This commission began its work by assuming that outreach does indeed matter to the future of the University of Virginia.

Outreach demonstrates that research adds value in to public life and that a nationally ranked research institution in Virginia is indeed significant — to the students who attend and to all residents.

Along with teaching and research, service comprises a university's traditional three-part mission. The commission defined service to include three activities:

- **Institutional service** to the faculty member's discipline and the institution, including committee membership and involvement with professional organizations;
- **Community service** or volunteer work that may or may not draw upon academic expertise; and
- **Academic service** that translates the intellectual resources of the institution into the public realm.

For purposes of this report, the commission focused primarily on **academic service**, defining it as “the application of scholarly knowledge and professional expertise to the health, economic, educational, civic, and environmental needs of the public.” In all instances, this definition interprets public service as a product. Outreach is the mechanism that enables delivery of that product.

While focusing primarily on academic service, the commission did, however, include **volunteer community service** in its study and recommendations, owing to the extraordinary nationally recognized contributions of its students, faculty and staff. In addition, the complex and critical enterprise of distance learning is treated in a separate report by Dean Sondra Stallard.¹

¹In spring 2000, the dean of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies presented a paper to the vice president and provost on the complex issues facing the University as it considers whether and how to utilize distance-learning technologies. The vice president and provost and vice president for information technologies appointed a joint committee to address these issues beginning in fall 2000. The dean's paper is available as Appendix C on the commission's website, <http://www.virginia.edu/virginia2020/public/public-docs1.htm>. Appendix A presents the commission's evaluation design; Appendices D and E provide reports on benchmarking and current public service programs.

To develop its definition and understanding of public service and outreach, the commission reviewed the literature on public service, studied best practices at other institutions, and explored specific issues in commission subgroups. In addition, more than 30 community leaders were interviewed regarding public service at UVa.

The commission learned that every school at UVa engages in outreach and every city and county in the Commonwealth benefit from UVa's public service. Because the University is decentralized and diverse, its schools and centers have drawn on their unique public-service expertise to develop outreach programs relevant to their particular constituencies.

Evaluation of the current state of public service and outreach at UVa and benchmark institutions identified four areas of weakness:

(1) UVa lacks clear priorities for public service and outreach.

Some peer institutions, including Pennsylvania State University, have increased awareness of their programs by strategically focusing their public service efforts through institutional priorities. They have capitalized on known academic strengths to respond to public concerns.

Interviews with Charlottesville and Albemarle County community leaders revealed that public constituencies believe UVa has the resources, both intellectual and financial, to offer whatever services it chooses. Clearly, the University needs to communicate better its public-service priorities and the rationales that shape them. In addition, there is the perception that other Virginia institutions, particularly Virginia Tech, have conveyed a stronger, clearer message about their priorities to the public.

(2) UVa does not partner with the public as effectively as it could.

The discipline-based structure of a traditional university does not readily lend itself to addressing public concerns. The public's integrated, "multidisciplinary approach" runs counter to the administrative, fiscal, intellectual and cultural structures that shape a university's daily operations. The disconnect between traditional university organization and public needs is one of the greatest challenges facing both the University and its benchmark institutions.

The commission found that UVa has been most effective in its public response when it has charged a unit, such as the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, with focusing on specific public needs.

Although numerous official and informal partnerships exist with Piedmont Virginia Community College and Virginia Tech, increased visibility and institutional commitment by UVa would greatly strengthen these partnerships. The University needs to support and promote these partnerships in a coordinated and consistent way. UVa's College at Wise offers additional, but as yet unrecognized, opportunities for stronger, more innovative partnerships between central and southwest Virginia.

The University also must develop more effective processes for listening to its constituencies, especially in terms of local partnerships and community relations. In this respect, both Duke University and Penn State provide models of excellence.

(3) The University has not articulated a clear commitment to public service and outreach.

In recognizing faculty achievement, the University currently separates public service from research and teaching, rather than assessing it as a vital component of these central missions. This separation diminishes the value and importance of public service.

At the institutional level, although there appears to be some centralized coordination and support for outreach through the Office of the Vice President for Research and Public Service, the budget, staffing and reporting lines for this office fall short of those committed or established by similar institutions. Administrative models for stronger centralized facilitation are in place at the University of Michigan, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Penn State and Virginia Tech.

(4) Many of UVa's contributions to public life go unnoticed and uncelebrated.

One reason for the appointment of this commission was the belief that the University's outreach efforts were little known around the Commonwealth. Although the magnitude, variety, and impact of current outreach programs at UVa are, in fact, substantial, many programs are not well known either to the University community or the public. The commission found, in interviews with community leaders, that this was because of UVa's decentralized outreach system.

Therefore, the commission has supported the development of **Outreach Virginia**, the first centralized database of information about public service programs at UVa. Launched on-line in spring 2000 by the Office of the Vice President for Research and Public Service, UVa launched the site in fall 2000 at <http://www.virginia.edu/outreachvirginia>.

Similar databases at other institutions, such as those at Michigan and Penn State, served as early models for **Outreach Virginia**.

While many faculty members distinguish themselves through service, endowed professorships and/or awards in public service similar to those supporting excellence in teaching and research clearly would strengthen public-service programs. UNC-Chapel Hill, Michigan and Virginia Tech all reward faculty service contributions through annual competitive awards and/or endowed professorships.

Despite students' exceptional commitment to public service through volunteerism, UVa still lacks any universal mechanism to integrate their service experience with academic study. Programs at Georgetown and Pennsylvania demonstrate growing evidence that a service-learning

requirement benefits liberal-arts undergraduates. Most of the 10 schools at UVa already offer some variation of academically-based service learning for their students, but current resources and programs do not provide sufficient opportunities for every student to have a service-learning experience as part of his or her undergraduate career.

Finally, while many of the University’s staff, faculty and students have committed to service and have devoted considerable time to the surrounding communities, the University does little to promote or reward these efforts. UNC-Chapel Hill facilitates and recognizes such efforts as one aspect of its new Carolina Center for Public Service, established in 1999. For example, the Carolina Center distributed \$125,000 in awards, fellowships and grants to students, faculty and staff at its 2000 public-service awards banquet.

Beyond the seven specific recommendations that follow, the commission recommends the University pursue four broad **institutional** goals. To achieve excellence in outreach by 2020, UVa must:

- **Focus and apply its expertise to issues of public concern;**
- **Work in partnership with the public on these issues;**
- **Articulate its commitment to public service and outreach; and**
- **Increase the visibility of its contribution to public life.**

The following table illustrates the interrelationship of the seven recommendations and four broad institutional goals .

**Table 1
Institutional Goals and Recommendations for Achieving Excellence in Outreach by 2020**

FOCUS AND APPLY EXPERTISE	WORK IN PARTNERSHIP	ARTICULATE COMMITMENT	INCREASE VISIBILITY
1. Focus and apply our expertise in high-priority areas of public interest.			
	2. Establish regional and local structures to facilitate outreach partnerships.		
		3. Elevate public service in UVa’s academic culture.	
		4. Integrate service learning into student academic life.	
	5. Increase coordination and support for student, staff and faculty volunteer service.		
6. Align administrative and financial resources to reflect outreach commitment.			
	7. Increase visibility of and access to outreach at UVa.		

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Focus and apply UVa's expertise in high-priority areas of public interest

1.1 Establish a process to identify institutional priorities

UVa should not strive to be all things to all people but instead should concentrate its resources in areas where its greatest strengths match pressing public needs. One of the commission's first tasks was to identify those areas where the University is well positioned to contribute to issues facing communities throughout the Commonwealth and the nation.

Based on a review of current outreach programs and an assessment of public concerns, the commission believes the University could make a marked difference in its communities — local to global — in the following five areas of public concern:

- **Civic engagement and public policy;**
- **Economic and business development;**
- **Education, both K-12 and lifelong learning;**
- **Environment, both planned and natural; and**
- **Health.**

University activities in these priority areas are multidisciplinary and innovative. In many cases, they focus on applying advanced technologies.

The commission recommends forming a University "public service advisory committee" to review these high-priority areas and develop mechanisms to promote institution-wide initiatives within them. One such successful mechanism at other universities is the thematic, interdisciplinary "institute for outreach" grounded in research and teaching excellence.

With input from faculty, staff, students and senior administrators, particularly deans, the University should develop these high-priority areas into a University-wide statement on public service and outreach. The statement should articulate the institution's commitment, scope of desired impact, and goals in the high-priority areas for each region of the Commonwealth.

Where possible, the statement should incorporate any current strategic plans for each of the University's schools. For example, UVa's commitment to improved healthcare in southwest Virginia differs from its commitment in other areas of the state, based on priorities established by the UVa Health System in its strategic plan.

This University-wide statement would shape all centralized outreach functions and guide all collaborative public-service and outreach ventures. In addition, the University would need to

promote initiatives within the five high-priority areas that extend the best of teaching and research into the public realm.

The University's areas of strength and excellence and the needs of its publics will inevitably change over time. The commission recommends establishing a system to monitor changing public needs and revise our priorities accordingly. Marketing studies can provide information essential to this process. The University Public Service Advisory Committee could review high-priority areas systematically and make strategic decisions about investing funds within these areas.

1.2 Strengthen UVa's institutional commitment to K-12 education

K-12 education is a major issue of public concern. Each year, through the work of hundreds of faculty in more than 70 departments, UVa provides **direct service** to schools, teachers and students throughout the Commonwealth.

In 1999-2000 alone, more than 35,000 teachers and prospective teachers enrolled in courses leading to graduate education degrees, initial teaching licensure, mid-career alternative licensure, graduate certificate programs, and teacher re-certification programs. In addition, more than 5,000 teachers attended workshops and seminars that covered subjects from web-based classroom materials for teaching history to teaching elementary school science in conjunction with the state's Standards of Learning. Furthermore, more than 10,000 children and their families participated in activities provided through UVa, including after-school and weekend enrichment programs, hands-on science experiments and civics education.

While efforts to support and strengthen K-12 education are extensive, their breadth and impact too often go unnoticed by the wider University community, fellow Virginians, and state legislators. Predictably, two UVa schools, the Curry School of Education and the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, make multiple and substantial efforts in this area. Yet, even here the impact of these direct services often is diminished by the lack of University-wide publicity and coordination.

To gain this institutional visibility, the Office of the Vice President for Research and Public Service should coordinate and publicize the K-12 projects throughout the University's 10 schools as a discrete, high-priority area. A visible "umbrella" label should be given to K-12 activities, with appropriate subcategories.

These might consist of:

- Teacher recruitment;
- Teacher re-training;
- Provision of content-rich curriculum aligned with the Standards of Learning; and
- Direct services to students and their families.

All programs throughout the University providing services to schools, teachers, and students in K-12 should report their initiatives and accomplishments to the Vice President for Research and Public Service.

A single contact the vice president's office, familiar with all the University's ongoing K-12 efforts, could facilitate such communication and, more importantly, coordinate and improve responses to public needs. This person also would oversee and promote efforts to obtain joint federal and state funding for this work.

An advisory committee, appointed and supported through the Office of the Vice President for Research and Public Service, should oversee K-12 outreach activities. Committee membership would include faculty and administrators, especially those individuals responsible for delivering K-12 programs, along with representatives from K-12 schools. In addition to overseeing publication of a K-12 program directory, the advisory committee should meet regularly to review the University's K-12 activities, discuss plans for future programs, and develop collaborative strategies to enhance their impact.

The commission also recommends that University centers spanning several schools and whose sole mission is outreach to K-12 audiences should report to the Office of the Vice President for Research and Public Service.

(2) Establish regional and local structures to facilitate outreach partnerships

2.1 Support local partnerships within high-priority areas

In recent years, UVa's efforts to initiate and maintain partnerships have benefited local residents, businesses and schools as well as the institution. **Virginia Gateway** is one such example that creates a point of contact for local businesses, particularly technology-based industries, interested in strengthening their relationship with the University. Through **Virginia Gateway**, the University has begun exploring partnerships with local governments, schools, businesses, and nonprofit agencies to invigorate the Charlottesville-Albemarle community.

The Biotech Training Center, begun in 1999 through the combined efforts of UVa faculty, Piedmont Virginia Community College, the City of Charlottesville, and the UVa administration has demonstrated the benefit of collaboration through outreach. Local residents can become competitive applicants for employment opportunities in UVa research labs as certified lab technicians.

Building on the success of the Biotech Training Center partnership, the **Connected Community** is another public/private partnership involving many of the same local partners. It seeks to "harness the power of the Internet to serve the people of Central Virginia." While new Internet applications are continuously being developed, certain segments of society have limited or no access to emerging technologies that could improve their lives.

The **Connected Community** partnership has committed itself to making Central Virginia a world-class model to enable all its residents — including the elderly, poor, children, K-12 teachers, and minorities — to access and use technology in their daily lives. It exemplifies the possibilities that develop when UVa partners effectively with other colleges and universities, public school systems, local governments, and local businesses.

UVa must develop and sustain such working relationships with communities and neighborhoods so specific programs are appropriate to the needs and assets of both the community and the University. This requires time, and the relationships must outlast the life of any one project.

UVa's contribution to the **Connected Community** partnership or other local outreach partnerships will require energy, oversight and funding during the next three to five years. The University Public Service Advisory Committee described above could provide such oversight, solicit project ideas from the University community, and develop a strategic plan for investing the University's limited outreach resources for maximum impact.

2.2 Develop mechanisms for regional partnerships to enhance the impact of outreach programs

UVa needs to develop regional networks to strengthen its impact and presence both at the state and national level. Two initiatives illustrate how the University might develop partnerships on a regional basis, the first concentrating on the Commonwealth, the second on the South Atlantic region of the nation.

(a) Commonwealth regional outreach councils

UVa resources, training and programs are in every region of the Commonwealth. The University trains local government officials and emergency-response medical volunteers. It provides graduate degree opportunities for practicing teachers, makes cutting-edge medical information available to health-care professionals in isolated communities, delivers direct specialized health care, improves environments, and instructs young writers in every city and county of Virginia. Schools and centers have developed strong relationships with specific constituencies throughout the state.

Yet, as an institution the University cannot speak with any confidence about its comprehensive, ongoing contribution to the quality of life in these regions. It has not established partnership structures that provide continuity and accessibility to residents in every region of Virginia.

Thus, the commission proposes that the Office of the Vice President for Research and Public Service, in collaboration with other units of the University, explore the feasibility of establishing regional outreach councils in those areas of the state where the UVa presence is substantial.

Three benefits would come from forming such councils. First, the institution would, for the first time, be able to communicate with those regions and measure its overall impact. Second, by bringing together UVa representatives who have established relationships in a region, the University creates opportunities for more integrated and comprehensive approaches to the issues facing that region. Finally, it creates a point of contact for those faculty, deans, or centers that wish to work with communities in a region but have no existing relationship on which to build.

The work of a regional outreach council could include any or all of the following seven activities:

- Organize regional conferences to discuss the contribution of higher education institutions to the concerns and challenges facing the region. Conferences would include representatives from UVa and other Virginia colleges and universities with an interest in the region, as well as its leaders and residents.
- Publish monthly electronic newsletters to provide updates on UVa activities throughout the region — health-care services, government training, support programs for public schools, training for teachers, part-time degree opportunities, volunteer programs, etc.
- Publish an annual report of UVa contributions to the region with plans for the coming year, including relevant directory information such that it can serve as a resource for residents throughout the region.
- Develop plans for partnerships with other Virginia colleges and universities to serve the region.
- Serve in an advisory role to help UVa leaders develop priorities for the University's work in the region.
- Conduct interviews or focus group sessions with regional representatives to evaluate UVa's contributions, define the region's needs and challenges, and shape future plans.
- Award grants to UVa schools, centers or faculty for outreach and research partnerships in the region.

(b) National Endowment for the Humanities' South Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities

In 1999, through the efforts of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and several other partners, the University received a planning grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to submit a competitive proposal to become the NEH South Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities. The proposal draws on UVa's strengths in the humanities, in digital library initiatives, and in the integration of technology with the humanities.

The center's programs would focus primarily on understanding and dissecting the legacies of slavery, segregation and racial violence throughout the South Atlantic region of the United States. The proposed center also would enlist the expertise and support of many partners.

This project has the potential to embody all the values and goals articulated in the commission's vision statement (see Outcomes at end of report). It illustrates the benefits of

multi-unit collaboration and allows UVa to undertake a highly visible national initiative that draws on its strengths in the humanities, outreach, research and teaching.

If selected as the site for a regional National Endowment for the Humanities center, the University would have two significant opportunities: one, to make a substantial contribution through outreach to the intellectual life throughout the U.S. South Atlantic region, and two, to gain greater national and international recognition.

Selection also would commit UVa to substantial fundraising for the humanities — up to \$15 million raised by the University and its partners to match up to \$5 million awarded by NEH. Such a substantial commitment will require University-wide coordination and support, both in developing programming and raising funds. The Advisory Committee on Public Service and Outreach would further help set priorities for fundraising to support outreach initiatives.

(3) Demonstrate institutional commitment by elevating public service in UVa’s academic culture

3.1 Encourage each school to develop and implement mechanisms for formal recognition

As noted above, the University frequently separates public service from research and teaching within the academic culture. This separation diminishes the value of public service and impoverishes the scholarly and instructional enterprise. Applying knowledge (public service) that is being discovered (research) and conveyed (teaching) should be a seamless process, enriching all three dimensions of the University’s mission. Therefore, in recognizing faculty achievements, the University should acknowledge academic outreach as a legitimate and valued contribution.

The commission recommends that public service be elevated in the criteria for evaluating faculty performance. One way to do this would be to create a “dual ladder” for the professional development of more established, tenured faculty. Senior tenured faculty could choose public service in combination with either research or teaching as their primary activities, with the remaining activity being of secondary importance in evaluating the individual’s contributions.

The choice of which ladder to follow should not be irrevocable, and it could change several times during an individual’s career, according to one’s opportunity and enthusiasm. All schools would develop and implement a mechanism for formal recognition of public-service activities (either this dual-ladder model or an alternative system), according to their needs, strengths and missions.

Each school would define its own public-service mission to be consistent with the University’s mission. Department chairs would negotiate with their dean parameters of that department’s contribution to the public-service mission of the school. An individual’s achievements, particularly if he or she opts for public service as a primary activity, would then be evaluated in the context of that mission. Tenured faculty members will need to be assured that they will be appropriately rewarded if they devote significant time to public-service activities.

The commission recognizes that with their current responsibilities and workloads, faculty members are typically over-extended; thus, the commission wants to make clear that it is not recommending public service as an additional responsibility.

Rather, the commission recommends that for those faculty members whose public-service activities emerge from or are integrated with their research and teaching, the recognition and rewards accorded those activities be commensurate with those in research and teaching. This recommendation is not intended for all faculty members; it is intended to provide institutional support for those whose academic disciplines and skills involve them in meeting public needs.

Each school would develop a documented evaluation process for public-service activities that addresses both quality and quantity of the public service contribution. Other universities have developed and used evaluation systems measuring the impact and outcomes for public service. Whatever evaluation system is adopted should be sufficiently flexible to encourage and reward cooperative activities across units within the University. Interdisciplinary efforts that require greater work demands should be particularly valued. One component of a dean's and department chair's own evaluation would be based on this system.

3.2 Provide rewards for faculty and staff in support of public service

The commission recommends providing opportunities for endowed professorships and sabbaticals as rewards for excellence in public service. Tenured faculty members who have made outstanding contributions to the public-service mission of the University would hold an endowed professorship for a fixed period (such as five years), with the expectation that the awardees would continue a comparable level of achievement during the tenure of the professor. Financing for professorships in public service and the remuneration associated with them should be consistent with existing professorships in research and teaching. Additionally, sabbaticals for public-service activities would be awarded according to guidelines consistent with existing policies for research sabbaticals. Such sabbaticals should be available to academic, research, and general faculty, as well as administrative staff.

As an annual event to celebrate the University community's accomplishments in public service, the president should make funds available for an awards banquet to celebrate and recognize outstanding service contributions of faculty, staff, and students. A President's Cup would be awarded to that member of the University community who embodies the highest ideals of service to others. Additional cash awards, modeled after the Harrison Awards for Excellence in Teaching, would honor faculty who integrate service with teaching and research to further the University's mission. A similar award could be established for University staff and general faculty.

In conjunction with this annual event, the University would sponsor a full-page advertisement in area newspapers to announce the awards and mention members of the UVa community who have achieved some level of service excellence. The president would feature these public-service achievements in his annual State of the University address and in annual reports.

To encourage innovative public-service initiatives by tenured faculty, the commission recommends establishing a competitive process to solicit faculty proposals for such new programs, with significant funding available for the best proposals. This will fund new high-quality public-service activities within the University and serve as a powerful incentive for faculty to extend their research and teaching interests into the public realm.

The experience of competing for external funding for public-service initiatives also would create new prospects for external funding — including public, governmental and private donors. Finally, such a competitive process could encourage interdisciplinary programs across University units, similar to the model of the former Academic Enhancement Program . Other public universities — including Michigan State University, UNC-Chapel Hill and Virginia Tech—have successful faculty grants programs.

(4) Demonstrate institutional commitment by integrating service learning into student academic life

4.1 Provide a service-learning option for all students

Service learning is a powerful pedagogy offered in a number of UVa's schools that allows students to make connections between the challenges of field-based application theories and the perspectives gained in their coursework and research. The commission recommends that the University increase its service-learning options so that every graduating student will have encountered at least one such opportunity during his or her tenure at UVa.

One strategy is for schools and departments to authorize a “fourth-credit option.” To be eligible for this credit, students would submit a proposal before beginning a course outlining how their service experience connects with specific course content. The proposal would require approval from both the faculty member and the service site. Academic credit would be granted for completing the academic or scholarly product, e.g., journal, paper, class presentation, or agency-based project. With the instructor’s approval, the fourth-credit option could be attached to any University course, thereby integrating community service throughout the curriculum with a minimum of infrastructure support.

A second strategy involves creating faculty-led curriculum-development workshops to explore the resources and pedagogy of service learning. The University is fortunate to have faculty already skilled in service learning and knowledgeable regarding its resources and theoretical models. By supporting curriculum-development workshops and providing faculty incentives, UVa could promote good practices in service learning — similar to its highly successful efforts to improve pedagogy through the introduction of new technologies.

4.2 Provide faculty development support for service learning

One of the hurdles to developing service-learning courses is the amount of out-of-class time needed for logistical details. A support person, comparable to a graduate teaching or research assistant, could handle much of this additional responsibility. In addition to being

supervised by a faculty instructor, these assistants would receive training and support from University agencies charged with oversight of community relationships. Successful models of this assistance can be seen at Georgetown University and Duke.

As previously noted, faculty could attend curriculum development workshops to learn the pedagogic and scholarly benefits of service learning. In addition, the commission recommends funding curriculum-development grants to aid faculty who want to restructure or create courses that include a significant service-learning component. Grants could provide support to attend national conferences supporting service learning, such as Campus Compact, the Invisible College, and the Campus Opportunity Outreach League.

(5) Demonstrate institutional commitment and increase visibility through better coordination and support for student, staff and faculty volunteer service

5.1 Provide support for Madison House and other community volunteer activities

The many community volunteer activities that UVa students, staff, faculty and alumni undertake help define the University's culture. While not entirely reliable, current data suggest that UVa's volunteerism per person exceeds that of any university in this country. With a modest infusion of resources, UVa can better coordinate these efforts and meet public needs more effectively.

In addition to the highly visible Madison House, UVa students have organized a diverse array of over 200 volunteer service organizations under an umbrella called the Virginia Service Coalition. This fledgling alliance suffers from the inevitable turnover in student populations, as does the more-established Madison House.

To give them continuity, a new position within the office of the Dean of Students or the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach could monitor their funding, responsiveness, space needs, and public impact. Other groups, particularly staff and alumni who have contributed thousands of hours of community service, might work with the person in this position to increase the continuity and benefits of UVa's volunteer efforts.

(6) Increase visibility by aligning administrative and financial resources to reflect the University's commitment to public service and outreach

6.1 Dedicate a senior administrative position to public service and outreach

Most of the previous recommendations can take place only if the University's leadership assumes responsibility for them. Institutions successful in public service and outreach have provided greater authority and resources to their senior administrators than has UVa. In section 1.1, the commission proposed a priority-setting process to establish strategic, thematic institutes that reflect the University's strengths and the public's needs.

Without the attention of a senior administrative leader, such a process cannot be developed or sustained. The commission's vision and goals for excellence in public service at UVa require a strong champion within the senior administration, a person who is visible, directly involved in public-service activities and has both external and internal credibility.

The Board of Visitors established the University's current administrative structure for public service in 1998 when it created the post of vice president for research and public service. This action added public service to an office already responsible for monitoring and supporting University research. One staff position was created to assume some responsibility for public service, but the resources continued to be focused primarily on research with no commensurate support for public service and outreach. Current staffing and financial resources are insufficient to support the vision and recommendations of this commission.

To achieve the vision and recommendations, the commission recommends that an associate vice president be appointed in the existing Office of the Vice President for Research and Public Service within the next year as an immediate, interim action. This person would oversee the University Advisory Committee on Public Service and Outreach as well as assume responsibility for the following nine functions specified in previous recommendations:

- Develop an effective mechanism to review and revise the University's high-priority areas for public service and outreach;
- Organize a central advisory committee to oversee, coordinate and strengthen the University's K-12 outreach activities;
- Conduct resident interviews and focus groups annually to assess public needs and evaluate UVa's effectiveness in responding to past needs;
- Conduct marketing studies to identify emerging public needs;
- Research the feasibility of regional outreach councils to promote public service and outreach and facilitate communication within regions of the Commonwealth;
- Develop infrastructures to support academic outreach;
- Establish thematic institutes for outreach grounded in research and teaching excellence;
- Develop and support processes that facilitate outreach of individual faculty, such as the Faculty Senate Speaker's Bureau; and
- Develop a centralized mechanism for collecting information about faculty academic outreach.

This position would need a supporting infrastructure for personnel and financial matters, with organizational links to deans' offices and the provost. The duties of this position could also

include: fundraising for public service; communicating with state legislators; working with deans to develop rewards for faculty activity; improving public access; and working with the provost and vice president for student affairs to support service-learning.

Besides creating an associate vice president in 2000, the commission recommends that the University establish a separate vice presidency for public service and outreach in three to five years. As its public-service achievements and visibility expand, a vice-presidential commitment would be needed to take the University toward the vision for 2020.

6.2 Reassess the financial base and funding models for public service and outreach

In spite of the magnitude and quality of public-service efforts already at the University, present funding bases and models probably would not enable us to respond to changing public needs in the future. Currently, UVA does not have systematic or rapid means to support initiatives within its high-priority areas. It does not have adequate mechanisms to track public-service expenditures or measure the benefits of its outreach to the public.

One example bears greater elaboration. The School of Continuing and Professional Studies is the University's only school whose primary mission is academic outreach. However, the funding model under which it operates hampers its ability to respond to public needs. Presently, the school is charged with generating enough revenues to cover personnel, programs, facilities and operating expenses. Although the picture has improved in recent years, the school does not generate enough money through enrollment to cover its entire budget. The University subsidizes the school, but only with the expectation that the subsidy will decrease, and school revenues will increase in coming years.

The commission recommends that the University reassess the funding model for the School of Continuing and Professional Studies to account for the public-service dimension of the school's mission. The school provides academic courses and degree programs in regions of the state where enrollment cannot offset delivery costs.

These programs are offered in response to public need or to achieve other goals for the University. The school must offset these losses by improving profit margins in the programs that generate higher enrollment or by developing newer and more profitable academic programs. Under the current funding model, however, little seed money or capital is available to develop and market these new courses, degree programs or professional-development programs.

(7) Demonstrate institutional commitment by increasing the visibility of and access to outreach at UVA

7.1 Establish a conveniently located, adequately staffed convention center and referral office with free parking and a central phone number, such as UVA-4YOU

Although the University's academic outreach serves thousands of people every day, most recipients are only aware of the particular service they receive. They are uninformed about additional services, and they have no clear way to access information about them. In interviews

with local leaders, the commission found that even those residents most closely connected to UVa sometimes were uncertain how to get information to meet their needs.

A conveniently located and adequately staffed convention center or referral office would greatly improve the public's access to information and services. Creating such a facility would send a significant message about the past, present and future values of the University. Its physical presence would finally give substance to the invisible and decentralized nature of our current institutional commitment to public service.

As with the construction and improvements in the Rotunda, Cabell Hall, the Bayly Museum, Madison House, Alderman Library, Scott Stadium, the proposed arts precinct, and the graduate schools of Law and Business — physical commitment expresses program commitment.

Without a public-service facility, the UVa conveys to its public that outreach is nonexistent. At the same time, current public-service activities are too many and varied to be housed in one facility. The University needs a state-of-the-art building to serve as a user-friendly orientation and citizen-referral center, a conference center, a research location for those addressing public-service issues, a gathering place for those at UVa who spend their time and energy on public service and outreach, and a location for the administrative apparatus necessary to coordinate the institution's public-service mission. Such a model exists in other states and fits with the goals described elsewhere in this report.

7.2 Support further development of 'Outreach Virginia'

This new Web-based, interactive guide to public-service opportunities and off-Grounds academic courses and programs will address a serious need for state legislators, local officials and all residents (global as well as close neighbors): to see what UVa services are available to them and to their constituents.

Visitors to the site can search for public-service programs by different criteria, including areas of special interest or regions of the Commonwealth. **Outreach Virginia** will include volunteer-service programs as well as academic public-service programs. It will continue to be shaped by an advisory board of public and University representatives (faculty, staff, students and alumni). The commission recommends providing sustained staff and funding support for **Outreach Virginia**.

7.3 Develop a strategic communications plan

The University already uses a wide variety of media to inform local and global residents about its opportunities and programs. The commission recommends developing a strategic communications plan that builds on a consistent theme and visual message for the institution's public service.² This strategic plan would be the responsibility of the University's development and external-relations staff working closely with multiple area media outlets.

² One such example, "What Are the Faces of the University of Virginia?" is provided in Appendix F on the commission's website, <http://www.virginia.edu/virginia2020/public/public-docs1.htm>.

In the consultants' assessment of the University's achievements in public service, "performance recognition" was cited as the weak link.³ While the University's public-service activity does compare favorably with that of other universities — including those more widely recognized for public service, such as Virginia Tech and Penn State — it falls short in how publicly it communicates its contributions.

In addition to focusing on a consistent theme in various UVa publications, the commission recommends holding local and regional summits on public service at a variety of locations, including the regional centers of the School for Continuing and Professional Studies, the regional offices of the Weldon Cooper Center, the Miller Center, the College at Wise and downtown Charlottesville and Richmond. These summits would produce meaningful conversations among higher-education representatives, community agencies and residents about public needs, improved partnerships and best practices

Outcomes

A Vision for the Year 2020

By the year 2020, the University of Virginia should be known for its commitment to working in partnership with its neighbors and the people of Virginia to enhance the quality of their life and that of the nation.

Working with local, state, national and global partners to create, apply and transmit knowledge reflects Jefferson's core belief in founding this University: "The most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness." The commission believes that its recommendations undergird that foundation.

With a clear set of guidelines for its outreach efforts, the University will concentrate its resources in those five areas:

1. Civic engagement and public policy

By 2020, the University will have expanded service to elected and appointed leaders in Virginia and the nation. It will be providing broader experiences to its students in service learning.

2. Economic and business development

By raising the standard of living and the quality of life of Virginia residents, the University will encourage entrepreneurial activities and business development through technological, theoretical and applied innovations.

³ See background paper by Joseph M. Cronin and Jane Sjogren, [Public Service and the University of Virginia](#), October 1998, available on the website.

3. K-12 and lifelong education

The University will have expanded the lifelong availability of learning and information services to all Virginia citizens and schools—from basic literacy to advanced professional studies in direct services.

4. Planned and natural environment

By lending its expertise to decisions at all levels concerning ecology and the use of space, buildings and transportation, the University will have become a strong force for protecting the environment.

5. Health

The University will be a direct contributor to the health and well being of residents in central Virginia and beyond at every stage of their life, from prenatal to elderly.

The Work of the Commission

In December 1998, UVa President John T. Casteen III convened the commission on Public Service and Outreach as part of Virginia 2020, a University-wide planning initiative. President Casteen charged the commission with shaping one of the University's central missions: to enlist local, state, national, and global partners so as to create, apply, and transmit knowledge to meet society's needs.

Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia for this very reason. Believing that “knowledge is power, knowledge is safety, knowledge is happiness,” Jefferson created the University to produce “educated citizens” who would enhance lives and change society. UVa has achieved prominence in the state and nation by remaining faithful to Jefferson's vision of a public university with public-minded people.

More than 30 people from the University community – students, staff, faculty, and administrators – served as members of this commission and participated in its 18-month-long study.