E2: A focus on

EQUITY & EXCELLENCE

STRATEGIC PLAN
COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
2021-2025

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E2: Equity and Excellence
the strategic plan of the College of Health Professions

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION THAT IS ACCESSIBLE, EQUITABLE AND COST–EFFECTIVE

GOALS

HIGH-VALUE EDUCATION	DIVERSITY AND EQUITY	IMPACT ON HEALTH	HEALTHY WORKPLACE	EXPERIMENTATION AND CREATIVITY	LEADERSHIP IN IPE
Provide an extraordinary, high-value education for every single CHP student	Reflect VA's diversity in race, sexual orientation, religion, gender, disability identity, ethnicity, nationality and gender idenity	Promote research, teaching, and public engagement that impacts health care delivery and health outcomes in Richmond, the Commonwealth and beyond	Create the best workplace in the United States for all CHP employees	Sustain a community that embraces experimentation and creativity	Demonstrate national leadership in interprofessional health education

I. Introduction

The College of Health Professions at Virginia Commonwealth University is recognized as an international leader in the education of outstanding health professionals, researchers, and leaders. The College promotes equity and excellence in health care service delivery and collaborative scientific discovery. The College is committed to ending health and health care disparities across populations.

The College recognizes the importance of accountability to its students and their families, the Commonwealth, faculty, staff, alumni, and other benefactors by effective and responsible stewardship of all resources. The College values the strength of its relationships with stakeholders including clinical affiliate partners and preceptors as well as community members and the varied organizations and entities that support our mission.

The College fosters fair and equitable work responsibilities and compensation to all faculty and staff and nurtures continuous professional growth. The College furnishes an accessible, secure, and pleasant physical setting that enhances the cohesion, interaction and morale of the students, faculty, and staff.

The College is comprised of the students, faculty, and staff across its departments, programs, and administrative units. Departments are empowered to achieve excellence in their respective disciplines and programs. The College derives its strength from professional and intellectual diversity based upon cooperative interprofessional education, research, and service. The College includes nine departments:

- **Gerontology**
- **Health Administration**
- **Medical Laboratory Sciences**
- **Nurse Anesthesia**

- **Occupational Therapy**
- **Patient Counseling**
- **Physical Therapy**
- **Radiation Sciences**
- **Rehabilitation Counseling**

College leaders, faculty, and staff are committed to equitable and excellent teaching and learning for all people with the capacity to utilize their education to strengthen the health care workforce and advance the well-being of stakeholders. We aspire to:

- Educate health care professionals to advance health for all populations, and to effectively address health disparities and health equity;
- Advance the use of technology for teaching, learning, research, and service;
- Promote scientific discovery that informs our work in higher education and the health of our nation;
- Develop tools that prepare health care professionals to assist a wide range of population groups to achieve their potential;
- Prepare future leaders to influence effective health care and optimal health outcomes for all;
- Shape public policy to promote quality, improve access, and reduce costs in higher education; and
- Build an educational foundation that supports learners' abilities to adapt to change, solve novel problems, overcome obstacles, and demonstrate compassion for all.

II.   Mission & Vision

The mission of the College of Health Professions is to create influential leaders in health care who embrace equity and model excellence through inclusive teaching and learning, thoughtful advancement of cross-cultural knowledge, meaningful service to others, innovative technologies, and scientific discoveries that promote health and health equity and eliminate health disparities. The vision of the College of Health Professions is academic excellence that is accessible, equitable, and of exceptional value.

III.   Diversity, equity, and inclusion

The College of Health Professions prioritizes the core value of individual dignity. We strive to promote a culture of diversity, inclusivity, and equity in a supportive learning and work environment. We are committed to creating a community that embraces and honors students', staff, and faculty members' diverse backgrounds, identities and lived experiences. We aim to reflect the full breadth and depth of diversity of the Commonwealth of Virginia in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic class, religion, creed, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, and disability identity.

Every student deserves an exceptional education that includes learning to effectively serve individuals and communities that reflect the rich diversity of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Faculty and staff are responsible for creating an educational and research environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students. Faculty and staff use instructional approaches that foster intellectual contributions while encouraging critical thinking and freedom of expression. Our faculty have the expertise to lead efforts in ensuring patients, consumers, community members, families, and communities receive high-touch, respectful, and humanizing support within the context of evolving health care technology.

We commit to this statement because it is consistent with the values of both the College of Health Professions and of Virginia Commonwealth University. A climate of inclusion and diversity aligns with an overwhelming body of evidence-based health care and decades of health and workplace research. Finally, a culture of inclusivity and diversity is imperative to meet our College's responsibility to train effective health care professionals and generate the highest quality scientific research that advances health.

To promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, the College of Health Professions will:

- Create communication and marketing materials that speak to all;
- Foster best practices in holistic hiring and admissions processes;
- Facilitate awareness and understanding of people from different backgrounds;
- Promote a representative community of leaders, faculty, staff and students;

- Develop a dedicated and effective leadership team that emphasizes diversity, equity, and inclusivity; and
- Foster international and domestic multicultural experiences, collaborations, and partnerships.

IV. Values

In pursuit of our vision, the College of Health Professions emphasizes the following values:

Accountability: We take responsibility for our attitudes, actions, judgements, resources, and achievements.

Dignity: We respect the value and individuality of every member of our community.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity: We strive to create a community that respects and honors every individual's backgrounds, identity, and lived experience.

Excellence: We aim for strong and sustainable performance, productivity, and impact.

Fulfillment of Potential: We facilitate ongoing professional development and personal growth.

Innovation: We encourage and support creativity, discovery and scientific advancement.

Integrity: We conduct ourselves ethically, honestly, and by actions that demonstrate trustworthiness.

Service to Others: We strive for a positive impact on the communities we serve by providing innovative solutions that support people and their needs.

V. Strategic goals

Six strategic goals will guide fulfillment of our mission and achievement of our vision in the College of Health Professions.

- **Goal 1:** *Excellent, High-Value Education*
- **Goal 2:** *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*
- **Goal 3:** *Impact on Health*
- **Goal 4:** *Healthy Workplace*
- **Goal 5:** *Experimentation and Creativity*
- **Goal 6:** *Leadership in Interprofessional Education*

> **GOAL 1. Provide an extraordinary, high-impact, high-value education for every learner.**
>
> **[Aligns with *VCU QUEST* Themes I, II, IV]**

Objective 1 (People): Promote positive, collaborative relationships between faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

- Establish robust coaching, mentoring, and modeling interactions;
- Provide faculty and staff training related to compassion, empathy, and social intelligence so they cultivate positive relationships with students and other stakeholders; and
- Actively engage alumni in educational activities of students.

Objective 2 (Learning): Create substantive change in individual students and faculty.

- Explore new and expanded versions of what learners and faculty can become through new opportunities and experiences;
- Initiate pedagogical strategies to be learning-centered and to effectively address diverse models of learning; and
- Facilitate effective education in cultural competence and cultural humility for students and faculty.

Objective 3 (Culture): Create and sustain safe and inclusive learning and working environments.

- Incorporate strategies from the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE), the Division of Inclusive Excellence, and the College's Diversity in Curriculum Task Force;
- Promote the grievance processes for students, faculty, and staff and encourage its utilization;
- Conduct safety protocol training including active shooter, fire, and other disasters;
- Build multi-cultural and interprofessional activities and other opportunities for enhanced engagement in partnership with the CHP Diversity Committee and Student Success;
- Promote civility and respect among faculty, staff, students and alumni through campaigns and initiatives;
- Establish a culture of appreciation; and
- Establish student, faculty and staff expectations related to diversity, equity and inclusion activities and development.

Objective 4 (Competence): Promote professional competence and self-efficacy.

- Establish student, faculty and staff expectations related to participation in meaningful professional development activities;
- Cultivate an appreciation of failure that advances learning;
- Provide advanced technology in educational settings for development of workforce skills;

- Procure novel, relevant, challenging, and real-life knowledge and skill development experiences;
- Provide opportunities for persuasive communication and evaluative feedback;
- Advocate for student involvement in teaching, scholarship, service, and entrepreneurial activities;
- Exceed accreditation standards;
- Identify opportunities to increase student participation in professional organization activities (e.g. scholarships to meetings and/or organizational dues); and
- Provide clinical education training for all practicum and internship sites.

Objective 5 (Transformation): Offer an educational environment that encourages students' personal and professional transformation.

- Engineer and facilitate activities focused on developing an intentional, aligned and integrated culture that radiates the beliefs, values and life skills that promote student success;
- Promote utilization of student services including the Division for Academic Success, University Counseling Services, and the Writing Center;
- Examine administrative operations for opportunities to integrate students for the purpose of developing leadership skills;
- Offer varied leadership training opportunities to students;
- Increase service-learning opportunities and clinical and internship sites; and
- Expand interdisciplinary and interprofessional student opportunities.

> **GOAL 2. Recruit, develop, and retain faculty, staff, students, and leaders who reflect Virginia's rich population diversity.**
>
> **[Aligns with *VCU QUEST* Themes II, IV]**

Objective 1 (Pathways): Increase the access pathways to recruit faculty, staff, and students from under-represented and minoritized groups.

- Expand pathways program participation;
- Expand relationships between CHP departments and diverse communities of prospective students;
- Implement best, evidence-based practices in holistic review of student applicants;
- Ensure student/faculty/staff eligibility and selection processes are accessible to all and inherently equitable; and
- Develop and implement new community-based mechanisms to promote and advance the career aspirations of all groups.

Objective 2 (Climate): Foster and project a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive environment.

- Reflect Virginia's rich diversity in our faculty, staff, and student body;
- Embed our values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all communications and actions;
- Increase the number of CHP community members with demonstrated knowledge of diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and skills;
- Increase the number and types of cross-cultural groups and also employee resource groups in the College;
- Improve the reporting and resolution process of concerns related to diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Increase the number of research projects, courses, and other activities that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion; and
- Provide ample opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to share ideas and concerns related to diversity, equity, and inclusion with College leadership.

Objective 3 (Success): Provide sustained support ensuring all members of the CHP community can thrive.

- Provide mentoring and support to new faculty, students, and staff;
- Expand scholarships for students from under-represented and minoritized backgrounds;
- Fully integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion at onboarding and all orientations;
- Eliminate achievement disparities across students;
- Eliminate compensation and satisfaction disparities across faculty and staff; and
- Review faculty and staff evaluation and advancement policies for unintended barriers that prevent success.

GOAL 3. Promote research, teaching, and community engagement that impacts health care delivery and health outcomes across Virginia and beyond.

[Aligns with *VCU QUEST* Themes I, III]

Objective 1 (Research): Promote scientific inquiry impacting health care delivery and health outcomes.

- Build transdisciplinary research models and collaborations with clinical and public health affiliates;
- Foster the development of research that improves health, rehabilitation, longevity, and quality of life;
- Expand the role of predictive and decision analytics as a foundation for knowledge generation;
- Conduct research to understand and effectively address the social determinants of health disparities and health equity;

- Advance the adoption and integration of evidence into routine health care and public health settings to improve our impact on population and community health; and
- Translate and disseminate research findings to subject matter communities.

Objective 2 (Teaching): Enhance teaching efforts to meet the needs of students, other VCU departments and the Richmond community

- Develop leadership and mentorship opportunities for faculty;
- Develop interprofessional teaching opportunities;
- Collaborate with VCU's daVinci Center;
- Provide information about health care professions to Virginia middle and high school students;
- Develop health sector training for legislators;
- Develop core curriculum for all CHP students to develop skills needed to excel in professional leadership positions (difficult conversations, unconscious bias, overview of health care system, working in teams, health disparities); and
- Develop leadership certificate for a range of constituents.

Objective 3 (Public Engagement): Public engagement to provide health care and health promotion services to communities.

- Develop interprofessional events with VCU departments to impact the health and well-being of community members; and
- Establish community impact projects in which learners:
  - are full partners in the creation and implementation of their learning experiences, and
  - assume primary responsibility for making their own choices about goals and options.

GOAL 4. Create and maintain an employee-centered, employee-supportive workplace for College faculty, staff, and administrators.

[Aligns with *VCU QUEST* Themes II, III, IV]

Objective 1 (Environment): Recruit and retain employees by maintaining a working environment that promotes mental and physical health and well-being.

- Provide faculty and staff freedom to respectfully provide input in activities supporting the mission of the college and express opinions without judgement or retaliation;
- Include faculty and staff in the process of collecting and analyzing data, implementing changes, and monitoring the work environment;
- Assign a workload that promotes work-life balance;

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- Demonstrate transparency in hiring and promotion; and
- Encourage faculty and staff to participate in hiring and promotion processes and provide input and feedback on these practices.

Objective 2 (Evaluation): Conduct timely performance evaluations that provide faculty and staff with clear, concise feedback and ways in which they can improve their judgment, behavior, performance, and opportunities for advancement.

- Implement evaluations that allow for faculty and staff input through interactive mechanisms;
- Implement evaluation processes that allow faculty and staff evaluation of CHP leadership; and
- Implement evaluation processes that align directly with the faculty promotion and tenure guidelines.

Objective 3 (Communication): Communication in the work environment should encompass formal and informal communication throughout the College, including communication to faculty and staff, with faculty and staff and from faculty and staff to CHP leadership.

- Create mechanisms for faculty and staff to share issues and concerns to build loyalty and drive improved productivity; and
- Foster a culture that supports open, transparent communication where information is shared upward, downward, and laterally.

> **GOAL 5. Foster an educational and workplace community that embraces experimentation, innovation, and creativity.**
>
> **[Aligns with *VCU QUEST* Themes I, II, IV]**

Objective 1 (Discovery): Establish an atmosphere that focuses on building curiosity.

- Develop a creative workplace community that encourages the sharing of ideas and embraces energetic interaction and differences among colleagues, students, and alumni;
- Develop a culture of giving; and
- Develop a culture that challenges one another toward personal and professional growth.

Objective 2 (Quality Improvement): Explore and make recommendations about current procedures and standards.

- Establish workgroups to identify opportunities to create and modify high-impact policies and procedures;
- Create interprofessional and interdisciplinary think-tanks; and

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- Engage in continuous evaluation and performance improvement.

Objective 3 (Technology): Explore technology tools that position the College on the forefront of creative trends.

- Engage alumni to develop networks of experimental ideas and funding opportunities; and
- Cultivate a culture of creativity, curiosity, experimentation, and innovation.

GOAL 6. Secure national reputation in interprofessional education excellence for health care providers, researchers, and leaders.

[Aligns with *VCU QUEST* Themes I, II, III, IV)

Objective 1 (Policy): Establish an interprofessional development committee to serve the College.

- Incorporate interprofessional teaching, research, and learning efforts into the college marketing and communication plans; and
- Develop a comprehensive plan to disseminate the College's interprofessional efforts and their impact to the national community of allied health professionals.

Objective 2 (Education): Develop and offer an interprofessional course for students across multiple programs in the College.

- Invite guest speakers to the CHP to share their experiences creating interprofessional opportunities and the impact of their IP teaching and research efforts;
- Expose students to fellow learners in other fields early to foster a culture of interdisciplinary work;
- Encourage faculty from different departments to work together as instructors; and
- Reduce costs by eliminating redundant instructional efforts from programs.

Objective 3 (Collaboration): Partner with other VCU medical campus programs to promote an effective interprofessional culture.

- Identify pathways of collaboration with the VCU Center for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Care.

Objective 4 (Reputation): Enhance national reputation as a high-quality, cost-effective, accessible, and equitable institute of higher education.

- Evaluate current image, reputation and brand;

- Develop and communicate a brand identity based upon evaluation of strengths, opportunities, purpose and feedback that differentiates the College from competitors; and
- Engage in continuous quality improvement.

VI.   Department planning

Each department will develop a plan for contributing to achievement of the College's strategic goals. Department plans should be organized around the six CHP goals and should address questions such as:

- What is the status of our departmental strategic plan?
- How can our department help in achieving CHP goals?
- What measures or metrics could assess our effectiveness and progress in accomplishing these goals?
- What are some new strategies, processes or efficiencies we may employ to improve our performance in relation to these goals?
- What are additional resources or infrastructure (e.g., technology, professional development, human resource redeployment, or facilities upgrades or repurposing) we need in order to improve our performance in relation to this goal?

Strategic planning will be a continuous process of annual assessment of goal attainment submitted to the College's leadership team by each department and for department reflection. Annual reports will include:

- Unit goals (vis à vis college strategic goals);
- Data sources or metrics;
- A summary of the unit's discussion and analysis of data results; and
- A description of the strategic changes or adjustments made as a result of the analysis.

VII.   Implementation and accountability

Implementation involves turning goals into a working plan that will evolve to respond to environmental factors. While the strategic plan's goals and objectives remain a source of structure and focus, the implementation plan will describe how to get the job done. Resources for implementation will be identified and will include people, time, space, technology, and funding.

The implementation plan will be directive, clear, and documented. Strategic plan implementation will depend on the College's ability to operationalize strategic priorities. It will be important to document who is responsible for implementing specific actions, dates by which actions are expected to be completed, and which measures will be used to assess completion. Accountability is paramount.

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Appendix: Strategic Planning Committee

COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

BRENDA MORRIS, Dean's Office

SUZANNE WRIGHT, Department of Nurse Anesthesia

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHRISTIE ATKINS, Departments of Physical and Occupational Therapy

BETH WILLIAMSON AYERS, Department of Health Administration & Dean's Office

BRENDA BROWN, Department of Patient Counseling

LAURETTA CATHERS, Department of Rehabilitation Counseling

ALEX CONNOLLY, Student, Occupational Therapy

MARK CROSTHWAITE, Department of Radiation Sciences

YONELLA DEMARS, Department of Radiation Sciences

MELANIE DEMPSEY, Department of Radiation Sciences

ANGIE FLACK, Department of Patient Counseling

HENRY LEWIS III, Dean's Office

SARAH MARRS, Virginia Center on Aging

HEATHER MILLAR, Department of Nurse Anesthesia

ANNIE RHOADES, Department of Gerontology

REIKO SIMMONS, Student, Physical Therapy

MARY TUCKER, Department of Rehabilitation Counseling

KYLE WHITLOW, Information Technology