

Robertson School Strategic Plan: 2024 - 2029

April 2024

1. Curriculum and Instruction

Provide a curriculum and instruction that enable students to gain knowledge, competencies and values to succeed.

1. Create a student-centric, forward thinking curriculum

- a. Create flexibility for students to study across disciplines
- b. Create a curriculum that engages students actively in our disciplines during their first semester at VCU
- c. Create a curriculum that fulfills our mission, vision and unique value proposition

2. Invest in Interdisciplinary collaborations: teaching, research, student initiatives

- a. Revise common core curriculum to include targeted interdisciplinary work.
- b. Create interdisciplinary courses where students from multiple Robertson concentrations work together to solve problems and create content for companies and organizations.
- c. Create and support a student-run communications organization (360° Communications) that leverages skills of Robertson students from all concentrations to solve problems and create content for companies and organizations.
- d. Coordinate workshops with faculty of other CHS units to facilitate collaborations on courses and projects of mutual interest.

2. Student Services and Success

Provide students with the support and services that promote learning and ensure timely completion of their program of study.

1. Engage students with industry

- a. Create annual budget for Employer Coordinator events
- b. Formalize Industry Council engagement with Employer Coordinator plan
- c. Provide resources to support internship opportunities
- d. Create industry partnerships

2. Invest in retention efforts

- a. Enhance Student Well-Being Measurement
- b. Create a Student Advisory Board
- c. Invest in communications resources to support retention

3. Expand recruitment efforts

- a. Develop and execute a Summer Media Camp experience
- b. Formalize high school outreach efforts and invest resources needed
- c. Invest in communications resources to support recruitment

3. Mission, Governance and Administration

Create policies and practices of the unit that ensure that it has an effective working and learning environment.

1. Define and communicate a clear mission & vision

- a. Define the Robertson School's why, how and what
- b. Create a new mission statement
- c. Create a vision
- d. Create a unique value position
- e. Integrate our mission, vision and unique value position into all communications

2. Establish strong community, culture and wellbeing

- a. Offer inclusive events
- b. Celebrate student work
- c. Celebrate faculty and staff work
- d. Create a plan to support faculty and staff professional development
- e. Recognize all staff and faculty on the website including adjuncts and student workers

3. Enhance communication and visibility

- a. Hire a communications staff member- P/T to F/T

4. Strengthen governance and policies

- a. Create a faculty annual evaluation rubric
- b. Create a process for committee peer evaluation and rubric
- c. Increase and improve methods for evaluating Teaching
- d. Align P&T standards with current University and industry standards

5. Implement strategic enrollment levels

- a. Align enrollment goals with University and College goals and metrics
- b. Undergraduate program
 - i. All sections of all required courses have enrollment of at least 15 students per semester.
- c. Graduate program
 - i. All sections of required graduate courses have at least 15 students per semester.
- d. Online Pathway
 - i. Increase enrollment so all online pathway sections have at least 15 students per semester.

4. Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Maintain academic excellence and relevance by assessing student learning using direct and indirect measures and annually take actions to make tangible improvements to curriculum and instruction.

1. Regularly evaluate and enhance curriculum

- a. Three year review cycle:
 - i. Review and update learning objectives for each course
 - ii. Ensure ACEJMC Core Competencies are covered
- b. Share learning objectives across all concentrations every academic year

2. Increase collection of student feedback

- a. Provide incentives and resources to support surveys of students
- b. Expand methods of gathering feedback

3. Increase collection of alumni feedback

- a. Establish regular surveys of recent alumni
- b. Create in-person engagement opportunities to gather feedback

5. Faculty

Hire, support and evaluate a capable faculty with a balance of academic and professional credentials appropriate for the mission. Support faculty as they contribute to the advancement of scholarly and professional knowledge and engage in scholarship (research, creative and professional activity) that benefits the disciplines and society.

1. Optimize work loads

- a. Revise work load allocation to ensure that faculty members can effectively contribute to achieving the school's goals and support a balance between teaching, research and service

2. Strengthen teaching development

- a. Offer annual grants to support teaching initiatives that align with the school's mission, vision and unique value proposition
- b. Increase school support for faculty teaching development, including training, conference attendance and networking opportunities

3. Enhance faculty-student interaction

- a. Create events or programs connecting faculty with students to create a supportive learning environment (mentorship, workshops, social events, tips and tricks of the trade, students teach the professors session)
- b. Create events or programs that encourage and reward one-on-one engagement with students around career development, work improvement or networking
- c. Support innovative research opportunities for students to engage with faculty

4. Strengthen research and scholarship development

- a. Create a clear strategy and plan for defining and reinvigorating research and scholarship in the Robertson School to align with the College and University strategies and our mission, vision and unique value proposition
- b. Reinvigorate a Robertson research lab to serve as a hub for research and professional scholarship activities to support collaborative research initiatives + innovative, forwarding thinking research connected to industry or improving the human condition
- c. Offer annual grant to support collaborative research initiatives + innovative, forwarding thinking research connected to industry or improving the human condition
- d. Foster collaborations with other units at VCU and other universities to enhance scholarship in the school, especially interdisciplinary research initiatives + innovative, forwarding thinking research connected to industry or improving the human condition

5. Improve intra-faculty communication

- a. Hold regular forums where faculty discuss topics such as scholarship projects, teaching challenges and successes, industry changing topics or happenings
- b. Encourage collaboration and information sharing

6. Resources, Facilities and Equipment

Plan for, seek and receive adequate resources to fulfill and sustain our mission.

1. Optimize collaborative learning and work spaces

- a. Invest in necessary upgrades and maintenance to facilities
- b. Review uses of large space assets such as the studio with the goal of creating spaces that encourage interdisciplinary work in teaching and research

2. Invest in technological resources for learning and, research and scholarship

- a. Technology needed for classes
- b. Technology needed for scholarship
- c. Technology needed for promotion and communication

7. Diversity and Inclusiveness

Uphold a diverse and inclusive program that embodies domestic and global diversity and that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, ability and sexual orientation.

1. Enhance EID initiatives

- a. Regularly survey students, staff, and faculty to assess the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives
- b. Continually improve and innovate EID strategies, ensuring they align with the evolving needs of the school community
- c. Conduct regular EID-focused training of staff and faculty

2. Create a sense of belonging

- a. Ensure all voices of the Robertson community have the opportunity to provide insight to and feedback on School initiatives and activities
- b. Create events or programs that connect students, particularly from underrepresented groups, to each other with the Robertson community

3. Ensure diversity is in the curriculum

- a. Create an annual report of all teaching activities (lectures, discussions, assignments, etc) which include diversity and inclusiveness topics in the Robertson School to understand our strengths and identify areas for improvement
- b. Review the presence of diverse perspectives and experiences in teaching activities on an annual basis to remain current

4. Continue EID leadership

- a. Continue the leadership role of EID Coordinator for the School to provide support, leadership and strategic planning guidance
- b. Invest in EID focused collaborations with the College and other VCU units

8. Professional and Public Service

Advance communication professions and fulfill obligations to the community, alumni and the public.

1. Enhance community engagement programs

- a. Leverage signature courses to strengthen community relationships
- b. Implement events, workshops and programs that establish the Robertson School as a key contributor to public service, promoting engagement and outreach.

2. Highlight alumni achievements

- a. Re-envision the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame to recognize alumni and their contributions to the communications industry
- b. Create ongoing relationships with alumni to promote their work and achievements.
- c. Leverage alumni networks to strengthen donor relationships and engage former students in supporting the school's initiatives.

3. Promote participation in competitions and conferences

- a. Support and promote student participation in regional and national competitions and conferences related to mass communication.
- b. Provide resources to support faculty travel and presentations

4. Increase faculty presentations and expert comments

- a. Encourage faculty to make presentations to local, national, and global organizations, showcasing the expertise within the Robertson School.
- b. Facilitate opportunities for faculty to provide expert comments to media organizations, raising the profile of the school in the public domain.