Mission statement

As the premier urban, public research university in Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University’s mission is to advance knowledge and student success through its commitments to:

- An engaged, learner-centered environment that fosters inquiry, discovery and innovation in a global setting
- Research that expands the boundaries of new knowledge and creative expression and promotes translational applications to improve human health
- Interdisciplinary collaborations that bring new perspectives to complex problems and mobilize creative energies that advance innovation and solve global challenges
- Health care that strives to preserve and restore health for all people, to seek the cause and cure of diseases through groundbreaking research, and to educate those who serve humanity
- Diversity that provides a climate of inclusion, a dedication to addressing disparities wherever they exist and an opportunity to explore and create in an environment of trust
- Sustainable university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of the communities VCU serves in Virginia and around the world
About the university

VCU is a premier urban, public research university focused on academic success. In recent years, U.S. News & World Report recognized VCU as having some of the most promising and innovative changes in the areas of academics, faculty, student life, campus or facilities. VCU is one of only 12 universities in the nation with a CTSA, Carnegie “high research and community engaged” distinction, and an academic medical center. Last year, VCU attracted $270.3 million in research funding. VCU boasts several graduate and first-professional programs ranked in the top 50 by U.S. News & World Report as among the best in the nation, including the No. 1 ranked sculpture and nurse anesthesia programs.

Through its strategic plan, Quest for Distinction, VCU works to meet the demands of diverse populations through impactful research, rigorous study, extensive community engagement and a universitywide commitment to human health. The university enrolls the most diverse student body in Virginia, with more than 31,000 students, and offers 225 undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, first-professional and certificate programs. VCU is made up of 13 schools and one college in downtown Richmond with branch campuses in Doha, Qatar, Northern Virginia, and Charlottesville, as well as Charles City County, Virginia — home to VCU’s 494-acre field station along the James River, the Inger and Walter Rice Center for Environmental Life Sciences.

VCU Medical Center, the university’s health sciences schools, the Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU and Community Memorial Healthcenter comprise VCU Health, offering state-of-the-art care in more than 200 specialties. In 2015, U.S. News & World Report named VCU Medical Center the No. 1 hospital in Virginia. VCU and VCU Health employ more than 21,000 faculty and staff, and with more than 174,000 alumni, are a regional and statewide economic force and committed community partner.

In 2009, Michael Rao, Ph.D., was appointed the fifth president of VCU and continues in his tenure to focus on VCU’s growth as a premier urban, public research university.

About VCU: vcu.edu/about
VCU leadership: vcu.edu/about/leadership

AT A GLANCE

**FOUNDED:** 1838

**ENROLLMENT (FALL 2015)**
- 31,242 students
  - 24,051 undergraduate
  - 5,451 graduate
  - 1,740 first-professional
- Representing 86 countries (PDF)
  - Top four: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, China and United Arab Emirates
- 81.81 percent full-time students
- 18.19 percent part-time students
- Male: 41.36 percent
- Female: 57.39 percent
- Not reported: 1.25 percent
- Overall first-year retention rate for full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking students: 86.5 percent
- Student-to-faculty ratio: 17:1

**INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY (FALL 2015)**
- 2,264 full-time faculty members
- 1,015 part-time (adjunct) faculty members

**EMPLOYEES**
- 21,679 employees at VCU and VCU Health, making us the largest employer in Richmond

**INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT**
- Endowment: $1.5 billion
- New gifts and pledges: $102,597,086
- Total cashed received: $67,775,729

**ALUMNI**
- 174,573
- 112,785 in Virginia

**VCU MEDICAL CENTER**
- No. 1 hospital in Virginia
- Only Level I trauma center in Central Virginia
VCU School of the Arts’ graduate program is ranked the No. 1 public university school of arts and design in the country (No. 2 among public and private institutions) by U.S. News & World Report, and is the only public university arts and design school in the country to ever place this high in overall ranking. The VCU Brandcenter, the School of Business’ graduate program in advertising, has also been ranked first in the nation by Creativity Magazine and as one of the top 60 design schools in the world by BusinessWeek. VCU’s School of Engineering, started in 1996, has seen tremendous growth and completely new facilities. As of 2016, U.S. News & World Report ranks the schools of Pharmacy (17), Social Work (22), and Education (33) in the top 50.

The VCU research enterprise supports students and faculty in a broad range of disciplines, including interpretative arts, drug development, nanotechnology, macroeconomics, public policy, biotechnology and others. Centers and institutes of excellence also advance the university’s research mission. At the close of the 2014-15 year, VCU achieved an all-time institutional high of $270.3 million in research awards. Investigators continue to attract federal awards from National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense, Department of Education and National Science Foundation, among others.

VCU is committed to supporting the growth of the Richmond region’s entrepreneurial ecosystem and developed a universitywide strategy for entrepreneurship called Venture Creation University, or VCU Squared. More than 50 percent of VCU students surveyed report they are interested in starting their own company, and 15 percent say they have already started a company, have a business idea or are actively pursuing business formation. The activity generated through this initiative has spurred significant growth in terms of student engagement in entrepreneurial activity, from 125 students in three programs in 2012-13 to more than 1,500 students in 15 programs in 2014-15.

**Academics:** vcu.edu/academics

**Research:** vcu.edu/vcuresearch
Strategic plan

Quest for Distinction, the university’s strategic plan, was launched by President Michael Rao, Ph.D., in 2011. It sets priorities of academic excellence, research that enhances the quality of life, human health and well-being, and ongoing contribution to the economic vitality and cultural richness of the community. Specific initiatives include the continued recruitment of high-quality faculty and resource development aimed at enhancing the overall student experience. The latest master site plan lays out more than $3 billion in new construction and renovations that would provide housing for an additional 1,300 students and increased parking for several thousand cars, as well as build 3 million additional square feet of academic and research space.

**Quest for Distinction:** quest.vcu.edu

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Accreditation

Virginia Commonwealth University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award baccalaureate, master’s, doctoral and first-professional degrees.

**VCU accreditation:** sacs.vcu.edu
Student life and athletics

VCU’s current residential hall capacity is around 5,800 students, with about 80 percent of freshmen choosing to live on campus. Because of the prominent location within the city of Richmond, many upperclassmen live in student apartments located around the campus, specifically in The Fan, Oregon Hill or the Carver neighborhood, and are still able to walk or bike to their classes. Most recently, VCU has launched living-learning centers, offering students to immerse in a field of interest, including service, culture and global learning, leadership and innovation.

VCU offers more than 500 registered student organizations, including a well-established net of ethnic and cultural, religious, Greek, recreational, and special interest organizations. There are two student government associations at VCU, one for each campus.

Having competed at the NCAA Division I level for more than 30 years, VCU has sponsored a broad-based program of intercollegiate athletics. The VCU Rams have won more than 30 conference championships, participated in numerous NCAA postseason championship events, including a run to the Final Four in men’s basketball in 2011, and had a number of All-Americans, both academic and athletic. VCU currently sponsors 17 varsity teams in NCAA Division I play through the Atlantic 10 Conference, including men and women’s basketball, men and women’s cross country, field hockey, golf, lacrosse, men and women’s soccer, men and women’s track and field, and volleyball.

VCU also has many student-run club teams, including coed and all-female cheerleading, baseball, softball, men’s and women’s rugby union, ice hockey, men’s and women’s lacrosse, cycling, crew and dodgeball.
About Richmond, Virginia

Established as the commonwealth’s capital in 1779, Richmond boasts a rich history, which can still be seen today in the architecture, the statues on Monument Avenue and even in the cobblestone streets found around the city.

Though this heritage is part of the city’s charm, Richmond — with VCU as an anchor — is a city that promotes positive and progressive change. A strong cultural community enhances the distinct diversity that flows throughout the city, where creativity is embraced as a propelling force.

When it’s time to rejuvenate, the city offers more than 550 acres of parks bordering the historic James River, just steps from VCU’s campus. Intimate neighborhoods, cozy restaurants and cafes, and quaint local markets provide the familiarity of a small town, while theaters, galleries, music festivals, sports attractions and a steady stream of annual events bring the region to life.

Richmond’s ideal location allows for day or weekend trips to the beach, the mountains or larger cities like the nation’s capital. Travel + Leisure magazine even recently named the Richmond region as one of five top wine regions to visit.

The Richmond area bustles with employment prospects, boasting 10 Fortune 1000 companies, state and local government agencies and a variety of corporations that welcome our students and graduates. The metropolitan area is also home to a broad base of financial companies, hospitals and media firms, as well as high-tech manufacturing companies.

Nineteen Richmond-area businesses are among the nation’s fastest-growing private companies, according to Inc. magazine’s 2012 rankings. Gallup ranked Richmond the “Third Best Large City in the Country for Job Creation” in 2012, while Forbes.com named it among the top 20 “Happiest Cities for Young Professionals in America.”

Richmond, Virginia: vcu.edu/about/richmond
Leadership

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Former chairman and CEO, General Motors

Steve L. Worley
Senior adviser to the board of trustees, LCMC Health