

A photograph of three diverse college students standing outdoors on a campus. The student on the left is a young woman with long blonde hair, wearing a light blue t-shirt with the Virginia Highlands Community College logo and a black backpack. The student in the center is a young man with curly hair, wearing a grey hoodie with 'VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE' printed on it. The student on the right is a young woman with dark hair in two braids, wearing a light blue sweatshirt with 'VHCC' printed on it. The background shows green trees and a black lamppost.

# VISION 2025

## **Institutional Strategic Plan**

*January 2022*

**Table of Contents**

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Greeting from the President ..... 3

Vision, Mission, Values ..... 4

Strategic Planning Framework ..... 6

    Statement of Purpose ..... 6

    Overview of Planning Process ..... 6

    2022-2025 Strategic Issues ..... 6

    Plan Scope and Implementation ..... 8

Institutional Priorities ..... 10

    Priority Area I: Student Access & Success ..... 10

    Priority Area II: Sustainability and Organizational Development ..... 11

    Priority Area III: Infrastructure and Systems ..... 12

    Priority Area IV: Engagement and Communications ..... 13

Tracking Measures ..... 14

Strategic Planning Workgroup ..... 16

## Greeting from the President

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For more than 50 years, Virginia Highlands Community College has met the education and training needs for the region’s residents, providing pathways to great careers, university degrees, and lifelong learning opportunities. One of my greatest joys as a member of the VHCC family is meeting people in our community whose lives have been touched and helped by the college.

This strategic plan, *Vision 2025*, is reflection of the dynamics of our service area – ever changing, yet firmly rooted. The COVID-19 pandemic radically altered the lives of our residents, and VHCC is shifting too, finding creative and innovative ways to deliver quality instruction and services to our students. We have learned new modes of communication, improved our technology, and used new tools to engage our stakeholders and tell our story. Along the way, we’ve confronted old systems and practices, and we’ve begun to modernize and update the look, feel, and function of VHCC, being ever mindful of the changing environment in which we serve.

But we are still firmly grounded in our historical mission to serve our community. Our values reflect the hospitality, generosity, and resilience of the people of our region, and our primary purpose remains the same: to give every student the opportunity to succeed. It is no surprise that Student Access and Success is first strategic priority of this plan, and this commitment is reflected in the ethos of the VHCC family. *Vision 2025* also highlights the importance of VHCC’s connection to our community, serving the business, industry, and civic interests that make up our rich and vibrant culture. We are proud to live and work here, and we seek to help it thrive for generations to come.

I’m thankful for the work done by many to develop, review, and implement *Vision 2025*: the VHCC Board, the VHCC Educational Foundation, the President’s Advisory Committee, and many others whose expertise and passion for our community have shaped our future through this Strategic Plan.

As we move into VHCC’s next 50 years, this plan offers an immediate framework for the entire college to engage our students, each other, and our community, and I invite you to join me as we work together on *Vision 2025*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Adam Hutchison". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Adam Hutchison, Ph.D.  
President

## Connection to the Commonwealth

### ***Opportunity 2027: the Strategic Plan for Virginia’s Community Colleges***

During the 2020-2021 academic year, Virginia Community College Systems (VCCS) Chancellor Glenn DuBois tasked a diverse group of faculty, staff, and administrators with the development of a new six-year strategic plan for Virginia’s Community College. This group included many members of a statewide task force that developed recommendations to respond to the impact of COVID-19 and to help our colleges remain sustainable and relevant in a post-pandemic future. These recommendations addressed program delivery modalities, teaching and learning practices, remote services, integrated student supports, funding and financing of colleges, and the future of work. In consideration of these COVID-19 recommendations and the dual backdrops of national racial unrest and declining college enrollments at VCCS colleges, Chancellor DuBois charged the strategic planning group to prioritize equity in the new plan.

The task force reviewed disaggregated demographic data to inform the goals, strategies, and metrics for the six-year plan, titled *Opportunity 2027*, with a primary focus to eliminate the demographic gaps in student outcomes over the next six years. Specifically, the strategic goal of *Opportunity 2027* is:

***Virginia’s Community Colleges will achieve equity in access, learning outcomes, and success for students from every race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic group.***

This strategic goal is supported by five pillars:

- Communication of Virginia’s community colleges as the Commonwealth’s primary training provider for business,
- High-impact learning practices delivered by world-class employees,
- A culture of care and student services to holistically meet the needs of today’s students,
- Curriculum that conveys the knowledge, skills, credentials, and degrees designed for the future of work, and
- Ongoing college affordability for students while supporting the vitality and sustainability of Virginia’s community colleges.

VHCC faculty, staff, and administrators participated in the development of *Opportunity 2027* and serve in various roles of oversight and execution of the plan, and the State Board for Community Colleges formally approved *Opportunity 2027* on March 18, 2021. VHCC’s Strategic Plan is informed by and supportive of *Opportunity 2027*.

## Vision, Mission, Values

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### Mission

Virginia Highlands Community College provides exceptional educational pathways **to all students** to enrich lives and strengthen communities.

### Vision

Virginia Highlands Community College will be an educational institution of choice, empowering students, employees, and community members to reach their fullest potential.

### Core Values

- **Student Success.** We welcome and engage every student with relevant learning opportunities and help them attain their goals to help our region thrive.
- **College Culture.** We are representatives of the hospitality and resiliency of our region, supporting everyone with opportunities for growth and engagement.
- **Excellence.** We expect the best from ourselves and our students.
- **Learning.** We are committed to life-long development and personal growth.
- **Stewardship.** We are accountable for the resources in our care, strategically investing to improve our region.
- **Partnership.** We collaborate with individuals and organizations to advance our shared goals and strengthen the region.



## Strategic Planning Framework

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### Statement of Purpose:

Virginia Highlands Community College engages in a proactive and inclusive strategic planning process to create a shared vision, set institutional priorities, develop outcomes, guide decision-making, allocate resources, assess progress toward results, and drive continuous improvement.

As such, VHCC has over time developed a strategic planning process that is customized and tailored to the unique context and needs of the institution while drawing from several models and examples. The process is aligned with the history, culture, and spirit of the institution, and it provides a good framework to accommodate external performance, compliance mandates, and internal organizational development priorities. This strategic planning process is embedded within the over-arching institutional effectiveness goals of the college.

### Overview of Planning Process:

VHCC's strategic planning operates on a three-year development cycle, depending upon environmental conditions. The process begins with an assessment of previous strategic planning efforts, as well as a review of the institution's vision, mission, and values. Key intellectual resources of the institution are compiled, evaluated, and packaged for use as foundational references for various planning activities. Examples of the types of documents that comprise this "information bundle" include previous strategic plans, a college data overview, an environmental scan report, performance measure data, and a master facility plan.

VHCC conducts forums with a variety of internal and external groups to kick-off the stakeholder engagement component of the strategic planning process. These forums begin with a condensed presentation of the "information bundle" to provide participants a common and shared background. Stakeholders are then given several discussion prompts that are designed to fuel reflection and discussion. Forum participants' contributions are recorded, sorted for commonalities, and analyzed.

Utilizing these contributions, a strategic planning workgroup references the background information and stakeholder feedback to develop a draft strategic plan which includes such things as strategic issues and institutional priorities. Several representative groups, including the VHCC Board, President's Advisory Council, and the President's Cabinet, review and make several rounds edits to the draft plan, ultimately resulting in a finalized strategic plan.



On an annual basis, implementation plans and budgets are created and implemented from the strategic plan to the planning unit level, and those levels incrementally contribute to one or more aspects of the strategic plan. Work is monitored and reported horizontally and vertically throughout the institution, with adjustments and course corrections being made as needed.

A graphic depiction of both a three-year planning process and the accompanying annual implementation and institutional effectiveness process can be found below.



## Annual Implementation & Institutional Effectiveness Process



2022-2025 Strategic Issues:

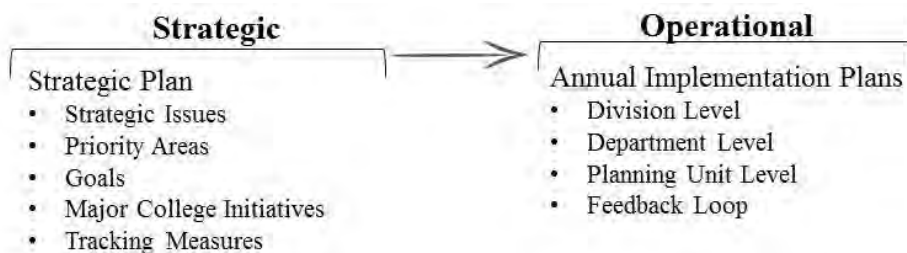
Four strategic issue areas were identified through VHCC’s planning process for this Vision 2025 strategic plan, incorporating the contributions of more than 100 stakeholders through focus groups and surveys. These issue areas served as the foundation for priority development – including goals, major college initiatives, and tracking measures:



Plan Scope and Implementation:

As illustrated below, this document focuses on the long-term or strategic direction of VHCC and encompasses priority areas, goals, major college initiatives, and tracking measures for use over a three-year period. These ideas represent substantial efforts to be undertaken by the college which will contribute to its fulfillment of its vision and mission.

The plan does not outline activities, action steps, benchmarks, and budgets needed to accomplish the goals outlined herein. Rather, implementation plans will be developed annually at all levels of VHCC that will include these specific operational or tactical elements. These elements provide a means for management and staff to break down the larger scale strategic goals into workable tasks, making the achievement of the strategic goals possible. Finally, the plan does not detail the ongoing core business practices of VHCC – those things that it carries out as a matter of course.





The President's Cabinet and the representative President's Advisory Council have the primary responsibility for monitoring and reporting progress toward achieving VHCC's vision as depicted in this strategic plan. Progress reports will be given to governance and stakeholder groups on a semi-annual basis utilizing an institutional scorecard and, where applicable, more expansive annual reports.

## Institutional Priorities

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### Priority Area I: Student Access & Success



*Practice effective enrollment management to increase student access, retention, success, and completion. This is accomplished through active recruitment, relevant programming, high-quality instruction and comprehensive student support services.*

#### **Goal 1: Improve access, persistence, and completion for all student groups**

##### *Major College Initiatives*

- a. Implement existing three-year Strategic Enrollment Management Plan
- b. Reduce achievement gaps for students of color and students with low socioeconomic status
- c. Redesign and implement SDV course for student success

#### **Goal 2: Ensure academic program relevance and sustainability**

##### *Major College Initiatives*

- a. Identify and implement new career and technical education programs of study (degree and non-degree) reflecting community economic development initiatives
- b. Develop and implement a process to evaluate and maintain the rigor, relevance, and efficacy of instructional programs and courses
- c. Implement program pathways and VHCC's Transfer Framework
- d. Strengthen use of program advisory committees

## Priority Area II: Sustainability and Organizational Development



*Ensure the success, security, and stability of the College through effective and efficient administrative processes, a diverse and supported workforce, and ongoing resource stewardship.*

### **Goal 1: Strengthen processes, systems and supports to advance faculty and staff success and excellence and reduce employee turnover**

#### *Major College Initiatives*

- a. Improve employee recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and offboarding processes
- b. Improve faculty and staff diversity through recruitment and retention of underrepresented populations
- c. Increase employee use of flex time and alternative work schedules to improve college operations, student services, and employee productivity
- d. Revise professional development and ongoing education policy to improve opportunities for employees

### **Goal 2: Develop systematic approach to organizational operations and succession planning**

#### *Major College Initiatives*

- a. Conduct comprehensive review and update of all college policies and procedures
- b. Develop and implement an updated Business Continuity Plan
- c. Develop and implement a college Leadership Succession Plan
- d. Expand cross-training opportunities for employees

### **Goal 3: Expand opportunities to increase connections and giving for unfunded needs and priorities**

#### *Major College Initiatives*

- a. Conduct an assessment of the scope and processes of Institutional Advancement
- b. Develop and implement a three-year Institutional Advancement Plan

### **Priority Area III: Infrastructure and Systems**



*Utilize current and effective technology to support the educational, administrative and workforce systems of the college. Use efficient technology and other solutions to improve student access and success, strengthen VHCC's operational effectiveness, enhance connections with educational, workforce and community partners, and support the evaluation of college initiatives and processes.*

#### **Goal I: Enhance student learning environment with a focus on student engagement and success**

##### *Major College Initiatives*

- a. Develop an updated campus master plan
- b. Renovate or modernize key campus student environments

#### **Goal 2: Ensure information technology (IT) systems resiliency and effectiveness**

##### *Major College Initiatives*

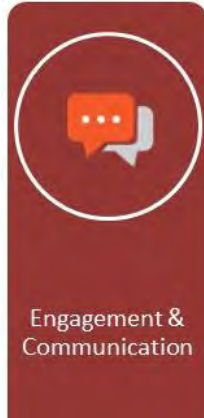
- a. Engage in continuity planning and documentation for IT operations
- b. Systematically evaluate and manage the life cycle and integration of IT systems
- c. Acquire and/or develop IT management tools to better support student lifecycle management

#### **Goal 3: Enhance campus infrastructure safety and security**

##### *Major College Initiatives*

- a. Enhance campus safety and security awareness for employees and students
- b. Enhance campus safety/security monitoring and communications

## Priority Area IV: Engagement and Communication



*Cultivate understanding and engagement among constituents and stakeholders through positive and informative communication. Collaborate with educational, workforce, and community partners to establish pathways to regional jobs, supporting the development of a strong workforce and providing economic stability.*

### Goal 1: Enhance student connections to regional jobs

#### *Major College Initiatives*

- a. Expand work-based learning opportunities (work-place shadowing, internships, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, etc.) with local businesses and industry
- b. Expand direct connections with regional employers
- c. Increase the number of students completing programs for which there is a regional workforce demand

### Goal 2: Support the development of new and existing businesses

#### *Major College Initiatives*

- a. Coordinate business outreach efforts with local workforce and economic development partners to prioritize economic priorities
- b. Increase workforce and economic development activities through customized training, regionally relevant workforce programs, and small business support
- c. Increase consulting services to businesses and industry

### Goal 3: Expand community engagement and brand awareness

#### *Major College Initiatives*

- a. Increase the number and frequency of VHCC-sponsored and/or -partnered community events
- b. Develop and update college information and marketing collateral to reflect current brand standards

### Goal 4: Improve College-wide communication

#### *Major College Initiatives*

- a. Increase cross-departmental collaborations
- b. Increase the frequency of college listening sessions
- c. Improve the college's mechanisms for information sharing, such as the AwareWolf intranet



## Tracking Measures

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### Priority Area I: Student Access and Success

1. Institution-Wide
  - Number of state performance measures met or exceeded
2. Curriculum/Degree Areas:
  - Peer-review online course approval process
  - Annual unduplicated headcount
  - High school yield rate
  - Dual enrolled students
  - Adult students
  - Number of new students
  - Number of returning (stop-out) students
  - Representation of racial/ethnic minority students
  - Proportion of students persisting from year 1 to year 2
  - Proportion of students earning 12 college credits in 1 year
  - Proportion of students earning 24 college credits in 2 years
  - Student progress over 5 years
  - Course success and retention by modality
  - Percent of high school equivalency completers to enroll in curriculum courses
  - Annual number of degrees, diplomas, certificates, and industry-recognized credentials
  - Program wage and outcomes (SCHEV data)
3. Continuing Education/Non-Degree Areas:
  - Annual unduplicated headcount
  - Representation of racial/ethnic minority students
  - Annual number of certificates and industry-recognized credentials

### Priority Area II: Sustainability and Organizational Development

1. Processes and systems to ensure faculty and staff success
  - Revised and published hiring, onboarding, and offboarding processes
  - Faculty and staff diversity that reflects the demographics of the VHCC service region
  - Flexible/Alternative/Telework work policy implemented
  - Revised Educational Assistance policy and funded opportunities for employees
2. Business continuity and succession planning
  - VHCC policies and procedures updates
  - Development and implementation of an updated Business Continuity Plan
  - Development and implementation of a VHCC Leadership Succession Plan
  - Number of employees trained in multiple functions; cross-training events conducted
3. Institutional Advancement
  - Institutional Advancement assessment completed
  - Development and implementation of Institutional Advancement Plan
  - Annual donations and gifts
  - Giving participation (VHCC Boards and full-time employees)

Annual leveraged resources (non-cash donations and volunteer time)  
Annual revenue generated by grants, contracts, and categorical funding

### **Priority Area III: Infrastructure and Systems**

1. Learning Environment
  - Campus master plan, including signage and wayfinding
  - Renovation and remodeling projects
2. IT resiliency and effectiveness
  - Continuity plan developed
  - Operations catalogued and documented
  - Number of Salesforce users
3. Campus safety and security
  - Perceived safety and security of the campus environment (survey response)
  - Security system upgrades
  - Use of emergency notification system

### **Priority Area IV: Communication and Engagement**

1. Enhance connections to regional jobs
  - Participation in and satisfaction with career-based information services (survey)
  - Student participation in work-based learning opportunities
  - Number of students completing programs related to the region's demand occupation list
  - Participants in VHCC job fairs, industry visits, and similar events
2. Support the development of new and existing businesses
  - Small Business Development Center statistics
  - Number of customized or specialized training courses or services
  - Total number of companies participating in training and/or services
3. VHCC marketing and branding
  - Number of VHCC-sponsored and/or -partnered community events
  - Marketing and communication audit completed
  - Website content alignment completed
4. College-wide communication
  - Number of college-wide listening sessions
  - Employee satisfaction with information sharing improved
  - Employee engagement increased

## Strategic Planning Workgroup

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Dr. Adam Hutchison  
President

Dr. Stacy Thomas  
Vice President of Instruction & Student  
Services

Christine Fields  
Vice President of Financial &  
Administrative Services

Laura Pennington  
Vice President of Institutional Advancement

Dr. Beth Wright  
Interim Dean of Nursing

Dr. Beth Page  
Dean of Professional & Technical Studies  
(ret.)

Barbara Manuel  
Dean of Arts & Sciences

Michael McBride  
Dean of Enrollment Management & Student  
Services

Lee Hunt  
Dean of Professional & Technical Studies

Dr. Vickie Ratliff  
Interim Dean of Nursing

Robert Phillips  
Dean of Workforce Development

Ken Fairbanks  
Director of Learning Resources

Robert May  
Director of Institutional Research &  
Effectiveness

Leigh Ann Adams  
Coordinator of Upward Bound

Karen Cheers  
Director of EXCEL Programs

Pat Farmer  
Coordinator of Dual Enrollment & High  
School Programs

Paige Kelly  
Coordinator of Admissions & Records

Traci Mitchell  
Coordinator of Recruitment & Career  
Services

Ernest Nunley  
Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds

Mary Snead  
Finance Manager

Tiffany VanBuren  
Director of Human Resources

Kevin Widener  
Chief of Police

Ben Casteel  
Instructor of Horticulture and Faculty Senate  
President

Cathy Zeigler  
Admissions Assistant and Classified Staff  
Assoc. President

Mackenzie Tymon  
Student Government Association

Julie Little  
Assistant Professor of Biology and Faculty  
Senate President



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Si necesita ayuda en español, marque el número 276-739-2559