



VCU

Board of Visitors

**VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS
ACADEMIC AND HEALTH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

December 12, 2024

4:00 p.m.¹

**James Branch Cabell Library
901 Park Avenue – Room 303
Richmond, VA**

**DRAFT
MINUTES**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. V. Dale Jones, *Chair*
Mr. Gurpreet “P2” Sandhu, *Vice Chair*
Hon. Siobhan Dunnivant, M.D.
Dr. Kenneth Lipstock
Dr. Clifton Peay
Mr. Randolph Reynolds, Jr.
Mr. C. J. Sailor
Hon. Todd Haymore, *Rector*

OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Michael Rao, *President*
Dr. Fotis Sotiropoulos, *Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs*
Dr. Marlon Levy, *Senior Vice President for Health Sciences and CEO VCU Health*
Dr. Srirama Rao, *Vice President for Research and Innovation*
Dr. Andrew Arroyo, *Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs*
Dr. Hernan Bucheli, *Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management and Student Success*
Dr. Aaron Hart, *Vice President for Student Affairs*
Ms. Jamie Stillman, *Executive Director of Academic Operations, Office of the Provost*
Presidential Cabinet of VCU
VCU students, faculty and staff
Members of the media

¹ The start time for the Board of Visitors meeting is approximate only. The meeting may begin either before or after the listed approximate start time as Board members are ready to proceed.

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. V. Dale Jones, Chair of the Academic and Health Affairs Committee, called the meeting to order at 4:13 p.m. The public was able to view the open session of the meeting via livestream at <https://mssvideo.vcu.edu/BOV>.

ACTION ITEMS

Dr. Jones asked the committee to consider approving three items that were provided in advance for review: the committee meeting minutes for September 12, 2024; a proposal to create a Master of Science in Chaplaincy in the College of Health Professions; and a proposal to create a Bachelor of Science in Health Research in the College of Humanities and Sciences. On a motion duly made and seconded, each of the items were approved. The meeting minutes are posted at <https://bov.vcu.edu/meetings/minutes/>. The proposal briefs for the two degree programs are attached hereto as *Attachment A* and is made a part hereof.

REPORTS

Dr. Fotis Sotiropoulos provided an overview of VCU's process for academic program productivity reporting. Academic program productivity at VCU involves rolling annual assessments of degree and certificate programs based on a complex set of factors including enrollments, graduates, labor market demand, support of VCU's mission, and others. VCU's process meets requirements of SCHEV. The process, which ensures that VCU's offerings meet academic and market demands and supports strategic enrollment goals, involves multiple stakeholders and results in an action plan that provides recommendations such as maintaining, investing, reallocating or sunsetting programs. A full Academic Program Productivity Report, detailing the findings and proposed actions, will be presented in May 2025 for the Board's approval.

Dr. Hernan Bucheli then focused the remainder of the report on improving VCU's graduation rates. VCU's graduation rate is impacted by key factors including our mission of excellence, impact and access; the academic and socio-economic characteristics of entering students; and retention rates for the first two years in college. VCU is addressing these factors through a combination of internal student services and national best practices. In addition to investments in academic advising, learning supports, financial aid, and other student services, VCU has launched university-wide initiatives through partnerships with the University Innovation Alliance and the National Institute for Student Success (NISS). Based on a model of VCU first-time, full-time freshman fall cohorts' retention and graduation rates, VCU anticipates a 70.5% graduation rate for the Fall 2024 cohort (measured in 2030). A copy of Dr. Sotiropoulos' and Dr. Bucheli's presentation is attached hereto as *Attachment B* and is made a part hereof.

Dr. Marlon Levy reported on issues pertaining to the five health sciences schools, one college and the health campus. He noted that the health sciences schools and college continue to focus on full integration and collaboration among the schools and with the health system. Student enrollment continues on an upward trajectory over the past five years, with highlights in the School of Medicine,

which has seen improvement in Masters and Ph.D. enrollments, and in the College of Health Professions, which has increased undergraduate enrollment by 13%. Planning efforts continue for a new dental school facility. At the conclusion of the report, Dr. Clifton Peay asked Dr. Levy to provide data regarding board and licensure rates for health sciences programs. A copy of Dr. Marlon Levy's presentation is attached hereto as *Attachment C* and is made a part hereof.

OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Jones asked the committee members to bring forward any topics on which they would like to focus at the next meeting. The committee suggested a focus on student internships.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Dr. Jones adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Virginia Commonwealth University Proposed Program Brief Proposal to create a Master of Science degree program in Chaplaincy

Overview

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) seeks approval for a Master of Science (MS) degree program in Chaplaincy at the Health Sciences Campus in Richmond, VA. The proposed program will be administered by the Department of Patient Counseling in the College of Health Professions. The degree program will require 76 credit hours, to be completed in eight (8) semesters, including two summer semesters. The proposed degree program will include a capstone.

The purpose of the proposed MS in Chaplaincy degree is to train and prepare students for careers in professional chaplaincy. The program will equip students to provide evidence-based, comprehensive and compassionate spiritual care as part of an interdisciplinary team of healthcare providers. While enrolled in this program, students will learn skills such as the development of spiritual care plans, assessment of spiritual care, spiritual care intervention, and more. Program coursework includes theory, ethics, research, management, and grief and bereavement care. All coursework for the MS in Chaplaincy degree program aligns with the core competencies for professional chaplaincy.

Graduates from the proposed MS in Chaplaincy degree program will be prepared for entry-level chaplaincy positions in a wide range of healthcare settings including acute care, ambulatory care, and long-term care. Pew Research Center estimates that by 2060, 40% of the U.S. population of all ages will be religiously unaffiliated¹. Thus, graduates of this degree program will learn to provide spiritual care to persons of various faith traditions, spiritual traditions, cultural identities, and value systems.

Delivery Format

The proposed program will be offered in a face-to-face format.

Target Implementation Date

Fall 2025

Demand and Workforce Development

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) do not have data or a job category for “chaplaincy.” With the current degree being an MS in Patient Counseling, the closest occupation to which there is available data is “substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors.” The BLS indicates that from 2022-32, employment is projected to grow “18%.”

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/projecting-u-s-religious-groups-population-shares-by-2070/>

O*Net categorizes Chaplains under the title of “Clergy.” The data within O*Net’s database shows a 3% growth in Clergy jobs within Virginia, and a 1% growth in jobs nationally. Furthermore, under the title of “Religious Workers, All Other,” the data points to a 1% growth in jobs nationally.

External Competition

Virginia Commonwealth University would be the first public institution in the United States to offer an MS degree in Chaplaincy. No similar degree program exists.

Target Population

The intended target audience for the program is graduate students pursuing a career in chaplaincy.

The Department of Patient Counseling currently offers a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Patient Counseling, as well as a Master of Science degree in Patient Counseling with a concentration in Chaplain Certification. The proposed MS in Chaplaincy would replace the current concentration in Chaplain Certification in the MS in Patient Counseling degree program. Since 2016, 10% of students who have completed the Graduate Certificate in Patient Counseling return annually to complete the MS in Patient Counseling degree program. Enrollment in the MS in Patient Counseling degree program — with a concentration in Chaplain Certification — has declined since COVID, but has had consistent enrollment of 3-4 students since 2021 — a decrease from 5-7 students from 2016-20. The Graduate Certificate in Patient Counseling has trended similarly, with enrollment ranging from 11-16 students from 2016-20, to 6-8 students from 2021-present.

Impact on Existing Programs

The proposed MS in Chaplaincy is not similar or related to any existing degree programs at Virginia Commonwealth University. The proposed degree program will not affect or negatively impact any existing degree programs. No degree programs will close as a result of the initiation and operation of the proposed degree program.

VCU currently offers a 30 credit hour (CR) MS in Patient Counseling degree with a concentration in Chaplain Certification. The department also offers a Post-Baccalaureate Graduate Certificate in Patient Counseling. The proposed MS in Chaplaincy will replace the concentration in Chaplain Certification in the current MS in Patient Counseling degree program..

Impact on Faculty

The Department of Patient Counseling has six (6) full-time faculty. All faculty will teach core or required courses in the proposed MS in Chaplaincy degree program. The faculty members have master’s and doctoral degrees in Divinity, Public Health, or other related disciplines. The faculty have over 60 years of combined teaching, research and clinical experience in the field. Faculty have published in peer-reviewed journals or currently serve as leaders in national organizations.

Four adjunct faculty members will be utilized to initiate and operate the proposed degree program. All adjunct faculty have, at minimum, five years of experience in chaplaincy or other closely related disciplines. All faculty will have, at minimum, a master's degree in Chaplaincy or other closely related disciplines.

Funding

Virginia Commonwealth University and the Department of Patient Counseling have the resources needed to initiate and sustain the proposed MS degree program in Chaplaincy. The department will have the faculty, staff, equipment, and space to initiate and maintain the proposed program.

Alignment with the VCU Mission

The proposed MS in Chaplaincy degree fully aligns with VCU's Quest 2028 student success goal of curricular innovation. This forward-thinking curriculum will prepare students to become professional chaplains in a variety of settings. Graduates will excel in assessing and addressing the unique needs and dynamics of diverse family systems, while also seamlessly integrating person-centered spiritual care into individual care plans. Additionally, students will incorporate their understanding of world religions, spiritual practices, and cultural traditions into their clinical practice.

Additional Information

The proposed MS in Chaplaincy covers a broad range of patient-counseling related topics, and the learning outcomes reflect each of those focuses. The core and required courses of the proposed degree program are designed to meet the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education's (ACPE) accreditation standards. The curriculum also meets the Health Care Chaplaincy Network's (HCCN) and Spiritual Care Association's (SCA) board certification criteria.

The proposed degree program will utilize 14 new courses (41 credits of the total 76 credits). As such, the program will require a full SACSCOC Prospectus. The proposed degree program will be offered as a cohort-based degree, which will require eight (8) semesters of coursework, including two (2) summer semesters.

Next Steps

- September 25 - University Committee on Academic Affairs (UCAA) Meeting
- October 2 - University Council (UC) Meeting
- October 21 - President's Cabinet Meeting
- December 12-13 - Board of Visitors' Meeting (BOV)

Virginia Commonwealth University Proposed Program Brief Proposal to create a Bachelor of Science degree program in Health Research

Overview

Virginia Commonwealth University seeks approval for a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree program in Health Research at the Monroe Park Campus in Richmond, VA. The proposed program will be administered by the Department of Kinesiology and Health Sciences in the College of Humanities and Sciences.

The purpose of the proposed BS in Health Research degree program is to prepare students to serve as research personnel for health-related research studies, including clinical research. The program will focus on providing students with knowledge and skills in developing and implementing research studies in diverse settings and with diverse populations. The proposed program will provide students with the knowledge and skills to work with funding and regulatory agencies and entities (e.g., institutional review board, food and drug administration) to ensure proper compliance with regard to health research development and implementation. Students will be able to develop research protocols, design surveys, consent potential research participants, navigate electronic health records, and identify appropriate laboratory tests for blood work associated with clinical research protocols. Through internships, students will have the opportunity for exposure to various types of research (e.g., clinical, behavioral) and an opportunity to work with diverse groups of individuals who are healthy or those with chronic health conditions, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, or kidney disease. Graduates will be prepared to work in academic or industry research settings that seek to improve the health experiences in individuals through research. Graduates will be capable of working in diverse clinical settings with diverse teams in the context of educational backgrounds and individual contributions to the research team (e.g., principal investigator, statistician).

Delivery Format

The proposed program will be offered in a face-to-face delivery format.

Target Implementation Date

Fall 2025

Demand and Workforce Development

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) shows a growth of 5% for both clinical research coordinators and social science research assistants. The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) shows growth for both fields, with clinical research coordinators demonstrating 3% growth and 1% growth for social science research assistants.

External Competition

There currently are no public institutions in Virginia that offer this degree program or one similar to it at the bachelor's level.

Target Population

The intended target audience for the program is individuals interested in a broad range of careers in health research, such as clinical research coordinators. This degree program is also intended for students who are interested in pursuing advanced study in health research spaces..

Impact on Existing Programs

VCU currently offers a BS degree in Health, Physical Education, and Exercise Science (HPEX) with two concentrations: Exercise Science and Health Science. The proposed degree will replace the concentration in Health Science.

Impact on Faculty

The Department of Kinesiology and Health Sciences at VCU has eight existing full-time faculty positions (8 FTEs) that will be involved with teaching core and other required courses in the proposed B.S. degree program. There are no part-time nor adjunct faculty required to initiate the proposed program.

Funding

No additional faculty will be needed for this degree program, therefore no additional resources are needed. The program will be supported by resources already in place to sustain existing academic programs, including student support services (enrollment services, library support, and career services) and faculty support services.

Cost and Funding Sources to Initiate and Operate the Program			
Informational Category		Program Initiation Year	Program Full Enrollment Year¹
		2025 – 2026	2028 - 2029
1	Projected Enrollment (Headcount)	250	450
2	Projected Enrollment (FTE)	240	430
3	Estimated Tuition and E&G Fees	\$9,989 (in-state); \$35,853 (out-state)	\$9,989 (in-state); \$35,853 (out-state)
4	Projected Revenue from Tuition and E&G Fees	\$ 2,656,000	\$ 4,195,380
5	Other Funding Sources Dedicated to the Proposed Program (e.g., grant, business entity, private sources)	0	0

Alignment with the VCU Mission

The proposed BS in Health Research program directly serves to fulfill the mission of Virginia Commonwealth University. The foundation of the Health Research degree program involves

¹ For the “Full Enrollment Year” use: for associate degrees, initiation year plus 1; for baccalaureate degrees, initiation plus 3; for masters degrees, initiation plus 2; for doctoral degrees, initiation plus 3.

exposing students to research theories and practices that will translate to improving the “quality of human life.” Graduates will contribute to “groundbreaking research” as the proposed program was developed to equip them with the knowledge and skills to conduct health-related research. The proposed degree program will not only incorporate the “core values of diversity, inclusion, and equity” in the learning environment, but these values are also reflected in the curriculum, specifically within the context of health and health research.

In addition to aligning with the institutional mission, the proposed health research program also aligns with the following goals and strategies of the Quest 2028 strategic plan:

- Support undergraduate and graduate curriculum to expand integration of transformative experiences focused on the future of work and student engagement in research.
- Increase students (undergraduate and graduate, including underrepresented minorities) and postdoctoral fellows engaged in research.

VCU Board of Visitors

Academic and Health Affairs Committee

Dec. 12, 2024

Fotis Sotiropoulos, Ph.D.

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Hernan Bucheli, Ed.D.

Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management and
Student Success



VCU

Office of the Provost

Future-proofing VCU's Academic Enterprise

Higher Education Landscape

- Enrollment cliff
- Questioning the value of higher education
- Game changing technologies

Value proposition and Investment

- Increase the value of a VCU degree
- Boost resources: attracting more students
- Living within our means: innovating within existing budget resources

Preparing students for the future of work

- Gen AI increases the potential for automation in jobs requiring higher level of education attainment
- Source: [McKinsey Digital, report on the economic potential of generative AI](#)

Workplace skills

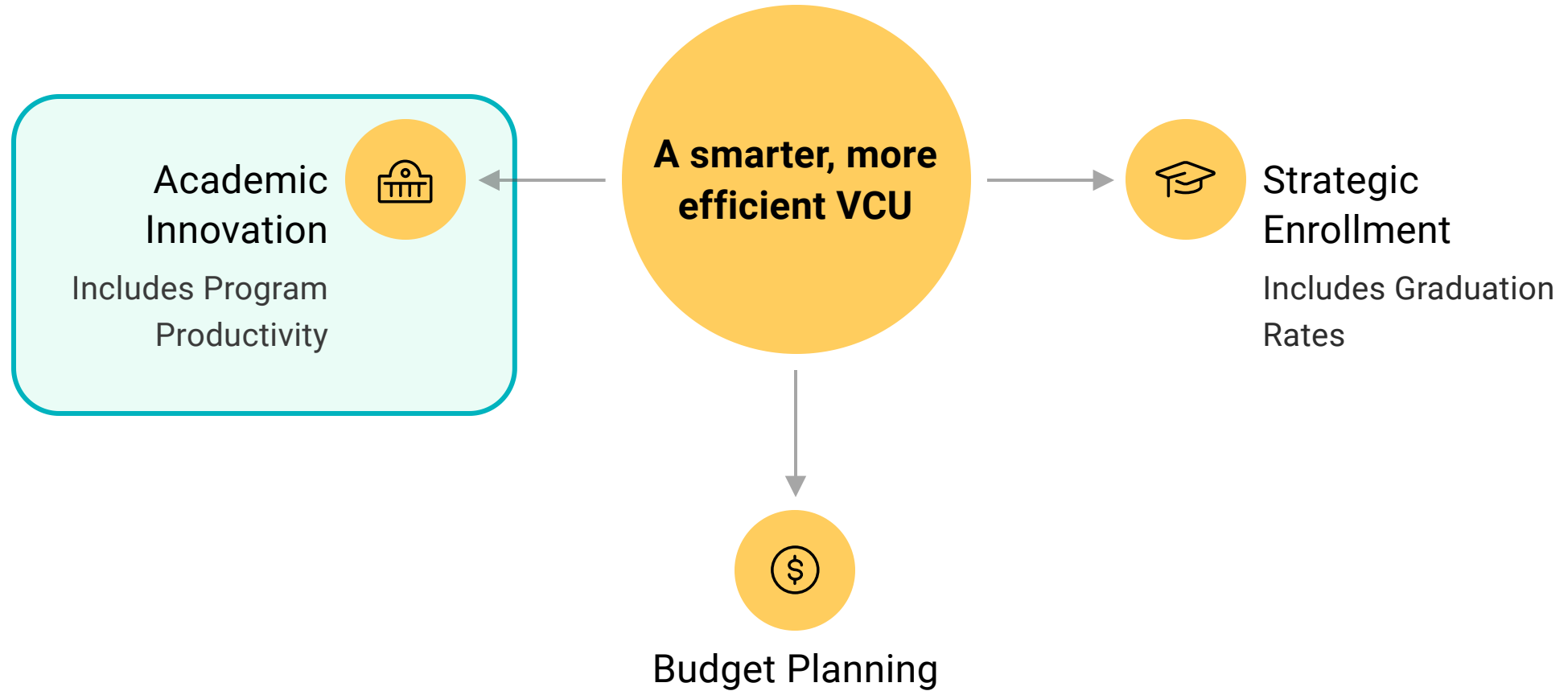
- Internships
- Problem solving
- Self-management
- Working with people
- Technology use and development



Today's Focus:

Academic Program Productivity & Modeling Graduation Rates

Collaborative Planning



Academic Program Productivity

Assessing the Vitals of Degree and Certificate Programs

Definition

- ✓ VCU employs a rolling **annual** process that meets SCHEV's requirement
- ✓ The reporting takes into account complex factors including **enrollments, graduates, labor market demand, support of VCU's mission**, and others

Purpose

- ✓ Ensures VCU's offerings meet academic and market demands and supports strategic enrollment goals

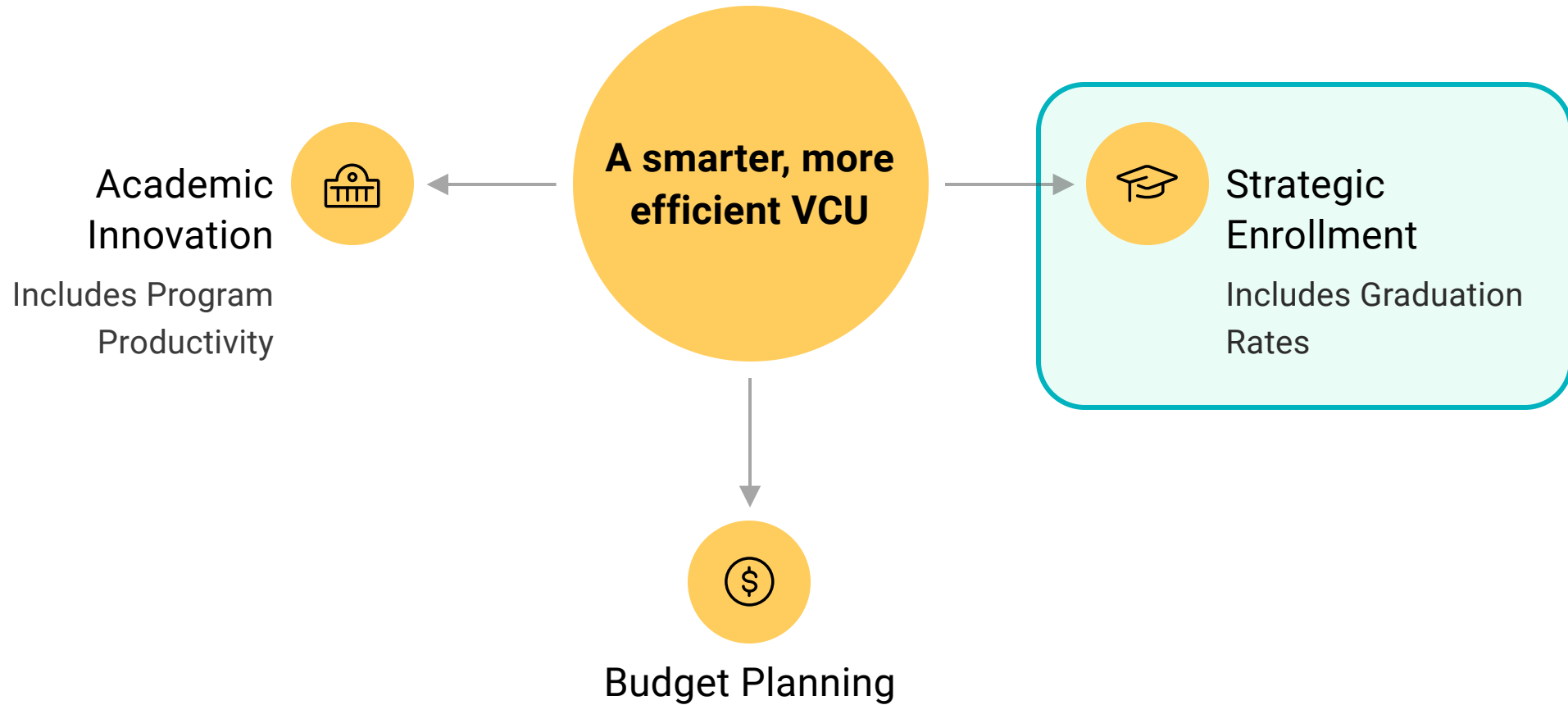
Outcome

- ✓ Action Plan that recommends: **Maintain, invest, reallocate OR sunset**

Timeline and Next Steps



Collaborative Planning



Increasing VCU's Graduation Rates

Three key factors










1 VCU's proud focus on **excellence + impact + access** creates distinct challenges

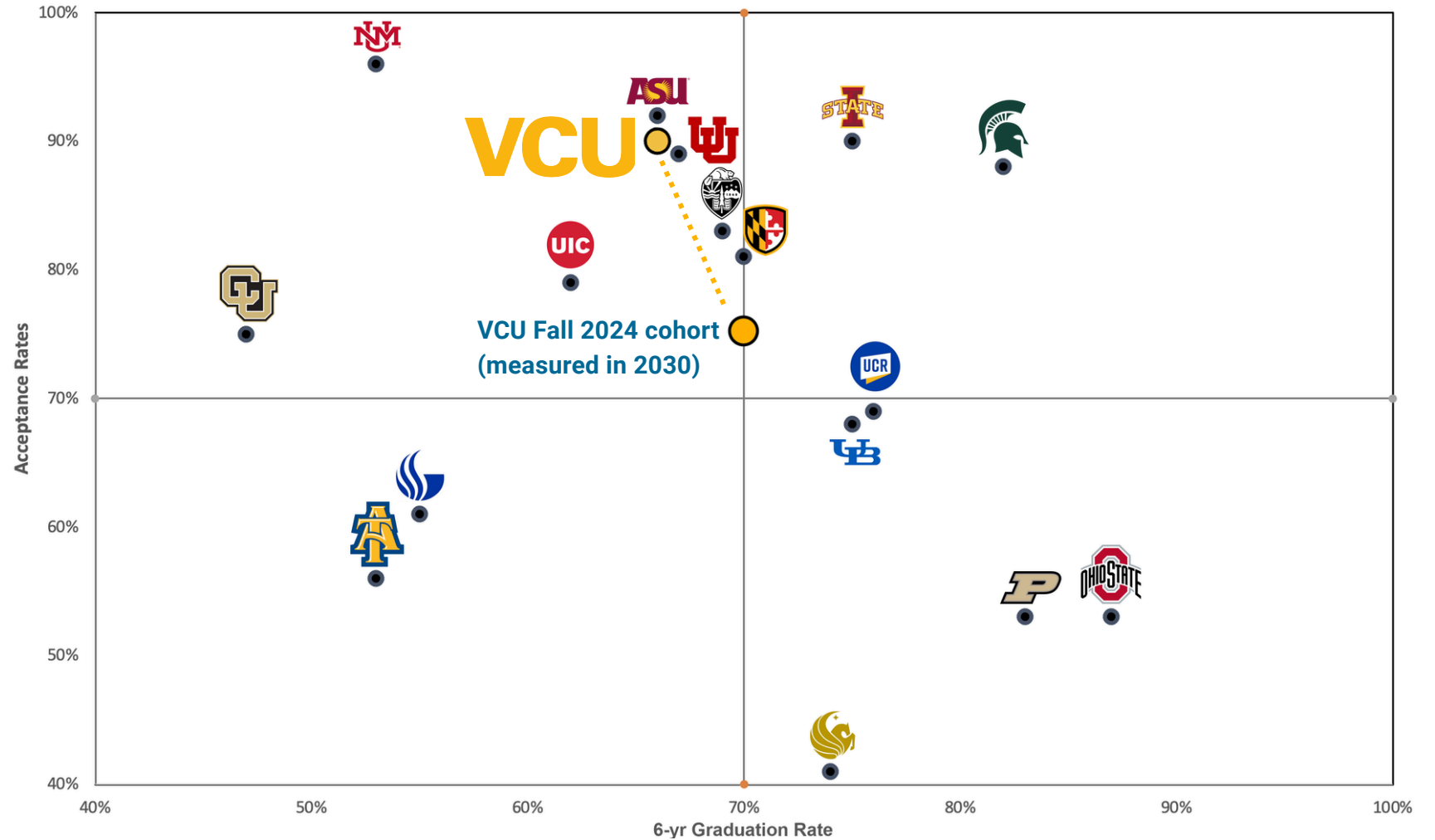
2 Entering students' **academic and socio-economic characteristics** and **retention rates for the first two years in college** are strong predictors of graduation rates at VCU and across higher education

3 VCU is **addressing this challenge** through a combination of internal student services and national best practices (**NISS**)

Correlation of 6-year graduation rate and acceptance rate

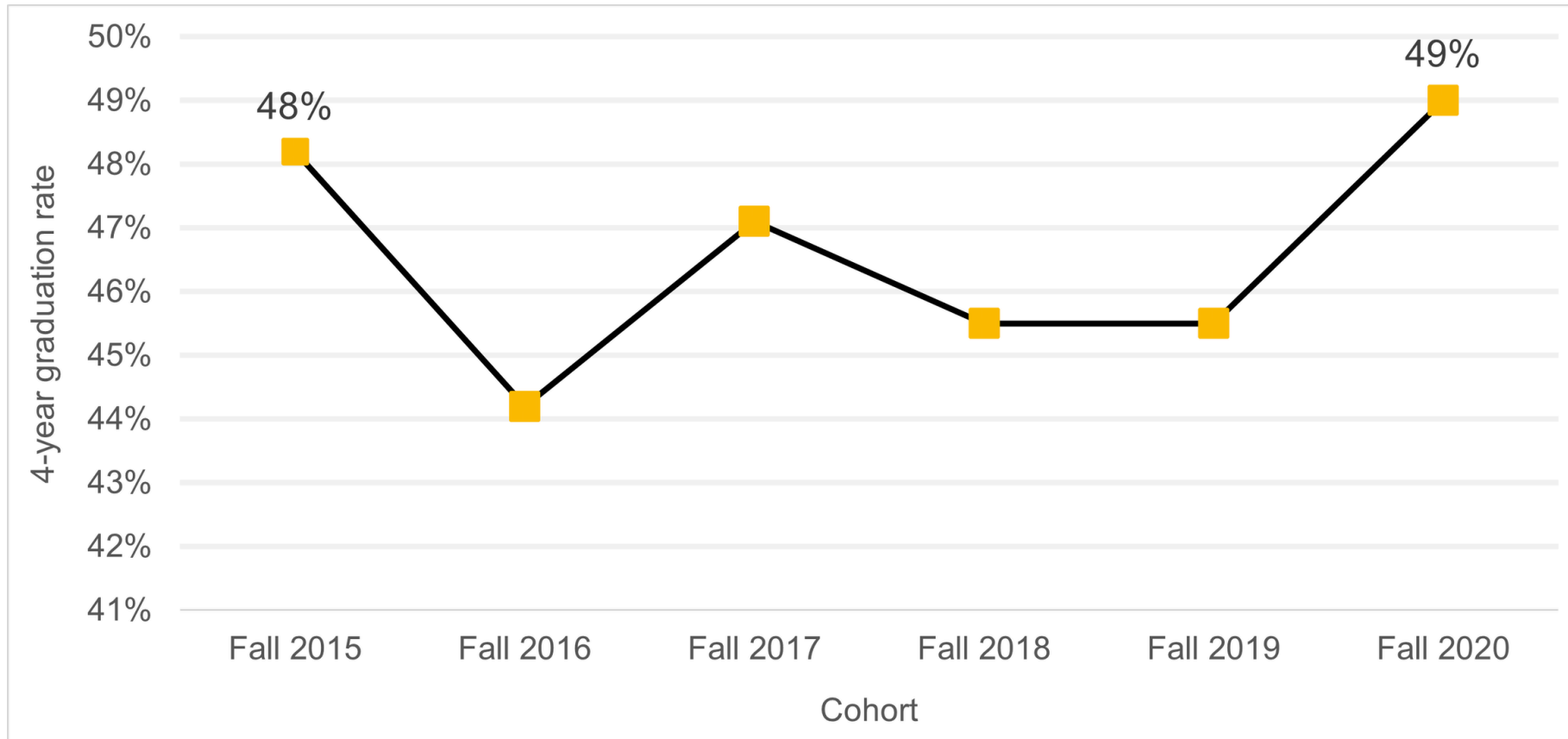
University Innovation Alliance (UIA) Partner Universities

-  University of Colorado Denver
-  University of New Mexico
-  Georgia State University
-  North Carolina A&T State University
-  University of Illinois Chicago
-  Virginia Commonwealth University
-  University of Utah
-  Arizona State University
-  University of Maryland Baltimore County
-  Oregon State University
-  University at Buffalo
-  Iowa State University
-  University of Central Florida
-  University of California Riverside
-  Michigan State University
-  Purdue University
-  The Ohio State University



Source: US News Main Survey, 2024

4-year graduation rate trends



The Fall 2020 cohort (most recent available) demonstrates the highest 4-year graduation rate since the Fall 1999 cohort

Modeling Future Graduation Rates

VCU First-time, Full-time Freshman Retention and Graduation Rate Modeling

Actual Rates as of Census II (Source: IRDS Insights 3.0)

Cohort	Full-Time Cohort Size	1-Year Retention Rate	4-Year Graduation Rate	6-Year Graduation Rate
Fall 2015	4,055	86.4%	48.2%	67.8%
Fall 2016	4,203	83.0%	44.2%	64.9%
Fall 2017	4,177	84.7%	47.1%	65.6%
Fall 2018	4,576	83.1%	45.5%	62.9%
Fall 2019	4,419	83.2%	45.6%	64.2%
Fall 2020	3,764	83.9%	49.0%	69.0%
Fall 2021	4,102	84.9%	49.0%	69.0%
Fall 2022	4,167	85.6%	49.3%	69.4%
Fall 2023	4,560	85.5%	49.5%	69.8%
Fall 2024	4,224	85.8%	50.0%	70.5%

Modeled

Prepared November 7, 2024 by SEMSS Enrollment Research and Evaluation



Assumptions: Modeling Future Graduation Rates

Baseline cohort:

- Fall 2015: the most recent class in history whose 6-year graduation rates were not as substantially impacted by COVID.

Trends:

- Additional support resources have been put into place to aid in student success, retention, and graduation
- 1-year retention rates have been increasing

Methodology:

- Projected slight increase in 1-year retention rate of 0.3% for the Fall 2024 cohort (conservative, educated approximation of upward trend)
- Projected increase in 4-year graduation rates of a total of 1% over the next 4 years (conservative, educated approximation of upward trend)
- Projected increase from 4-year graduation rate to 6-year graduation rate (as modeled by the Fall 2015 freshman class)

Student support key initiatives

- ★ Academic Advising Investments
- ★ Career Audit
- ★ Financial Aid & Student Accounts (Onestop Shop)
- ★ First Year Experience Enhancements
- ★ Learning Supports
- ★ Hardship policies (Covid)
- ★ Targeted (Communications, Placement, Populations)
- ★ Innovation and Best Practices (UIA/NISS)

Impacting improved trajectory of retention and graduation rates:

VCU and National Institute for Student Success (NISS)

Four major priority areas

For more information on NISS visit: <https://provost.vcu.edu/niss/>



♥ VCU CARES

student success

IS MY **PRIORITY**

- Goal:

- 5000 student empathy interviews

- Outcomes:

- Engage workforce and build community
- Collect a wealth of knowledge about our students to help us tailor programs and initiatives



Enrollment Focus Areas

Overall enrollment increases Fall 2022 - Fall 2024



Non-Traditional Learners

↑ 2.1%

UNDERGRADUATE ONLY



VCU Online

↑ 39.2%



New Master's Enrollment

↑ 9.5%



Out-of-State & International

↑ 4.2%

Discussion

Academic and Health Affairs Committee Report

Health Sciences Campus
December 2024

Marlon F. Levy M.D. MBA
SVP, VCU Health Sciences



People, Programs, Places

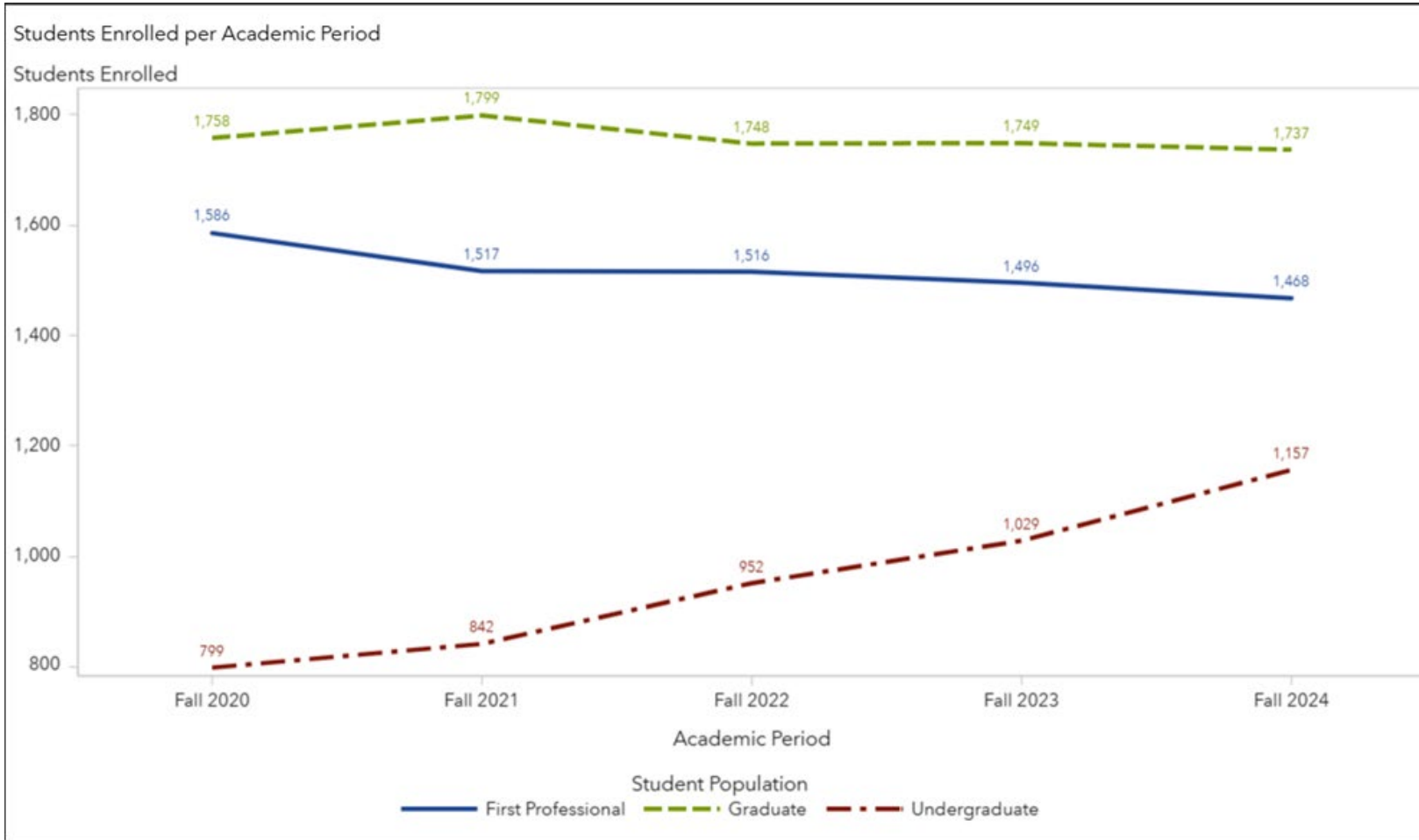
Enrollment

People



WE ARE THE UNCOMMON.

Total Campus Enrollment	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
	4,143	4,158	4,216	4,274	4,362



WE ARE THE UNCOMMON.

School of Medicine Enrollment Efforts

- SOM Improved enrollment in Masters and PhD compared to prior years; major contribution margin is from the Pre-Cert Pre-Med Program
- Clearing all LCME citations
- Increased locations for placements, particularly in OBGYN and Surgery
- Expansion back into northern Virginia/Inova
- Request for increased funding support from the state
- Increased efforts to match the McGlothlin Program to ensure educational debt is an acceptable level to ensure retention and accreditation compliance
- Marketing campaign and website expansion in all graduate programs

Pharmacy Enrollment Efforts

Undergraduate

- BSPS = 26 Students [11/19/24] ↑ 100% YOY (26 students)
- Note: New program has already met initial benchmarks

Professional

- PharmD = 329 Students [11/19/24] - ↓ 6% YOY (21 students)

Graduate

- Thesis Masters = 3 Students [11/19/24] ↓ 25% YOY (2 students)
- Non-thesis Masters - Launching Fall 2025
- Ph.D. = 58 Students [11/19/24] ↓ 7% YOY (4 students)

College of Health Professions Enrollment Efforts

- **Undergraduate**
 - Increase of undergraduate enrollment by 13% in 2024 over 2023
 - Bachelor of Science in Health Services increase of 497% since it was launched in 2021
- **Professional**
 - Increase of undergraduate professional programs
 - MLS increased 17%
 - Radiation Sciences increased 12%.
- **Graduate**
 - CHP experienced a 3.8% decrease in graduate enrollment in 2024 over 2023
 - Enrollment in the MHA declined 15.4%, which accounted for 69% of the decrease in total enrolled CHP graduate students
 - Occupational therapy also experienced a substantial decrease of 6% decrease in total enrollment in 2024 over 2023

Recruitment

People



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Recruitment

- Health Sciences VP position posting
- SOM national searches:
 - Microbiology and Immunology
 - Pediatrics
 - Dean of Admissions
- Pathology Chair, Dr. F. Yang from Northwestern, starting December 1

Programs

College of Health Professions Programs

- **Perfusion:** Proposal development is underway, with submission date of 12/1/24. The proposal will go through the approval process with SACSCOC and SCHEV in 2025, with an anticipated start date of January, 2026, if approved. The target cohort size is 10 students.
- **Radiation Sciences** includes sonography, radiography, radiation therapy and nuclear medicine. Enrollment is robust, applications continue to increase, and cohorts are meeting/exceeding enrollment targets. We are developing a proposal to expand Radiation Therapy and Sonography into Northern Virginia. This expansion would require approval from SACSCOC and SCHEV.
- Proposal in development to increase enrollment in **Nurse Anesthesia** at Richmond and NOVA sites and are evaluating whether to expand Medical Laboratory Sciences to NOVA.

School of Medicine Initiatives



2024

2025

Places

Places

- New dental school facility planning continues
- **Pharmacy:** Satellite campus exploration in northern Virginia

Discussion