

# illuminate



VANDERBILT  
People, Culture and Belonging

Vol 2.7



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# EDITOR'S REFLECTION

When I was growing up on a rural farm, I learned something that's never left me: nothing flourishes alone. The barn door creaked open at dawn, rain drummed on the roof, crops stretched toward the sun, animals needed care and people leaned on one another. That was life. And that simple truth still guides me today: growth only happens when the conditions are right.

That's what we're building together at Vanderbilt. A community where you are supported, not just for the work you do, but for the life you live.

If there's one thing I know, it's this: health care that steadies you when life gets shaky, retirement planning that gives you peace of mind, learning pathways that open doors you didn't even know were there. These aren't perks. They are promises. They are our way of saying: You matter. You belong. You are not alone here.

Our aspiration is simple: to make our workplace better for our people and our people better for Vanderbilt's noble mission. Together, we are creating more than a workplace. We are cultivating a living community where care, connection, and opportunity are not lofty ideas, but everyday experiences you can count on.

It's Our Moment!

*Sydney*

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

*Celebrating the excellence of Vanderbilt staff.*



## Connor Bacon Associate Director of Digital Media & Learning Technology Office of Digital Education

Connor is my manager and the head of my team, the Digital Media Lab. The success of our team is accredited to Connor's leadership. But his impact is not limited to our team. His presence as a role model is omnipresent in every functional group in our office. Every day, he pushes the team to innovate and think creatively to solve problems. Connor does not try to control and micromanage those under his wing, he leads by example and encourages areas that colleagues can grow in. In every way, he embodies a mentor that cares deeply for his colleagues and lifts them to grow and steers them down the right path.

Submit a nomination for a staff member or team for our Staff Spotlight

*I love being a part-time grad student at Vanderbilt in addition to being a full-time Development and Alumni Relations staff member. Taking classes part time has been a great way to better understand the student experience, meet new friends, and feel like I belong. As a lifelong learner, I am grateful for Vanderbilt's generous tuition benefits and enjoy learning new things and applying them immediately on the job.*

- MK Rosack

**Moments  
THAT  
matter**

## Moments That Matter

Moments That Matter is an invitation to reflect on those times that have made a difference in your life at Vanderbilt.

Our journeys at Vanderbilt are not just about the moments we create for ourselves—they're about the moments we help create for others.

Share Your Moment



# UPCOMING EVENTS AND LAUNCHES

## Fall Staff Awards Closes Friday, August 29

The awards recognize the many contributions of university staff to Vanderbilt's core goals and mission. The winners of each award will be announced at the annual Fall Staff Assembly on October 29.

The Fall Staff Awards include longtime university awards, including the Community Impact Award, Professional Excellence, Innovation Excellence, Research Excellence, Student Impact, and Leadership Excellence awards.

Nominations can be submitted by staff, students, faculty or postdoctoral scholars via the [online nomination form](#) through **Friday, Aug. 29**. Please see the [staff awards website](#) for nomination guidelines and award amounts.





# UPCOMING EVENTS AND LAUNCHES

## Parking at Vanderbilt University: Options for Commuters

Vanderbilt University offers a range of transportation and parking options designed to meet the varied needs of students, faculty and staff commuting to campus.

These resources can help you choose the best commute option for yourself:

1. Compare **personalized commute/parking options and pricing** with the [Commute Calculator](#) and request

personalized trip planning and parking option guidance from the [Commute Concierge](#)

2. **Parking fills up early in the day and closest to campus buildings.** Consider [active and carpool commutes](#), arriving before 8 a.m. and exploring the [parking map](#) for more locations

3. Visit the [Parking and Transportation website](#) for all transportation options

4. Email [parking@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:parking@vanderbilt.edu) with any questions

## Vanderbilt Get Connected

Get Connected is Vanderbilt University's new platform that serves as a bridge between Nashville-based nonprofits and Vanderbilt's volunteer base. Simplifying community outreach, Get Connected helps students, faculty and staff find causes they are passionate about and track their volunteer hours. Visit [vu.edu/getconnected](http://vu.edu/getconnected) and log in with your VUnetID to get started.

## VUIT Learning Collective - September Session

### PowerPoint 101 with Dylan Platz

*Friday, September 5 / 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.*

This beginner-friendly course introduces the essentials of Microsoft PowerPoint. Participants will learn how to create visually engaging slides, apply consistent formatting, insert multimedia, and deliver presentations with confidence. Whether you're new to PowerPoint or looking to sharpen your skills, this session will help you build a strong foundation for effective communication.

[Register Here](#)

## Introducing: The Magnolia Makerspace

The Magnolia Makerspace is a creative place open to all students, faculty, and staff every Tuesday and Thursday from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in room 036 of 6 Magnolia Circle. We are stocked with a variety of tools and machines to assist you with your projects such as a number of hand tools, soldering irons, 3d printers, or our laser cutter. Our goal is to provide people with a space to work with and learn about and how to use these tools.



# FUTURES LEARNING HUB UPDATES

Join us this September for the Anchor's Edge Learning Series, where we'll explore new ideas, build skills, and connect through engaging sessions designed to support growth and collaboration. Don't miss this opportunity to learn something new and apply it directly to your work at Vanderbilt.

All registrants will receive a recording after the live session. If you're unable to attend, please register to ensure you have access.



Register

## Motivation Monday – September Session

**When:** 9/8/25 @ 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

**About:** Join us for our monthly live roundtable discussion highlighting a Vanderbilt team or individual making an impact through high performance and collaboration.

## The AI-Ready Employee: What It Really Looks Like

**When:** 9/16/25 @ 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

**About:** Being "AI-ready" doesn't mean you have to code or become a data scientist. It means being curious, adaptable, and willing to explore how AI can enhance—not replace—your role. The most AI-ready employees are those who ask better questions, use tools to save time, and stay open to learning new ways of working.

This session breaks down what it means to be AI-ready for everyone—whether you work in a kitchen, a lab, or a leadership suite. We'll explore the mindsets, habits, and ethical considerations that allow employees to confidently partner with AI and thrive in a fast-changing workplace.



Register



# FUTURES LEARNING HUB UPDATES

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## Personify Health Webinar Series

**When:** 9/24/25 @ 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

**About:** Join Amy Silvers, Wellbeing Champion Program Manager, for an engaging Personify Health webinar series designed to help faculty, staff, and postdocs get the most out of this powerful wellbeing platform! Whether you're new to Personify Health or a long-time user, these sessions will provide a comprehensive walkthrough of the platform's key features, tips for maximizing its benefits, and insights into recent updates and new offerings.



Register



Register

## Prepare for the Reality of Health Care in Retirement

**When:** 9/25/25 @ 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

**About:** This session, hosted by Fidelity, will explore essential aspects of retirement planning, including strategies for paying for health care, the optimal timing for claiming Social Security, and an overview of Medicare. It will also discuss the various types of elder care and their associated costs, providing insights on how to prepare for the realities of retirement.

## Why Join

- **Skill Building:** Gain valuable skills to help you excel in your current role or unlock new opportunities.
- **Community:** Connect with colleagues across the university who share a passion for growth and learning.
- **Accessibility:** Each session is designed for a wide range of experience levels and interests.

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## Benefits & Perks at Vanderbilt: Unlock Your Potential with LinkedIn Learning Via Oracle Learn

At Vanderbilt, investing in our people is a top priority. One of the standout perks available to all employees is **free access to LinkedIn Learning via Oracle Learn**. You can find thousands of courses designed to help you grow both personally and professionally.

Whether you want to sharpen your leadership skills, explore data analytics, learn about AI, or even dive into mindfulness practices, LinkedIn Learning via Oracle Learn offers something for everyone. The best part? You can learn at your own pace, anytime and anywhere.



For employees, this means an opportunity to:

- **Advance your career** with training in high-demand skills.
- **Stay current** in a rapidly changing workplace.
- **Build confidence** by exploring new areas of interest.
- **Balance work and life** with flexible learning that fits your schedule.

This benefit for employees empowers you to take charge of your own development. It's more than a perk—it's an investment in your future.

Start exploring today and see how continuous learning can open new doors for your career and personal growth.

Here are the top five LinkedIn Learning courses co-workers have completed in the last year.

1. [Communicating With Transparency](#)
2. [Psychological Safety: Clear Block to Innovation, Collaboration, and Risk-Taking](#)
3. [Skills to Build Stronger Work Relationships](#)
4. [How to Boost Your Productivity with AI Tools](#)
5. [Working with Difficult People](#)



# HEALTH, WELLBEING AND BELONGING

**Back by popular demand!**

## Trivia Night

Thurs., Sept. 25 at Jasper's!  
4:45 - 7 p.m.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

## Help shape the next Vandy Trivia and Game Night!

As we gear up for a new academic year, Health, Wellbeing, and Belonging is excited to begin planning our next Vandy Trivia and Game Night. Our first event was very well received, and we're eager to build on that momentum with your help.

We want to hear from you. Please take a few minutes to complete this brief survey to share your ideas and preferences so we can design an inclusive, engaging event that reflects our community's interests.

[Complete the survey here.](#)

In the survey, you can weigh in on:

- Trivia categories and game options (board and card games)
- Team formats and prize ideas
- Volunteer interest for planning or event support

Your feedback will directly influence event details and help us create a fun, welcoming experience that promotes community, wellbeing, and work-life balance.

Thanks for helping us make the next Vandy Trivia and Game Night our best yet!

## Join Us for a Wednesday Walking Tour! Hosted by People, Culture, and Belonging

Take a break, get some fresh air, and explore the beauty of Vanderbilt's campus with Laura Barker, Assistant Grounds Manager.

Date: September 24, 2025

Time: 9:30AM

Meeting Spot: Rand Patio (across from Old Central)

Bring your walking shoes and enjoy a guided tour highlighting the natural beauty and thoughtful design of our campus grounds.

Let's walk, connect, and celebrate the spaces that bring us together!

For more information, contact:

Stacey Bonner

[wellbeing@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:wellbeing@vanderbilt.edu)



## Demystifying Your Credit Score

**Date/Time: September 9 at 11:00 AM CT**

A Fidelity representative will share valuable information on improving your credit score and understanding the factors that influence it. Understanding your credit score is essential, as it can affect your ability to rent an apartment or purchase a home.

To attend, please [register here](#)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kayla Austin at [wellbeing@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:wellbeing@vanderbilt.edu)

## July Team Step Challenge Winners - We Got This!

Congratulations to team We've Got This!, who logged an impressive 1,017,192 steps during our July challenge, proving that teamwork, motivation, and a shared commitment to health can lead to amazing results.

For Elana, the challenge was both a competition and a personal journey. "I am very competitive and winning drives me. I am also in a stage in life where I am consciously working on being healthier. Additionally, having Chris as a teammate pushes you to do your best—he always finds time to make his health come first."

Jessica shared that the team's support made all the difference. "Having teammates who are actively working on their health and make it a priority inspires me to be better about my own. They inspire me at work and in everyday life."

### Record-Breaking Success

Thank you to everyone who participated in making this our most successful challenge yet!

Pictured (Top to Bottom)

*Jessica Hall, Elana Milano and Ashley Haddard*

Not Pictured

*Megan Altemus and Christopher Regan*





# CHILD AND FAMILY CENTER

## The Acorn School Professional Development

The Acorn School 2025-26 Team engaged in a week of professional development activities while resetting the learning environment in preparation to welcome over 300 children on August 4th.

Recognizing that play is the most efficacious way that human beings incorporate information, build skills and remember what they learn, VCFC resourced time for the Acorn Community of Practice to grow our collegiality through playful collaboration while managing serious content.

In addition to First Aid/CPR certification and ASQ, Chalk, Early Literacy and Pyramid trainings, several teachers lead impactful workshops to reinforce the activities and strategies that deliver Acorn's Nature Education and emergent curriculum. Celebrating our staff is 87 Vanderbilt employees strong, representing many different talents united to deliver excellence in early childhood care and education.





# IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: BUILDING YOUR CAREER JOURNEY AT VANDERBILT

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At Vanderbilt University, we're committed to helping every member of our community grow, thrive, and find purpose in their work. Over the past year, we've taken major steps forward to create a clearer, more supportive employee experience that makes career growth more visible, feedback more meaningful, and opportunities more accessible. Here's a look back at three key initiatives shaping the future of work at Vanderbilt:

## **Project Polaris: Our New Skills-Based Job Architecture**

Earlier this year, we introduced a new skills-based job architecture, a framework designed to bring greater clarity, consistency, and visibility to roles across the university.

This structure organizes every position into job families, growth streams, and levels, helping staff better understand career pathways and managers more effectively align talent with evolving needs.

For staff, this means:

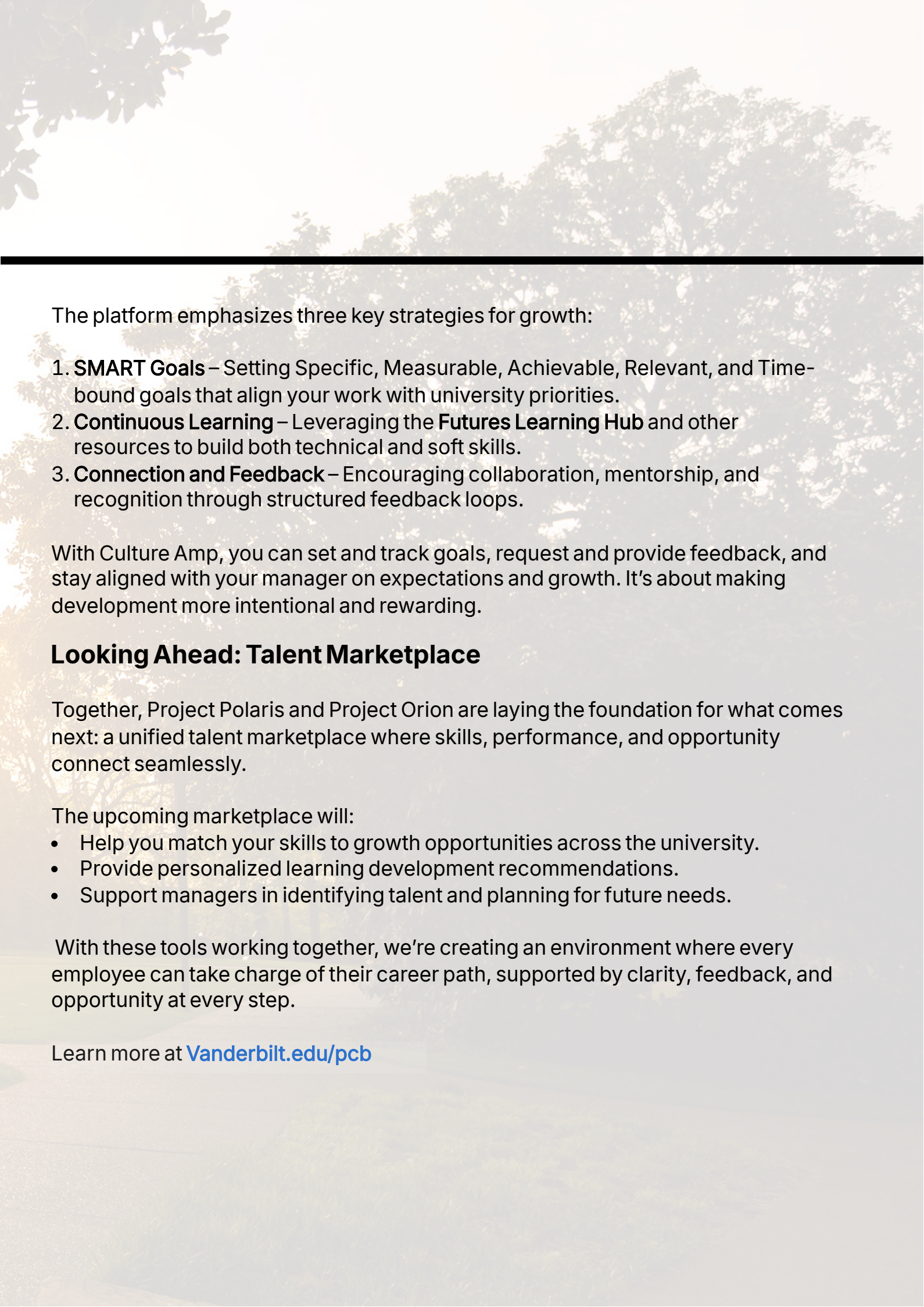
- A transparent view of career progression across the university.
- Clearly defined role expectations and success factors.
- Access to the soon to be released **Oracle Talent Marketplace**, which will connect your unique skills to open roles, learning resources, and development opportunities.

For managers, it means better workforce planning, streamlined people processes, and more effective tools to support staff development. And for Vanderbilt as a whole, it creates a modern, equitable framework for attracting, retaining, and growing talent.

## **Project Orion: Supporting Growth Through Modern Performance Growth & Management**

Another milestone in our employee experience journey is the launch of our new performance management platform, powered by Culture Amp. This tool modernizes the way we set goals, give feedback, and track development. This shifts performance management from a once-a-year event to an ongoing conversation.





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The platform emphasizes three key strategies for growth:

1. **SMART Goals** – Setting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals that align your work with university priorities.
2. **Continuous Learning** – Leveraging the **Futures Learning Hub** and other resources to build both technical and soft skills.
3. **Connection and Feedback** – Encouraging collaboration, mentorship, and recognition through structured feedback loops.

With Culture Amp, you can set and track goals, request and provide feedback, and stay aligned with your manager on expectations and growth. It's about making development more intentional and rewarding.

## Looking Ahead: Talent Marketplace

Together, Project Polaris and Project Orion are laying the foundation for what comes next: a unified talent marketplace where skills, performance, and opportunity connect seamlessly.

The upcoming marketplace will:

- Help you match your skills to growth opportunities across the university.
- Provide personalized learning development recommendations.
- Support managers in identifying talent and planning for future needs.

With these tools working together, we're creating an environment where every employee can take charge of their career path, supported by clarity, feedback, and opportunity at every step.

Learn more at [Vanderbilt.edu/pcb](https://Vanderbilt.edu/pcb)

# connect with us



[vanderbilt.edu/pcb](https://vanderbilt.edu/pcb)

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Check website for location

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