

FIRST DRAFT February 2014: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY UPDATE on 2013-2014 Strategic Planning for Vanderbilt University

Armed with confidence and possibility, the 2002 Strategic Plan outlined a set of bold initiatives to enhance Vanderbilt's standing as a premier research and teaching university. The plan strove "to declare what is unique about Vanderbilt and fuse that mission into an institutional identity that serves as a compass for our future." Critical to the success of the 2002 plan was a commitment to take the essential elements of preeminent research universities – outstanding students, distinguished faculty, distinctive academic programs, a commitment to equality, and cutting edge educational technologies – and unite them in an unparalleled learning environment by drawing on Vanderbilt's strength as a single, unified residential campus.

In the ensuing twelve years, Vanderbilt has dramatically increased the quality of its faculty, its student body, and its impact and visibility in the world. Those gains can be tied to the visions laid out in the 2002 Strategic Plan; namely, that we significantly increase our commitment to the affordability of our undergraduate education while making focused investments within the university to ensure we stay true to our missions of teaching, research, and service. As a result, all of our colleges have substantially improved or maintained their stature over the last decade in rankings commonly used by prospective students and faculty to evaluate academic quality. These gains fuel our ambitions as Vanderbilt aims to take another great leap forward.

Our ambition, however, must confront some daunting challenges for higher education, research universities, and academic medical centers. Globally, we face major societal problems, including environmental and economic sustainability, a growing gap between the rich and poor, and the constant threat of terrorism and political turmoil. Domestically, America's economic and political future faces increasing uncertainty fueled in large part by polarization, gridlock, and an inability to find solutions to pressing problems. Institutionally, how can Vanderbilt best address concerns regarding the growing cost of a college education and offer its students a diverse living and learning environment that prepares them to lead in the twenty-first century? How can we further innovate in healthcare in the face of rising costs, system restructuring, and the pressing need to prevent disease not just treat it? How can we leverage interdisciplinary teaching and research so as to ensure Vanderbilt addresses the problems confronting society and humanity? How do we harness the most effective new education technologies that can advance our teaching and research? These are critical questions that pose significant challenges. Vanderbilt's response must be both vigorous and effective.

The strategic planning process of 2013-2014 responds to these challenges and provides another "compass for our future" by mapping out a series of bold and creative university initiatives. Launched last April, Chancellor Zeppos charged the Strategic Planning Executive Committee to employ a grassroots approach to chart the university's future. To date, over 200 faculty across all colleges have been formally involved. Another ~250 colleagues have offered their input and thoughts in a series of conversations and meetings about what paths Vanderbilt should take. This breadth of participation, in part, reflects that this strategic plan will for the first time bring all schools, all hands, and all minds together in the important missions of learning and discovery at Vanderbilt. With all hands and minds working together, we will advance the *One Vanderbilt* philosophy to meet current and future challenges and approach our 150th anniversary as one of the truly great teaching and research universities in the world.

The Vanderbilt Edge

Vanderbilt is exceptionally well positioned to meet the challenges outlined above and continue leading and defining the future of higher education. This optimism is a consequence of Vanderbilt's distinctive features.

First, our commitment to *Opportunity Vanderbilt* is absolutely fundamental to our educational mission in the twenty-first century. By replacing need-based loans with scholarships and grants, all outstanding undergraduates, regardless of financial standing, can join our living and learning community. *Opportunity Vanderbilt* exemplifies our core values and it advances our enduring dedication to equality, diversity, and accessibility. While many universities have recently retrenched on making such a costly investment in their students, Vanderbilt remains steadfast in its commitment to equity and affordability. *Opportunity Vanderbilt* is essential for recruiting and supporting the students with the greatest potential to engage, to question, and to forge change.

Second, Vanderbilt's geographically unified campus is an integral part of *One Vanderbilt*. Access to ten highly ranked colleges covering nearly every aspect of humanity offers our students and faculty a unique environment for learning and discovery. Students can engage in research with path-breaking scientists at the Medical School while also taking courses from top-flight faculty in the humanities who teach them better to appreciate the perspectives of diverse cultures. Faculty at the Blair School might work with faculty at Peabody to consider how music can affect childhood education. Students can learn about computer design with faculty in the School of Engineering and the Owen School, producing new software that could lead to a more efficient businesses and privacy protection. Vanderbilt also has a large wholly owned healthcare system that provides tremendous opportunities to address the many deep and complex issues related to healthcare.

One Vanderbilt reflects a deep commitment to **a unique culture of collaboration, creativity, and civility** across a wide array of disciplines. Vanderbilt faculty and students at all levels – undergraduate, graduate, and professional - work together to explore critical questions across disciplinary boundaries, develop crucially important intellectual and civic capabilities, and use those insights to forge change that helps to address the big problems facing society.

Third, Vanderbilt's broad based commitment over the last decade to a rich and balanced undergraduate residential college experience offers an invaluable edge as we tackle many of these challenges. The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons and the new College Halls at Kissam are critical to educating the whole person and establishing a passion in our students for life-long learning. Other universities have residential colleges, but our *One Vanderbilt* geography and culture provides a truly unique advantage. For example, academic and living experiences are intertwined in the Ingram Commons – it is the home to students, faculty house heads, and academic units. Because of *Opportunity Vanderbilt*, the result is a shared experience where undergraduates, regardless of interests, background, or financial standing, create an engaged community of students and faculty. When truly exceptional and diverse individuals are brought together to live and learn, the resulting experiences cultivate the values we seek to instill in our students. They grapple – perhaps for the first time – with different perspectives that may lead them to question their preconceptions and to work collaboratively with one another to forge change.

Finally, Vanderbilt is set in Nashville, a dynamic city that offers a rich context for learning and discovery. The nickname of "Music City" underscores the centrality of Nashville's creativity. Our students have access to one of the leading arts environments in the country offering near limitless possibilities for professional development in graphics, video production, publishing and broadcast television. Nashville also has a history of healthcare innovation and has become a magnet for many

dynamic businesses. As a state capital, Nashville is a center of political activity, providing students an opportunity to make a difference in public affairs and public service along with strong connections to critical social and political movements in our country's history.

PREVIEW of DRAFT Initiatives for the Four Themes Driving the Strategic Plan

Building upon a strong foundation of increasingly talented students living in a residential college system within one of the great research universities in the world, four dynamic themes drive Vanderbilt's 2013-2014 Strategic Plan: Undergraduate Residential Experience, Trans-institutional Programs, Healthcare Solutions, and Education Technologies. These four themes, which address critical challenges now facing Vanderbilt, have remarkable synergies and they are connected in vision and mission. Each also capitalizes on our distinctive strengths and advances our mission of teaching, research, and service.

Going forward, we are fully committed to three essential goals. **First**, we must offer an absolutely outstanding educational experience for all our students. **Second**, we must undertake world class research that produces new and important discoveries on important problems. **Third**, we must guarantee these two first two goals are mutually reinforcing so as to ensure Vanderbilt's impact on society is deep and enduring.

Undergraduate Residential Experience

We aspire to offer students an intellectually rich, diverse and dynamic education. Our ability to provide a compelling learning environment is possible because Vanderbilt's residential college experience is housed within a geographically compact and world class research university that operates as a meritocracy, drawing the very best students and faculty from around the globe.

To accomplish this vision, as leaders in higher education, we must innovate through daring thinking that fully leverages Vanderbilt's many distinctions. Our students must benefit from the exceptional promise of both discovery and learning. To do so, we will harness the outstanding research and teaching strengths of our faculty to create a dynamic living-learning environment that will instill critical human and intellectual qualities in all our graduates. This rich intellectual setting must expose our students to a wide variety of perspectives and experiences and educate *the whole person* while cultivating lifelong learning.

Strategic Initiatives:

- Fully Endow *Opportunity Vanderbilt*
- Complete the College Hall residential system to include all undergraduates while integrating graduate and professional school students.
- Create new curriculum and other activities to enable our students to achieve foundational skills for lifelong learning, including those in the languages, arts, and technology.
- Create independent "immersion" experiences that give every undergraduate an opportunity **to engage, to question, and to forge change.**

- Create dedicated space - renovated and new - across the entire educational, residential, and research landscape that fosters interactions amongst the faculty and students.
- Establish a *Cross-College Teaching Initiative* to support innovative collaborations across colleges and thereby, create opportunities for all faculty to work collectively to better educate our undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.

Trans-institutional Programs

We aspire to generate new insights and discoveries, while training future leaders and scholars, by leveraging Vanderbilt’s distinctive resources and expertise from across the entire campus. Vanderbilt will take the lead in defining, addressing, and solving important problems and questions facing society.

To accomplish this vision, Vanderbilt’s trans-institutional programs - both existing and new – must focus on critical challenges, connect our diverse disciplinary strengths, foster increased collaboration and integration, enable and instill critical qualities in our students, and provide an enriched environment that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Trans-institutional programs (TIPs) encompass both “interdisciplinary” and “multidisciplinary” approaches to create new and valuable knowledge by interweaving relevant perspectives, features, methods, and information. We must build upon the themes of the 2002 Strategic Plan and prioritize activities focusing on “Humans, the Human Condition, and Humanity,” while also casting a wide net to ensure breadth and creativity. Such transformative collaborations are essential to advancing Vanderbilt’s international leadership in education and research.

Strategic Initiatives:

- Establish a TIPs “incubator” to provide seed funding and dedicated resources to bring faculty and students together to share ideas, perspectives and knowledge and develop innovative cutting-edge collaborative research and teaching activities.
- Establish a school-wide TIPs Governance Council to develop criteria for guiding investments in new and existing trans-institutional programs.
- Make new investments in graduate and professional education – including increased funding, dual degrees, and curricula - that foster and support interdisciplinary efforts, recruiting the best students, and giving our graduates cutting edge training to compete in increasingly constrained job markets.

Healthcare Solutions

We aspire to be the world’s leader in developing and pursuing effective solutions to pressing health and healthcare problems through new discoveries and innovative educational initiatives.

To accomplish this vision, Vanderbilt is committed to improving personal and community health by developing innovative, aggressive and multi-disciplinary solutions. Over the last decade, our efforts have been focused on building a national leadership position in personalized medicine, drug discovery, and public health, and we have set in motion forces that have made these goals a reality. Moving forward, our collaborative discovery and training efforts must be increasingly focused on caring for the whole person by ensuring that our healthcare solutions attend not only to a person’s physical conditions, but also to the

social, political, and historical contexts that greatly impact the health, and the cost of healthcare, for individuals and populations. This broad approach will enable us to leverage all areas and disciplines across Vanderbilt to make discoveries that improve health, advance the quality, equity, and accountability of healthcare services, improve public policy tied to disease prevention and healthcare delivery, and prepare leaders and scholars to make healthier living possible in all corners of the world.

Strategic Initiatives:

- Increase research support for work toward discoveries focused on the molecular and genomic basis of disease and its treatment and prevention.
- Launch initiatives focused on understanding the cultural, economic, legal, political, and social attributes that affect health and disease prevention across all ages.
- Provide forums for interactions that infuse health and biomedical science focused initiatives with our strength in the humanities and social sciences.
- Develop and support existing and new curriculum and dual degree programs— from undergraduate to graduate to professional students – that will educate future leaders to address the complex health and healthcare issues from innovative interdisciplinary perspectives.
- Develop shared core resources that will support expansion of our healthcare policy and healthcare delivery research, and create a framework for external entities to engage Vanderbilt as a “hub” for identifying solutions to current and emerging challenges facing the healthcare industry.

Educational Technology

We aspire to embrace new education technologies to foster innovation in learning, teaching, and discovery and set standards for best practices in higher education.

To accomplish this vision, we must employ new educational technologies that advance our ability to educate the whole student and make lifelong learning a reality for *all* our students—current, past, and future. We must leverage our expertise in the assessment and development of these technologies with the goal of strengthening faculty-student interactions and enabling more personalized and connected learning. Further, we are committed to extending the concept of *One Vanderbilt* to foster lifelong learning and improve lifelong connections for our alumni and students.

Strategic Initiatives:

- Create new infrastructure for classrooms, laboratories, and other facilities to support the newest educational technologies.
- Launch new curricula in communications, information technology, data analysis, data visualization and analytics.
- Develop a knowledge repository of curriculum material for the entire campus.

- Create opportunities for connecting faculty, students and alumni through MOOCs, libraries, and other education technology innovations.
- Support the new Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning (VIDL) and the Center for Teaching (CTF), as well as their partnership, to ensure flexibility and responsiveness in meeting faculty and student needs, and ensure that innovations developed anywhere on campus are broadly shared and implemented.
- Invest in research on the best practices and effectiveness of new education technologies, making full use of our outstanding Peabody School of Education and other rich talent on our campus.
- Use new education technologies to forge partnerships, collaborations, and global outreach with key external stakeholders.

Conclusion

Vanderbilt's gains over the last decade are impressive by any standard. To make the next decade as great as the last one will require investing in a future that focuses on critical external challenges, connects our diverse disciplinary strengths, fosters increased collaboration and integration, inspires a broad intellectual spirit in our students, and provides an enriched living and learning environment that makes the most of our many talents on our diverse, unified campus. We must strive to guarantee that all of our students and all of our faculty are engaged in meaningful collaborations with each other. We aspire to offer the most innovative educational experience to our undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, while supporting and advancing new discoveries by faculty. All of these efforts must be considered within the context of advancing *One Vanderbilt*. By leveraging our highly ranked colleges within our intimate campus, Vanderbilt can and will continue its march to the very pinnacle of higher education.