



SCHOOL of NURSING

Our Extraordinary Future

Inspiring Excellence, Advancing Health
10-Year Strategic Plan

FROM THE DEAN

Learning is a lifelong process for people and institutions.

That means we constantly strive to improve the work we do: whether it's how we support students, deliver our teaching, the ways we look for new professors and staff, the kind of science or research we advance, and the kind of nurses and human beings we are.

With COVID-19 now a diminishing threat, new forces at play are quickly changing both higher education and nursing. Across every discipline, prospective students are questioning the return on investment of college education and graduate degrees, and expecting different, more convenient modalities of course content, structure, and delivery. Nurses are considering new roles within the profession, adjacent to it, or outside of it. Healthcare continues to face staffing shortages and ongoing problems with burnout and attrition, and employers have increasingly specific, often acute needs. We not only stand at the precipice of change; we are in its churn.



This strategic plan—co-created by our faculty and staff between 2022 and 2024—is our compass for the next 10 years. It positions us in strategic alignment with UVA Health's [One Future Together: Health & Hope for All](#) plan and UVA's [Great and Good plan](#) while also synching us with the School's [IDEA 2030](#) plan.

Our Extraordinary Future: Inspiring Excellence, Advancing Health strikes a balance between what and who we are and what we aspire to be: the nation's best, most welcoming, most diverse public nursing school where people from all walks of life are nurtured, grow, imagine, and belong.

It's imperative that UVA-educated nurses be prepared to use their voices and positions of trust to improve the health and well-being of people in our community, across Virginia, the nation, and the world. It's also critical that we continue to go above and beyond to support our nursing students as they find their own voices and paths. With twin challenges created by near-constant change in both higher education and healthcare,

our work has never been more ripe with possibility, or important.

Ours is an extraordinary future; this is our map.

Be well,

[Marianne Baernholdt, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN](#)

The Pew Charitable Trusts Dean, UVA School of Nursing
Dean of Professional Nursing, UVA Health

OUR PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE

Founded in 1901, and home to a diverse community of researchers, educators, learners, clinicians, staff, and caregivers, the School of Nursing is deeply committed to compassionate, evidence-based nursing care, science, and advocacy in an environment that champions inquiry, interprofessionalism, and belonging. A humanistic approach by faculty members fosters critical thinking, promotes awareness of social and cultural diversity, champions resilience and self-care, and protects and optimizes the health and wellness of patients, caregivers, and families.

Building on its history of excellence in leadership and service, the more-than 100 year-old UVA School of Nursing today is consistently ranked among the nation's top American nursing programs and lauded for its focus on clinician well-being, interprofessional learning, and culture of belonging. The School offers [vibrant and diverse program pathways](#) for individuals to become nurses or amplify their nursing practice at every professional stage.

Responsive to the many critical issues nursing faces—including burnout, attrition, moral distress, clinician well-being, pandemic strain, and the ever-changing needs of learners and learning environments, as influenced by the AACN's new *Essentials*—the School continues to expand and make more flexible its offerings across the undergraduate and graduate program spectrum. Positioned at the nexus between two rapidly changing entities—higher education and healthcare—we remain committed to being nimble, willing to strategically adjust as knowledge, people, and markets demand.

Like every nursing school, we are impacted by a host of internal and external pressures. Within UVA, as diversity and our undergraduate programs expand, fundraising remains strong and faculty nurse scientists' research portfolios grow, other within-School factors are more troubling: dramatic declines in graduate student enrollment, growing competition from online-only and for-profit nursing programs, a dearth of clinical practice spaces for students, and too few bedside preceptors and nursing faculty members to teach the next generation.

Outside UVA, the nursing profession continues to be troubled by acute staffing shortages, clinician attrition, unhealthy work environments, pay disparities, and disengagement, as well as a coming wave of nursing faculty retirements and declining graduate and undergraduate nursing enrollments. Achieving health equity among populations and communities remains a distant goal, and, in many spaces, homogeneity of nursing students and working RNs is more the rule than the exception.



MISSION, VISION, and VALUES

Mission: Improving lives through nursing

Vision: Transforming health through exceptional care, science, learning, and influence

Values: In close alignment with UVA Health's ASPIRE values, we are a learning community rooted in compassion and respect. As a community of students, faculty, and staff, we value:

- **Trust**
We are a community of trust and integrity
- **Equity**
We stand firmly for equity, inclusion, and diversity and against racism and social injustices of any kind
- **Excellence**
We pursue excellence in nursing practice and in teaching and learning, and believe learning is life-long
- **Collaboration**
We value problem-solving across programs and roles and collectively thrive when the environment is healthy, respectful, and caring
- **Knowledge**
We are committed to advancing science and developing evidence-based solutions that improve health, health equity, and healthcare

GOAL 1

Transform educational offerings to meet the changing needs of our students, the Commonwealth, and society

OBJECTIVES
 Strengthen and broaden the reach of academic programs and build engagement in areas of strategic growth

Establish learning environments that are responsive to internal and external needs

INITIATIVES
 + Competency-based education
 + Learning environments

GOAL 1

Transform educational offerings to meet the changing needs of our students, the Commonwealth, and society

Growing competition coupled with increased demand from prospective students, working nurses, and employers, make it critical that we adjust how, where, and what we teach. With a growing array of technology, and an increasingly tech-savvy student and faculty community, there has never been a better time to improve our content and delivery systems to remain dynamic, relevant, responsive—and growing.

Objectives

Strengthen academic programs to broaden the reach of and build engagement in our learning community, particularly in geographies of strategic growth. Address the critical need to get more students and nurse leaders across the state and region engaged. Create, update, and deploy learning environments that adapt to the fast-changing needs of society, healthcare, and higher education.

Initiatives

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE)

Implement a collaborative, creative, competency-based education model across all academic programs that will help address the nursing shortage while enhancing role readiness and preparing students, scientists, and educators to be agile in these spaces.

- // Build, incentivize, champion, and celebrate CBE teaching and implementation
- // Collaborate with instructional design experts and in collaboration with UVA's Center for Teaching Excellence, the vice provost for UVA's Online Education and Digital Innovation office, and other organizations to strengthen CBE and alternative pedagogical approaches to transform academic programs
- // Develop professional opportunities for faculty and staff that include the use of digital health technologies that included telehealth and remote patient monitoring
- // Recruit faculty and staff with CBE teaching experience and expertise

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Renovate and expand current physical and digital learning spaces to increase access and expand innovative learning experiences. Redesign and upgrade technology infrastructure to diversify pedagogical approaches, delivery modes, and clinical learning.

- // Conduct a space and technology needs assessment based on enrollment projections
- // Establish an instructional design and technology unit to support faculty, staff, and students
- // Design learning spaces, including in the simulation lab, in concert with professional consultants and renovate as funds allow
- // Amplify and expand learning spaces designed to teach digital health best practices

GOAL 2

Co-create and enhance partnerships to improve health and healthcare

OBJECTIVES

Develop new and enhance existing partnerships with hospitals, community health sites, and people

Strengthen and expand experiential opportunities for prospective students, faculty, and practicing nurses through clinical, global, and workforce development initiatives

INITIATIVES

- +Scaleable academic practice model in population health
- +New and existing UVA Health workforce partnerships and initiatives

GOAL 2

Co-create and enhance partnerships to improve health and healthcare

With feet firmly planted in both academic and healthcare spaces, the School is uniquely positioned to act as the connective tissue between communities, caregivers, and health systems. Leading with compassion, trustworthiness, and transparency, and with a vocal, visible commitment to equity, respect, and belonging, we must care for and learn from the community members whom we serve. Committing to earning communities' trust will ensure that patients at UVA Health and beyond will be better cared for, and that nursing students and faculty will have richer, broader clinical experiences and engagement.

Objectives

Establish new and enhance existing partnerships with hospitals, community health sites, and community members to expand the School's presence and impact across UVA Health regions, the Commonwealth, nation, and world. Strengthen and expand experiential opportunities for students, faculty, and practicing nurses through clinical, global, and workforce development initiatives.

Initiatives

SCALABLE ACADEMIC PRACTICE PARTNERSHIPS IN POPULATION HEALTH

Develop a Partner Development and Engagement Office infrastructure to support the School's overall outreach mission locally and globally and advance the work of affiliated units using an academic/practice partnership model that distinguishes the School as a champion of population health.

- // Expand Partner Development and Engagement Office (PDEO)
- // Engage faculty members, students, and alumni volunteers in current and new endeavors, from local to global
- // Establish interprofessional nurse co-led clinics and partnerships and a tracking system to capture their work
- // Develop mentoring program for PDEO-engaged faculty to promote scholarship and grant writing activities

NEW AND EXISTING HEALTH WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS AND INITIATIVES WITH UVA, UVA HEALTH, AND OTHERS

Expand School partnerships/initiatives to meet nursing workforce needs at UVA Health, across the region, and the Commonwealth through innovative programs like "Earn While You Learn" as well as pathway programs with K-12 and associate degree-granting institutions.

- // Create a collaborative partnership plan with measurable goals and outcomes for success
- // Develop an academic practice model tailored to the practice and teaching needs of UVA Health and UVA School of Nursing
- // Expand and inspire joint scholarly activities and products that promote the School and UVA Health partnerships
- // Expand pathways to become a UVA nurse

GOAL 3

Position the School as a leader in nursing science, from discovery to translation

OBJECTIVES

Strengthen nursing research infrastructure to improve efficiency and dissemination

Build and sustain a diverse community of scholars

INITIATIVES

- +Grow research and scholarship infrastructure
- +Formal mentoring systems for faculty and students

GOAL 3

Position the School as a leader in nursing science, from discovery to translation

The School's researchers seek to address some of the most pressing health inequities of our time by leading groundbreaking investigations, disseminating findings in ways that impact our local and global communities, and by recruiting and supporting nurse scientists at all career stages. The benefits of nursing science engage all our faculty and learners, supporting diverse scholarly and dissemination efforts. Our undergraduate and graduate curricula require students to engage in research and other scholarly endeavors and by offering opportunities for them to collaborate with mentors and peers to disseminate their work.

Objectives

Strengthen our nursing research infrastructure to improve efficiency and support scholarship and dissemination of findings. Build and sustain a diverse community of scholars committed to research and scholarly excellence.

Initiatives

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Develop and grow the purpose and organizational structure of the Office of Nursing Research and Scholarship (ONRS) to support grant-related and other scholarly activities across the School.

- // Establish additional positions and dedicated effort to support and track activities, including grant writing, submissions, and grant management
- // Manage year-round research internships for students to spark interest in nursing science careers
- // Continue to strengthen the post-doctoral fellowship to tenure track professor positions
- // Offer professional development opportunities and spaces to learn, including a Writing Accountable Community group, lectures, and coordinating visiting professorships

FACULTY RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN FOR EARLY CAREER INVESTIGATORS, SENIOR SCIENTISTS, AND RESEARCH TEAMS

Maintain robust faculty recruitment and retention practices that support a diverse community of scholars (trainees, research teams, and faculty) to grow research funding and increase interdisciplinary, cross-Grounds, and outside-UVA collaborations.

- // Refine and prioritize targeted research Areas of Excellence for investment and expansion through a systematic approach
- // Implement an annual strategic seed funding process within identified Areas of Excellence to support success in the submission of larger, externally-funded grant proposals
- // Develop formal faculty mentoring programs with established benchmarks for success
- // Partner with UVA research initiatives for joint recruitment and hires that leverage funding options, and encourage faculty to recruit through national networks as positions become available

GOAL 4

Cultivate trust and equity in all that we do within our learning, research, and clinical environments

OBJECTIVES
 Develop and model human excellence competencies

Activate structures, practices, and processes that promote transparency, engagement and accountability

INITIATIVES
 +High-performing learning organization practices
 +Adaptive and innovative environments

GOAL 4

Cultivate trust and equity in all that we do within our learning, research, and clinical environments

People are our foundation. Having a connected, engaged, high-performing, and diverse community facilitates the realization of the School's mission, vision, and goals as we harness our community's collective knowledge, skills, and abilities and optimize how we learn, grow, connect and engage across difference. A School community fully committed and accountable to our values enables individuals, groups, and the organization to do their best work in the ambitious pursuit to transform healthcare, augment health outcomes, and improve health equity.

Objectives

Develop and model human excellence competencies and behaviors to enhance organizational performance and elevate a positive, productive workplace culture. Expand structures, practices, and processes that promote transparency, engagement, and accountable behaviors, deepening our commitment to our core values.

Initiatives

HIGH-PERFORMING LEARNING ORGANIZATION PRACTICES

Using the tenets of high-performing learning organizations, including being future-focused and action-oriented, dedicated to ongoing learning, and invested in continuous improvement and renewal, establish a path to achieve organizational excellence and a culture in which everyone can thrive. To do this, lean on established work by the Compassionate Care Initiative, the Inclusion, Diversity, and Excellence Achievement initiative, and Wisdom and Wellbeing.

- // Identify core competencies necessary to live our values
- // Create learning experiences for faculty and staff that translate knowledge into aligned behaviors and embed accountability into everyday work
- // Assess individual and organizational behaviors for feedback and progress
- // Become a leader in this space through published scholarship, grant activities, and collaborations

ADAPTIVE AND INNOVATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Create a culture of continuous learning and growth to increase our capacity to deliver results that truly matter to our community and keep us future-focused and prepared to adjust in a changing world.

- // Assess purpose, efficiency, and effectiveness of School's structures, including task forces, committees, councils, and meeting frequency, and redesign for appropriate representation and enhanced engagement across School communities of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other stakeholders
- // Promote clarity and open access to information, shared understandings of major issues, opportunities, and decisions, and amplify the interdependencies between them
- // Create an Innovation Hub/ideas exchange—a "sandbox" for ongoing conversations and actions focused on trust and equity—where the School community can connect, identify, and address challenges together
- // Develop opportunities for knowledge sharing and talent development so that trust, respect, and equity become organizational habits

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

With the deployment of **Our Extraordinary Future**, we must continuously monitor impact and progress of these initiatives and continuously assess additional opportunities that might also align with and fortify our stated goals. To gauge impact, monitor progress, and advance our collective work, we will:

// Dedicate a group to partner with the School of Nursing community to develop action plans, key milestones, timelines, resources, and responsibilities, with progress to be communicated at All-School meetings, Dean's Council meetings, and State of the School addresses.

// Assign a central staff member who will be charged with ongoing tracking related to plan components.

// Develop outcome measures to monitor the impact in each goal area and across the plan.

// Implement a systematic approach to report, monitor, and share progress with the School community and other stakeholders.

// Refine and adapt plans to be responsive to internal and external environments.

These crucial steps recognize that this plan is a diverse, vibrant, and living document that must have regular attention and care to have the greatest impact. Everyone has a part in driving this plan forward.

APPENDIX

Strategic Plan Working Group members

Ryne Ackard, Kimberly Acquaviva, Cathy Campbell, Lynn Corbett, Delores Fields, Ivora Hinton, Tracy Kelly, Kathryn Laughon, John Teahan, and Ishan Williams

Dean's Council members+

Ryne Ackard, Jeanne Alhusen, Theresa Carroll, Bethany Coyne, Gina DeGennaro, Beth Epstein, Melissa Gomes, Sarah Hallowell, Randy Jones, Lance Poston, Kathryn Reid, Barbara Reyna, Abby Self, Shelly Smith, John Teahan, and Erik Williams.

+ Individuals listed served on Dean's Council at some point during Strategic Plan development.