Virginia State University Annual Report: Future Impact of Inclusion and Belonging Strategic Plan 2024

Executive Summary

Virginia State University (VSU) is dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment where every member of the community feels valued and empowered. This report outlines the anticipated future impacts of the Inclusion and belonging strategic plans on the university's populations, workforce, and budget.

Founded on March 6, 1882, as the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute, VSU has been a beacon of educational hope for over a century, serving Petersburg, Colonial Heights, Prince George, and Dinwiddie County. Throughout its history, VSU has undergone several name changes and expansions, reflecting its growth and adaptation to the evolving educational needs of its community.

Originally established to provide educational opportunities for African Americans, VSU has grown from an institution with 126 students and a $20,000 budget to a fully integrated university with nearly 4,000 students of varied identities, and extensive facilities. VSU's legacy includes a commitment to inclusion and belonging which has significantly impacted the populations it serves and the university's workforce and budget. As the regional university for Southside Virginia, VSU continues to uphold its mission and values, envisioning an exciting future that transcends its illustrious past and fosters sustained excellence in higher education.

Goal 1: Inclusive and Equitable Campus Policies and Practices

Objective 1: Policy Review and Inclusive Hiring
Specific: Review university policies to identify and address inequities.
Measurable: Number of policies reviewed and revised.
Achievable: Form dedicated review committees.
Relevant: Ensures fairness and equity.
Time-bound: Complete by 2026.

Goal 2: Employee Training

Objective 1: Continuous Professional Development
Specific: Offer professional development opportunities, including conferences and specialized courses, for VSU employees (*budget dependent*).
Measurable: Track participation and feedback.
Achievable: Secure funding and provide resources.
Relevant: Ensures ongoing learning and growth.
Time-bound: Achieve by 2026.

Goal 3: Access and Achievement

Objective 1: Increase campus accessibility
Specific: Complete capital improvements to address campus accessibility issues (*budget dependent*).
Measurable: Monitor the number and scope of completed projects.
Achievable: Secure funding and project approvals.
Relevant: Ensures an inclusive environment for all.
Time-bound: Implement by 2027.

Objective 2: Recruit, retain, and graduate underserved students

Specific: Increase enrollment of underserved students by 7% each year.

Measurable: Track admissions and retention data.

Achievable: Implement enhanced admissions efforts, access partnerships, summer bridge programs, and new pathways.

Relevant: Supports VSU's mission to foster an inclusive community.

Time-bound: Achieve by the end of 2026.

Goal 4: Inclusive and Respectful Environment

Objective 1: Celebrate core community values

Specific: Develop and implement a plan to promote VSU's core values across campus.

Measurable: Track participation in value-related programs and events.

Achievable: Utilize existing resources and staff.

Relevant: Fosters a respectful and inclusive culture.

Time-bound: Roll out by the start of the 2025 academic year.

Objective 2: Cultivate free speech and expression resources

Specific: Create interdisciplinary programs focused on civil discourse and debate (*budget dependent*).

Measurable: Number of programs and participation rates.

Achievable: Collaborate with academic departments.

Relevant: Supports diverse perspectives.

Time-bound: Implement by 2026.

Goal 4: Building a Sense of Belonging

Objective 1: Expand mentorship programs

Specific: Increase participation in mentorship programs by 20% annually for first generation students. (*budget dependent*)

Measurable: Track enrollment and participation rates.

Achievable: Leverage existing mentorship structures.

Relevant: Supports student and staff development.

Time-bound: Achieve by 2026.

Objective 2: Create supportive spaces

Specific: Establish three new supportive spaces on campus for cultural and religious identities. (*budget dependent*)

Measurable: Monitor the usage and impact of these spaces.

Achievable: Secure funding and identify locations.

Relevant: Enhances campus inclusivity.

Time-bound: Implement by 2026.