

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE / REPORT

On August 1, 2018, President Ryan launched an initiative called *Ours to Shape*, which engaged faculty, staff, alumni, students, and community members in sharing their ideas and vision for UVA as it enters its third century. Through in-person town halls, conversations, and an interactive online platform, community members submitted over 2,600 comments in response to a set of guiding questions around community, discovery, and service.

This summary provides an overview of the ideas shared by community members throughout that process. Explore **Five Big Themes** that emerge across all of the responses. Discover the **Most Common Words** used by community members when sharing their vision for the University's future. Read about **Ten Hot Topics** that dominate much of the conversation. And see **What Matters to the UVA Community** in a chart that visually represents the ideas by proportion and topic.

A TESTAMENT TO A BROAD COMMUNITY

President Ryan and the Strategic Planning Committee, as well as other University leaders, have read and reviewed thousands of responses and ideas submitted through the online platform and 75 in-person sessions. Included are responses from students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, community members, and more.

The responses fall into 35 major categories, and some of those further split into as many as 13 identifiable subcategories. Within each category, respondents present strikingly different ideas and opinions. Some responses offer concrete solutions; others offer philosophical and ideological frameworks for addressing the future of the University. Across the board, they are aspirational, envisioning a University better than the one we have today.

As most members of the UVA and Charlottesville communities might expect, the feedback is far from homogenous. The great strength of this community lies in its diversity; the variant experiences of those who responded and their individual relationships to the University led to sometimes contradictory perspectives on what the best path forward might be.

The future of the University belongs to all of these community members and will require working together on complex questions about who we are and who we want to become. The *Ours to Shape* responses themselves ask some of these important questions, like what is more important, our traditions or our future? Exclusivity or accessibility? A global focus or the strength of the residential experience? Embracing academia or preparing students for a real world beyond it?

LESSONS LEARNED / FIVE BIG THEMES

Despite these differing perspectives, five overarching themes appear across dozens of topics. These themes address important values of the UVA community that must undergird specific goals and strategies for the future. These themes include:

THEME / DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

One of the most frequently invoked values is that of **diversity and inclusion**. Hundreds of responses share a vision of UVA as a community welcoming to everyone, including, among many others:

- people of color
- members of the LGBTQIA+ community
- first-generation and low-income students
- international students, faculty, and staff
- socioeconomically diverse community members
- those with differing political and religious beliefs
- members of the community with accessibility needs

THEME / SUSTAINABILITY

The community values a more **sustainable** and environmentally-responsible future for UVA. From local food to building design, and from engaging local schools in conversations about sustainability to supporting new research, this concept illuminates many of the submitted ideas.

THEME / TECHNOLOGY

From celebrations of the benefits of emerging technologies in healthcare, science, engineering, education, and more, to concerns over access, funding, and the wise use of new technologies, respondents urge that UVA ought to be smart and thoughtful about the implementation of **technology**.

THEME / THE VALUE OF RELATIONSHIPS

In almost every category, responses focus on **the value of relationships** between community members and between the University and the broader world. Responses highlight the importance of human-to-human interaction, global working relationships, collaboration, the University's responsibility to its neighbors and the public, and the quality of academic and social exchange on Grounds and beyond.

THEME / EXCELLENCE NOT FOR ITS OWN SAKE

Many respondents praise UVA's prominence as a phenomenal academic, research, and medical institution. Often, though, this praise is tempered with the idea that exceptional and exclusive don't always mean the same thing. Rather than pursuing excellence for its own sake, respondents stress that, as President Ryan said in his Inaugural Address, we must strive to be **not only great, but also good**.

LESSONS LEARNED / MOST COMMON WORDS

The five overarching themes and the aspirational nature of the responses is captured in the chart below, which highlights the most commonly used words from all of the responses collectively. The word lists demonstrate the promise and possibility the community feels that UVA's third century holds.

20 NOUNS

Student
Community
Faculty
Research
Service
Staff
Grounds
People
Opportunities
Charlottesville
Resources
Education
World
Health
Virginia
Housing
Knowledge
Alumni
Ideas
Leadership

20 VERBS

Create
Work
Support
Provide
Help
Think
Build
Encourage
Learn
See
Change
Make
Focus
Improve
Increase
Engage
Include
Collaborate
Teach
Become

20 DESCRIPTIVE WORDS

All
New
Better
Between
Through
Public
Good
First
Local
Best
Academic
Diverse
Great
Only
More
Together
Working
Important
Different
Living

LESSONS LEARNED / TEN HOT TOPICS

Ten topics emerge amongst dozens of responses, as do refreshing and creative ideas to help address them. Respondents believe that all of these topics – and many others – are central to UVA's future. Hot topics among community members include:

TOPIC / UVA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS NEIGHBORS

The University is an important part of the local community and has a responsibility to be a good neighbor to Charlottesville and the surrounding counties. Respondents believe that working to strengthen community relationships may involve discussing the University's role in paying living wages and fostering communal economic development as well as its influence on the availability and affordability of area housing.

TOPIC / UVA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMONWEALTH AND NATION

Many responses indicate that UVA also has a responsibility to maintain strong relationships throughout Virginia. Suggestions and ideas include engaging strategically in Northern Virginia, enhancing the University's support of rural and underserved communities in Virginia, and continuing to educate and train future leaders to serve the public, as outlined by the University's mission statement.

TOPIC / SUPPORTING FACULTY AND REMOVING OBSTACLES TO SUCCESS

The University's outstanding faculty is a significant contributor to its success. Faculty recruitment, funding, and support are suggested areas of focus that may help ensure a world-class faculty for the future. Comments indicate that encouraging collaborative work between faculty in different disciplines and creating the right balance between research, teaching, and other responsibilities can also enable faculty to flourish.

TOPIC / BUILDINGS, LAND USE, CONSTRUCTION, AND RENOVATIONS

The University's landscape is one of continual change. Commenters see that significant new projects, including a re-imagined Emmet-Ivy Corridor, provide opportunities for UVA to think strategically about how space can support priorities and enhance the community. According to respondents, these projects may help build the physical world that the future University will inhabit and may provide the opportunity to embody our values in physical structures.

TOPIC / IMPROVING DIVERSITY AND SUPPORTING MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Community members see the future of the University as being diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Enhanced support for community members from diverse backgrounds and thoughtfully-implemented programs, resources, and initiatives can help the University become a more welcoming place for all who chose to study, work, live, and receive care here.

TOPIC / THE FUTURE OF ACADEMICS

Many responses acknowledge UVA's outstanding academic reputation. As the landscape of higher education changes, there may be increased room for interdisciplinarity in both research and student work. Suggestions indicate that a UVA education can prepare students for the world beyond academia, with skills in critical thinking, writing, analysis, problem solving, and more, while giving students the chance to embrace the sciences, humanities, and arts throughout their studies.

TOPIC / WHAT STUDENTS DO

Supporting the activities of students, both in and outside of the classroom, is an important topic to members of the community. Responses show that internships, research opportunities at the undergraduate level and beyond, innovative coursework and degree programs in existing and new disciplines, enhanced student advising, accessible international experiences, and the importance of student self-governance remain central to the success of the student experience at UVA.

TOPIC / WHAT STUDENTS NEED

Many responses demonstrate that those who come to UVA to study require excellent and innovative student services and support structures. New and re-imagined housing opportunities, access to resources in mental and physical health, and improved access to financial aid, among many other ideas generated through *Ours to Shape*, may allow UVA to develop new ways to support students as they engage in the life of the University.

TOPIC / SUPPORTING STAFF

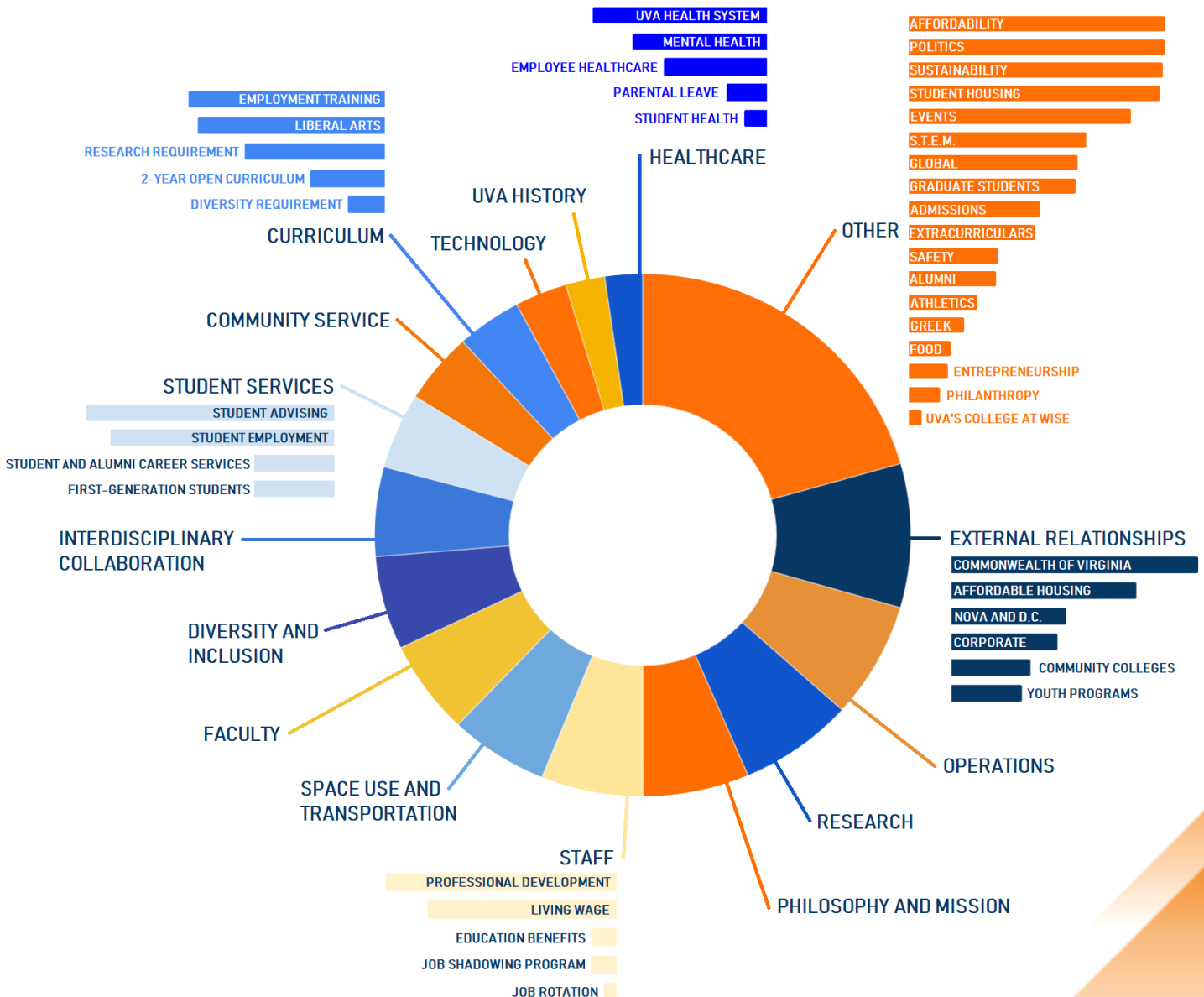
University staff work in almost every imaginable field and represent the best of the local community. Wages, housing, parking, benefits, and opportunities to continue learning and developing in many fields are strategies offered by respondents to help UVA recruit and retain exemplary staff.

TOPIC / UVA'S HISTORY

A significant number of responses acknowledge that UVA has historically represented some of the best and worst of American achievement. The story we tell about our past and our future matters to members of the community, and many suggest that the University should examine its traditions and its legacies with the same kind of deep and critical thought that students are taught to use in the classroom. Community members have many suggestions about how the University can retain the best of what it has been, and, using lessons from its past, work intentionally on the kind of institution it wants to become in the future.

WHAT MATTERS TO THE UVA COMMUNITY

The chart below provides a visual breakdown of the categories represented in the *Ours to Shape* responses and their approximate proportions. Many categories also contained sub-categories; some of the most common ones appear below.



WHAT COMES NEXT / STRATEGIC PLANNING

Ours to Shape was a launchpad designed to engage the full community in sharing their ideas about the University's vision. The ideas generated through the in-person and online opportunities provide critical insights that will inform strategic priorities for the University's future. The process of strategic planning continues to be collaborative, involving the efforts of many different stakeholders. Members of the community are welcome to continue submitting ideas through the *Ours to Shape* platform online.

A draft of the new strategic plan will be submitted in early summer, 2019. Visit ourstoshape.virginia.edu to learn more and stay in touch.