

Randolph College Strategic Plan

Randolph College
Strategic Planning Committee
Spring–Fall 2019

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Mission

Randolph College prepares students to engage the world critically and creatively, live and work honorably, and experience life abundantly.

Randolph College students will engage the world critically and creatively

Randolph College will combine the liberal arts with innovative educational programming to provide a context for intellectual development and career preparation. A Randolph College education will prepare graduates to take their places in a complex world. Randolph College students will be active participants in their own educations. Combining instruction with research and leadership opportunities, students will contribute to their own personal and intellectual growth. They will have a wealth of academic, artistic, athletic, civic, and other opportunities through which to express their creativity. Critical thinking skills will be emphasized, as written and oral communication skills are combined with scientific and quantitative skills. Randolph's programs will prepare students to make critical judgments, weigh competing factors, and apply sound analysis.

Randolph College students will live and work honorably

Randolph College will deliberately and overtly incorporate its Honor Code and Honor System into educational and community programs. The values inherent in this code have become essential in the digital age. The College is committed to the preservation and utilization of its Honor Code, which serves as the basis for students' lives within the community and provides the bedrock for lives of integrity. Randolph College students will acquire knowledge of disciplines that emphasize honor and integrity at work in human endeavors. They will experience life in an honor-bound community while learning to analyze broad societal issues. Ultimately, they will be recognized for their unwavering commitment to academic and personal integrity. This will be a hallmark distinguishing Randolph College and its graduates.

Randolph College students will experience life abundantly

Randolph College will provide a trajectory to success, contribution, and fulfillment. From its inception in 1891 as Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Randolph College has recognized the value of the "life more abundant" – not for personal gratification or in a materialistic sense, but as an expression of the importance of appreciating the world in all its complexity, engaging with others, achieving personal growth, and meeting the needs of the community. In support of this objective, Randolph College students will receive individual attention that promotes the personal and intellectual growth of each student. They will develop lifelong skills, set and achieve goals, and explore new areas of interest. Furthermore, they will appreciate the importance of serving others as well as meeting personal ambitions.

Essential Characteristics

The following are the most fundamental elements of Randolph College's institutional identity. These attributes have been established during the course of the College's history and have endured through internal and external change to become its most abiding strengths. They undergird the College's mission and serve as clarifying priorities during times of planning and decision.

TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Impactful liberal arts. A Randolph education provides the student with a liberal arts foundation that promotes a meaningful life while equipping the graduate to pursue a rewarding career.

Problem-solving. Problem-based learning incorporates critical thinking, creative thinking, and flexibility while preparing graduates to adapt to and overcome challenges.

Communication. Randolph graduates can speak and write effectively. These skills are important in themselves, and they also enable graduates to work collaboratively and interact positively.

Community. Historically a highly residential campus, Randolph maintains a residential learning community, with its associated traditions, while encouraging the commuting population to take part.

PERSONALIZED TEACHING

Opportunity for challenge. A Randolph education is challenging, but this rigor is not reserved for those who are most prepared for it. Randolph helps all of its students meet the challenge.

Classrooms without walls. Learning occurs in the classroom as well as in offices and hallways, on sidewalks and athletic fields, during co-curricular activities, in the Lynchburg community, and beyond.

Variation in the classroom. A diversity of perspectives and pedagogies, and a culture of cross-disciplinary learning, reflect the breadth of the liberal arts.

Education in the singular. The Randolph experience is individualized. Professors are noted for their accessibility, and the impact of co-curricular opportunities is maximized by the College's size.

TOOLS FOR LIVING

Inclusion. By pursuing staff, faculty, and student diversity, Randolph models its commitment to under-represented populations and prepares students to navigate a diverse world.

Honor. The Honor Code is deliberately incorporated into every aspect of the College, providing the basis for life at Randolph and serving as the bedrock for a life of integrity and justice.

Empowerment. Randolph empowers students to think independently and to express and defend their ideas. Students graduate confident, resilient, grounded, and ready for the world.

The Abundant Life. The pursuit of a rich and meaningful life is essential. This entails personal growth, understanding the world in all its complexity, and engagement with one's community.

Strategic Opportunities and Challenges

The landscape of higher education and Randolph's place within it are evolving rapidly, and they will continue to do so throughout the strategic planning period. The following factors directly affect the fulfillment of Randolph's mission and present particular opportunities for positive change.

	<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Challenges</i>
Branding	Randolph possesses the elements of a unique, marketable identity.	Randolph has low name recognition within its target markets. Randolph lacks outward-facing distinctiveness; its overall message is ineffective.
Location	Randolph's Lynchburg location offers elements, both historical and natural, that could be leveraged as positive features.	Randolph's Lynchburg location is sometimes viewed as a liability.
Recruitment	Populations of non-traditional students represent a new, largely-untapped potential market.	New student recruitment is low and on a downward trend. The pool of graduating high school students will be decreasing, and its makeup will change.
Retention	Certain student groups retain well.	First-year retention is not as strong as it has been or could be.
Cost	Plans for a price reset offer the potential to attract more students to Randolph.	Randolph is viewed as being too expensive by, and may be too expensive for, many of the students and families in its recruiting pool.
Curriculum	Randolph has a deep liberal arts tradition, and its curriculum is strong in many ways. Plans for innovative course scheduling and a new calendar structure may create a sense of distinction.	Students who view college as a step toward a particular career may not be responding to the liberal arts argument. The curriculum is not outwardly distinctive or appealing to target students.
Student Life	Many students express satisfaction at specific aspects of the Randolph College experience.	Many students view student life at Randolph as less than a robust college experience.
Student Support	Randolph is strong in academic and personal student support.	Students are requiring increasingly more of these resources.
Physical Plant	Randolph's campus is historic and beautiful.	The physical plant is in need of deferred maintenance and upgrade.
Finance	Randolph has a dedicated alumnae and alumni base and a large endowment for its size.	Randolph operates on a budget deficit, and its endowment spending rate is higher than it should be.

Strategic Plan

All initiatives in the Randolph College Strategic Plan will take into account the College’s current academic and co-curricular strengths, financial goals and constraints, anticipated demand, implementation costs, and anticipated yield.

Year 1: 2019–2020 | *Year 2:* 2020–2021 | *Year 3:* 2021–2022 | *Year 4:* 2022–2023 | *Year 5:* 2023–2024

GOAL 1 *Attract and retain more students.*

- Objective 1 The College will increase its undergraduate enrollment base by an average of at least 5% per year for fall enrollments in years 2–5, resulting in a full-time degree-seeking undergraduate headcount of approximately 700. New masters programs will increase the total number of graduate students from 50 to 100, resulting in a total degree-seeking headcount of approximately 800 by year 5.
- Objective 2 The College will expand its geographical market by attracting a more sustainable balance of in-state versus out-of-state students, recruiting first-year classes of no less than 40% non-Virginia students.
- Objective 3 The College will develop areas of special interest to serve as enrollment tributaries.
- Objective 4 The College will undertake a brand refresh or re-branding process and will evaluate its marketing practices to develop a more consistent internal and external identity and improve marketing impact.
- Objective 5 The College will increase first-time first-year retention to at least 75%.
- Objective 6 The College will create a “scaffolding for success” to decrease the number of students who fail to persist at the College for academic reasons.

GOAL 2 *Enrich the student life experience.*

- Objective 7 The College will build upon its commitment to diversity and inclusion in order to enhance the student experience and distinguish Randolph from peer and area institutions.
- Objective 8 The College will strengthen the residential student experience.
- Objective 9 The College will expand the range of support services for non-traditional student populations.
- Objective 10 The College will improve student satisfaction with social life.
- Objective 11 The College will develop a co-curricular activity “certificate” program.

GOAL 3 *Explore changes in the academic program.*

- Objective 12 The College will explore, and implement as appropriate, new academic programs that will appeal to current and emerging student markets.
- Objective 13 The College will establish and apply criteria for review of existing programs to determine viability and resource allocation.
- Objective 14 The College will explore and implement curricular and delivery alternatives.
- Objective 15 The College will emphasize the theme of “opportunity” in its academic programming.

GOAL 4 *Ensure the financial sustainability of the College.*

- Objective 16 The College will eliminate its structural deficit by Year 3, using a multi-pronged approach that includes maximizing net tuition revenue, bringing student-to-faculty and student-to-staff ratios closer to those of peer and aspirant institutions, reducing fixed and variable expenses, and exploring new sources of revenue.
- Objective 17 The College will implement capital improvements and new programs in a way that is governed by a sound debt policy.
- Objective 18 The College will develop long-term strategies for reducing the endowment draw rate to prudent levels.