Vanderbilt University, with its culture of civility and community, its unique array of schools, and its commitment to intellectual inquiry and great teaching, continues to leverage its traditional strengths to fuel a dramatic trajectory as one of the nation’s most impressive institutions of higher education. The 2002 Academic Strategic Plan outlined a set of bold initiatives to enhance Vanderbilt’s role as a premier research and teaching university. Essential to the success of this plan was an institutional commitment to forge new intellectual, social and academic relationships and synergies across all areas of the university.

Ten years later, Vanderbilt continues to weave together the essential elements of a great university---outstanding students, distinguished faculty, distinctive academic programs---and unite them all in an unparalleled campus learning environment. Below is an update of key areas set forth in the original 2002 Academic Strategic Plan as evidence of our dedication to Vanderbilt’s values and role as an educational leader in an increasingly complex world.

**Vanderbilt’s Mission, Uniqueness, and Sense of Institutional Identity for the Future**

**UPDATE**

University leadership has identified what is unique about Vanderbilt in order to establish an institutional identity that will serve as our compass for the future:

- Focus on community, leadership, civility and friendship
- Balance of engaging academic, social, service opportunities
- Dynamic campus learning environment across schools

**“One University” Philosophy**

A critical step in defining our institutional identity was made in 2008 when Nicholas S. Zeppos became the 8th chancellor of Vanderbilt and outlined his “One University” philosophy. This concept leverages the university’s creative, collaborative and entrepreneurial culture to benefit the whole campus, uniting the medical center and university central in philosophical and practical ways. The resulting institutional strength and fiscal flexibility have provided enormous benefits to our ability to support Vanderbilt’s academic mission.
Investing in Leaders and our Future: Recruiting Students to Vanderbilt and Building a Unique Educational Experience

UPDATE

Undergraduate Admissions

Vanderbilt’s success in undergraduate admissions has been marked with impressive gains along every metric of selectivity over the past twenty years and dramatic acceleration in the past ten years. This trajectory, facilitated by strategic investments in enrollment management, marketing, communications and technology, can be attributed in large part to recent initiatives including The Ingram Commons, the no-loan policy, successful faculty recruitment and retention, and strong administrative leadership.

From 2002-2012, undergraduate applications increased 288% from 9,838 to 28,348. The admit rate dropped from 46% in 2002 to 14% over the same ten-year period and the mid-range SAT increased from 1240-1400 in 2002 to 1400-1560 in 2012.

These increases in the number and quality of applications have brought about significant gains in retention and graduation rates over the same time period. In 2002, retention from first to second year was 94.4% with 84.1% of undergraduates graduating within six years. In 2012, retention increased to 96% and the six-year graduation rate rose to 92.2%.

Vanderbilt’s student body has also become more diverse with regard to race, culture, religion and socio-economic background. Only 12.4% of the 2002 entering class self-reported as under-represented minorities compared to 29.7% in the 2012 entering class. The percentage of aided first-year students with financial need increased from 37.8% in 2002 to 50.8% in 2012.

No-Loan Policy

In 2008, Chancellor Zeppos announced that Vanderbilt would join a handful of elite American universities committed to access and affordability by eliminating student loans in Vanderbilt need-based aid awards. This commitment, pledged at the height of the worst domestic economic downturn since the Great Depression, was made even more dramatic given Vanderbilt’s relatively modest endowment compared to these peer schools.

Historically, Vanderbilt’s admission process has excluded family income information. Once a student is admitted to Vanderbilt, the Office of Student Financial Aid steps in to provide an aid award that meets 100% of a family’s demonstrated need with no income caps for families. Vanderbilt’s need-based aid awards now consist of grants, scholarships and a modest work-study option. This “no-loan” policy has dramatically reduced total student indebtedness and made a Vanderbilt education possible for thousands of students.
A special endowment, Opportunity Vanderbilt, was established in 2008 to support this commitment and help relieve its financial impact on school operating funds. Despite the unfavorable fundraising climate at the inception of the program, over $133,000,000 has been raised in gifts and pledges to date.

Vanderbilt Visions

Vanderbilt Visions was established in 2006 as a first-year core university program comprised of collaborative small groups of approximately eighteen first-year students, team-taught by faculty and student co-facilitators. These groups meet weekly from late August through November to explore four types of acculturation:

Academic acculturation, by fostering the perception among first-year students that their networks are intrinsic to the academic life of the university;

Cognitive acculturation, by fostering an understanding of the reflective and critical thinking skills that are key to success at a research university;

Social acculturation, by fostering collaboration and shared understanding among faculty, students, and educational professionals;

Civic acculturation, by fostering the norms, values and ethics necessary for life in the democratic and global communities of the 21st century.

The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons

Vanderbilt’s commitment to teaching the whole student is evident in the many ways it promotes intellectual exchange and inquiry outside the classroom. The successful hiring and retention of top faculty combined with the increased selectivity and diversity of each entering class has steadily and substantially enhanced the undergraduate experience, demanding new ways of living in such a vibrant learning environment.

To this end, in 2008, Vanderbilt opened The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons, a unique first-year residential area comprised of ten houses guided by residential faculty and a Dean of The Commons. A dining-activity complex provides a community building experience for students, faculty and staff. All first-year students begin in The Ingram Commons as a diverse collection of promising high school graduates and emerge after two semesters as an actively engaged class of university citizens prepared for life on the central campus.

College Halls at Vanderbilt

With The Ingram Commons now complete and thriving in its fifth year of operation, we eagerly await the 2014 opening of the first residential colleges for upper-class students, known as College Halls at Vanderbilt. The college hall system will bring new energy to the array of campus living options for sophomores, juniors and seniors, offering enhanced
opportunities for social, intellectual and leadership development. Each college hall will be self-governed in large part by its residents, mentored by a resident Faculty Director and several Graduate Fellows.

The first two college halls are currently under construction at the corner of West End and 21st Avenues on the former site of Kissam Quadrangle, a six-dormitory complex built in 1956. Additional campus sites have been identified for future college halls that will involve new construction and/or renovation of existing facilities.

Faculty Recruitment and Retention

UPDATE

Our Strategy is to:

- Recruit and retain outstanding faculty
- Successfully compete for “stretch hires”
- Dramatically increase the number of endowed faculty chairs
- Establish new and exciting trans-institutional programs

Thanks to strategic budget decisions, thoughtful alignment of Vanderbilt’s strengths in key areas of teaching and research, and the success of the recently completed Shape the Future capital campaign, the number of endowed faculty chairs has increased from 76 in 2002 to 170 in 2012. This new level of investment and philanthropy has allowed us to aggressively recruit premier experts in their fields to Vanderbilt where they can advance their work, mentor future scholars and contribute to our campus community. It also enhances our ability to retain our own faculty stars, whose accomplishments place them at risk for being recruited elsewhere.

In 2002, 23% of our faculty were women compared to 38% in 2012, while the percentage of minority faculty has grown from 13% in 2002 to 17% in 2012.

Faculty Awards and Honors

The substantial increase in faculty honors and awards over the past ten years is another indication of our success in recruiting and retaining outstanding faculty. In 2011, 133 Vanderbilt faculty were honored by the following organizations, compared to only 36 in 2002:

- American Academy of Arts and Science
- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- Fulbright Scholars
- Guggenheim Memorial Fellowships
- Institute of Medicine
• National Academy of Education
• National Academy of Engineering
• National Academy of Sciences
• NEH Fellowships
• NSF CAREER Award
• Oxford University Harmsworth Professorships
• Sloan Foundation Fellowships

Building Distinctive and Distinguished
Academic Programs at Vanderbilt:
Trans-Institutional Programs and Bridging Disciplines and Schools

UPDATE

Vanderbilt has made significant strides in forging internal relationships and connections across schools and disciplines. Using our traditional strengths in individual areas of expertise, we have established a set of interdisciplinary centers where talented faculty and students from a variety of fields come together in a resource-rich environment, working collaboratively to achieve meaningful advances in their fields. The creative spirit promoted in these centers has enhanced faculty recruitment and retention as well as created an appreciation for the role of disciplinary strength in solving problems that are interdisciplinary in nature.

Interdisciplinary Centers in 2012:

Exploring Culture, Society and Humanity

• Advanced Computing Center for Research and Education
• The W.T. Bandy Center for Baudelaire and Modern French Studies
• Center for Latin American Studies
• Center for Study of Democratic Institutions
• Curb Center for Art, Enterprise and Public Policy
• Max Kade Center for European and German Studies
• Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities
• Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development

Understanding the Human Mind

• Brain Institute
• Center for Structural Biology
• Center for Molecular Neuroscience
• Center for Integrative and Cognitive Neuroscience
Exploring the Physical, Biological and Mechanical World of the Unseen

- Institute for Software Integrated Systems
- Institute for Space and Defense Electronics
- Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in the Biomedical Sciences
- Mass Spectrometry Research Center
- Vanderbilt Initiative in Surgery and Engineering
- Vanderbilt Institute of Chemical Biology
- Vanderbilt Institute of Imaging Science
- Vanderbilt Institute of Nanoscale Science and Engineering

Market, Political, Economic and Legal Institutions

- Law and Business Program
- Cal Turner Program in Moral Leadership in the Professions

**Incorporating Research and Discovery into the Undergraduate Experience**

**Vanderbilt Undergraduate Research Journal**

Established in 2006, the Vanderbilt Undergraduate Research Journal is a refereed journal of outstanding scholarship featuring the work of Vanderbilt students in every academic discipline. Led by the Faculty Advisory Board, the journal conforms to the highest standards of scholastic integrity in a blind peer review process conducted by distinguished students in the undergraduate, professional and graduate schools.

**VUSRP**

The Vanderbilt University Summer Research Program has grown to include over 50 undergraduates in paid ten-week summer research positions in collaboration with full-time faculty. This program also features informal seminars and a fall poster session highlighting a wide variety of scholarly research. While research opportunities for undergraduates are more common in the sciences, the program has successfully expanded into non-science disciplines as well.

**Transforming Graduate Education at Vanderbilt**

**UPDATE**

As part of Vanderbilt’s goal to assume a leadership role in training the next generation of university scholars and academic leaders, an aggressive plan was recently implemented to increase the number and quality of advanced degree students and provide them with outstanding faculty mentors and expanded academic opportunities.
Our Strategy:

- Improve graduate student quality and diversity
- Recognize and reward outstanding graduate teaching by our faculty
- Build distinction in strategic areas of existing strength or potential
- Engage faculty in the process of intellectually engaging, mentoring and training graduate students

Graduate School Admissions

In 2012, the Graduate School received 8116 applications, representing a 299% increase compared to 2001. As a result, the admit rate has declined from 36% in 2001 to 11% in 2012 and the yield has increased from 40% in 2001 to 53% in 2012. Our current graduate student enrollment stands at 2,350, representing a 140% increase from 2001. Among the 168 students receiving the Ph.D. degree in 2001, only 7.6% were underrepresented minorities compared to 15.7% of the 257 degrees awarded in 2012.

Sponsored Research

Total sponsored research has grown dramatically over this same time period, with $219 million awarded in 2001 compared to $569 million in 2012. The National Science Foundation has ranked Vanderbilt 22nd among US colleges and universities based on all federal obligations for research and development funding according to the most recent available data.

NSF Graduate Fellowships

Vanderbilt has also experienced steady improvement in the competition for NSF Graduate Fellowships. These highly competitive scholarships provide three years of funding for each Fellow to be used over a five-year period during his or her graduate studies. Prior to 2008, there were years when none of Vanderbilt’s entering or continuing graduate students were awarded NSF Graduate Fellowships. For 2012, including new and continuing NSF Fellows, nearly 50 NSF Fellows are enrolled at Vanderbilt.

The following is a list of the number of new NSF Graduate Fellowships awarded during the last five years:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NSF Fellows</th>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>2012</td>
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Reorganizing Our Business Models and “Doing Things Differently”

UPDATE

The Academic Venture Capital Fund

Launched in 2002, the Academic Venture Capital Fund (AVCF) program of one-time investments in research has provided a platform for transformative institutional change. Beginning with the work of eleven selected interschool initiatives, Vanderbilt faculty now work together as never before, eager and able to reach across school and disciplinary lines routinely and with confidence. Interdisciplinary work has joined disciplinary work as a recognized and accepted feature of intellectual life at Vanderbilt.

Current initiatives funded initially by the ACVF program:

- Program in Law and Business
- Vanderbilt Institute for Integrative Biosystems Research and Education
- Vanderbilt Institute for Nanoscale Science and Engineering
- Center for Integrative and Cognitive Neuroscience
- Research in Proteomics and Functional Biology
  - Proteomics Laboratory
  - Gene Profiling Laboratory
  - The Cryo-Electron-Microscopy Facility
  - Animal and Human Research Imaging Facility
- Vanderbilt Institute of Chemical Biology
- Functional Genomics of the Zebrafish
- Advanced Computing Center for Research and Education (ACCRE)

Online Education

In September 2012, Vanderbilt announced a new partnership with Coursera that will facilitate the launching of five free online courses beginning in January 2013. The response from Vanderbilt faculty and students and alumni worldwide has been very positive. Additional courses for 2013 are currently under consideration.

International Partnerships

In recent years, Vanderbilt has established key institutional partnerships to foster valuable research collaboration, create new educational opportunities for students and enhance its institutional presence and academic reputation abroad. These partnerships now include the University of Melbourne, the University of Sao Paolo and Queens University in Belfast. In addition to these institution-wide partnerships, each Vanderbilt school has
developed its own internationalization priorities, ranging from the development of the Americas MBA program at Owen to Peabody’s efforts in Abu Dhabi. Vanderbilt is also home to a federally-designated National Resource Center for Latin American Studies. In addition, the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health has become a key player in advancing health and development in resource-limited regions around the world.

Conclusion

The 2002 Academic Strategic Plan established an ambitious strategy rooted in the traditional values and unique qualities of Vanderbilt University. Much has been achieved in ten years with new challenges and opportunities on the horizon. The plan’s primary focus on the development of human capital has brought extraordinary students and faculty to Vanderbilt where they now thrive in a creative, collegial and entrepreneurial campus learning environment. Armed with the strength of this plan, our work continues as we enter the next planning process and reach for even higher levels of achievement and success.