



# VirginiaTech

*College of Agriculture  
and Life Sciences*

**Alumni Organization**

**Strategic Vision**

Setting the course for the  
Virginia Tech CALS Alumni Organization  
Into the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Approved by the VTCALS Alumni Organization Board  
July 20, 2003

# PREFACE

The strategic plan for the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Alumni Organization is the result of a planning process that began in late fall of 2002. A full day retreat of the Alumni Board held in Richmond January 2003 was led by a facilitator, Bill Sheetz, Director of Alumni Development at the University of Kentucky. This resulted in key elements of a strategic plan which were consolidated and refined into a draft strategic plan by the college alumni, college administrative staff and the executive committee of VTCALS Alumni Organization.

This draft was presented to the VTCALS Alumni Organization Board at the April meeting which was devoted entirely to refinement of the strategic plan. The refinements and related developments from this meeting were assimilated by VTCALS Alumni Organization board members and CALS staff. In addition, the Agriculture and Extension Communications unit at Virginia Tech placed the revision into draft format for final publication. The Board was presented with the near final draft formatted for publication at the July 20 meeting. By vote of the Board the strategic plan was accepted with minor edits. The College strategic plan was distributed at the Annual Meeting of the organization September 6, 2003. This process has set the stage for a plan of work which will lead to growth and development of the VTCALS Alumni Organization.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to acknowledge the following people for their time and energy in developing the VTCALS Alumni Organization Strategic Plan:

VTCALS Alumni Organization Board of Directors  
Dr. Jay Jackman, 2002-03 VTCALS Alumni Organization President  
Mike Parrish, 2002-03 VTCALS Alumni Organization President-Elect  
Charlie Stott, Director of Agriculture and Extension Communications  
Dr. Greg Brown, Interim Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Dr. Sharron Quisenberry, Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Dr. H. Dean Sutphin, Associate Dean, Director of Academic Programs,  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Lynn Young, Assistant Director Alumni Relations, College of Agriculture  
and Life Sciences  
John Cannon, Alumni Coordinator, College of Agriculture and  
Life Sciences.

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## **VISION**

The Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Alumni Organization strengthens relationships between the college, its alumni, and the industries they serve.

## **MISSION**

Support the learning, discovery, and engagement/Extension missions of the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to alumni, industry, and the general public.

# STRATEGIC GOALS BY THEME

## I. Constituency Programs

- A. Enhance the quality of the on and off campus event experience for alumni
  - 1. Use decorations and presentations that promote Tech spirit and provide meaningful information about the university at all department reunions, CALS homecoming, and other VTCALS Alumni Organization events
  - 2. Use video, slide presentations, or PowerPoint in event programs where appropriate
  - 3. Communicate with CALS Alumni with links to nostalgic pictures of previous reunions to generate interest in returning to campus
- B. Effectively coordinate the events that attract increasing numbers of alumni to return to campus
  - 1. Maintain a wide variety of events, including CALS Homecomings
  - 2. Plan events with departments
  - 3. Plan selected programs per year that center around CALS constituent groups (Farm Bureau, Young Farmers, FFA, 4-H, Agri-Business Council)
- C. Encourage participation by younger graduates
  - 1. Encourage current students to participate in alumni activities
  - 2. Encourage networking among members of younger classes to promote attendance
  - 3. Encourage representation on the board among young alumni
  - 4. Encourage participation in CALS Homecoming
  - 5. Maintain VT CALS Alumni Organization website
  - 6. Participate in Governor's School
- D. Develop and implement a set of programs that will engage alumni in their various constituency relationships
  - 1. Department
  - 2. Chapter
- E. Establish gift goals in collaboration with CALS development officer to reach goals
  - 1. Alumni Organization
  - 2. Others

## **II. Special Alumni Programs**

- A. Promote major programs on campus for alumni
  - 1. CALS Homecoming
  - 2. Regional events
  - 3. Department events/celebrations
  - 4. Continuing education programs
  - 5. Graduation
  - 6. Courses
  - 7. Weekend seminar programs
- B. Strengthen programs for alumni living abroad
  - 1. Identify CALS Alumni abroad
  - 2. Coordinate with International Programs and Alumni to identify faculty traveling abroad for potential meetings
  - 3. Work with Study-Abroad programs to create opportunities to connect students with alumni
- C. Share strategic plan with Dean
  - 1. Ask for funds from Dean's office
  - 2. Extend invitation for Dean's involvement on board from VTCALS Alumni Organization president
- D. Involve Dean in alumni organization
  - 1. Participate in Ag Leadership Council
  - 2. Develop a formal arrangement to "Do Business" with the Dean
  - 3. Ask Dean to help create alliance with President's Office of the University
  - 4. Plan alumni sponsored events with Dean's involvement
  - 5. Provide opportunities for the Dean to maintain alliances that are important to students

## **III. Career Development Services**

Continue supporting job search and career resource initiatives in conjunction with Career Services

- 1. CareerLink – maintain the volunteer base to meet CALS needs
- 2. Continue to update address and e-mail information of CareerLink volunteers
- 3. Promote Alumni Job Search Program and other career services

4. Promote Alumni Gateway, including alumni job networking
5. Promote CareerLink in *Connections*

#### **IV. CALS Ambassadors**

- A. Establish liaison events and activities between CALS Ambassadors and the Alumni Organization
  1. Appoint ambassador to Alumni Board
  2. Use ambassadors to assist in college recruitment activities
  3. Appoint leadership committee of Ambassadors and Alumni member

#### **V. Alumni Outreach Programs**

##### **A. Programs**

1. Enhance the quality of VTCALS Alumni Organization programs and strive to increase attendance at CALSAO sponsored regional events
2. Encourage the use of faculty involved with current and planned university initiatives as speakers at organizational or regional events
3. Develop innovative strategies for communication with alumni including Web pages, e-mail, and on-line registrations
4. Enhance the training of VTCALS Alumni Organization Board Members
5. Assist the Admissions Office staff in recruitment efforts by identifying high quality applicants and providing information to parents, high school guidance personnel and students

##### **B. Communications**

1. Promote VT CALS Alumni Organization events and publish articles in the *Virginia Tech Magazine*, in academic college publications, in the VTNetLetter, in other university publications, and through the Website and e-mails
2. Provide opportunities to promote VTCALS Alumni Organization services and programs at events such as career fairs, and university and community events
3. Highlight Virginia Tech in trade magazines and newspapers

##### **C. Constituency Partnerships**

1. Strengthen cultivation and communication with the academic departments through alumni staff liaison and student ambassadors
2. Plan events, awards programs, donor recognition and other initiatives serving alumni in the college in coordination with the dean and development staff

3. Cultivate collaborative relationships with departments to facilitate alumni involvement in advisory boards and department reunions and provide opportunities for alumni to make presentations to students
4. Encourage departments to recommend candidates for nomination to the VT Alumni Association Board of Directors
5. Identify and cultivate volunteers within constituency groups to help develop programs that engage alumni in their constituencies
6. Host reception for scholarship winners before scholarship dinners
7. Highlight alumni through CALS newsletters

#### D. Legislative Advocacy

1. Encourage support from elected officials for the programs of the college under the direction of the college administration
2. Continually inform the network of legislative advocates through newsletters, e-mails, and personal contacts
3. Encourage chapters to invite members of the General Assembly to their events, recognizing them prominently
4. Host reception for legislators, students, faculty, and constituents
5. Help acquire external, state, federal, and county funding, and maintain an internal budget with the Director of Academic Programs, President of VTCALS Alumni Organization, and College Development Officer

#### E. On-Campus Programs

1. Provide high quality on-campus event experiences for alumni by providing the latest information about the college and university, highlighting advances in technology, new facilities, and current and new initiatives
2. Provide a high quality departmental reunion experience (5 year rotation)
3. Encourage networking among alumni to promote attendance

4. Plan and promote College Homecoming on home game weekend to attract more alumni back to campus and encourage the college to feature open houses showcasing their programs
5. Promote school spirit and loyalty among current students and alumni through CALS ambassadors
6. Present positive Agricultural and Life Sciences career opportunities for youth
  - a. Through mentor programs
  - b. Internship program
  - c. Representatives at high school college nights
  - d. Guidance counselors
  - e. Engage CALS ambassadors to help recruit
  - f. Invite community college representatives and companies

#### F. Services for Alumni

1. Assist the College and University Career Services staff in increasing and more effectively using available alumni volunteer talent and resources to assist in its initiatives, including job search and career resources
2. Facilitate connection through alumni with companies that might recruit Virginia Tech students
3. Provide additional career services to alumni