



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES
**AGRICULTURAL AND
APPLIED ECONOMICS**
VIRGINIA TECH.

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COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING STRATEGY PLAN

August 2024 – July 2026
Revised 6.18.2024

EXTENDING OUR GLOBAL IMPACT

Opportunities to achieve higher impact in Virginia and beyond in applied economics and agribusiness principles that help address food, financial, health, development, policy, environmental, and social needs.



Strategic focus areas

Focus area 1: Perceptions

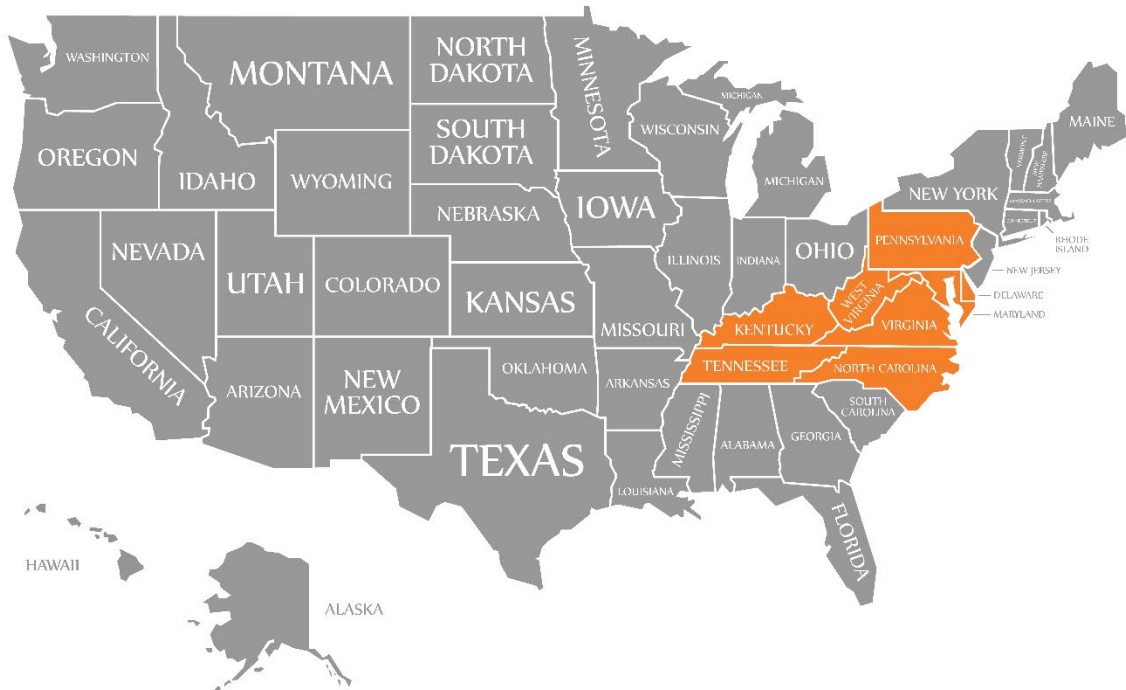
Strategic Priority 1.1 >> Degree Impact

GOAL: IMPROVE PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH AN AAEC DEGREE

Key initiative 1: Develop a comprehensive marketing and social media strategy targeted toward prospective undergraduate students and community college transfers in both urban and suburban areas.

Collaboration with the AAEC Undergraduate Advisory Committee

Key initiative 2: Identify high schools and community colleges in both urban and suburban areas of Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Delaware, and Tennessee; develop digital presentations and materials geared toward guidance counselors and transfer students.



Collaboration with the AAEC Undergraduate Advisory Committee, CALS recruiter

Key initiative 3: Develop an online master's comprehensive marketing and social media strategy to grow enrollment and improve US News & World Report rankings (First year ranking 2024 - #149).

Collaboration with the Professional Online MS Committee

Key initiative 4: Enhance the AAEC website to include job placement (companies, placement ratings) and profiles on current students and alumni, especially young alumni.

Collaboration with the Communications and Marketing and Graduate Advisory Committees

Strategic Priority 1.2 >> Ph.D. recruitment

Key initiative 1: Develop faculty Ph.D. recruitment materials

Key initiative 2: Develop a form for potential Ph.D. students who have applied. The form will dive deeper into their interests to provide more insights to tailor their academic experience and faculty pairing if accepted.

Collaboration with the Graduate Advisory Committee

Success metrics

- Increase in undergraduate and transfer applications from research conducted in urban and suburban areas
- Increase in online master's enrollment and ranking
- Faculty usage of Ph.D. recruitment materials
- Enhance Ph.D. students' academic experiences and faculty interactions

Focus area 2: Partnerships

Strategic Priority 2.1 >> Develop partnerships

GOAL: EXPAND AND GROW THE PATHWAY FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

EXPERIENCES

Key initiative 1: Promote the redefined Kohl Centre mission and vision to develop and grow partnership and experiential learning opportunities under the Chair's leadership

Key initiative 2: Develop a comprehensive social media strategy targeted toward prospective industry partnerships

Key initiative 3: Enhance the AAEC and Kohl Centre websites as a digital toolkit and resource for potential company partnerships

Key initiative 4: Develop and utilize the Young Professional Development Advisory Board

Key initiatives 5: Create partnership and online master's all-encompassing database

Key initiatives 6: Research potential industry partnership

Collaboration with the Industry Partnerships, Bridge, Communications and Marketing Committees

Strategic Priority 2.2 >> Develop industry and alumni relationships

GOAL: EXPAND AND GROW FIRST-DESTINATION JOB PLACEMENTS

Key initiatives 1: Centralized industry and alumni visit contacts via '**strategic priority 2.1 develop partnerships, key initiative #5**' as a tool to better engage industry and bridge the gap between students and first-destination job placements

Collaboration with the Industry Partnerships, Bridge, Graduate Advisory, and Professional Online MS Committees

Success metrics

- Increase in partnerships
- Increase in experiential learning opportunities, notably, paid internships
- Improved data collection and record keeping

Focus area 3: Planning for the Future

Strategic priority 3.1 >> Curriculum

GOAL: MAJORS AND CURRICULUM OF THE FUTURE

Key initiative 1: Conduct a comprehensive curriculum review (Undergraduate/Graduate)

Key initiative 2: Encourage the development of new majors and minors that align with the changing landscape of agricultural and applied economics and review current curriculum metrics and enrollment trends

Strategic priority 3.2 >> Awareness as a hub for all agricultural and applied economics expertise with a focus on the Virginia Tech research agenda

Collaboration with the Undergraduate and Graduate Advisory, Professional Online MS, and the Communications & Marketing Committees

GOAL: GLOBAL ELEVATION OF FACULTY KEYNOTE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Key initiative 1: Be internationally recognized for economic analysis of broad agricultural issues in our five focus areas 1) agribusiness, risk management, and policy, 2) environmental and natural resources, 3) food and health, 4) international development and trade, and 5) rural and regional development.

Key initiative 2: Encourage and support interdisciplinary and collaborative research

Key initiative 3: Develop a long-term sustainable source of funding

Key initiative 4: Foster collaboration between Extension and research to solve critical issues

Key initiative 5: Develop an annual report

Collaboration with the Governance, Communications & Marketing, Extension/Outreach, and Awards Committees

Success metrics

- Increase in student applications
- Increase in quality of Ph.D. student applications
- Increase in grant applications and funding