

2025-2030

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIC PLAN

 UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA



**UNIVERSITY
COMMUNICATIONS
PLAN**

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UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The University of Virginia is a public institution of higher learning guided by a founding vision of discovery, innovation and development of the full potential of talented students from all walks of life. It serves the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation and the world by developing responsible citizen leaders and professionals; advancing, preserving and disseminating knowledge; and providing world-class patient care.



UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA MISSION & VALUES

As described in its mission statement, UVA is defined by:

- Our enduring commitment to a vibrant and unique residential learning environment marked by the free and collegial exchange of ideas;
- Our unwavering support of a collaborative, diverse community bound together by distinctive foundational values of honor, integrity, trust and respect; and
- Our universal dedication to excellence and affordable access

to be
**GREAT
AND
GOOD**
in all we do

To be great is to achieve excellence in what you do. Greatness is a goal common to most institutions of higher learning. Using excellence to serve the common good is how higher education finds its higher purpose. It's the true value of a public university.

Therefore, we should strive not simply to be great, but also to be good, recognizing that in the not-too-distant future, it will likely be impossible for a university to be truly great if it is not also good.

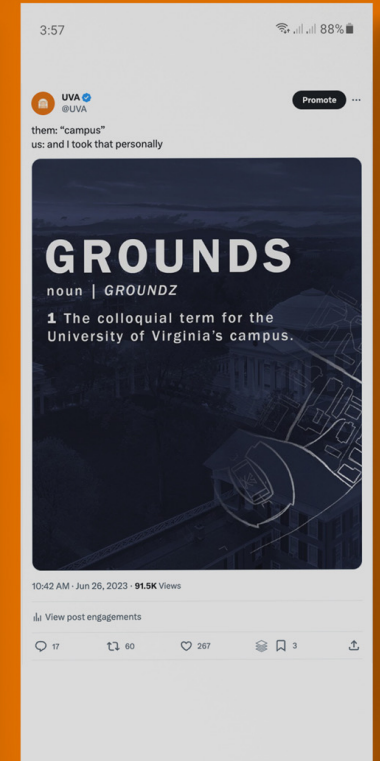
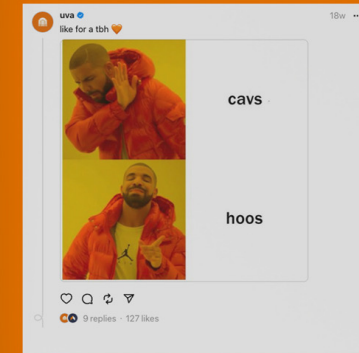
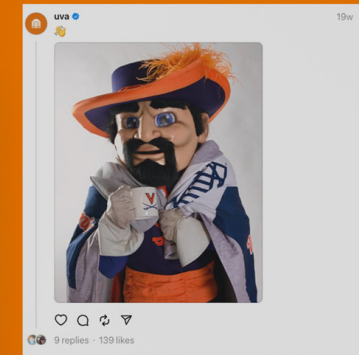
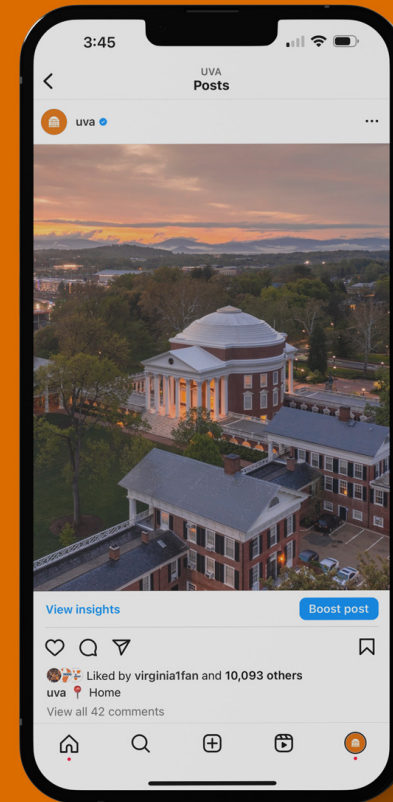
The very best faculty, students and staff are going to want to live, work and study at institutions in which they can believe wholeheartedly; institutions that are both outstanding and ethical; institutions that are excellent, but excellent for a purpose.

If we reach this goal, we will also achieve a more concrete goal: We will be the leading public university in the country in 2030 and one of the very best in the world, whether public or private.

University Communications

The primary goal of University Communications is to showcase the University as a model of excellence in public higher education through effective and engaging communications and marketing. Our aim is to not only inform but also inspire our audiences, ensuring the impact of our University is widely recognized in our broad UVA community, across the Commonwealth and beyond.

If we achieve this goal, we will directly contribute to the University of Virginia being recognized as the leading public university in the nation by 2030. One that is both great and good by reputation: great because of our excellence in research, teaching, learning and patient care, and good through our direct impact on the communities we serve and the value we contribute.



OUR COMMITMENTS

The following commitments will guide the work of our team over the next five years:

1 STRATEGIC IMPACT

We commit to ensuring that our communications and marketing initiatives align with and actively contribute to the University's strategic goals. Our work will be purpose-driven, designed to have a measurable impact on achieving these objectives.

3 ACCOUNTABILITY & EVALUATION

We commit to evaluating the effectiveness of our work using a variety of tools to measure brand reputation, audience engagement and the outcomes of our efforts. We will apply what we learn to improve our work and to better support the goals of our organization and the University as a whole.

2 EXCELLENCE AS A STANDARD

We commit to upholding excellence as our benchmark in our communications programs. The work we produce will reflect high standards of quality, creativity and strategic thinking. We speak to the hearts and minds of individuals, tailoring our communications to engage and foster a strong connection with our diverse stakeholders.

4 DEDICATION TO GROWTH

We commit to fostering a culture where members of our team can grow and advance by offering employees professional challenges, focused mentoring and opportunities to learn and build new skills.



OUR OBJECTIVES

- 1** Create a Unified Content Strategy
- 2** Curate Great Stories & Experiences
- 3** Measure & Optimize Program Effectiveness
- 4** Nurture our Craft & Team Culture



OBJECTIVE

Create a Unified Content Strategy

WHAT DOES THIS OBJECTIVE ENTAIL?

Our charge is to masterfully tell the University of Virginia story, creating content that advances the overarching goals and aspirations of UVA.

This includes promoting key content themes, such as overall excellence, knowledge creation, academic quality, value and being a good neighbor, as outlined in the University's 2030 Plan.

As a team, University Communications will create a unified content strategy that outlines our content themes, core audiences, messaging priorities and distribution channels for each unit. Further, this effort will not only create greater clarity and better work but will also instill a shared sense of ownership in its execution.



WHY ARE WE DEDICATING TIME AND RESOURCES TO THIS OBJECTIVE?



IMPLEMENT A FOCUSED STRATEGY

To reinforce and advance the overarching goals and aspirations of the University as our primary focus while telling the UVA story in a compelling way.



MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY

To align our messaging across communications and marketing areas, creating a consistent and recognizable narrative, fostering trust and credibility, and differentiating our brand.



STREAMLINE & COORDINATE EFFORTS

To streamline and coordinate content creation and distribution, making the most efficient use of resources by simplifying marketing efforts, enhancing alignment among team members and contributing to long-term engagement growth.

HOW WILL WE STRATEGICALLY AND TACTICALLY ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE?

1 AUDIT PAST CONTENT

Collectively review content from the past three years across channels to identify trends, extract insights and make recommendations for improvement.

2 RESEARCH AUDIENCE & MEDIA CONSUMPTION

Conduct in-depth research on our core audiences' preferences, experiences and interests to deepen our understanding of how they engage with and consume content on each of our distribution channels (channels in which content is delivered to the intended audience, such as Instagram, the UVA Today Daily Report or Virginia.edu).

3 FORMALIZE CONTENT STRATEGY

Create a comprehensive content strategy that outlines our content themes and pillars, key messaging, audience priorities, distribution channels and content formats. Use the University's 2030 Plan as a guide with an emphasis on overall excellence, research, audience experiences, community contributions and value.

4 ALIGN & PRIORITIZE DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Align and prioritize key distribution channels for each content theme and audience segment to ensure a tailored approach.

HOW WILL WE STRATEGICALLY
AND TACTICALLY ACHIEVE THIS
OBJECTIVE?

5 EXPLORE CONTENT FORMATS

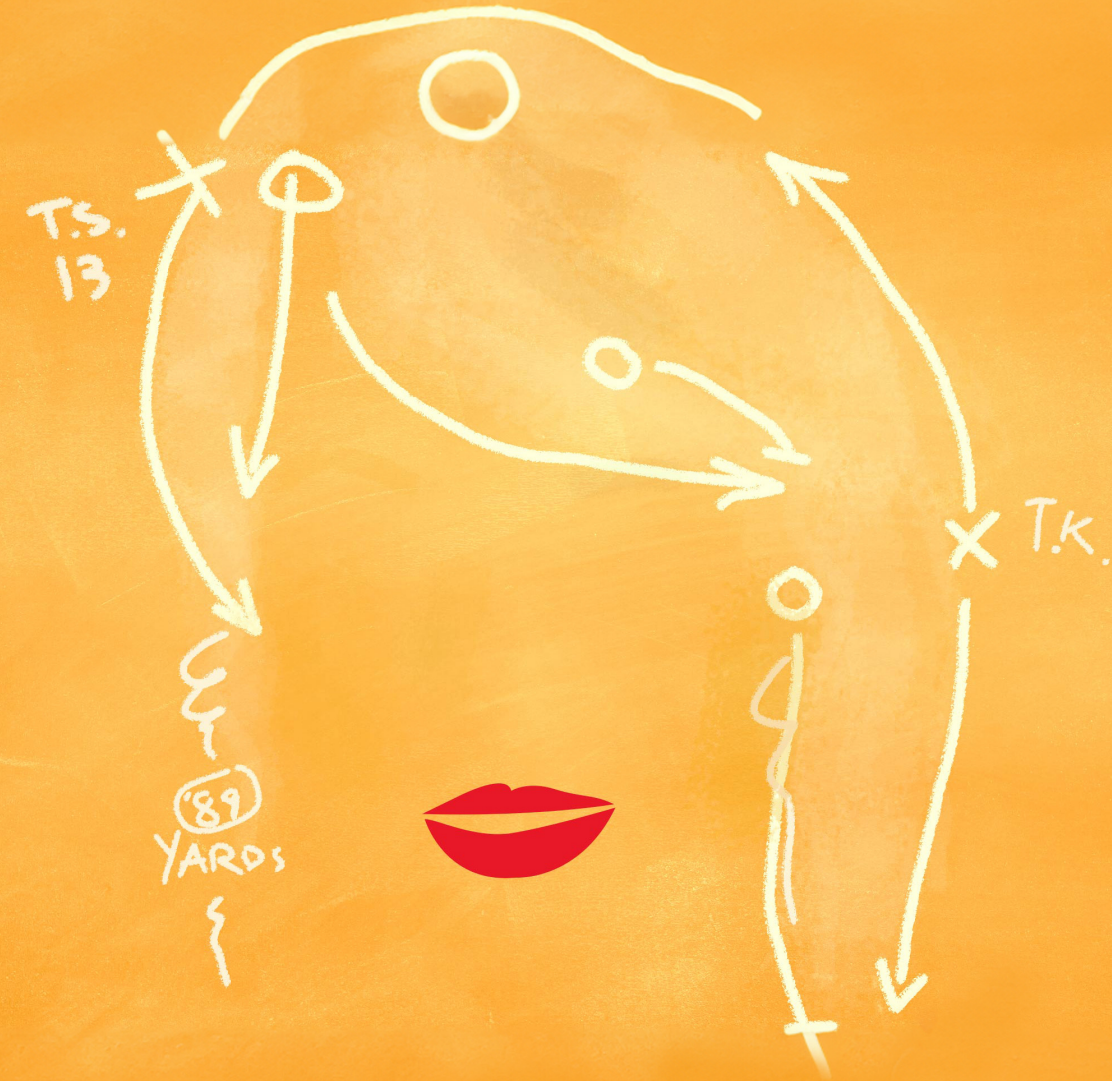
Explore multimedia content formats (content that incorporates multiple forms of media, such as text, audio, photography, video and interactive elements) that add richness, contours and depth to our content themes and key messages on each distribution channel while adhering to accessibility best practices.

7 CREATE AN EDITORIAL & CONTENT PLAN

Use the content strategy to create a collaborative editorial and content plan each year to maximize our resources and reach.

6 ALIGN ON CONTENT GOVERNANCE

Determine how to monitor and maintain content quality and consistency through periodic reviews and updates to the content strategy.



HOW WILL WE MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

- Creation of a unified content strategy with prioritized content themes that align our programs
- A deeper understanding of our audiences and how best to reach them
- Increased collaboration between units and leaders
- Streamlined productivity and resource allocation



OBJECTIVE

Curate Great Stories & Experiences

WHAT DOES THIS OBJECTIVE ENTAIL?

At our core, we share compelling stories and create meaningful experiences. Once we are aligned on our content strategy, we will put it into action by consistently finding and crafting newsworthy University stories, content, marketing campaigns, licensing programs and brand expressions. We will identify and prioritize the creation of stories that speak to our value and impact, highlighting success metrics, academic achievements in teaching and learning, faculty research, social mobility, university life and other themes as defined by the content strategy. In doing so, we not only strive to strengthen UVA's positive brand perception but also proactively manage and mitigate potential reputational issues.

Each story and experience contribute to our collective goal of being widely recognized as the leading public university in the nation. Our campaigns showcase the UVA experience and contributions, encouraging prospective students to apply, attracting and retaining faculty and staff, keeping alumni active, engaging stakeholders and involving community members.



WHY ARE WE DEDICATING TIME AND RESOURCES TO THIS OBJECTIVE?



INCREASE AWARENESS OF UNIVERSITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS & FOSTER COMMUNITY PRIDE

To communicate the plans, priorities and accomplishments of UVA to key stakeholders, ensuring our audiences understand how we live our values to be both great and good in all we do.



INCREASE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

To engage UVA's core audiences with the intent of building brand loyalty, increasing interactions and impacting satisfaction, advocacy and retention.



ENSURE BRAND COHESION

To ensure internal stakeholders understand and represent our brand effectively by aligning their school or unit's mission and vision with the University's brand while providing them with the knowledge and tools for cohesive, high-quality brand expressions.



EXTEND CONTENT LIFESPAN THROUGH OPTIMAL DELIVERY

To maximize the value and relevance of the content we create by repurposing across channels and optimizing over time, ensuring we are working smarter, not harder.

HOW WILL WE STRATEGICALLY
AND TACTICALLY ACHIEVE THIS
OBJECTIVE?

1 IDENTIFY GREAT STORIES

By being attuned to what is happening across the Grounds and fostering good relations with colleagues, we will routinely identify, create and distribute stories based on timeliness and newsworthiness while ensuring prioritization of content themes that are aligned with the overarching content strategy and advance University objectives.

3 OPTIMIZE CONTENT FOR MULTI-CHANNEL DISTRIBUTION

Optimize content for each distribution channel, ensuring the content is best formatted for the medium and the way audiences consume content on that platform; examples include UVA Today, display advertising, social media, website, email and more.

2 CREATE MULTIMEDIA CONTENT

Collaborate across teams to create content and advance narratives by embracing different media types (graphic design, illustration, typography, photography, video, digital experiences, etc.) to evolve our work and engage our audiences.

4 COORDINATE MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Using the content strategy as a guide, identify consistent content and campaign needs for each year, promoting cross-unit collaboration, allocating appropriate resources, maintaining the quality of ongoing campaigns and preserving space for new campaigns as they arise.

HOW WILL WE STRATEGICALLY AND TACTICALLY ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE?

5 BUILD RELATIONSHIPS & SECURE EARNED MEDIA

Build relationships and rapport with local, regional and national news outlets to better understand the landscape and pitch important stories, allowing us to reach larger, more diverse audiences, increase awareness and gain a greater share of voice by regularly pairing our expertise with the news of the day.

7 MANAGE ISSUES & REPUTATION

Proactively monitor and analyze potential reputational issues, collaborating with key stakeholders to develop and execute communication plans that address concerns and uphold the University's image.

6 CRAFT EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

Craft compelling narratives for executive leadership that align with overarching content themes and University objectives while communicating effectively with internal and external stakeholders.

8 FOSTER THE UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMUNICATIONS COMMUNITY

Create educational, networking and idea-sharing opportunities, camps, workshops and trainings for communications colleagues across the Grounds to improve content curation, marketing and brand adoption, and to increase the amount of high-quality content available on university-owned channels.

HOW WILL WE STRATEGICALLY
AND TACTICALLY ACHIEVE THIS
OBJECTIVE?

9 **MANAGE & EVOLVE THE BRAND**

Maintain and evolve UVA brand identity, expressions and programs — such as BrandDOT — exploring new ways to leverage technology and engagement to improve efficiency and adoption.

10 **DEVELOP LICENSING PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS**

Create and promote licensed products in collaboration with reputable, responsive partners to foster community pride through storytelling while marketing and evolving collections to increase brand affinity and revenue.

11 **MAINTAIN & OPTIMIZE VIRGINIA.EDU**

Provide a user-friendly, SEO-optimized experience, showcasing content that speaks to a range of key audiences through the maintenance of Virginia.edu as the digital “front door” of the University.



HOW WILL WE MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

- Creation of high-quality, high-performing content and campaigns
- Better collaboration and relationships with communicators across the Grounds and within the media landscape
- Greater share of voice and earned media placements
- Increased adoption of brand assets and tools
- Increased sales of licensed products



OBJECTIVE

Measure & Optimize Program Effectiveness

WHAT DOES THIS OBJECTIVE ENTAIL?

Our responsibility is not just to produce and promote content, but to motivate and move audiences, providing them with a variety of touchpoints with the UVA brand to encourage action. As we tell the UVA story through content and experiences, we must listen to our audience to learn how they get information, how they view the University, and what types of content would help them better understand UVA and grow in their affinity for the institution.

To gain these essential insights, we must embrace and prioritize marketing research initiatives. More in-depth perception studies will provide us with important knowledge and data needed to inform our strategic messaging approach. We must also emphasize the importance of ongoing learning, extracting insights and analyzing trends to inform future decision-making.



WHY ARE WE DEDICATING TIME AND RESOURCES TO THIS OBJECTIVE?



UNDERSTAND PERCEPTION OF UVA

To understand sentiment, perception and gaps in knowledge among key audiences in order to effectively communicate and market to them.



MAKE DATA-INFORMED DECISIONS

To cultivate a data-driven culture to understand brand health and perceptions, while generating actionable data-backed insights to drive internal team decision-making.

HOW WILL WE STRATEGICALLY
AND TACTICALLY ACHIEVE THIS
OBJECTIVE?

1 CREATE AN ANNUALIZED RESEARCH PLAN

Annualize a research plan designed to encompass both large-scale research and more detailed activities throughout the year.

2 CONDUCT RESEARCH TRAINING & COMMUNICATION

Discuss and train across units on how metrics, trends, audience engagement, brand perception and other data should be used to inform decision-making and optimize work.

3 RESEARCH AUDIENCE & MEDIA CONSUMPTION

Conduct ongoing analysis on our core audiences' preferences, experiences and interests to deepen our understanding of how they engage and consume content on each of our distribution channels.

4 MONITOR THE BRAND

Survey the user community to understand various wants and needs, analyze adoption of BrandDOT assets and tools and monitor the environment to ensure compliance and proper execution.

HOW WILL WE STRATEGICALLY AND TACTICALLY ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE?

5 **MANAGE SOCIAL MEDIA & ONLINE REPUTATION**

Routinely monitor UVA's online reputation by analyzing social sentiment, community engagement, media and online reviews, ensuring active management of the brand's online reputation between larger perception studies.

6 **REPORT ON PERFORMANCE**

Regularly analyze the performance of content, activities, events and campaigns to determine the most effective way to engage our audience and adjust the strategy accordingly.

7 **TEST & OPTIMIZE**

Continuously test and refine content and experiences based on audience engagement metrics utilizing A/B testing when relevant to determine the most effective formats and channels.



Your Joy.

UVAToday
Your Source for All Things UVA.

NEWS.VIRGINIA.EDU



Your Traditions.

UVAToday
Your Source for All Things UVA.

NEWS.VIRGINIA.EDU

HOW WILL WE MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

- Strengthened perception and reputation among our key audiences
- Increased number of positive reviews and social media mentions
- Increased brand compliance and satisfaction among user community
- Strengthened reporting and understanding of key metrics



OBJECTIVE

Nurture Our Craft & Team Culture

WHAT DOES THIS OBJECTIVE ENTAIL?

Our team will actively encourage collaboration and foster a culture where the exchange of ideas and collective efforts are valued and deemed necessary to strengthen the work product. We must recognize and applaud the accomplishments of our team members and continuously reflect on our personal and professional development. Promoting and embracing a growth mindset should be a fundamental aspect of our team's identity, as it encourages learning and improvement.

As such, there will be a renewed focus on operations, professional development, culture-building activities and feedback loops. Excellence is only possible if we cultivate a strong internal culture and continuously refine our craft.



WHY ARE WE DEDICATING TIME AND RESOURCES TO THIS OBJECTIVE?



FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE

To intentionally focus on the growth and development of team members, allowing our staff to contribute their very best in a way that is gratifying for them individually and maximizes our overall contributions to the University.



FOSTER COLLABORATION

To nurture an open and collaborative mindset and team dynamic that promotes learning, adaptability and trust to produce the highest quality work product.



ATTRACT & RETAIN TOP TALENT

To continue to grow the team by creating an aspirational workplace that attracts top talent while retaining invaluable team members.

HOW WILL WE STRATEGICALLY
AND TACTICALLY ACHIEVE THIS
OBJECTIVE?

1 GATHER EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK

Conduct a recurring internal survey of all units to measure employee satisfaction and identify opportunities for culture-building and operational improvement.

2 CRAFT A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Identify growth and culture opportunities for each unit, while aligning on cross-unit team building and professional development plans that outline topics, goals, participants and facilitation needs.

3 FOSTER DIVERSITY OF IDEAS & PEOPLE

Foster an inclusive environment that values and actively seeks a diversity of perspectives and experiences by encouraging open dialogue and collaboration to strengthen our efforts.

4 BUILD CULTURE

Champion a culture of excellence rooted in learning and growth by providing the Employee Engagement Council with the necessary resources and time for planning engagement and recognition programs.

HOW WILL WE STRATEGICALLY
AND TACTICALLY ACHIEVE THIS
OBJECTIVE?

5 **PRIORITIZE ETHOS IMMERSION**

Encourage the importance of immersing ourselves in the UVA ethos; being more deliberate about spending time on the Grounds experiencing and engaging in the essence of UVA. It is easier to influence minds when you start with the heart.

7 **EMBRACE AI & NEW TECHNOLOGIES**

Facilitate open discussions around how AI and other technologies might assist with organizational challenges, create new opportunities, free up time to do our best creative and strategic work and continue assisting our organization.

6 **EVOLVE & OPTIMIZE OPERATIONS**

Teach, integrate and embrace project management as a core team function and responsibility of each unit, prioritizing a holistic view of active projects and resources needed to succeed.

8 **IDENTIFY COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Identify and categorize long-term cross-unit projects that would benefit from collaboration versus short-term deadline-based projects that need to get done.

HOW WILL WE STRATEGICALLY
AND TACTICALLY ACHIEVE THIS
OBJECTIVE?

9 REFLECT & CELEBRATE MILESTONES

Nurture a positive and motivated work environment where we recognize achievements, anniversaries, project completions and other significant milestones, taking moments of pause to celebrate successes while reflecting on areas for improvement.

10 GROW LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Facilitate conversations, guide plans and help execute professional development and training, culture-building activities and operational changes, ensuring communication is direct and clear on the importance and impact of these initiatives.



HOW WILL WE MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS OBJECTIVE?

- Increased job satisfaction and retention of talent
- Implementation of professional development and subsequent learnings
- Reputation as a desirable place to work, internally and externally
- The embrace of new technology and solutions that improve our work
- Increased collaboration and productivity



**FORWARD
MOMENTUM**

DEFINING SUCCESS

Envisioning 2030, success will be achieved by our unmatched ability and commitment to consistently produce the right content and effectively deliver it. This requires that our work be clearly defined, regularly assessed and for it to be embraced through shared ownership and collaboration in its execution. Our dedication to UVA and each other will make University Communications stand out for its exceptional people, collaborative ethos and commitment to producing outstanding work in support of the University of Virginia.



UNIVERSITY
of
VIRGINIA