

Strategic Plan from November 2021 to November 2026

Forming Leaders, Living in Community, Serving the Church and the World

Introduction

On October 15, 2023, Virginia Theological Seminary marks a major milestone: 200 years of service to the Church. While we celebrate this milestone appropriately, we also acknowledge we have a responsibility to respond to the ever-changing challenges of our day.

This plan is a result of a wide and consultative process. Every Board member was individually interviewed; and the results discussed in a Board meeting. Every faculty member was interviewed. The Alumni Association Executive Committee (AAEC) discussed planning possibilities. All staff were invited to send in suggestions. The staff and student government were involved. In the Dean's Commentary and in other e-communications, our wider VTS family – friends and donors – were invited to participate. A draft slowly emerged in June. This draft was shared with the various internal constituencies. Then it went to the Board and was finally voted at the November 2021 Board Meeting.

This plan builds on the revised mission statement that was approved at the May 2021 Board Meeting. We are a school that is clearly about the work we are called by God to do. While much of the plan is a commitment to continue the good work we have been doing, there are certain distinctive themes that permeate the plan and are embedded throughout the plan, that we believe should be addressed during the next several years.

Many of these distinctive themes are in response to the Board's sense that the Church faces certain acute challenges. In response to the primary challenge of secularization, the Seminary is committing to the hard work of discipleship, formation, and evangelism. In response to the challenge of racism in the Church and the world, the Seminary continues the work of reparations. In response to the opportunity to provide outstanding academics from research active faculty, the Seminary is making research a priority. In response to the culture of competition in theological education, the Seminary commits to partnerships. In response to the need to find ways to engage younger people in Christianity, the Seminary commits to the full range of media captured by the phrase "the arts." In response to the environmental crisis facing our planet, the Seminary commits to the theme of creation care. In response to the need to create new income streams, the Seminary commits to exploring the possibility of developing Zabriskie Drive. This is a plan that promises to make an impact on these major challenges.

This is the text that will guide us over the next five years. We are aware it is an ambitious plan. We acknowledge that the world changes and plans sometimes need to be adapted. In addition, we are aware that a particular initiative might become a priority, thereby displacing other initiatives. So, this will be a living text, which will be modified by the Board as needed.

The goal is to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to this hurting world. May all we do be for God's glory.

Yours in Christ,
David Charlton and Ian Markham

Mission Statement

Led by the Holy Spirit, Virginia Theological Seminary forms and educates leaders who proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and helps others participate in God's mission throughout the world. We are a racially and culturally diverse residential community of The Episcopal Church, devoted to worship and prayer; teaching and learning; and research and service to the wider church.

Mission Emphases

Our home is The Episcopal Church. We bring to all we do: an abiding commitment to the life of faith with the life of the mind; our love of liturgy, music and preaching; and a generous, open orthodoxy.

Our longing is for God to form human lives who are passionate in their beliefs and practices for the Good News of God in Christ, caring for the earth, and bringing the presence of Christ through pastoral care to those in need.

Our ministry and mission are grounded on a lovely campus in a residential community, where people daily learn the discipline of worship; engage in rigorous graduate studies; and participate in lively table fellowship in the Refectory.

Our work is graduate theological education, where texts and traditions are opened, where connections are made with the contemporary Church and the world in ways that compel and excite.

Our mission is global in reach. Through our deep connections in the Anglican Communion and our Center for Anglican Communion Studies, we have ministry partners worldwide. We value our ecumenical and interfaith relationships and seek to learn from the perspectives of others.

Our Lifelong Learning programs, through creative and innovative initiatives, seek to bring education, training, and resources within the reach of all.

Our deep commitment is to shape Church leaders, lay and ordained, who are committed to the creation of a just society in which the image of God in all people is honored and where the sins of racism and injustice are named, challenged, and ultimately eradicated.

Our service to the Church and the world is enhanced by dedicated focus on research with an emphasis on practice.

Our connections with alumni, friends, and congregational and diocesan partners are important and strengthen the Seminary.

Our mission is delivered by dedicated employees who strive for excellence through the provision of services, and through careful stewardship of our resources. We are invested in the development of our staff, and are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our life together.

Eight themes are embedded in the plan:

Evangelism and Outreach: The Seminary will cultivate expertise in how to preach and proclaim the Gospel.

Formation: The Seminary will continue to make formation – in a holistic way – a priority.

Reparations: The Seminary will make amends for our sinful participation in injustice.

Multicultural Sensitivity: The Seminary will strive to increase the sensitivity of the community to racism and exclusion, with the goal of working toward an inclusive, justice-oriented community and society.

Research: The Seminary will develop a strong academic profile grounded in faculty publications and grant work.

Partnership: The Seminary will work with other institutions and organizations to further its mission and commit to more collaborative work across VTS departments.

The Arts: The Seminary will seek to enrich teaching and learning through engagement with the creative arts and digital media.

Creation Care: The Seminary will witness to the priority of caring for God's creation in our teaching and learning and living.

Window 1: Worship and Community Life

1.0 Aim:

Create a worship life of beauty and holiness that provides a liminal place to encounter God and grow in love of one's neighbor, placing God and the saving work of Jesus Christ at the center of all we do in Immanuel Chapel, the Memorial Garden, and other places of worship.

1.1 Outcome:

Time and space held for prayer and worship that glorifies God and sustains the beloved community at Virginia Theological Seminary.

Actions:

1.1.1 Recognize the broad diversity of worship across The Episcopal Church and with our ecumenical partners; make sure that underrepresented groups and voices are included.

1.1.2 Assure that worship is a time of community gathering that provides the space for the community to cohere and be nurtured.

1.1.3 Instill a sense of joy, calm, and inner strength in our students through their worship participation and provide opportunities for student leadership.

1.1.4 Seek to fully utilize the audiovisual/live streaming capacities of Immanuel Chapel as both a tool for ongoing worship and an evangelical resource in a changing digital environment.

1.1.5 Educate our students in effective worship planning and leadership.

1.1.6 Support vibrant and varied musical offerings, building up a superlative music program to benefit our students, and becoming a resource for the wider Church.

2.0 Aim:

Foster the creative use of the arts in worship.

2.1 Outcome:

A community that worships God using many artistic and creative media.

Actions:

2.1.1 Educate faculty and students on the effective use of the arts in worship.

2.1.2 Educate users in the chapel's audiovisual capacities to enhance the use of the arts in worship.

2.1.3 Create synergies between classroom teaching and worship to foster the use of the arts in worship for all ages, including members of the Butterfly House.

3.0 Aim:

Support thoughtful preaching that inspires evangelism.

3.1 Outcome:

Preachers who can commend the Gospel to a wide range of people.

Actions:

3.1.1 Enhance the Hines and Bowers preaching fellowships to bring a range of excellent preachers to campus.

3.1.2 Foster a deeper partnership with the Episcopal Preaching Foundation.

3.1.3 Through Deep Calls to Deep programming, create a range of preaching events in chapel.

3.1.4 Build on the 200 sermons project and explore ways the initiative could continue.

4.0 Aim:

Create mechanisms for members of the community to establish healthy lives, including a balance of work, rest, and play.

4.1 Outcome:

A calm interior campus life that allows for deepened spiritual lives and time and space for life in community.

Actions:

4.1.1 Encourage students and faculty to follow a personal Rule of Life.

4.1.2 Establish a communal Rule of Life for students and faculty.

4.1.3 Encourage a commitment to Sabbath practices for students and faculty.

4.1.4 Foster a healthy culture around vacations for staff and faculty.

4.1.5 Maintain Quiet Days and support students and faculty in using the time deliberately.

4.1.6 Explore the possibility of building a fitness facility to enhance community wellness, and continue to support the use of the VTS grounds to enhance community wellness.

4.1.7 Support more internal partnerships across VTS departments to coordinate fewer but richer events.

5.0 Aim:

Explore the possibility of creating an intentional community (within the community) on campus, devoted to prayer and/or social justice ministries.

5.1 Outcome:

Seminarians have more options to enhance their formation as they live on campus.

Actions:

5.1.1 Embark on a survey of interest and explore the possibility of a campus space (either a residence hall or Maywood) for such a community.

5.1.2 Research other intentional communities that are part of seminary life to find effective models.

5.1.3 Consider making a connection to the New Mission Practices concentration.

6.0 Aim:

Invite staff and Seminary families to participate (as they desire) in community life.

6.1 Outcome:

Wider community on campus fostered, affirmed, and celebrated.

Actions:

6.1.1 Retain community dinners as a vehicle for community-building for students and student families.

6.1.2 Continue to host formation and advising groups in faculty homes to support community-building between faculty and students.

6.1.3 Highlight and continue to support the work of the spouses and families group called SPIRIT (Significants Participating In Really Interesting Things).

6.1.4 Reevaluate and, when needed, redesign shared programming in which staff, student families, and faculty are encouraged to participate.

7.0 Aim:

Create avenues for conversation and communication in the community.

7.1 Outcome:

A community where there is space for conversation, visitors are welcomed, and information and events clearly communicated.

Actions:

7.1.1 Create a program of regular community meetings or Flock Talks to discuss current issues in the community or wider cultural context.

7.1.2 Utilize a VTS-wide calendar system for tracking events and logistical needs for each event.

7.1.3 Establish better communication practices on campus, including leveraging digital resources, holding a regular time for community meetings with announcements and introductions of visitors, (possibly on Wednesday morning at the end of chapel service).

8.0 Aim:

Foster co-curricular opportunities for creative expression.

8.1 Outcome:

A community that engages the arts as part of its formation and spiritual practice.

Actions:

8.1.1 Explore the possibility of creating an art studio on campus, possibly on Zabriskie Drive.

8.1.2 Create an artist-in-residence program.

8.1.3 Enhance the yearly art show.

8.1.4 Create an art gallery space on campus.

8.1.5 Create opportunities for community members to participate in the performing arts on campus.

8.1.6 Hold concerts in the chapel on a regular basis.

9.0 Aim

Foster a community dedicated to creation care.

9.1 Outcome:

Students and employees more knowledgeable about, and involved in, creation care.

Actions:

9.1.1 Support Cultivate VTS and encourage staff, faculty, and student participation.

9.1.2 Establish a Creation Care Committee of faculty, staff, and students.

9.1.3 Build on the Kreidler Environmental funds as a vehicle for exploring creation care issues.

9.1.4 Explore the development of Zabriskie Drive as a model of eco-friendly construction.

9.1.5 Model creation care in the stewardship of the campus.

9.1.6 Consider ways to incorporate creation care in the curriculum.

10.0 Aim:

Explore the creation of year-round housing or storage for residence halls students.

10.1 Outcome:

Decisions made on year-round accommodations or storage for residence halls students.

Actions:

10.1.1 Gather statistics on the number using the residence halls for programming during the summer.

10.1.2 Research the average number of students who would be interested in year-round accommodations.

10.1.3 Explore options around year-round storage possibilities on the campus for residence halls students.

10.1.4 Determine costs and benefits to the summer programming of having program participants living off-campus during summer programs.

Window 2: Teaching and Learning

1.0 Aim:

Create an expansive curriculum that draws on a variety of sources and supports the forming of the beloved community.

1.1 Outcome:

All Master's and Doctoral courses and program options revised by 2023, to expand and/or re-evaluate sources and guiding questions in order to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Actions:

1.1.1 Join with other seminaries to host a consultation on diversity in course creation and syllabus development.

1.1.2 Task the Masters' Committee with the responsibility of regular evaluation of diversity in courses.

1.1.3 Consider adding or enhancing a concentration in the M.Div. program in intercultural studies/ministry.

1.1.4 Continue to strengthen faculty engagement and community-building from reading White Fragility and After Whiteness in 2020-2021.

1.1.5 Develop M.Div. pathway to support formation of ministry developers for mutual ministry and bivocational clergy.

1.1.6 Consider ways that the Butterfly House can be a venue for teaching innovation.

2.0 Aim:

Continue to grow our distance options for degree programs.

2.1 Outcome:

Viable hybrid teaching partnerships with other institutions explored and proposed; selective online courses for credit continue to be offered.

Actions:

2.1.1 Pilot blended synchronous courses for Virginia Theological Seminary and General Theological Seminary.

2.1.2 Provide faculty with resources to develop and enhance online teaching and learning.

3.0 Aim:

Enhance faculty development in pedagogy.

3.1 Outcome:

Support structures and programs created to allow faculty to grow as teachers in both face-to-face and digital environments.

Actions:

3.1.1 Discuss pedagogy regularly as a faculty and provide needed training for all faculty and VTS instructors.

3.1.2 Begin substantive conversations in 2021-22 with faculty and students regarding grading and assessment.

3.1.3 Evaluate our current support for educational technology.

4.0 Aim:

Develop our relationship with Alfred Street Baptist Church, a thriving, historic Alexandria congregation with a commitment to innovative programming for education, ministry, and evangelism.

4.1 Outcome:

A clearly defined, mutually beneficial, realistic and sustainable relationship with a historic African-American church in Alexandria.

Actions:

4.1.1 Create special initiatives to encourage application to VTS by qualified applicants at both the Master's and Doctoral level.

4.1.2 Explore ways to incorporate Alfred Street Baptist Church staff as instructors in homiletics.

4.1.3 Support the development of Alfred Street Baptist Church as a Contextual Ministry (CXM) site.

4.1.4 Explore partnering in the summer intern program at Alfred Street Baptist Church.

4.1.5 Discern and pilot opportunities for program collaboration between Lifelong Learning and Alfred Street Baptist Church that could be shared with the wider Church.

5.0 Aim:

Deepen our relationships with other faith communities, including local Jewish communities, as well as the Nur community, a dialogical group of Muslims.

5.1 Outcome:

Continuing options for students to learn more about other faith communities, especially Judaism, and the continuing presence of dialogical Muslims in our community who want to learn about Christianity and The Episcopal Church.

Actions:

5.1.1 Work with the Nur community and the local Jewish community to identify potential students for our Masters' program.

5.1.2 Continue to support the Washington Theological Consortium Certificate in Christian-Muslim Relations and Ecumenism.

5.1.3 Discern opportunities for Lifelong Learning to create more interfaith programming.

6.0 Aim:

Evaluate and, where necessary, redesign admissions process.

6.1 Outcome:

An admissions policy that is suited to a selective admissions process.

Actions:

6.1.1 Articulate a vision for a diverse and dynamic student body.

6.1.2 Create a rubric that can be articulated and will enable the committee to evaluate and rate applicants according to a predetermined scale.

6.1.3 Explore the possibility of expanding the student body, as housing permits.

7.0 Aim:

Create opportunities for the theme of Evangelism to have a greater priority.

7.1 Outcome:

A revised New Mission Practices concentration in the M.Div. program with an emphasis on evangelism.

Actions:

7.1.1 Invite the faculty and stakeholders to review the concentration.

7.1.2 Build partnerships with key organizations and individuals that are being innovative in evangelism.

8.0 Aim:

Encourage seminarians to develop leadership skills for ministry settings.

8.1 Outcome:

Effective graduates with administrative skills in ministry settings.

Actions:

8.1.1 Continue to support cultivation of expertise through the regularly offered Master's-level courses.

8.1.2 Support the development of leadership skills (including parish administration and stewardship) in contextual ministry settings.

8.1.3 Develop more regular offerings in leadership and parish administration skills in Lifelong Learning.

9.0 Aim:

Create opportunities to increase scientific literacy in the Master's and Doctoral programs

9.1 Outcome:

Students and congregations able to reflect appropriately on the relationship between science and faith.

Actions:

9.1.1 Explore grant opportunities to attract funding for these initiatives.

9.1.2 Create a book-reading opportunity for interested faculty.

9.1.3 Prioritize Lifelong Learning programming at the intersection of science and faith.

9.1.4 Provide opportunities for scientific literacy in the Master's programs.

9.1.5 Use the Kreidler environmental funds for opportunities to explore science and religion.

10.0 Aim:

Embark on the processes necessary for the ATS (Association of Theological Schools) reaccreditation review.

10.1 Outcome:

Successfully completed ATS review in 2023; emerged as a stronger institution with an enhanced sense of mission across the whole institution.

Actions:

10.1.1 Use the accreditation process to reflect on our effectiveness as an institution.

10.1.2 Design a program for analysis, feedback, and change that allows all of VTS to articulate and engage our mission.

10.1.3 *Create appropriate metrics of assessment of our effectiveness.*

10.1.4 *Require the Policy Administrative Meeting to regularly review our institutional effectiveness even as the faculty continue to review our effectiveness in teaching and learning.*

10.1.5 *Establish criteria and process for biannual Board reports.*

11.0 Aim:

Review the shape of our faculty in an ever-changing world.

11.1 Outcome:

A strong faculty that can continue to provide leadership in the classroom and in the church.

Actions:

11.1.1 *Fill the newly endowed chair in Children's Spirituality and appoint the professor of ethics and director of the St. Nicholas Center for Faith and Justice.*

11.1.2 *Review the teaching needs of the institution as vacancies arise, in the light of potential partnership opportunities.*

Bishop Payne Library

12.0 Aim:

Develop a thriving library that opens the door to theological scholarship to the VTS community and beyond.

12.1 Outcome:

The VTS community's theological formation enriched through leading-edge collections, accessible services, and innovative programming.

Actions:

12.1.1 *Leverage the newly renovated library building to optimize the patron experience, foster an inviting context for theological exploration, including collaboration with the Academic Resource Center, and host engaging programming from a variety of VTS entities.*

12.1.2 *Manage growth of the library's print and digital collections, the Seminary archives, and the African American Episcopal Historical Collection, in accord with the library's Collection Development and Access Policy.*

12.1.3 *Increase patronage of the library and archives through greater outreach, description, strategic staffing, and online discoverability (e.g. implement the public interface of the archives digital content management system).*

12.1.4 *Increase engagement with the library's print, digital, archival and special collections by implementing new approaches to outreach and collaboration with the curriculum.*

12.1.5 Enhance users' digital interactions by creating an intuitive library search interface, upgrading the integrated library system and access control, and expanding the open-source repository.

12.1.6 Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the African American Episcopal Historical Collection along with the VTS Bicentennial in 2023.

Doctoral Programs

13.0 Aim:

Offer doctoral programs of excellence that challenge and enable lay and ordained ministers to adapt their leadership to changing trends in church and culture and deepen ability in reading and interpreting culture in order to identify new ministry opportunities for congregations, schools, and other contexts of ministry.

13.1 Outcome:

The provision of rigorous doctoral level instruction in Christian ministry that strengthens congregational leaders, enhances educational resources for schools and churches, and deepens spirituality for communities and individuals.

Actions:

13.1.1 Increase enrollment in the D.Ed.Min. program both in the U.S. and Hong Kong.

13.1.2 Work with Lifelong Learning on opportunities for joint leadership programming.

13.1.3 Deepen intercultural aspects of doctoral education at VTS.

13.1.4 Partner as appropriate with other doctoral programs in other institutions.

13.1.5 Enhance the pedagogical development of doctoral instructors.

13.1.6 Reevaluate scholarship program and tuition discounting to ensure appropriate cohort formation, fiscal responsibility, and that we are reaching targeted audiences from a variety of denominations.

13.1.7 Explore the possibility of a doctorate in preaching and/or music leadership.

13.1.8 Continue to build bridges between the doctoral programs and the Episcopal Schools.

Window 3: Research and Service to the Wider Church

1.0 Aim:

Develop the St. Nicholas Faith and Justice Center.

1.1 Outcome:

A Seminary witnessing to the themes of faith and justice with deeper connections between campus, region, country, and globe.

Actions:

1.1.1 *Appoint a professor of ethics and director of the Faith and Justice House.*

1.1.2 *Establish trusted relationships with the Episcopal Public Policy Network and other faith-based advocacy groups.*

1.1.3 *Create opportunities for social service and social justice work in partnership with Washington Consortium schools and other institutions.*

1.1.4 *Provide community outreach events (such as the police and clergy breakfast) that strengthen the theme of faith and justice and serve as models for seminarians to replicate in future ministry.*

1.1.5 *Develop programming and structures for revenue generation.*

Center for Anglican Communion Studies (CACS)

2.0 Aim:

Support cross-Communion organizations.

2.1 Outcome:

Support provided for organizations that keep the Communion together.

Actions:

2.1.1 *Form possible relationships with Theological Education in the Anglican Communion (TEAC), Anglican Communion Office (ACO), Lambeth Conference, Anglican Consultative Conference, Compass Rose, Canterbury Scholars, Triangle of Hope, United Nations Anglican Communion Representative, Anglicans Center in Rome, and Anglican Center in Santiago, Spain.*

2.1.2 *Keep informed about projects and priorities of Communion networks intersecting with our work where possible, including Environmental Network, Anglican Indigenous Network, Peace and Justice Network, International Anglican Liturgical Consultation and Network for Interfaith Concerns.*

3.0 Aim:

Develop a membership organization for The Center for Anglican Communion Studies (CACs).

3.1 Outcome:

Enhanced effectiveness of CACS through friends and events.

Actions:

3.1.1 Commit to an annual dinner where the member organization gathers.

3.1.2 Encourage membership around the Seminary, the region, and the world.

3.1.3 Monitor the effectiveness the member organization as a vehicle of disseminating knowledge, understanding of, and income generation for CACS.

3.1.4 Organize a launch effort for the member organization.

4.0 Aim:

Focus on key themes for the next five years which connect students with Alumni and friends around Communion issues

4.1 Outcome:

Implementation of themes for each year of the Strategic Plan.

Actions:

4.1.1 Year one, 2022: The Anglican Communion in Latin America (Central America, South America, the Caribbean and Mexico).

Year two, 2023: 25th Anniversary of CACS: Renewing Old Ties, Making New Friends: The History of VTS Missions in Liberia, Brazil and Japan; also recent and future initiatives in mission.

Year three, 2024: Youth and the Communion

Year four, 2025: Ecological and Environmental Theology and Activism: The Anglican Communion and Ecumenical and Inter-faith Partners.

Year five, 2026: The Anglican Communion in Africa

4.1.2 Organize webinars and consultations.

4.1.3 Organize Communion sabbaticals.

5.0 Aim:

Develop the Triangle of Hope Relationship

5.1 Outcome

Strengthened links between Liverpool (UK), Liberia, and Virginia (USA), and theological education supported across the Communion.

Actions:

5.1.1 Work with the leadership of the Triangle of Hope.

5.1.2 Strengthen connections with Diocese of Virginia Triangle of Hope partners.

5.1.3 Raise consciousness at VTS about the history of the slave trade triangle from the slave forts in West Africa to the slave block in Alexandria.

6.0 Aim:

Support promising leaders in developing provinces of the Anglican Communion.

6.1 Outcome:

Anglican Communion leadership supported.

Actions:

6.1.1 Identify potential leaders, especially younger people, and women, in theological education and elsewhere.

6.1.2 Discover ways to empower, train, mentor, and otherwise bless the ideas and projects of these potential leaders.

6.1.3 Organize, through in-person conferences or social media, plenary meetings and small support groups for potential leaders.

6.1.4 Review, evaluate, and think strategically about our results and publish them as appropriate.

7.0 Aim:

Maintain partnerships (formal agreements) and relationships (informal cooperation) about the Communion.

7.1 Outcome:

Current partnership commitments honored, current strategies assessed, and future possibilities planned.

Actions:

7.1.1 Continue as indicated in agreements with St. George's College, Jerusalem, Msalato Theological College, and Ming Hua Theological College.

7.1.2 Explore other institutions where VTS support could be particularly effective, possibly Costa Rica, Myanmar, Cuba, Sri Lanka.

7.1.3 Continue to encourage and support faculty and student participation in Cross-Cultural Education Programs (CCEPs) with our Anglican Communion partners and relations.

7.1.4 Use partnerships, relationships, and CCEPs to deepen VTS community awareness of the Anglican Communion.

8.0 Aim:

Offer Christian hospitality to all guests and visitors. This foundational objective underlies all others.

8.1 Outcome:

Strangers welcomed as if they were angels in disguise.

Actions:

8.1.1 Welcome scheduled guests and visitors, doing our best to accommodate their needs.

8.1.2 Receive unexpected visitors in the same spirit.

8.1.3 Foster a ministry of listening to dreams, hopes, and visions; work to make connections with those who could support implementation.

8.1.4 Seek opportunities to build bridges across major differences of opinion.

8.1.5 Encourage positive feelings towards CACS, VTS, and the Anglican Communion.

8.1.6 Provide opportunities for international visitors to lead seminars and discussions and to preach at VTS chapel when possible.

9.0 Aim:

Provide the Seminary with the Fellows of CACS.

9.1 Outcome:

An enriched campus experience, with the appointment of three annual Fellows of CACS who visit the Seminary and provide opportunities for conversation (each Fellow visiting the campus for at least one week per year and receiving a modest honorarium, with travel and living expenses covered).

Actions:

9.1.1 Appoint a CACS Fellow in Peace and Reconciliation, with a focus on interfaith/ecumenical dialogues or intra-Anglican points of tension.

9.1.2 *Appoint a CACS Fellow in World Anglicanism, with a focus on rich and poor, role of women, ecology and resources, justice; history and future possibilities.*

9.1.3 *Appoint a CACS Fellow in Theology and Bible, with a focus on one or more of the following: doctrines of God, questions of witness, past and contemporary martyrs, canon law, liturgical reform, and polity issues.*

Lifelong Learning

10.0 Aim:

Form and equip lay and ordained leaders across the Church.

10.1 Outcome:

Healthy Christian communities fostered, grounded in baptismal theology and honoring all orders and forms of ministry.

Actions:

10.1.1 *Provide institutional and faculty support to churchwide mutual ministry network and curricular focus to prepare clergy to serve in mutual ministry contexts (Lilly Pathways for Tomorrow, Phase II application).*

10.1.2 *Expand VTS Alumni website to include dashboard for personalized one-stop access to VTS news, continuing education opportunities, learning cohorts, engagement with classmates and faculty, opportunity to contribute content and propose ideas for Lifelong Learning programming.*

10.1.3 *Promote use of grant-based research and TryTank findings on leadership, church growth and innovation into Master's and Doctoral level curricula.*

10.1.4 *Annually recruit and train mentors (from VTS Alumni and beyond) for all graduates actively engaged in Launching into Ministry, publish and promote resources on clergy mentoring (from Thriving data).*

10.1.5 *Design and offer programming to provide transformational learning for courageous leadership in a changing church.*

10.1.6 *Create programming dedicated to support and best practices for small congregations.*

10.1.7 *Continue developing a variety of Spanish language resources, as well as English resources to support Latina/o communities.*

10.1.8 *Develop resources and programs for Episcopal schools.*

11.0 Aim:

Be Episcopal and welcome ecumenical voices.

11.1 Outcome:

Premier Episcopal Seminary for Lifelong Christian Formation.

Actions:

11.1.1 Inaugurate International Children's Spirituality Conference.

11.1.2 Hold faculty conversations with Vice President for Academic Affairs, including dedicated time/articulated goals for engagement with Lifelong Learning (as required dimension of service to the Church).

11.1.3 Promote strategically Christian Formation faculty research, publications for student recruitment and churchwide impact.

11.1.4 Offer certificate programs in Christian Formation, with advanced track offering credit toward MA-CF.

11.1.5 Cultivate eFormation community of scholars and practitioners to think theologically, lead wisely, research and publish original content on digital media and ministry.

11.1.6 Create responsive programming between VTS and Alfred Street Baptist Church (ASBC) to be held on both campuses with ASBC teachers.

11.1.7 Promote pedagogical research and innovations to inform improved sharing of the Christian faith in congregational settings.

12.0 Aim:

Develop innovative Church committed to evangelism, willing to "try" experiments.

12.1 Outcome:

TryTank continues in partnership with General Theological Seminary as a key venue for innovative church.

Actions:

12.1.1 Build and equip community/communities online and model digital literacies for ministry.

12.1.2 Bring the latest science of congregational development to the challenges facing the Church.

12.1.3 Monitor and share learnings through continuing experiments.

13.0 Aim:

Support Deep Calls to Deep and fully integrate the program into VTS' Lifelong Learning department.

13.1 Outcome:

The continuation and flourishing of Deep Calls to Deep as a program nurturing preaching and continuing VTS's long tradition of fostering excellent proclamation.

Actions:

13.1.1 Create ways to make the program sustainable through increased participant contributions, program adjustments, and seminary funds.

13.1.2 Integrate fully Deep Calls to Deep into the Lifelong Learning department.

13.1.3 Establish synergies with other grant-funded projects at VTS, and with teaching and learning at the Master's level.

Multicultural Ministries

14.0 Aim:

Promote the development of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive Seminary community on the campus and beyond.

14.1 Outcome:

The VTS community supported in embracing an intercultural present and future that appropriately memorializes the complexities of our history with regard to race and inclusion.

Actions:

14.1.1 Serve as a resource and supportive space for seminarians of color, in partnership with the Seminarians of Color Union (SOCU).

14.1.2 Foster the intercultural atmosphere espoused in the Seminary Covenant by organizing programs and experiences that celebrate diverse cultures, promote intercultural competency, and advocate for racial justice.

14.1.3 Design a process for assessing the VTS community's progress on the journey towards diversity, equitability, and inclusivity.

14.1.4 Encourage members of the VTS community to engage more deeply with the rich diversity of "the DMV" (the DC, Maryland, and Virginia metropolitan area).

14.1.5 Complete the effort to reevaluate and rename buildings and faculty chairs and lecture series.

14.1.6 Assess the effectiveness of the annual Introduction to Intercultural Competency and revamp the program accordingly.

14.1.7 Work closely with the national episcopal church with its diversity, equality, and inclusivity programs.

15.0 Aim:

Administer a reparations program that both fosters relationships with descendants and provides them with financial resources in acknowledgement of the material consequences of slavery and systemic racism.

15.1 Outcome:

Descendants' trust built in VTS's commitment to the program and the Seminary's broader witness to the importance of reparations continued.

Actions:

15.1.1 Strengthen relationships with descendants and be guided by their perspectives as the project evolves.

15.1.2 Deepen and broaden the VTS community's commemoration of our institutional history utilizing the in-depth research conducted for the program.

15.1.3 Address the systemic harms of slavery and racism, in addition to the harm to particular families and communities.

15.1.4 Network more closely with other organizations engaged in this reparative work.

15.1.5 Work with Lifelong Learning to serve as a site of dialogue and education about reparations in the broader church and in society.

15.1.6 Grow the reparations fund over the next five years, working in partnership with other departments.

15.1.7 Collaborate with Black churches that have historical ties to VTS (Oakland Baptist Church and Meade Memorial Episcopal Church) to develop reparations projects that benefit their congregations and surrounding communities.

Faculty Research

16.0 Aim:

Create a strategic program for faculty research support.

16.1 Outcome:

An integrated program that maximizes efficient utilization of the Seminary's resources to support faculty research.

Actions:

16.1.1 *Develop more intentional connections between the Meade seminars (renamed), sabbaticals, Suzanne F. Thomas Prize, Gladstone library, Hopkins Fund, grant applications, and course offerings. (A taskforce could be appointed to develop such connections.)*

16.1.2 *Continue the (renamed) Meade Seminars.*

16.1.3 *Increase and formalize bonuses for book publications for faculty not participating in (renamed) Meade Seminars.*

16.1.4 *Develop a program for providing research assistants to faculty.*

16.1.5 *Bring commissioning editors to campus once or twice a year to discuss possible publication with faculty.*

16.1.6 *Conduct regular faculty development programs that explore issues such as accessing specialized resources (archival, digital, etc.), getting published, developing a long-term research program, identifying grant availability (including Conant and Wabash), etc.*

16.1.7 *Hold receptions to celebrate book publications.*

16.1.8 *Host (the following year) roundtable discussion and/or Facebook live discussion for Alumni and students with any faculty who receive a sabbatical, in which they present the results of the research they conducted during their sabbatical.*

16.1.9 *Find ways to highlight faculty publications/presentations in VTS magazine and in webinars, in partnership with Lifelong Learning and Communications.*

16.1.10 *Conduct a weekly writing group hosted by the Director of Faculty Research.*

17.0 Aim:

Raise profile of faculty research.

17.1 Outcome:

Faculty known for their work in their area of specialization and more widely in the Church and the world.

Actions:

17.1.1 *Conduct a concerted social media campaign and strategy to raise the profile of faculty publications.*

17.1.2 *Encourage faculty to have an academia.edu page with abstracts of their publications and current area of research*

17.1.3 *Send faculty books to both scholarly journals and prominent Church publications (e.g., The Living Church, Christian Century, etc.) for potential reviews.*

17.1.4 *Consult with other institutions to understand their strategies for promoting faculty research.*

17.1.5 Ensure that faculty pages on the VTS website highlight their recent and significant publications.

18.0 Aim:

Develop mission-related grants, fellowships, and resources

18.1 Outcome:

A significant income stream to support faculty research made possible by the grant work of the Seminary.

Actions:

18.1.1 Develop a list of foundations (Lilly Endowment Inc., Luce, Templeton, ATS, Conant, etc.) and funding streams (i.e., National Endowment for the Humanities) most relevant to the work of the Seminary.

18.1.2 Develop annual goals for grant applications.

18.1.3 Provide training to the Director of Faculty Research and other faculty who request it for grant writing.

19.0 Aim:

Work as partners rather than competitors with seminaries and diocesan schools of The Episcopal Church.

19.1 Outcome:

Full participation in strategic conversations to support theological education in The Episcopal Church and beyond.

Actions:

19.1.1 Continue conversations with General Theological Seminary on ways in which we can work together.

19.1.2 Explore possible ways we can support theological education through the diocesan schools and support smaller dioceses.

19.1.3 Participate fully in the Council of Deans and support partnership initiatives where we are able.

Community Building

20.0 Aim:

Build connections through pilgrimages.

20.1 Outcome:

A wider orbit of friends and Alumni who feel connected to the Seminary as a result of a spiritually enhancing journey.

Actions:

20.1.1 Continue to build on the success of the Bicentennial Pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Grace and Gardens, and Gothic France.

20.1.2 Organize further pilgrimages for new friends and Alumni through to 2026.

20.1.3 Create different opportunities for different groups that provide pilgrimage choices for all our key stakeholders

20.1.4 Create a page on the VTS website for pilgrimage information, including recaps of the pilgrimages and testimonials of pilgrimage “alumni.”

20.1.5 Develop a financial structure so that pilgrimages are net revenue positive.

20.1.6 Create donor strategies for pilgrims.

21.0 Aim:

Launch a third century of traditions.

21.1 Outcome:

A variety of opportunities recognizing the significance of the bicentenary, to be continued into the next one hundred years.

Actions:

21.1.1 Develop an annual liturgical recognition of participants in the reparations program.

21.1.2 Create a membership society called the “200 Club” that meets biannually on the campus for education and fellowship.

21.1.3 Host an annual music event that promotes an emerging musical talent in the Church world.

Window 4 – Infrastructure (Employees, Finances, Institutional Advancement, and Campus)

1.0 Aim:

Create a campus ready to serve for the third century.

1.1 Outcome:

The implementation of prioritized initiatives from the Campus Masterplan.

Actions:

1.1.1 Develop campus-wide exterior and interior signage that effectively directs campus visitors to all destinations.

1.1.2 Develop campus-wide exterior lighting that ensures safety.

1.1.3 Improve Aspinwall Lane Entrance to become the grand entrance.

- a. Assess, plan, and implement an underground utilities strategy.*
- b. Develop a plan to finance and implement Holy Dell and Cemetery*
- c. Explore the possibility of a grass surface which is flat on Trotter Bowl, better suited for soccer, ultimate frisbee, and cricket.*
- d. Develop a plan to finance and implement a development of Zabriskie Drive, which may include the development of rental properties, campus guest housing, neighborhood garden, fitness center, and meeting and performance space.*

2.0 Aim:

Develop auxiliary services as profit-centers.

2.1 Outcome:

Sustainable operations of the Butterfly House, Guest Houses, Café 1823, and VTS Shop.

Actions:

2.1.1 Strive to achieve break-even and then produce profit in years thereafter at the Butterfly House.

2.1.2 Maintain a minimum of 75% occupancy year-round at the Guest Houses.

2.1.3 Strive to achieve break-even and then produce profit in years thereafter at Café 1823.

2.1.4 Strive to achieve a profit at the VTS Shop.

3.0 Aim:

Develop Lifelong Learning as a revenue-generating department.

3.1 Outcome:

A self-sustaining operation that serves the Church world-wide, in which Lifelong Learning is the digital educational platform for VTS non-credit courses, seminars, certificate programs, etc.

Actions:

3.1.1 Establish a fee structure for course offerings that cover the cost of programming.

3.1.2 Work with partners in the Seminary to explore philanthropical and profile-raising possibilities.

3.1.3 Work with Institutional Advancement to create Lifelong Learning scholarship fund to ensure access to programming by all.

4.0 Aim:

Develop Communications for the third century of service.

4.1 Outcome:

Implementation of a marketing, communication, and media department that elevates and sustains the Seminary's profile.

Actions:

4.1.1 Conduct a total review of all aspects of our communications in all departments and across the Seminary, using an outside consultant.

4.1.2 Assess the effectiveness of current communication channels, evaluate staffing structure, explore new and emerging technologies and implement with the future in mind.

4.1.3 Develop interactive technologies that allow for creative sharing of information and ideas.

4.1.4 Track impact and awareness more closely.

4.1.5 Consult with experts to define metrics.

5.0 Aim:

Support employees aspiring to excellence through staff development.

5.1 Outcome:

A well-trained and highly motivated work force, which is mission-conscious and eager to learn.

Actions:

5.1.1 Continue and require professional development and continuing education for all employees.

5.1.2 Create more effective on-boarding programs and transition opportunities, including career development and coaching.

5.1.3 Develop a phased retirement option for all employees.

5.1.4 Provide leadership development training for all mid-level managers, directors, and senior staff, including the Dean and President.

5.1.5 Identify cross-functional opportunities for staff to develop skills in other departments.

5.1.6 Implement evaluation tool that identifies employees' career goals and objectives and plan for achievement.

6.0 Aim

Develop diversity, equity, and inclusion in our recruiting, hiring, retention, and promotion practices.

6.1 Outcome:

A diverse workforce that mirrors the emerging Church and society.

Actions:

6.1.1. Include, with intentionality, a diverse pool of candidates when filling vacancies.

6.1.2. Establish department goals to improve minority representation.

7.0 Aim:

Provide opportunities for employees to grow and connect with one another in creative ways on campus.

7.1 Outcome:

A more integrated work force with deeper interdepartmental connections.

Action:

7.1.1 Create and fund interest groups, from book-reading to yoga to golf to film-watching.

8.0 Aim:

Become an environmentally-conscious campus.

8.1 Outcome:

A carbon-neutral campus by 2035.

Actions:

8.1.1 Evaluate all campus-wide construction projects for their environmental impact.

8.1.2 Commit systematically to a significant increase in solar power, perhaps with electric car provision.

8.1.3 Commit to the planting of trees, especially in the Holy Dell and in the Grove, with a goal of a 25% increase in the number of trees on campus.

9.0 Aim:

Provide effective governance in action.

9.1 Outcome:

Nimble and engaged Board and consultative groups that support and enhance the Seminary's mission.

Actions:

9.1.1 Develop a Board that reflects a diversity of voices and experiences.

9.1.2 Ensure Trustees have an understanding of, and vision for, supporting and enhancing the changing needs of the Church.

9.1.3 Raise up Trustees both from within and from without for leadership roles.

9.1.4 Develop a Board that models effective governance for theological education.

Institutional Advancement

10.0 Aim:

Continue and grow financial support beyond comprehensive Bicentennial Campaign.

10.1 Outcome:

Annual Fund grown and donors interested in specific projects of the Bicentennial Campaign moved to other initiatives.

Actions:

10.1.1 Continue to retain donors in both traditional (direct mail, email, visits, phone calls) and imaginative ways (social media, gamification, QR codes).

10.1.2 Build on more recent successes, including Giving Day and Thank You Day, to engage and celebrate donors, while progressing a culture of philanthropy among students.

10.1.3 Grow the donor base, by analyzing event data and existing friends, for more targeted outreach. Partner with other departments, such as music events, CACS and LL events, to generate philanthropic potential.

10.1.4 Communicate the mission of the Seminary; ensure that not all communications and events are "asks."

11.0 Aim:

Continue and grow membership in the VTS 2023 Legacy Society.

11.1 Outcome:

An expanded 2023 Legacy Society that further strengthens VTS' financial future.

Actions:

11.1.1 Ensure the VTS website has complete and relevant Legacy materials, accessible to all.

11.1.2 Engage with present members of the Society to learn their stories of making planned gifts to VTS.

11.1.3 Relay planned giving stories on the website and in publications, so others are attracted to planned giving.

11.1.4 Research the history of planned giving at VTS and prepare a booklet that tells the story of 200 years of planned gifts.

11.1.5 Commit to annual information sharing with Alumni and friends on making planned gifts.

12.0 Aim:

Equip and support VTS Alumni in ministry.

12.1 Outcome:

A deeper connection between Alumni and the Seminary.

Actions:

12.1.1 Develop the Alumni area of the website to create an on-line "go-to" hub for all things Alumni-related: Seminary news; access to Alumni classes, groups, and networks; program and event offerings from the Alumni Office (including Convocation and Reunions) and the Seminary; online opportunities for Alumni to share their news and their suggestions for future programming.

12.1.2 Support Alumni programs and activities through active engagement of the AAEC.

12.1.3 Develop a handbook for AAEC members with specific guidelines concerning expectations of service and involvement in supporting Alumni activities.

12.1.4 Develop expansive Regional Chapter network across the U.S. and internationally, coupled with strengthened regional chapters, and with class stewards supporting philanthropic efforts of the Seminary.

12.1.5 Help Alumni to serve as strategic resource networks for students and other Alumni; in addition, develop networks around professional/ministry focus.

12.1.6 Create flexible resource networks for Alumni around specific topical areas or experiences, such as leading parishes in reparations work, developing new liturgies for specific occasion, and mentoring parish leaders new to Church renovation work.

12.1.7 Implement Alumni pilgrimages and other travel opportunities offering a wide range of multicultural offerings.

12.1.8 Create affinity Alumni networks and reunions (e.g., women, Black alumni, LGBTQ).

13.0 Aim:

Provide excellent placement services for graduating students.

13.1 Outcome:

The best possible placement for the gifts and talents of our students.

Actions:

13.1.1 Continue to offer a placement service to visiting rectors and diocesan leaderships; work closely with each student.

13.1.2 Resume workshops and coaching, program opportunities with rectors and other clergy, diocesan bishops and other leaders, Episcopal school heads and other administrators, on topics related to placement and first-call ministries.

14.0 Aim:

Build relationships with congregations.

14.1 Outcome:

Services provided by the Seminary support congregations and raise awareness of the Seminary in congregations.

Actions:

14.1.1 Create a comprehensive VTS Church Engagement Plan that increases our visibility in congregations and leads to stronger parish donor engagement and success.

14.1.2 Create an interdepartmental plan encompassing current, planned, and desired activity across the Seminary. This would include guest-preaching and teaching by faculty, communications focused for parish bulletins, informational presentations, follow-up plan for engagement, etc. The plan would include goals for philanthropy as well as increased engagement with parish/diocesan-focused VTS program initiatives (e.g. Baptized for Life, TryTank, etc.), Lifelong Learning, and recruitment.

Bicentennial Celebration

Given that this plan takes us through our Bicentennial in 2023, we are continuing to implement the strategic decision made in 2018 to mark the historic milestone with a wide range of events, including among other items, the publication of books, the commissioning of art, musical compositions, and a play, and the installation of an interactive donor wall of recognition.

Planning for the Seminary's Bicentennial Celebration (BC2023) will be the responsibility of the Dean's Office for 2022 and 2023. The year-long celebration will feature (at least) monthly events, commencing on October 15, 2022, and culminating in a grand, festive weekend on October 13-15, 2023. For the "big" weekend and a Festival Eucharist, we will welcome as Celebrant and Preacher, The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry, the 27th Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church.

The lower level of Bohlen will be "command central" for the BC2023. The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Professor Emeritus, will coordinate with the Dean's Office to mark the BC2023. The Dean's Executive Assistant will serve as administrative assistant for a Board committee of the BC2023.

A timeline of events for the Bicentennial will be developed during the first quarter of 2022. The planning of events will involve all departments in the Seminary, and will include standing events, such as Convocation, Dean's Cross, Kreitler Lecture, Costan Lecture, as well as new events created especially to mark our Bicentennial.

November 15, 2021