

NUMBER: 1001

TITLE: The Mission of the University

APPROVED: June 10, 1971; Revised June 18, 1987; Revised January 17, 1989; Revised April 15, 1999; Revised June 14, 2002; Revised April 8, 2010

MISSION

Old Dominion University, located in the City of Norfolk in the metropolitan Hampton Roads region of coastal Virginia, is a dynamic public research institution that serves its students and enriches the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation and the world through rigorous academic programs, strategic partnerships, and active civic engagement.

BACKGROUND

Old Dominion University is located in Hampton Roads, one of the world's major seaports. Since the early seventeenth century, Hampton Roads has been the state's gateway to the rest of the world and the world's gateway to Virginia in commerce and industry, in recreation and culture, and in national security. Now a complex of seven major cities, it is a microcosm of the opportunities and challenges of contemporary urban America. It is also a major center for research and development and a home for extensive scientific and technological activities in marine science, aerospace, ship design and construction, advanced electronics, and nuclear physics.

The University takes its unique character from Hampton Roads as it provides leadership to the state and nation in teaching, research, and service. Thus the University has a special mission for the Commonwealth in commerce, and in international affairs and cultures. It has a significant commitment in science, engineering and technology, particularly in fields of major importance to the region. As a metropolitan institution, the University places particular emphasis upon urban issues, including education and health care, and upon fine and performing arts.

As one of America's major ports, Hampton Roads is the locus of national and international military commands, and the home of a culturally diverse population. The University therefore has natural strengths in activities having international outreach. Faculty members in such fields as business, economics, international studies, geography and the sciences strive to design curricula, teach courses, and encourage foreign exchanges that enhance the University's role as Virginia's international institution.

The Hampton Roads scientific environment provides special opportunities for science and engineering faculty to emphasize research and graduate programs in such fields as marine science, aerospace, and advanced electronics. Global ocean studies and cooperative research at NASA receive particular attention, as University researchers collaborate with U.S. and foreign engineers and scientists.

Urban issues are addressed by programs in public administration, education, the social sciences, and the health professions. The richness of Hampton Roads' artistic life gives great vitality to the University's programs in the visual arts, music, theater, and dance.

MISSION SUPPORT

Old Dominion University serves the needs of several internal and external constituents with its resources. These include: current and prospective students seeking undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs; business and industry; government agencies at all levels; the military; research organizations; and the community at large regionally, state-wide, nationally, and internationally. These constituencies are discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

Old Dominion University offers a wide array of undergraduate programs, all of which meet national standards of excellence. Every Old Dominion undergraduate student follows a general education program that is designed to develop the intellectual skills of critical thinking and problem solving and to encompass the breadth of understanding needed for personal growth and achievement and for responsible citizenship. This general education program places special emphasis upon appreciation of the arts and upon understanding the perspectives of women, minorities, and non-Western cultures. Each undergraduate chooses a major program in the liberal arts or sciences or in a technological or professional field.

Old Dominion University's graduate offerings are focused on society's need for advanced professional education and on specialized programs at the master's and doctoral levels for which the institution is prepared through unusual strength of faculty or special geographic advantages. All graduate programs meet national standards of excellence.

As a national leader in the field of technology-delivered distance learning, the University strives to enhance the quality of the educational experience, wherever education is delivered, by applying emerging technologies; it also supports research to explore the impact of these technologies on the teaching-learning process. By utilizing these technologies and by partnering with institutions of higher education, corporations, and governmental entities, the University is able to provide undergraduate and graduate degree programs to students across time and geographic boundaries.

Because of its commitment to Hampton Roads and its emphasis on creative innovation, Old Dominion University offers life-long learning opportunities through credit and non-credit courses and brings educational services and programs to the people of Hampton Roads at several off-campus centers. The University has a responsibility to serve the many members of the military services and their families. The military forms a unique combination of national and international constituents because they are from other locales in the United States and are looking to become, among other things, internationally capable in an international environment.

As a center of learning, Old Dominion University is committed to the principle of free inquiry. The university faculty of distinguished teacher-scholars seek to pass on the best in academic tradition while establishing themselves at the forefront of discovery and creativity. As partners in the development of the University's future, the faculty enjoy full academic freedom and have a recognized role in the decision-making process of the University. Mindful of present and future needs for a multicultural academic climate, the University deems recruitment and retention of minority and women faculty members and staff to be essential.

The University is committed to providing the highest quality instruction to all of its students. Teaching excellence is encouraged through faculty development programs and appropriate recognition of superior instruction.

The discovery of new knowledge through research and creative endeavor is a central function of Old Dominion University, which values and supports faculty participation in the discovery, synthesis, application and creation of new knowledge and art forms. The institution shall promote and preserve excellence in basic and applied research as a Carnegie Foundation Doctoral Research-Extensive University which is a key production and coordination force in technology development.

The University encourages the involvement of its faculty and staff in community service. The enrichment of the lives of students and residents of Hampton Roads is fostered through university sponsored cultural activities, fine and performing arts events, and intercollegiate athletics. In addition, through applied research, consulting, and other activities, the University plays a prominent role in the development of local business and industry and serves as a resource to government agencies and both public and private educational institutions.

The University seeks in its student body a diversity of age, gender, ethnic, religious, social, and national backgrounds. It actively recruits American minority students along with students from other countries worldwide in such numbers as to have their presence make a discernible impact upon the University's educational processes. Old Dominion recognizes its mandate to serve both the academically gifted and those who have the potential for academic success despite educational, social, or economic disadvantages.

Extracurricular activities and experiences are offered that challenge students to develop a personal system of values, to think and act autonomously, to achieve physical competence, and to establish a sense of their own identity. Other services help students meet educational, personal, and health needs.

Old Dominion University depends on its alumni for advice, leadership, and support. In close collaboration with the University, the Alumni Association provides to former students opportunities to continue their participation in various aspects of university life, to advance their personal and professional development, and to sustain communication and strengthen bonds with their alma mater and fellow alumni.

To evaluate its accomplishments against its goals, a continuing process of systematic assessment is given high priority by the University. Information gained from such efforts is utilized to ensure the highest possible quality for all university programs. The Board of Visitors will conduct a periodic review of the University's mission and major goals in conjunction with representatives of the major university constituencies. The review will ensure that the mission clearly identifies the University's unique role in Virginia's public higher education system and assures that the University is focusing its resources to be the best that it can be in that role to achieve its mission and accomplish the major goals.