



INSTITUTE FOR SOCIETY,  
CULTURE, AND ENVIRONMENT  
VIRGINIA TECH™

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2020-2024



# VISION, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES

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**THE INSTITUTE FOR SOCIETY, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT (ISCE)** champions the fundamental role that the social sciences play in society. The social science community at Virginia Tech is broadly defined and inclusive of faculty in traditional social science disciplines and departments, faculty in behavioral and public health sciences disciplines and departments, policy and humanity scholars, and individual faculty embedded in departments not traditionally aligned with the social sciences, but whose research addresses contemporary social problems within their respective disciplines (collectively referred to as the “social sciences” throughout this document).

The Institute is committed to elevating Virginia Tech’s standing in the social science research arena through the promotion of innovation and collaboration that contributes to excellence in research addressing significant societal concerns. The impact of this research comes to fruition through its broad dissemination and application to practice and policy.

ISCE is an incubator and accelerator for early-stage research and a platform for transdisciplinary collaboration. It serves as a catalyst for research and scholarship in the social sciences, fosters conversations across the disciplines, and facilitates connections, linkages, and networks among faculty within and across Virginia Tech’s colleges and campuses and beyond.

## VISION

To be recognized as a leader in facilitating and advancing social science research and scholarship that addresses critical and emerging human and societal issues and contributes to a high quality of life and sustainable future for generations to come.

## MISSION

To enhance Virginia Tech’s capacity and status in the social sciences by catalyzing innovative, interdisciplinary, and translational research and scholarship addressing critical individual and social concerns impacting the lives of people and places in Virginia, nationally and across the globe.

## CORE VALUES

The university’s core values of Diverse and Inclusive Communities, Knowledge and Innovation, Opportunity and Affordability, and Excellence and Integrity provide the foundation of the Institute and the work of ISCE-affiliated faculty.

In addition, ISCE values:

- Inter- and transdisciplinary collaborations
- Global perspectives and vision
- Collegiality and mutual respect within and across disciplines

# ALIGNMENT OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ISCE GOALS

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## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

### ADVANCE REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND GLOBAL IMPACT

#### Goal

Enhance research and scholarship in the social sciences

#### Objective 1.1

Maintain a broad-based interdisciplinary research portfolio that specifically addresses the critical individual and social concerns facing people and places locally, nationally and globally

#### *Implementation Strategies*

- Leverage seed funding to raise external research expenditures
- Extend seed investment programs that consistently demonstrate success in faculty securing external funds
- Provide strategic support for faculty whose work presents high impact funding opportunities in the greater Washington D.C. metro area
- Promote research collaborations between faculty located in Blacksburg and the Health Sciences and Technology campus in Roanoke
- Assist faculty accessing restricted data, publicly available datasets, and curated data systems to enhance research excellence
- Facilitate the development of faculty teams to pursue large research and training awards
- Enhance proposal development support within ISCE and through partnership with the Faculty Activity Support Team (VT-FAST)

#### Objective 1.2

Support ISCE center and interdisciplinary initiatives

#### *Implementation Strategies*

- Provide start-up funds for centers and interdisciplinary groups that show strong potential for high-impact and long-term sustainability
- Extend support for centers and groups that demonstrate a trajectory of success in securing external funds
- Partner with and invest in activities in support of university strategic priorities, including the University's Destination Areas and the Rural Virginia Initiative
- Maintain partnerships with the university-level research institutes, colleges, and other entities to support interdisciplinary initiatives, programs, and projects that have the potential for success in advancing the research mission of the University

#### Objective 1.3

Bring greater visibility to the work of faculty in the social sciences

#### *Implementation Strategies*

- Expand distribution of the Institute's newsletter, the *ISCE News Flash*
- Host and support seminars, workshops and conferences highlighting innovative social science research and its applications
- Enhance communication strategies to consistently showcase the work of the social sciences

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2**

### **ELEVATE THE UT PROSIM (THAT I MAY SERVE) DIFFERENCE**

#### **Goal**

Build transdisciplinary research capacity to address multi-dimensional challenges

#### ***Implementation Strategies***

- Facilitate faculty interaction and team building opportunities
- Mentor junior faculty with emphasis on diversity and inclusiveness
- Incorporate explicit commitment to and a focus upon diversity and inclusivity into funding priorities and opportunities
- Encourage inclusion of underrepresented undergraduate and graduate students in ISCE-supported research teams
- Develop international university collaborations

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3**

### **BE A DESTINATION FOR TALENT**

#### **Goal**

Participate in the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff

#### ***Implementation Strategies***

- Promote the value-added features of ISCE during faculty recruitment visits and new faculty orientations and other programs for faculty
- Contribute to faculty start-up and retention packages
- Support university recruitment efforts for underrepresented faculty
- Strive for competitive staff salaries
- Provide staff opportunities for career advancement within ISCE

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4**

### **ENSURE INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE**

#### **Goal**

Create opportunities to explore innovative ideas

#### ***Implementation Strategies***

- Engage in a continuous planning process
- Seek input and ideas from faculty for new initiatives and programs
- Pursue opportunities for targeted initiatives through collaboration with Advancement

# MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

## ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, AND IMPACTS ISCE LOGIC MODEL

### Mission

To enhance Virginia Tech's capacity and status in the social sciences by catalyzing innovative, interdisciplinary, and translational research and scholarship addressing critical individual and social concerns impacting the lives of people and places in Virginia, nationally and across the globe.

