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## Ensure Everyone Succeeds

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**Authors**

Kayla Anderson, Jill Butler, Leigh Anne Hylton Gravatt, Parthasarathy Madurantakam, Ingrid Redway, Maria Teves, and The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University

## ENSURE EVERYONE SUCCEEDS

### TEAM MEMBERS

Kayla Anderson, Contract and Research Administrator, Division of Sponsored Programs

Jill Butler, Assistant Professor, Online M.S.W Field Coordinator, School of Social Work

Leigh Anne Hylton Gravatt, Associate Professor, Vice-Chair of Education, Department of Pharmacotherapy & Outcomes Science, School of Pharmacy

Parthasarathy Madurantakam, Associate Professor, Department of General Practice, School of Dentistry

Ingrid Redway, Associate Director of Radiology Nursing & Interventional Services, VCU Health

Matthew Scott; Assistant Professor, Department of Kinesiology & Health Sciences, College of Humanities & Sciences

Maria Teves, Assistant Professor, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, School of Medicine

*Project Sponsor: Dr. Alison Jones, Associate Vice President for Health Sciences - Academic Operations & Strategy*

### PROJECT ABSTRACT

Students in the post-baccalaureate certificate and graduate programs on the Health Science Campus (MS, PhD, and first professional programs including DDS, PharmD, and MD) are highly motivated to succeed in their chosen career paths. Needless to say, these courses are very heavy on didactics and challenge the best of the students. Typically, these programs have rigid curricular designs and offer little to no flexibility to students in choosing the courses. It is fast-paced, high in curricular hours and the students cannot afford to have mishaps without jeopardizing their careers. While this stringent curriculum is necessary for VCU to maintain its accreditation standards and global standing, it does take a toll on students' performance and well-being. The Division of Academic Success (DAS) on the Health Science campus provides an excellent support net for these students in terms of identifying and supporting students needing accommodations, teaching time management and study habits, and test taking strategies. Conversations among team members, students and program directors representing different units in the Health Science Campus, as well as discussions with DAS staff, revealed lack of awareness of the comprehensive services provided by the DAS and no standard policy/ guideline across different schools as to when to engage the DAS to help students in need. To improve utilization, this project proposes that DAS focus on three key areas: education and training, promotion and marketing, and redesign and elevation of existing resources.

### QUEST 2028

This project aligns with Quest 2028 by focusing on the academic needs of our post-baccalaureate certificate and graduate students on the Health Sciences Campus. More specifically, this project addresses the following:

**Theme II:** Ignite student success through curricular innovation and a holistic culture of care.

**Goal 2.2:** Enhance the university culture of care and responsiveness supporting student engagement, success and sense of belonging.

While resources may be available, their impact is dependent on student utilization. One of Quest 2028's goals states we should "...strengthen and provide intentional opportunities and conditions for purposeful student engagement, growth, physical/mental well-being and belonging among all students." We want to do our very best to set our professional students up for success to "transform the lives of our distinctive and diverse students." Continuous assessment and defined milestones with targeted goals directed at health science students are important to incorporate

into the learning strategy. Empowering our students to succeed while improving student retention rates is critical to the mission of our university.

## **PROJECT GOALS**

This project aims to raise awareness of DAS's services on the MCV campus. The hope is that by having more faculty and students informed about the services DAS offers, more students will receive the support they need to succeed in their respective programs. The project's identified goals include:

1. Improve the visibility and accessibility of DAS, digitally
2. Educate faculty and students regarding the services that DAS provides

## **PROJECT STRATEGIES**

The team met collectively to develop a project centered around Student Success; specifically students enrolled in the professional programs on the Health Sciences Campus. Initially, program goals were focused on developing a tutoring program for the students. However, upon being assigned a team-sponsor, it became clear that although these services and supports were already in place, the use of the services varied across schools on the Health Sciences Campus. Speaking more in-depth regarding the use of the current services provided by DAS, we discovered, based on the enrollment of Fall 2021 students on the Health Sciences Campus (4119), only 41% registered with DAS. "Students registered with DAS" is defined as the number of students who have obtained services through DAS and received at least 1 service. It is important to note that although 41% of students enrolled and registered for a service, there were also over 7317 contacts. The operational definition of student contacts is the number of instances where students have received services (counseling, testing, tutoring, etc). For the Fall 2021 academic year, each student averaged 4.3 services/contacts with DAS. While the data may appear as if there is a "good" number of students accessing services through DAS; not all students who could benefit from the services at DAS are accessing them. Consequently, students are still struggling in classes. In reviewing the data, only some schools' students on the Health Science Campus access these services. The question becomes, how can we build awareness to ensure the best possible success for our students?

Continued meetings with the team sponsor and other key VCU stakeholders identified further needs within DAS, including increased awareness of their services. The team hosted monthly meetings to develop concept ideas to implement which would serve the project's goals. In addition, the team collected data from DAS to highlight the current utilization of the primary services.

## **ACTION STEPS**

1. Interviewed DAS staff to understand better the services rendered and how students and faculty of different programs at Health Science Campus currently utilize these resources
2. Had conversations with the academic deans of the Office of Students Services in two professional programs (pharmacy and dentistry) to get more insight on faculty awareness and referral of struggling students to the DAS
3. Met with the staff at the Campus Learning Center (Monroe Park Campus) to discuss how undergraduate students connect and utilize their services
4. Discussions with our project mentor, Dr. Jones and DAS Director, Dr. Amy Miller, led us to reframe our project focusing on improving the awareness and utilization of DAS services through enhanced visibility.

## **OUTCOMES**

There are two primary outcomes from this project.

1. Increase the number of students who interface with the DAS website.
  - a. By improving the design and functionality of the website, we hope that students will be able to connect to the services DAS offers more easily. Collecting data on the number of visits to the website and student engagement visits to the DAS will inform future decisions.
2. Increase awareness among both students and faculty of the academic support services provided by DAS.
  - a. Through increased awareness, this will allow students and faculty to know when it is appropriate to utilize DAS services, allowing early identification of struggling students.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

Both aspects of our project (increased online presence and annual training), once deployed, can be utilized for several years and would require minimal maintenance. However, as technology changes, how students connect with services may evolve. Thus, this should be taken into consideration in order to ensure continued success. An example of this would be the incorporation of a real time chat feature with the staff at DAS. The educational video should be an annual requirement for faculty. An advertising campaign (e.g., TelgRAM) should occur at least annually to ensure all students and faculty are aware of the services DAS provides. These environmental scans should be a part of DAS's annual budget and workflow reviews.

## **FINANCING AND RESOURCES**

This project will need financial support from the Senior VP for Health Sciences and effort from VCU IT department for website redesign and integrating Canvas links. Further, additional resources will be needed for the educational video and the promotional flyers.

<b>Item* (Personnel cost included)</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Website Redesign	\$ 22,200
Canvas Links	\$ 5,000
Faculty training videos	\$ 15,000
Flyers and promotional videos	\$ 7,500
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$ 49,700</b>

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the above information, our recommendations include:

1. Education: Develop a short training video for faculty which will provide guidance on when to refer students to DAS and will keep faculty informed about the resources and opportunities DAS provides. The video would be an annual training requirement.
2. Promotion: Flyers targeting students/faculty will be developed and distributed annually, both electronically and physically in heavily traveled spaces
3. Redesign: Update the DAS website to enable easy access to information/resources
4. Resources: Incorporation of links/buttons in Canvas for easy access to DAS

**FINAL PITCH**

Although professional students on the Health Science campus may struggle academically, their awareness and efficacy in seeking support for services may serve as a barrier. Ultimately, we want all of our students to be successful. Educating both students and faculty about the services that DAS provides will allow more students to utilize these resources. When faculty are aware of what services DAS provides, they can better counsel students as students may seek help through the faculty members. As we increase awareness, we also need to improve the accessibility of these resources through a streamlined DAS website and connecting links within Canvas courses. This campaign will provide both education about resources and increased digital accessibility for a relatively low cost. Ultimately, our hope is that students are able to get the academic assistance they need, when they need it.

# Ensure Everyone Succeeds

Completed by:  
GEHLI Team 2

Presented by:

- Maria Teves ■ Matthew Scott ■ Leigh Anne Hylton Gravatt ■ Ingrid Redway
- Jill Butler ■ Kayla Anderson ■ Parthasarathy Madurantakam

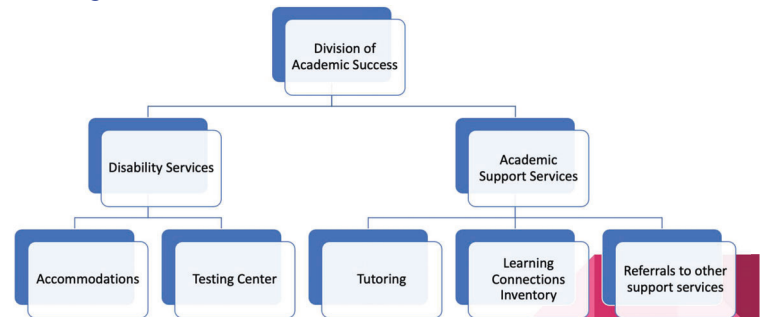
## The story behind the project.....



## Background

- **Division of Academic Success (DAS) on the Health Science Campus**
  - Services the VCU Health Sciences Schools
    - College of Health Professionals
    - Dentistry
    - Medicine
    - Nursing
    - Pharmacy
- **Mission: Create inclusive and accessible learning environments while facilitating academic success**

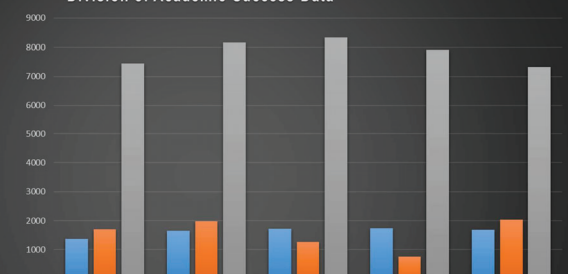
## Background



41% of students enrolled in Fall 2021 on the Health Sciences Campus, are registered with DAS

*What does this mean?*

Division of Academic Success Data



■ Students Registered with DAS ■ Exams Proctored through DAS Testing Center ■ Student Contacts

## Quest 2028

**Goal: Strengthen and provide intentional opportunities and conditions for purposeful student engagement, growth, physical/mental well-being and belonging among all students.**

**Theme II:** Ignite student success through curricular innovation and a holistic culture of care.

**2.2:** Enhance the university culture of care and responsiveness supporting student engagement, success and sense of belonging.

## Project Vision

To promote the success of graduate and professional VCU students on the MCV campus through the Division of Academic Success (DAS)



## Goals & Outcomes

- **Goal 1: Improve Visibility**
  - Outcome: More students interface with the DAS website and can easily connect with their services
- **Goal 2: Educate Faculty**
  - Outcome: Faculty and students are more aware of the academic support services that DAS provides and knows when to appropriately utilize their services
- **Goal 3: Future Steps - Enhance the culture of care**

## Goal 1: Improve Visibility

## Flyers (Paper & Virtual)

**Estimated Cost:**

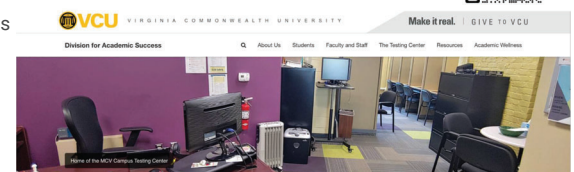
*\*Including personnel*

**\$7,500**



## How to Currently Connect with DAS?

1. [Website](#)
2. Direct Referrals



### Welcome to the Division for Academic Success (DAS)

We offer disability and academic support services to students in the VCU Health Sciences schools. These schools include the College of Health Professions, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy. Our mission is to create inclusive and accessible learning environments while facilitating academic success. This is accomplished through innovative services and programs in partnership with faculty, staff, and students at VCU.

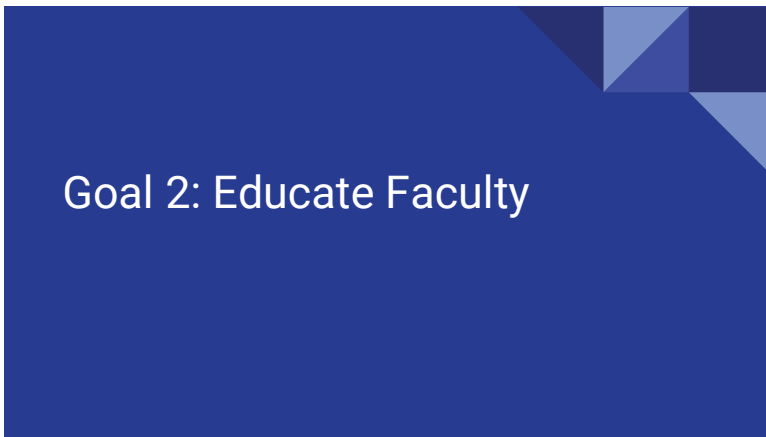
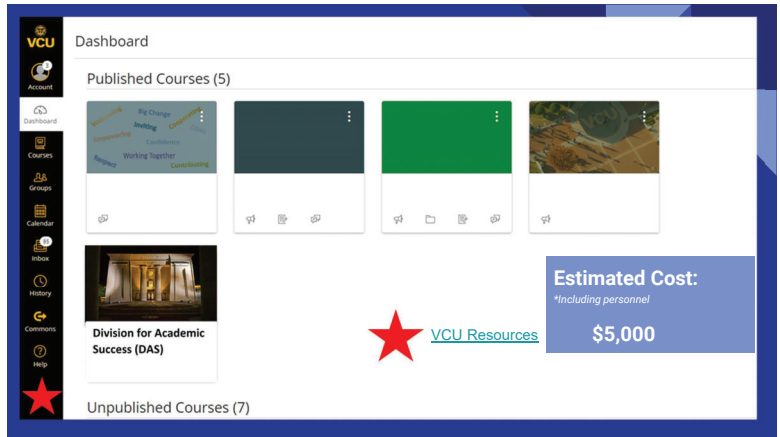
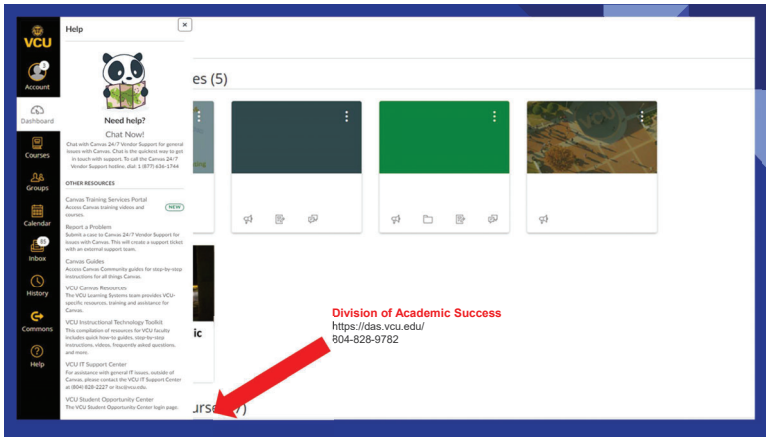
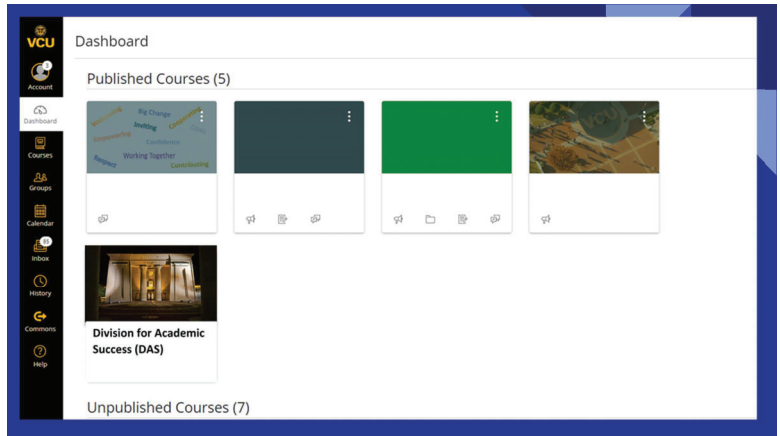
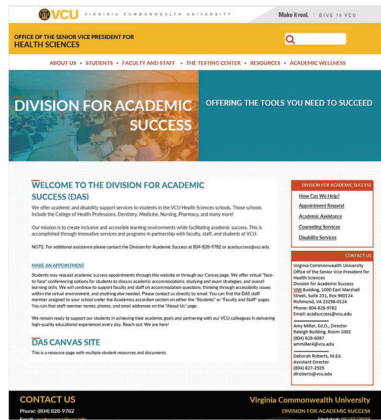


# Website Redesign

Estimated Cost:

*Including personnel*

**\$22,200**



## Required Education for Faculty

- DAS Services Provided
- When to refer students to DAS
- How to connect to DAS

Estimated Cost:

*\*Including personnel*

**\$15,000**

# Talent @VCU

VCU Human Resources

Home My HR Cases Browse HR Services Browse HR Knowledge Benefits Performance Management Learn

Learning and Development Catalog

Learning and Development

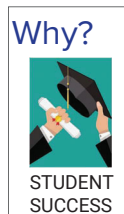
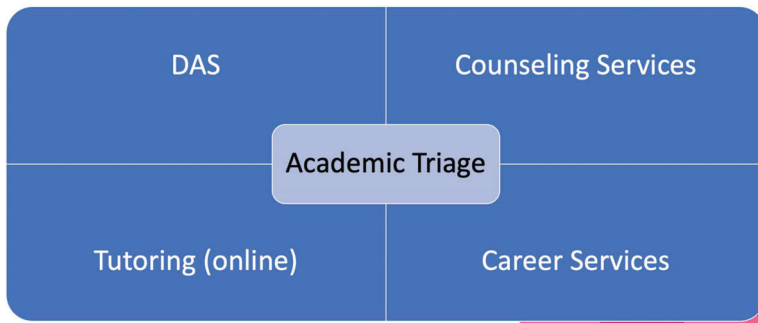
# Goal 3: Future Steps

What's next for DAS?

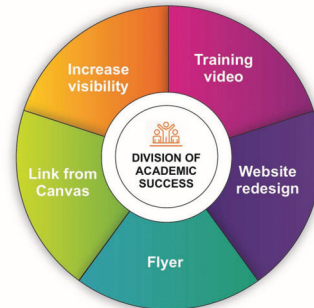
## Continuing to Enhance the Culture of Care: Next Steps

- Continue to expand Canvas as a resource center
- Online tutoring opportunities
- Centralizing resources

### Future Steps: Centralized Services University Wide



### Summary



### How much?

*Can we really put a price on student success?*

### How?

### Summary of Team Takeaways:

- Utilizing a diverse team with varied skill sets was a large contributor to successfully developing our project.
- One of the challenges we faced early on was defining the scope of our project. We needed to adapt our project as we learned new information.
- We were able to utilize our networks to gain diverse professional perspectives from individuals outside of the program.

### Thank You!

- Dr. Alison Jones, our project sponsor
- Dr. Amy Miller, Director of DAS
- IT Team from School of Dentistry (SOD)
- GEHLI