

The Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges

At the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges (VFIC), we're committed to making sure students who want to earn a college degree have the opportunity to do so. That's especially true for under-resourced students from diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, and financial backgrounds. One of the ways we accomplish this goal is by creating scholarships that not only provide students with access to higher education but, through ongoing financial support, sustain their enrollment from one year to the next toward graduation.



Universal Leaf Foundation has played an instrumental role in our success. How? By generously supporting the VFIC Brighter Futures Scholarship Program, as well as our annual fund. Since becoming a partner in helping us fulfill our mission, Universal Leaf Foundation has provided scholarships for nearly 550 students. And through unrestricted gifts to our annual fund, they have helped fund programs that provide students with experiential/hands-on learning opportunities outside the classroom.

Seventeen colleges and universities form the VFIC consortium, blanketing the Commonwealth of Virginia with exceptional institutions of higher education and enriching the communities they call home. The consortium includes Bridgewater College, Emory & Henry College, Hampden-Sydney College, Hampton University, Hollins University, Mary Baldwin University, Marymount University, Randolph College, Randolph-Macon College, Roanoke College, Shenandoah University, Sweet Briar College, University of Lynchburg, University of Richmond, Virginia Union University, Virginia Wesleyan University, and Washington and Lee University. These schools educate nearly 30,000 students, 24,000 of whom are undergraduates.

VFIC MEMBER SCHOOLS

BRIDGEWATER COLLEGE

1

Founded: 1880
Location: Bridgewater, VA
President: David W. Bushman
bridgewater.edu

MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

7

Founded: 1950
Location: Arlington, VA
President: Irma Becerra
marymount.edu

SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE

12

Founded: 1901
Location: Sweet Briar, VA
Interim President: Mary Pope Hutson
sbc.edu

VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY

15

Founded: 1865
Location: Richmond, VA
President: Hakim J. Lucas
vuu.edu

EMORY & HENRY COLLEGE

2

Founded: 1836
Location: Emory, VA
President: John W. Wells
ehc.edu

RANDOLPH COLLEGE

8

Founded: 1891
Location: Lynchburg, VA
President: Sue Ott Rowlands
randolphcollege.edu

UNIVERSITY OF LYNCHBURG

13

Founded: 1903
Location: Lynchburg, VA
President: Alison Morrison-Shetlar
lynchburg.edu

VIRGINIA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

16

Founded: 1961
Location: Virginia Beach, VA
President: Scott D. Miller
vwu.edu

HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE

3

Founded: 1776
Location: Hampden-Sydney, VA
President: John Lawrence Stimpert
hsc.edu

RANDOLPH-MACON COLLEGE

9

Founded: 1830
Location: Ashland, VA
President: Robert R. Lindgren
rmc.edu

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

14

Founded: 1830
Location: Richmond, VA
President: Kevin F. Hallock
richmond.edu

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

17

Founded: 1749
Location: Lexington, VA
President: William C. Dudley
wlu.edu

HAMPTON UNIVERSITY

4

Founded: 1868
Location: Roanoke, VA
President: Darrell K. Williams
hamptonu.edu

ROANOKE COLLEGE

10

Founded: 1842
Location: Salem, VA
President: Frank Shushok, Jr.
roanokeu.edu

HOLLINS UNIVERSITY

5

Founded: 1842
Location: Roanoke, VA
President: Mary Dana Hinton
hollins.edu

SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY

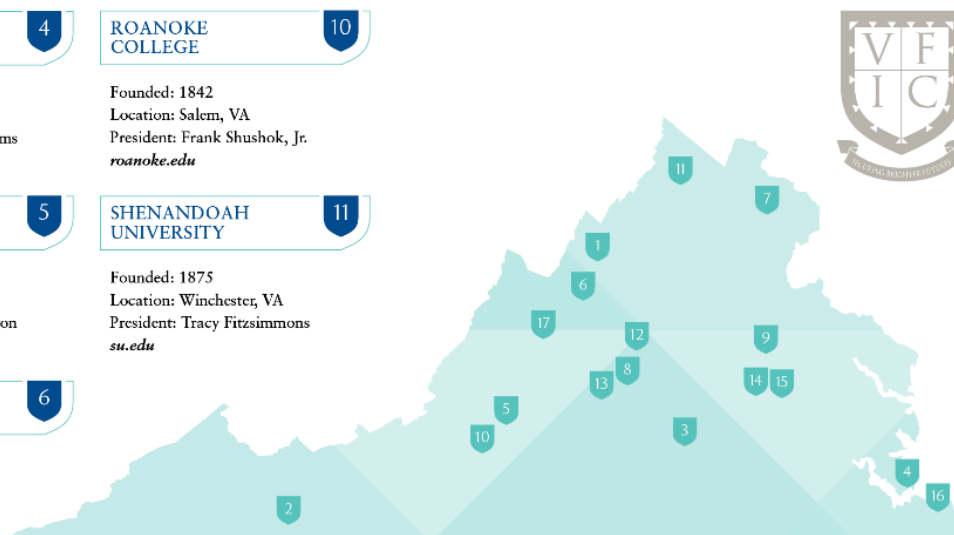
11

Founded: 1875
Location: Winchester, VA
President: Tracy Fitzsimmons
su.edu

MARY BALDWIN UNIVERSITY

6

Founded: 1842
Location: Staunton, VA
President: Jeffrey P. Stein
marybaldwin.edu



VFIC schools are racially, culturally, and economically diverse. According to current research from the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia, 42 percent of VFIC undergraduates come from minority backgrounds. Thirty percent of undergraduates receive a PELL Grant. More than 23 percent of the students on our campuses fall into the first-generation category. With enrollments between 450 and 4,200 students, our schools teach a broadly pragmatic liberal arts and sciences education in environments that value and encourage ethical leadership and responsible citizenship.

In addition to providing students with the financial support they need to attend college, we also develop programs that complement each school's traditional in-class instruction. Funding from Universal Leaf Foundation has supported this valuable component of education, too. These programs provide students with opportunities to secure an education that includes real-world experiences outside the classroom.



Our programs include the following:

Brighter Futures Scholarship Program

Provide VFIC students who have financial need with scholarship funding that enables them to pursue their dream of securing a college degree.

STEM Education Workshops

Facilitates the sharing of knowledge and instructional methodology among VFIC schools and faculty to enhance science education.

Heat Watch

Works with students, faculty, and volunteers from more than a dozen colleges and universities across the state to collect data about how heat varies across communities and to understand where residents are most at risk during extreme heat waves.

Building Transfer Pathway Connections

Engages faculty and staff from thirteen VFIC schools in a collective effort to facilitate student transfer capacity from Virginia's community colleges to VFIC colleges.

Undergraduate Research Fellowships and Scholarships

Enables students to gain valuable experience from direct participation in the creation, discovery, and use of new ideas and technologies.

VFIC Women's Leadership Development Summit

Offers young women from VFIC schools the opportunity to hear from corporate and civic leaders about how to assume roles of authority in professional and personal settings.

Ethics Bowl (held annually since 1999)

Matches student teams from each of our sixteen member colleges to address contemporary ethical dilemmas in a highly competitive event.

Enhancing Career Preparation for Underrepresented Students

Complements the work of career development officers at VFIC schools by providing them with the special resources they need to help underrepresented students secure a fulfilling, lucrative job upon graduation, as well as a rigorous, educational internship during their undergraduate years.

"Thanks to Universal's generosity, students who could not afford to attend college without scholarship support gain access to higher education," says Matt Shank, president of the VFIC. "These students are excellent stewards of the company's investment."



Virtually all of our Brighter Futures Scholarship recipients graduate in four years. That's a testament to their discipline, focus, and financial responsibility. And for students who are Pell Eligible, these scholarships contribute to student retention. Students who can afford to stay enrolled graduate on time and move into the workforce more quickly, ready to begin their careers, as well as enjoy financial independence and economic mobility.

"With Universal's ongoing support for our mission," Shank adds, "we're optimistic about the future of our graduates. Students who are typically underrepresented in higher education will, on VFIC campuses, have the opportunity to earn a degree that prepares them for a meaningful career and a bright future."



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