

# PRACTICE

## FIELD GUIDE



ASPIRATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

This Field Guide belongs to:

\_\_\_\_\_

My Top Five Strengths

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

*Discover your strengths at [www.dsa.vt.edu/strengths](http://www.dsa.vt.edu/strengths).*

If found, please contact:

\_\_\_\_\_ @vt.edu

# ASPIRATIONS

FOR STUDENT LEARNING

-  **Commit to unwavering *CURIOSITY***  
Virginia Tech students will be inspired to lead lives of curiosity, embracing a lifelong commitment to intellectual development.
-  **Pursue *SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND INTEGRITY***  
Virginia Tech students will form a set of affirmative values and develop the self-understanding to integrate these values into their decision-making.
-  **Practice *CIVILITY***  
Virginia Tech students will understand and commit to civility as a way of life in their interactions with others.
-  **Prepare for a life of *COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP***  
Virginia Tech students will be courageous leaders who serve as change agents to make the world more humane and just.
-  **Embrace *UT PROSIM* as a way of life**  
Virginia Tech students will enrich their lives through service to others.

THIS IS YOUR VIRGINIA TECH

# EXPERIENCE

The Aspirations for Student Learning represent our greatest hopes for Virginia Tech students. Fully exploring them will help you understand what living a life marked by these Aspirations looks like.

Make your time at Virginia Tech really matter. What you are learning comes together with who you are becoming as a person. Connect all of your different experiences—from internships, career fairs, and student organizations, to intramural sports, Gobblerfest, and everything in between—in a meaningful way that prepares you for your future.

By discovering opportunities for involvement in GobblerConnect and intentionally reflecting on your experiences in this Field Guide, you'll be able to make the most of your time as a Hokie.

## NAVIGATING YOUR PRACTICE FIELD GUIDE

If you haven't already, visit [vt.gallup.com](http://vt.gallup.com) and complete CliftonStrengths® to learn more about your unique gifts and talents. Record your top five on the inside back cover of this field guide!

If you are seeking opportunities for engagement, visit [gobblerconnect.vt.edu](http://gobblerconnect.vt.edu). And if you are ready to continue experiencing the Aspirations for Student Learning, start here – **the Practice Field Guide!**

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As you start to build and map out your collegiate experience, you'll begin to Practice the Aspirations. In the Explore phase, you started to grasp the "what" of the Aspirations for Student Learning. In the Practice phase, you'll be thinking through the "how." We want you to take a step further and think more about how you **commit** to unwavering curiosity, **pursue** self-understanding and integrity, **practice** civility, **prepare** for a life of courageous leadership, and **embrace** *Ut Prosim* as a way of life.

The Practice Field Guide is meant to help you delve deeper into what you've encountered in Explore. Hopefully, you've identified areas of growth and interests you would like to pursue and discovered communities where you can flourish as a Hokie.

The Practice Field Guide will support you as you commit to your chosen communities, furthering your personal growth. Speaking of community, you will find a page in the back of this book dedicated to your Success Network of people who care. We want you to think about the individuals, resources, and communities who care and contribute to your success and wellbeing and list them there. We've given a few ideas about who you might include in your Success Network, and we hope that you'll add people who will help ensure that you make the most of your Virginia Tech experience.

Engage in campus life, ponder the strengths questions and challenges, connect with others, take stock of what's going on in your life, and Practice the Aspirations. This book is designed to help you become the best version of yourself, as you dive deeper into the Aspirations for Student Learning and reflect on your experience.

There is no prescribed timeline for working through this guide, so choose the pace that works best for you!



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Aspirations Fellows:** students who embody the Aspirations for Student Learning as they serve in unique, amazing, and inspiring ways. Fellows have the opportunity to impact the student experience, mentor other students in the early stages of discovering the Aspirations, receive a distinction cord for graduation, and be celebrated at an annual induction ceremony.

**Field Guides:** these books (or online PDFs if preferred) are intended to spark reflective thought, writing, and conversation about the Aspirations for Student Learning. The Explore Field Guide will kick off your Experience VT journey. From there, a second volume, the Practice Field Guide, will deepen your understanding, application, and commitment to the Aspirations.

**GobblerConnect:** a central web-based platform housing hundreds of student-led clubs and organizations, their programs and events, and the learning opportunities offered by university departments, colleges, and centers.

**Strengths:** a personal assessment that helps Virginia Tech students identify and focus on their innate gifts and talents. With free access to the CliftonStrengths® assessment, students begin to know themselves, learn about others, discover their strengths, and understand how their talents align with their goals.

**Success Network:** Individuals, resources, and communities of people who care and contribute to your success and well-being.

## CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY

What have been the biggest challenges of your time at Virginia Tech thus far?

How have you navigated those challenges?

What are you learning from those challenges?

## CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY

What have been the biggest successes of your time at Virginia Tech thus far?

How do you define success? Why did you define these experiences or milestones as successes?

What are you learning from those successes?

What kinds of support do you need to be successful at Virginia Tech?

What qualities do you look for in people who support you?

How do you ask for support? How can you help people understand or recognize when you need support?

## Commit to Unwavering **CURIOSITY**

*Virginia Tech students will be inspired to lead lives of curiosity, embracing a lifelong commitment to intellectual development.*

How do you approach uncertainty and the unknown?



*Delve deeper into the Aspirations for Student Learning at [www.dsa.vt.edu/aspirations](http://www.dsa.vt.edu/aspirations).*

How do you challenge yourself to explore what you are naturally curious about?

How does curiosity impact your day-to-day living?



# CHALLENGE

*Engage with the following websites and consider the reflection questions below.*

- **GobblerConnect:** Find organizations and events that can help you understand, practice, and discover more about your interests.
- **Curiosity.com:** Learn about a diverse array of subjects, and apply that information to your various involvements.
- **Pinterest:** Check out what other people are interested in and collect your own interests to display and pursue further.

When browsing these websites, what makes you curious?

What kinds of things do you search for?

What holds your interest?

*Identify an area of curiosity and create a plan to nurture and engage that curiosity. Chronicle how this plan unfolds and what you're learning.*



*Have a conversation with someone you would describe as curious.*

Why do you view them as a curious person?

Talk to this person about your own journey and experience with curiosity.

*How has nurturing your curiosity given way to growth and learning?*

Pursue

## SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND INTEGRITY

*Virginia Tech students will form a set of affirmative values and develop the self-understanding to incorporate these values into their decision-making.*

Which of your personal values have remained consistent for you over time? Why?



*Delve deeper into the Aspirations for Student Learning at [www.dsa.vt.edu/aspirations](http://www.dsa.vt.edu/aspirations).*

Which of your values have been challenged? How so?

How are you challenging yourself to grow as a person?

What aspects of your life story are you working on re-writing? Why?



# CHALLENGE

*Log in to the Virginia Tech strengths portal at [vt.gallup.com](http://vt.gallup.com) where you originally took the CliftonStrengths® assessment. Print out the Strengths Insight and Action-Planning Guide. Create a personalized action plan based on the suggestions and ideas for action provided for each of your strengths in the report.*

*Take any of the following assessments and compare your results with your strengths:*

**Personality Assessment:** [www.16personalities.com](http://www.16personalities.com)

**Life Values Inventory:** [www.lifevaluesinventory.org](http://www.lifevaluesinventory.org)

**Values in Action:** [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org)



## BUILDING SUPPORT

*Talk to a member of your Success Network about ways in which you can grow—as a student, student leader, friend, employee, etc.*



## LOOK BACK

*Consider a moment that defined you. Reflect on how it changed you and your beliefs.*

## Practice **CIVILITY**

*Virginia Tech Students will understand and commit to civility as a way of life in their interactions with others.*

What do you perceive to be constructive and positive interactions? What makes for a “good” or “comfortable” interaction?

What do you perceive to be negative and destructive interactions? What makes for a “bad” or “uncomfortable” interaction?



*Delve deeper into the Aspirations for Student Learning at [www.dsa.vt.edu/aspirations](http://www.dsa.vt.edu/aspirations).*

What role, if any, do you play when a conflict arises?

How might you take responsibility for your actions and reactions, becoming more comfortable in difficult situations or conversations?

What role, if any, does civil disobedience play in practicing civility?



# CHALLENGE

*Among friends, in an organization or class, or with members of your Success Network, create a CliftonStrengths® Team Talent Map utilizing the Virginia Tech strengths portal. You can do this by logging in to [vt.gallup.com](http://vt.gallup.com) and using the Groups tab. Once each member has accepted the invitation they will receive via email, select View Team Strengths Report and discuss the following questions together.*

If you haven't already, share about yourself and your strengths.

How do you see your strengths connecting to the ways you interact with others?

How might you navigate your Virginia Tech experience using your strengths? How might your strengths influence your involvement on campus?

Which of the strengths leadership domains are represented within your group?



# CHALLENGE *(Continued)*

What strengths are missing, if any? What strengths leadership domains are missing, if any?

How can this inform the ways you understand your role on a team or within a group of people? (e.g., communication processes, projects, outreach, etc.)

*Visit [ISidewith.com](http://ISidewith.com). Go deeper into learning where you stand on a number of political and social issues. Reflect on the life experiences that have shaped your perspective and why your perspective is important to you.*



## BUILDING SUPPORT

*Identify someone with different views than you. Without trying to change their mind, engage in a conversation that allows you to learn how it is they came to have the views they hold.*

Ask, if they are willing to share, what life experiences have shaped their perspectives and why those perspectives are important to them.



## LOOK BACK

*Based on your previous experiences with civility, where is there room for you to grow?*

Prepare for a life of  
**COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP**

*Virginia Tech students will be courageous leaders who serve as change agents and make the world more humane and just.*

Who are you as a leader? What messages are others receiving from how you lead -- about what is acceptable behavior, habits of thinking, and ways of treating others?

Describe attributes you think a leader should possess.



*Delve deeper into the Aspirations for Student Learning at [www.dsa.vt.edu/aspirations](http://www.dsa.vt.edu/aspirations).*

Has this changed at all since the beginning of your time at Virginia Tech? If yes, how? What caused your thoughts to change?

What is your informal power in different environments (i.e., network, influence, expertise)? How can you use your informal power for the greater good?

How can you identify:

- An action to be taken?
- A relationship to be mended?
- Someone or something that needs to be recognized?



# CHALLENGE

*Spend some time at the Pylons or reading about the Pylons ([www.vt.edu/about/buildings/war-memorial-chapel](http://www.vt.edu/about/buildings/war-memorial-chapel)). Consider the eight values represented by the Pylons and identify one or two that you identify with most closely.*

How would you define the value(s) you selected?

What experiences or perspectives caused you to choose the Pylon values you selected?

How do these values impact how you lead?

*Identify a community need. Consider questions of ethics, power, and authority. When strategizing for action, think about issues of access and service as well as the many roles individuals can serve in this project. To guide this process, consider:*

How do we define community? How do we identify a need?

How can an act of courageous leadership remedy this community need?



## BUILDING SUPPORT

*Volunteer time with a student, campus, or community organization. What did you learn from doing things you are passionate about?*

Reflect on your experience below, then share and discuss with a member of your Success Network.



## LOOK BACK

*What makes leadership an act of courage? How has your experience practicing courageous leadership changed your identity as a leader?*

Embrace  
**UT PROSIM** as a way of life

*Virginia Tech students will enrich their lives through service to others.*

Has your understanding of service changed or expanded during your time as a student at Virginia Tech? If yes, how?



*Delve deeper into the Aspirations for Student Learning at [www.dsa.vt.edu/aspirations](http://www.dsa.vt.edu/aspirations).*

What relationships, conversations, or barriers exist that detract from community? What role can you play in changing that?

Does service look different across various situations, roles, or environments? If yes, reflect on a couple of examples that allow for comparing and contrasting how service might vary in different contexts.

How do your new ideas of service conflict or align with your previous understanding of service?



# CHALLENGE

*In what ways could you practice Ut Prosim by using your unique strengths?*

*Commit to an experience that will allow you to practice Ut Prosim, through existing opportunities or one you create.*



*Reflect on your experience practicing Ut Prosim. What did you learn about yourself?*

How did you utilize your strengths in your service?

What did you learn from others?

*Ask someone in your Success Network to explain how they embody Ut Prosim by using their unique strengths.*



*Spend a couple of minutes envisioning your next year. What have you learned from reflecting on your experiences in this Field Guide? How will what you've learned through reflection influence how you approach your next year at Virginia Tech?*

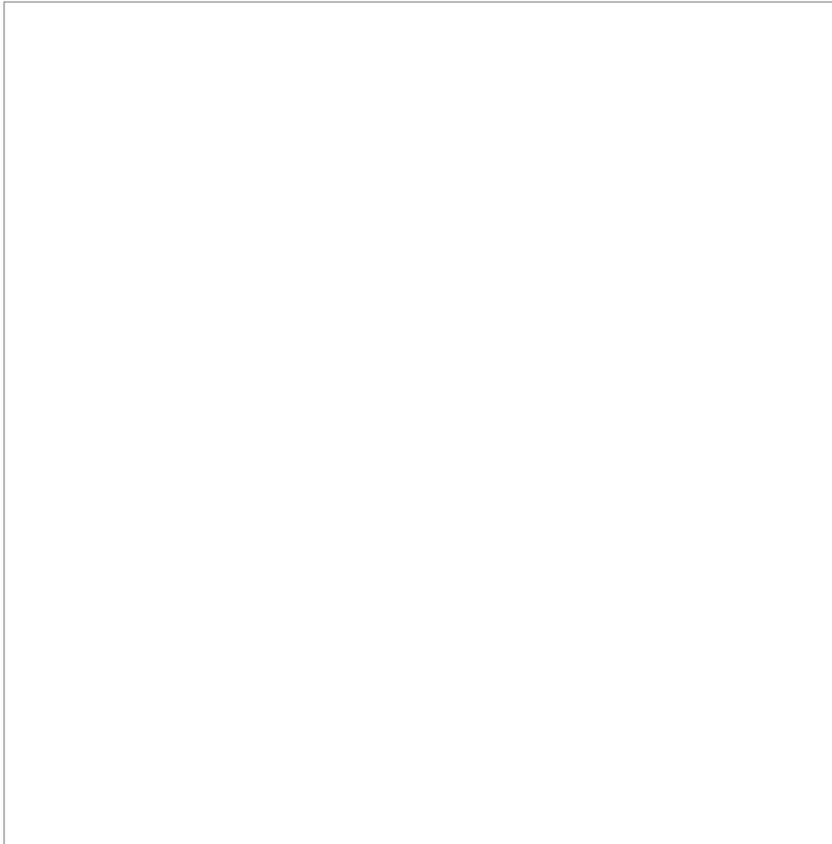
Now that you've completed the Practice Field Guide, your next step is to Live the Aspirations for Student Learning! The Live phase is all about taking what you've learned thus far in your Virginia Tech experience and using that knowledge to help others Experience VT. Hopefully, by practicing the Aspirations with your Success Network, you've gained a deeper understanding of yourself, your interests, and the ways you can influence your community.

We hope that you will join us in the Live phase, influencing future generations of Hokies as they design and create their own paths. This could be through coaching students with tools such as CliftonStrengths® and GobblerConnect, or by using your experience to be an ambassador to help other students Experience VT and grow in their understanding of the Aspirations for Student Learning.

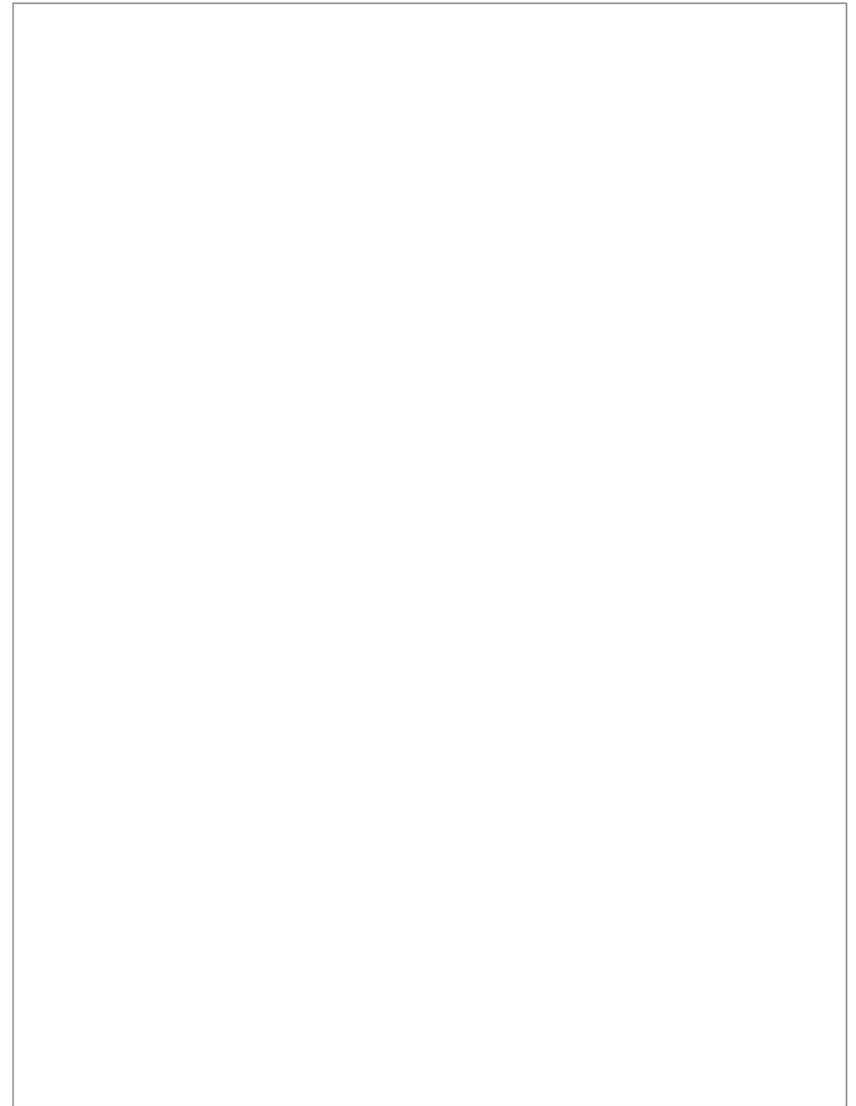
Think about what you need to transition to this next phase of your Virginia Tech experience. Do you need to talk to someone about your next steps? What are you looking forward to as you Live the Aspirations for Student Learning?

## PEOPLE WHO CARE: MY SUCCESS NETWORK

*Think about individuals, resources, and communities of people who care and contribute to your success. This is your Success Network and they'll be helpful as you Practice the Aspirations for Student Learning. Examples could include: your Orientation Leader, Resident Advisor, Academic Advisor, etc. Who are they and how did they help you?*



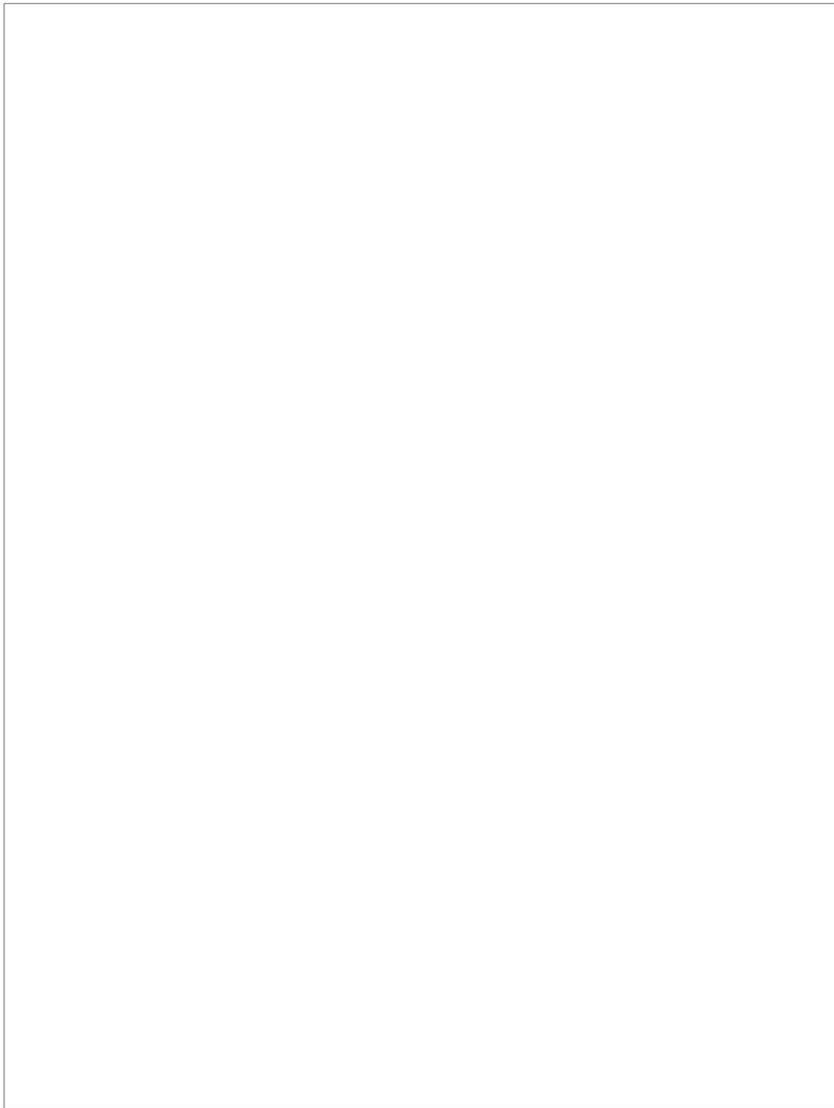
## REFLECTIONS



REFLECTIONS

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