



New ideas FOR THE FUTURE

President's vision seeks to build on EVMS' strong foundation.

Six months into his tenure as President and Provost of EVMS, Richard Homan, MD, is charting a course for EVMS' future — one that capitalizes on the school's strengths and builds on its unique history.

There are opportunities, he says, for the school to carve a niche in the landscape of U.S. academic medicine and to create a progressive, innovative educational environment. The timing couldn't be better.

Shifts in the fundamental underpinnings of our health-care system and top-to-bottom revisions to education make this an ideal moment to calibrate EVMS' priorities. Out of this opportunity, several key areas have emerged as central components of EVMS' growth.

Continue to improve the quality of EVMS' core missions

Much has changed since EVMS opened its doors 40 years ago, but its primary focus areas have remained constant: excellent education, innovative research and outstanding patient care. Strengthening each of these interconnected missions will be key to attracting the best students and faculty and delivering the best return on the community's investment in EVMS.

Medical education is evolving to a degree not seen since the 1910 "Flexner Report" established the apprenticeship model for training aspiring physicians. Emerging technologies and teaching methods are driving a complete

rethinking of how schools teach students across the health-care disciplines. EVMS is seizing that opportunity to update its medical curriculum, with an eye toward better incorporating team-based education, skills-based assessments and simulation training — concepts that cater to new generations of learners.

Curriculum reform is made even more vital by the realities of the world after graduation from medical school. The number of available positions in residency programs — specialty training all physicians must complete in order to gain licensure — has been mostly steady for years. That means medical schools must focus on preparing students to enter a competitive residency environment.

The School of Health Professions, too, is undergoing changes. It has grown by more than 40 percent over the past three years, and it will continue to be the primary source of growth in EVMS' student body. The Biomedical Sciences Master's Program, for instance, is expected to soon enroll 100 students per year, compared to 23 as recently as 2010. The school recently approved master's programs in laboratory animal science and in medical and health professions education and is considering the addition of a graduate degree in health-care compliance and a combined MD/MBA.

Interdisciplinary collaboration will be a key element of both the medical and health professions schools — as will community service. Spurred by the creation last year of the M. Foscue Brock Institute for Community and Global health, student service-learning opportunities will be incorporated into the curriculum to shape students' development as compassionate, community-minded professionals — a priority that fits within the larger context of improving health in Hampton Roads and beyond.

And as the educational programs evolve, EVMS' research endeavor will progress along with it. Dr. Homan describes research as the return on EVMS' academic investment, and identifying the ideal areas of emphasis will maximize that return. The strong research programs in diabetes, reproductive health and cancer will continue, and additional emphasis will be placed on avenues of research that emanate from EVMS' innate strengths —



studies that explore fields such as public and community health and health-services delivery.

Likewise, EVMS Medical Group — the school's patient care enterprise — will evolve in tandem with the other two primary missions. EVMS providers will continue to form the nucleus of the medical education component of the school, and they will contribute to the development of additional clinical trials that track outcomes data to determine the most effective means of care. This research will focus on quality of care, cost effectiveness, technology and other facets that will drive care delivery in the future.

Strengthening these core functions will position EVMS to attract high quality students and to focus on research and clinical care that directly address local needs.

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merging technologies and teaching methods are driving a ground-up rethinking of how schools teach students across the health-care disciplines.



Elevate EVMS' academic reputation nationally

Ten years ago, many in Hampton Roads were unaware of EVMS' missions and its contributions to the region. Today, thanks to a concerted effort during the tenure of President Emeritus Harry Lester, local citizens have significantly greater understanding of the school's role in supporting the community's health and economic vitality. That same energy will be put toward earning greater national recognition for our faculty, many of whom are leaders in their field.

One of Dr. Homan's goals is to emphasize areas where EVMS can be truly extraordinary — such as community and population health, health services-delivery research and curriculum design. Establishing that “academic niche,” as Dr. Homan describes it, creates a platform from which EVMS can contribute to national conversations and showcase excellent faculty doing high-quality work across all three core-mission areas.

The effort to build wider recognition also includes measures to facilitate faculty presentations at national meetings, which will help demonstrate EVMS' academic and research expertise to colleagues at other schools and academic-health centers. To move toward that goal, funding has been set aside to help faculty who are preparing presentations for major conferences.

Gaining national prominence will help EVMS graduates as they head into residency or the workforce, where name recognition can help open doors. And it will support the critical goals of luring top-flight faculty and forging new partnerships.



Develop and support faculty and staff

As EVMS redoubles its efforts in its three core functions, the need to retain outstanding faculty and staff becomes ever more critical. Resources are being channeled to help them continue developing the skills needed in a progressive medical campus. It is an investment in the school's human capital, Dr. Homan says, because the faculty and staff are the school's greatest assets.

Early signs of this initiative include the creation of two new leadership positions.

Elza Mylona, PhD, is EVMS' first Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs and Professional Development. She is developing a support infrastructure designed to balance faculty members' efforts across EVMS' missions and to acknowledge them for their contributions to the school, whether that is primarily through research activities, clinical practice or education. Additionally, she will be ensuring that faculty have access to professional development opportunities.



Dr. Homan also recruited Mekbib Gameda to serve as the Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion. Mr. Gameda is working to increase diversity among EVMS faculty, students and staff as we seek to mirror the community we serve.

Luring talented new faculty will be crucial as the school grows. To that end, EVMS is requesting an additional \$3.2 million in annual operating support from the General Assembly, as recommended by the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia. Part of that funding would help EVMS recruit additional faculty members needed to keep pace with increased enrollment.

Providing a strong platform of ongoing faculty support and training ensures that, as a whole, the institution is prepared to succeed in the ever-changing higher-education landscape and can respond to opportunities and challenges that emerge in the classroom, in the lab or in the clinic.

Fund operations and capital plan

It's been just over two years since Lester Hall opened, bringing with it the physical capacity for increased student enrollment, enhanced cancer research and expanded simulation programs.

Today, it's full, and the school is taking the initial steps toward completing the campus master plan — a new building behind Andrews Hall. EVMS is asking the General Assembly for \$1.1 million in planning money for the structure, which would provide additional room for growth in the health professions programs and bring academic and administration functions on the main campus from satellite buildings.

The school's digital infrastructure also is getting a much-needed overhaul. A five-year, \$5 million initiative will bring disparate information systems onto a single platform that will help the institution function more efficiently and work better across departments.

Cultivate robust partnerships

Much like its collaborations with other healthcare providers, academic and industry partnerships will play a pivotal role in the school's future.

Discussions with the College of William & Mary have led to a series of research collaborations between faculty members at the two institutions, and they are exploring educational programs that would bring together the discrete strengths of each school. Possibilities include working with William & Mary's Mason School of Business to offer a dual MD/MBA program and an advanced healthcare-delivery certificate program — the latter of which would benefit from significant input from Sentara Healthcare to help shape the program's content. These programs would help meet the demand for the physicians and health professionals who not only have

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excellent clinical skills, but also are fluent in the health-policy and financial aspects of care delivery in the context of changing payment systems and the realities of the Affordable Care Act.

Similarly, EVMS continues to build on the long-standing, beneficial academic relationship with Old Dominion University, particularly in the area of public health. The General Assembly has provided funding to study the resources need to establish a school of public health jointly run by EVMS and ODU. The school would be the first of its kind in the commonwealth.

Beyond the academic realm, EVMS' clinical and scientific expertise makes it an ideal partner for industry. For instance, basic scientists are working with Virginia Beach-based LifeNet Health to develop better ways to preserve tissue samples for detailed analysis,

and Canon Inc.'s facility in Newport News may host EVMS biotechnology graduate students.

Nurturing these symbiotic relationships is part of being responsible stewards of increased resources provided by the state and donors, Dr. Homan says. Strong partnerships also expand opportunities for students and residents to gain real-world experience and, critically, for EVMS to broaden its economic contributions to the region.

Outstanding, forward-thinking education. Focused research that capitalizes on the faculty's distinct expertise. Strong, symbiotic collaborations with academic and industry partners. These themes drive Dr. Homan's vision for EVMS' evolution — one that builds on the school's distinct, 40-year legacy and strives to meet the needs of a growing community and a shifting health-care landscape. □