



T301: Developing and Fostering Research Ecosystems: Lessons and Reflections from NSF GRANTED Convenings

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*SRAI Collaborative Section Meeting, Atlanta, GA
May 5, 2026*

Agenda

- ✓ *Welcome*
- ✓ *NSF GRANTED Program (Convenings)*
- ✓ *Discussion: Research Ecosystems*
- ✓ *Convening Takeaways*
- ✓ *Questions*

Learning Objectives

- ✓ *At the end of this session participants will be able to define and describe research ecosystems as a framework for research development.*
- ✓ *At the end of this session participants will be able to apply research ecosystems thinking to their own context as it relates to research development and partner engagement.*

Welcome and Introductions

✓ *I am...?*

✓ *You are...(researcher, research development, pre-award, post-award, compliance, school/unit, central...)?*

Context

- ✓ *NSF GRANTED Program*
- ✓ *Convening Grant – Regional Research Ecosystem*
- ✓ *Ecosystem - community of living organisms interacting with each other and their physical environment in a particular area*
- ✓ *So what? Why is this important?*

**Growing Research Access for
Nationally Transformative Equity
and Diversity (GRANTED)**

**Growing Research Access for
Nationally Transformative
Economic Development
(GRANTED)**



Credit: NSF, <https://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/granted>

Conference: GRANTED Building a Regional Research Ecosystem ...

VCU:

John Fife, PI

Jose Alcaine, Co-PI

Shari Garmise, Co-PI

Collaborating Partners:

VSU, Longwood University
(others)

Convenings:

-VCU (Feb. 16, 2024)

-VSU (April 2024)

-Longwood (May 2024)

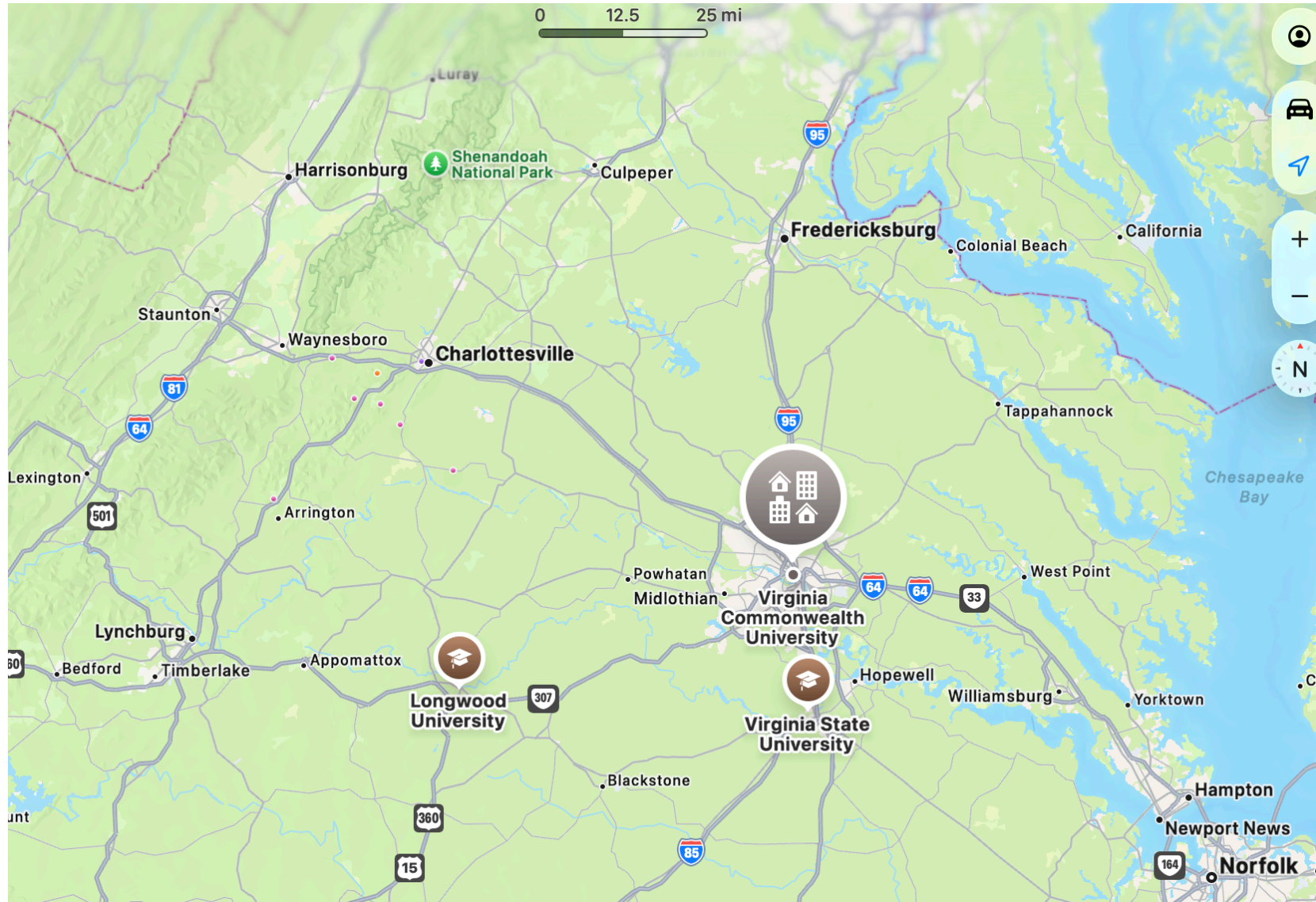


Regional Scope

VCU-Longwood
~60mi

VCU-VSU
~26mi

(Image: Apple Maps)



Need for Catalyst

- Catalyst
- Relationship Building
- Sustainability
- Long T View



CISTEME | Center for Innovation
in STEM Education

Goal (Research Ecosystem)

- ✓ *...to convene to build and sustain a strong regional research ecosystem to conduct socially impactful research through coordination, collaboration and research sharing across emerging universities and with the community.*
- ✓ *Research ecosystem: “...a community of researchers which interacts with one another, their environment and other stakeholders interested in their respective areas of research in such a way that knowledge is transferred between them and system-level processes emerge” (Pandey & Pattnaik, 2015, p. 173).*

Findings from the Convenings (Selected)

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Challenges</i>
<i>R1, MSI (VCU)</i>	-Urban university, most developed research infrastructure among three, PhD programs, community partnerships, health center	-Dependence on external funding (vulnerable), research growth outpacing infrastructure, need for multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary collaborations
<i>R2, HBCU (VSU)</i>	-Semi urban HBCU, land-grant, emerging research, focus on student level tech transfer	-Lagging/underserved infrastructure, limited research capabilities (size), limited research funding/faculty career development
<i>Undergraduate/Masters/ERI (Longwood)</i>	-Strong network/proximity with local community, focus on student development	-Pressing challenges in Southside (region), remote location, need more STEM opportunities for students

Takeaways (Selected)

-Building Networks

-Building Sustainability

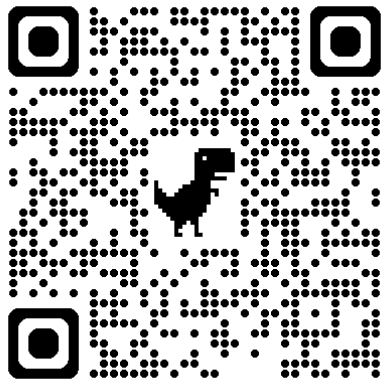
-Building Funding

-It's a Marathon not a Sprint!

Comments and Questions

Thank you!

Contact jgalcaine@vcu.edu



Convenings: Website

Special Thanks:

-Dr. Preeti Kamat, Consultant, VCU/SOE Alumna

-Singith Perera, VCU/SOE Doc Student