



Community Outreach Strategy for Proposed Virginia Research and Education Reactor

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VCU College of Engineering

Who are we?



Virginia Innovative Nuclear Hub



**Virginia Research and
Education Reactor
(VA-RER)**



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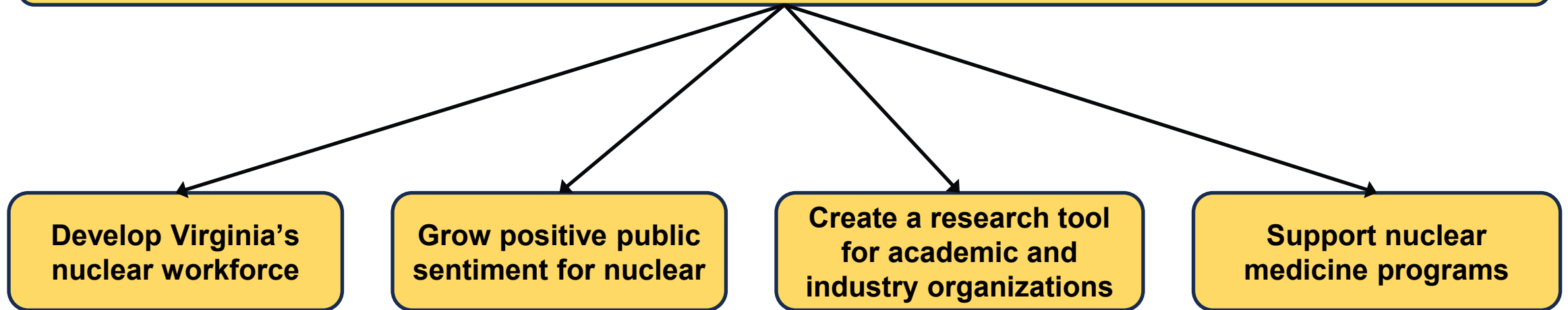
LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY
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What are we trying to do?

Design, construct, and operate a research reactor in Virginia



What do we need to accomplish those goals?

Outreach!

Outreach Goals

**Clear public
misconceptions about
nuclear energy**

**Spark interest in
nuclear engineering
among Virginia
students**

**Grow support for the
project in the public
and private sector**

**Tangibly benefit the
surrounding
community**

Overview of Phases

Short-Term

Before specifications have been determined

- Reach out to high school students, young adults, and community members
- Spread outreach program to several Virginia cities

Pre-Completion

Before the facility is operational

- Pivot focus of outreach education to include intended reactor capabilities and benefits
- Receive input from the public to address community needs with the future facility

Continuation

Beyond first criticality

- Continue listening to public input
- Develop the facility as an education hub
- Ensure we are viewed as a part of the community, not an outside force

Short Term Phase

- Begin designing educational talks for high school students and young adults
- Reach out to Richmond public libraries to host

Spring 2026

Fall 2026

- Reach out to public high schools for in-class or after-school instructive visits
- Expand demographics to older adults
- Expand to more locations

Spring 2027

- Run first event at Richmond Main Library
- Expand to Charlottesville, Blacksburg, and Lynchburg

Educational Events

**Created and presented
by student volunteers**

**Focus on nuclear
science foundations**

**Accessible to high
school age students,
young adults, and
college students**

**Implement interactive
elements**

Current Progress

Design Educational Talks

- Preliminary topics selected
- Begun development of interactive elements

Reach Out to the Community

- Organizing with Richmond Main Library
- Reached out to Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops

Find Student Volunteers

- Volunteer flyers made
- To be posted at universities come fall

Pre-Completion Phase

- Publish announcement
- Continue education events, focus more on VA-RER
- Public Q&A sessions

During Facility Design

- Create newsletter detailing progress
- Increase frequency of Q&A sessions

Facility Done, Before Reactor Installation

Capabilities Decided

- Release information on design progress
- Create online form to voice concerns
- Work with art schools to design murals
- Develop outreach lab

During Construction

- Begin designing online classes and modules
- Begin designing and implementing outreach lab materials
- Host educational content creators for an in-depth filmed tour

Continuation Phase

- Host open house events for free tours
- Slow down external events
- Establish goals for yearly visitor numbers

After First
Criticality

One Year After
Criticality

- Refine tour procedures
- Solidify partnerships with community organizations
- Refine outreach lab experiences, cater to specific demographics to ensure interest

- Streamline requests for reactor time
- Update online resources, outreach lab, and tours
- Continue to host Q&A sessions
- Continue to integrate community artists in further expansion and beautification

Moving Forward



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Key Takeaways

Transparency

**Integration with
the community**

Mutual benefit

Education

References

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Thank you!