Redeveloping vims.edu

Strategy Brief

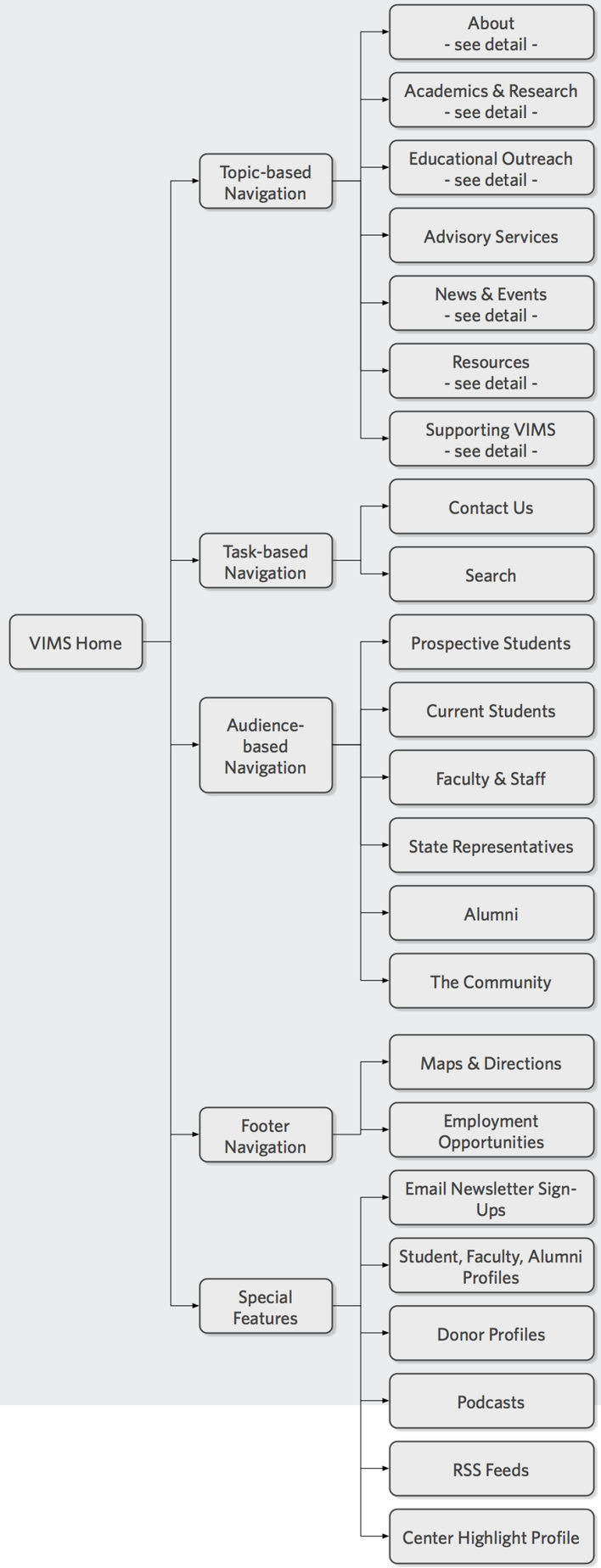
Wednesday, 5 March 2008

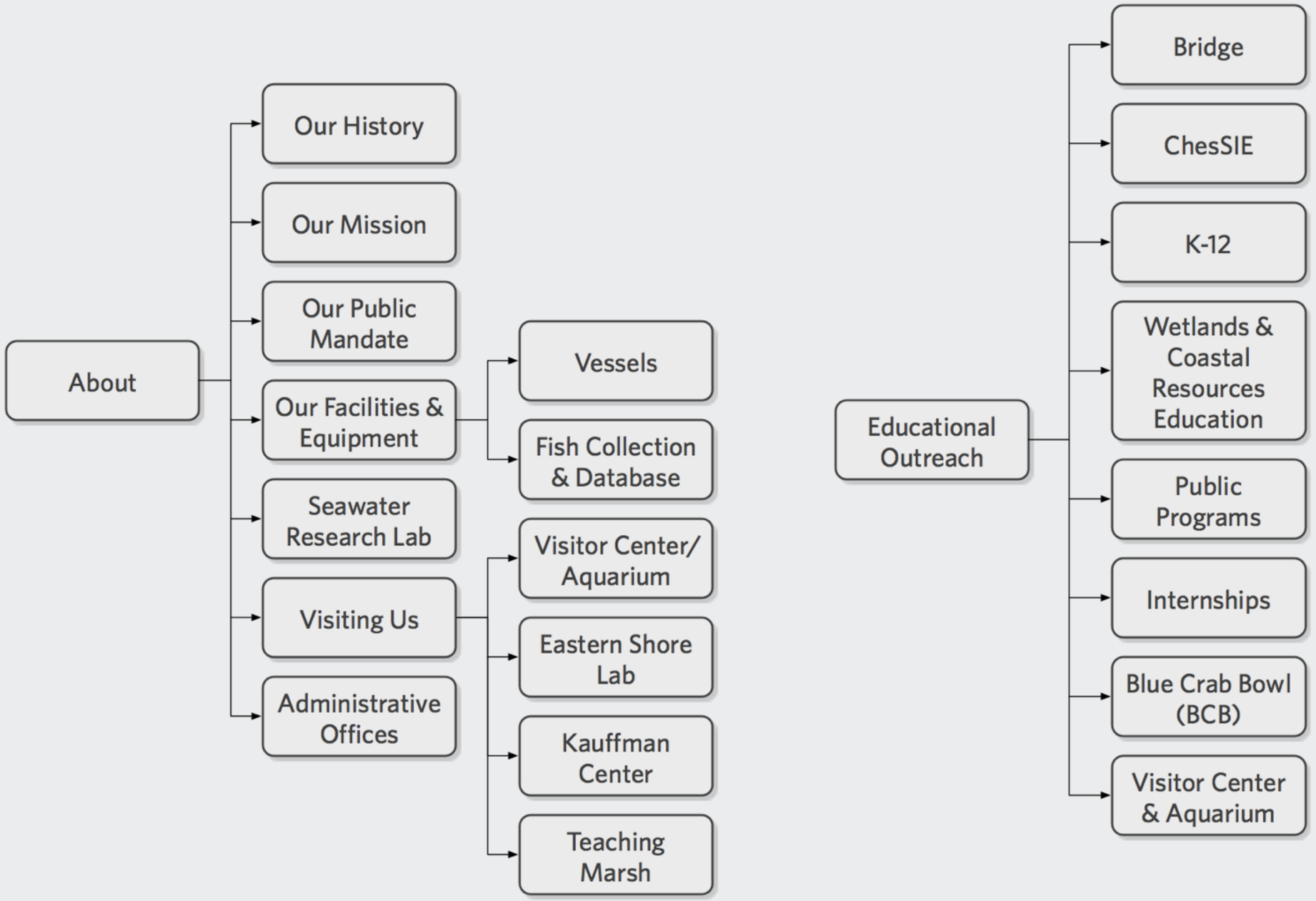
mStoner

A New Information Architecture

Key points in the new information architecture that we recommend:

- Make the tripartite mission intrinsic. The current site uses the three parts of VIMS' mission as the trellis for the site structure. In point of fact, there's sufficient crossover in these focuses to cause confusion. The new IA moves the institute toward a more traditional site structure that's easier to parse.
- Employ three different types of navigation. The IA that we recommend defaults to a topic-based model, with links from across the site aggregated on audience-specific gateways. Global task-based navigation allows people to take action from any page on the site. This navigation structure can be employed at the center or departmental level as well (e.g., audience- and task-based links specific to each center).
- Separate internal from external information. Information important to the VIMS community has been pulled from the main site and nested into gateways.

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Our History
Our Mission
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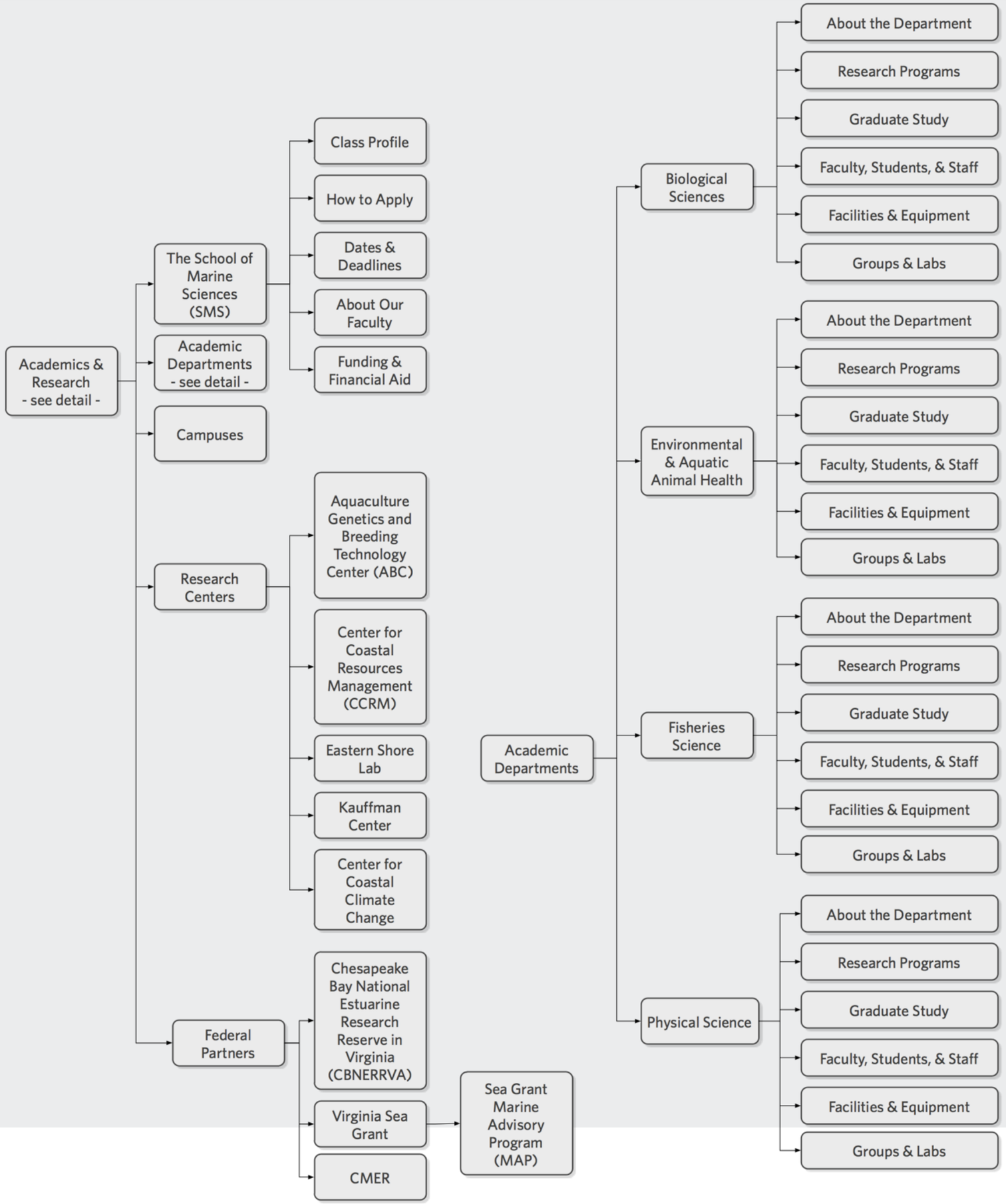
Our Facilities & Equipment
Vessels
Fish Collection & Database
Seawater Research Lab
Visiting Us
Visitor Center/ Aquarium
Eastern Shore Lab
Kauffman Center
Teaching Marsh
Administrative Offices
Educational Outreach
Bridge
ChesSIE
K-12
Wetlands & Coastal Resources Education
Public Programs
Internships
Blue Crab Bowl (BCB)
Visitor Center & Aquarium

We recommend a parallel structure from department to department to provide a level of consistency important to site users. Each of the academic departments may add additional links to the core structure that we've outlined.



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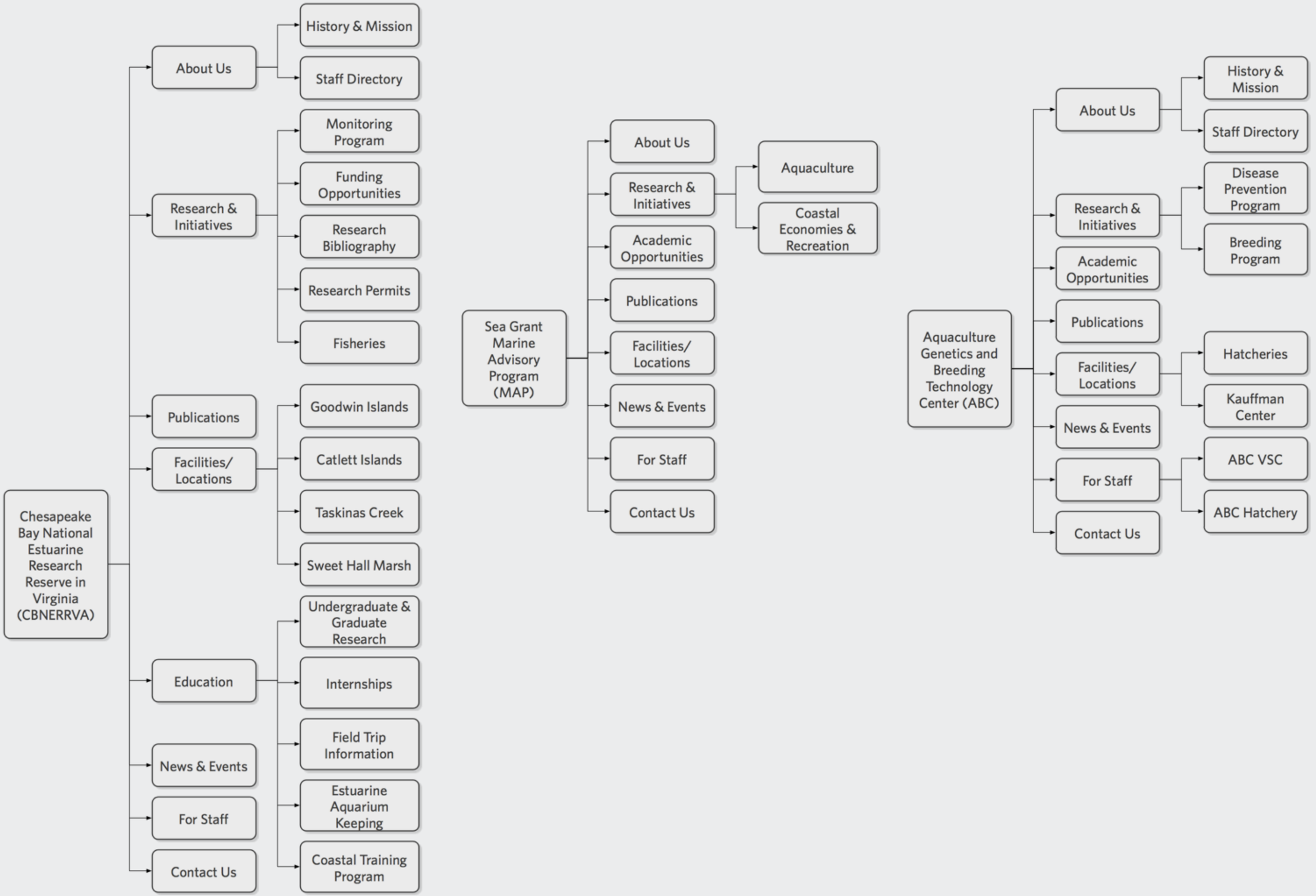
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Staff Directory
Research & Initiatives
Monitoring Program
Funding Opportunities
Research Bibliography
Research Permits
Fisheries
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Catlett Islands
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Kauffman Center
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ABC VSC
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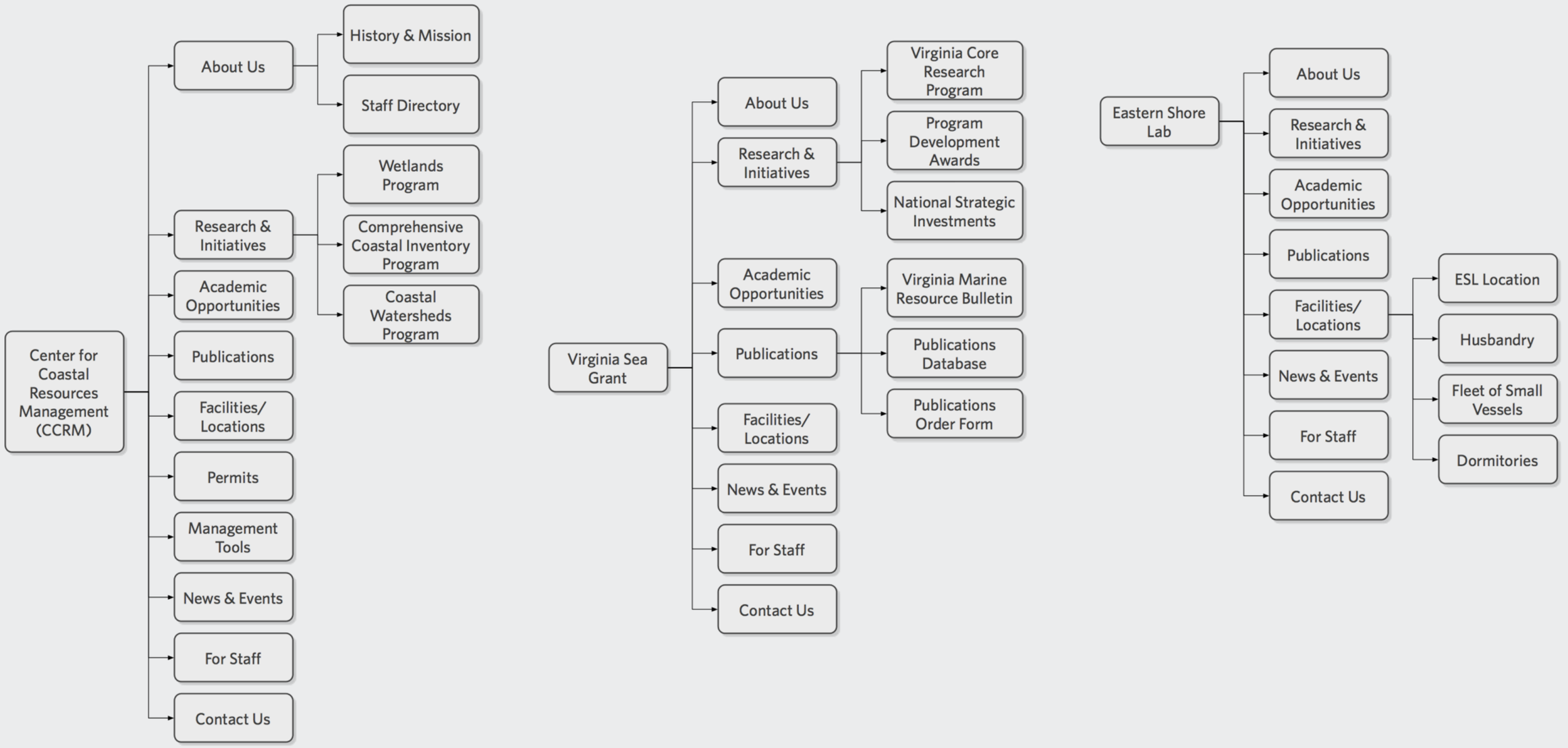
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Comprehensive Coastal Inventory Program
Coastal Watersheds Program
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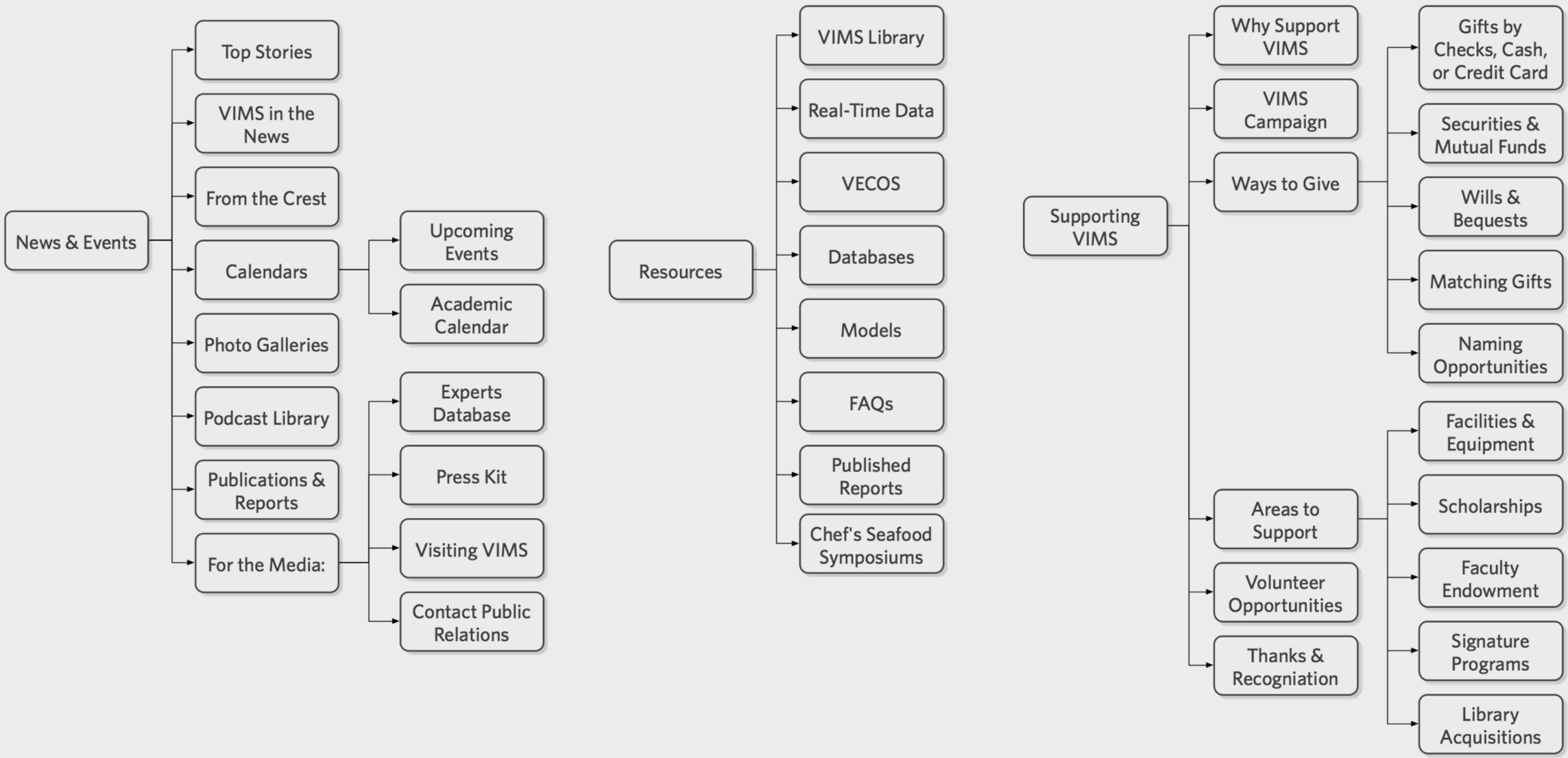
News & Events
Top Stories
VIMS in the News
From the Crest
Calendars
Upcoming Events
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Podcast Library
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Experts Database
Press Kit
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Databases
Models
FAQs
Published Reports
Chef's Seafood Symposiums
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Securities & Mutual Funds
Wills & Bequests
Matching Gifts
Naming Opportunities
Areas to Support
Facilities & Equipment
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Preliminary Wireframes

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- Visiting Us
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VIMS Center for Coastal Climate Change Research
(Center Highlight Profile) Morbi pede erat, porta vitae, molestie a, suscipit at, leo

SIGN-UP FOR THE VIMS E-NEWSLETTER

Photo

HOME > ABOUT

Fusce cursus vestibulum nisi. Suspendisse ultrices. Aenean et massa. In hac habitasse platea dictumst. Etiam facilisis ipsum molestie odio. Quisque eu velit. Etiam non leo fringilla magna posuere lacinia. Nunc porttitor ante non est. Duis elit. Nam eu risus. Cras sollicitudin. Pellentesque felis pede, pulvinar ac, aliquam nec, ultrices sed, lorem. Nullam sollicitudin, elit vitae sollicitudin pharetra, nibh nisi ornare nisl, nec mollis justo tellus a diam. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae; Aliquam diam ligula, vulputate vel, tempor sit amet, pellentesque quis, dolor. Maecenas neque est, rhoncus vel, semper vitae, hendrerit non, eros.

Student Profile (SPIFF 1)
Jane Smith
Senior
MARINE BIOLOGY

Fusce et nibh eu lacus venenatis molestie. In hac habitasse platea dictumst.

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Field Research (SPIFF 2)

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Email: wmaster@vims.edu
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3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Design & Content Recommendations

In approaching the homepage design, we heard:

- **Use appropriate imagery.** Tidal waves, oceanic images, and creatures commonly associated with marine life don't properly represent the coastal work on which VIMS focuses.
- **Maintain proper proportions.** According to VIMS stakeholders, the size of the "college footprint" on the current VIMS site is appropriate. We should maintain those proportions in approaching the new VIMS homepage design.

In terms of key messages, we recommend the following:

- **Local focus, global impact.** The shallow-water research that VIMS performs makes a positive impact not only in Virginia's coastal region, but internationally. We should highlight this impact and the way it overlaps with the VIMS mission - in research, education and advisory services.

  For each, VIMS should develop a bank of profiles and stories that highlight faculty, students, and alumni to illustrate the tangible results that VIMS shows in each of these areas.

Technology Recommendations

While these items fall outside of the scope of the work we've been asked to do, we believe that the points bear mentioning:

- **Web analytics.** Several stakeholders have asked for access to site usage logs and statistical tools.
- **VIMS-specific search.** Stakeholders would like to configure the search function to return VIMS-specific results on VIMS pages.
- **Staffing.** The Institute is understaffed at both the department and central level to maintain, much less enhance, the VIMS site. One of the key hires that VIMS should consider immediately is a database administrator.
- **Ownership.** VIMS needs a centralized team to support web efforts institute-wide.
- **Shared responsibilities.** VIMS need a mechanism for staff who have web-related responsibilities to share information and support each other in their work. This could take the form of a monthly web development meeting.
- **New calendar system is necessary.** VIMS needs a new calendar system; the current system, donated by a faculty member at the College, has served them well for years. Their current needs, however, have outstripped the software's capacity.