Valdosta State University
Outdoor Lighting Policy
Effective March 1, 2011

PURPOSE

This policy is predicated on the need to balance the following objectives and concerns:

1) To ensure nighttime safety and security for VSU students and personnel, and to provide optimum nighttime visibility on the VSU campus.
2) To avoid unnecessary hazards to motorists and pedestrians created by lateral glare from building, street, or parking lot light fixtures. Lateral glare is defined as a light beam projecting from a fixture more than 70 degrees above straight downward.
3) To minimize undesirable light trespass and illumination of Valdosta's night sky.
4) To conserve energy, for both environmental and economic reasons.
5) To minimize adverse effects of artificial nighttime illumination on local nocturnal animals.
6) To restore and preserve a suitable level of night-sky darkness to ensure adequate visibility of celestial objects from the VSU Observatory, a scientific and educational facility of regional importance.

POLICY

It is the University's policy to provide optimum nighttime campus lighting for maximum security, while minimizing risks to safety and adverse effects on the environment and night sky.

PROCEDURES

1) Specifics of design and installation of new lighting and retrofitting of existing lighting should be done after a survey and consulting the IDA Outdoor Lighting Code Handbook Version 1.11, including the USA Pattern Lighting Code and the EPA Green Lights Program (http://es.epa.gov/partners/green/green.html).

2) Any currently existing lighting fixture that does not satisfy these guidelines should be removed, redirected, or shielded within a reasonable period of time, budget permitting, to minimize light trespass, light pollution of the night sky, and over-illumination within the VSU campus area. The Environmental Issues Committee, working with the SGA and COSA, will present needs to the Planning and Budget Committee with regards to the design and retrofitting of campus outdoor lighting fixtures to be in compliance with this policy.

   It is recommended that an annual after-dark, walk-through of existing lighting fixtures should be conducted by a committee during the fall semester to determine compliance with this Outdoor Lighting Policy, and a summary of recommendations for actions to be taken be submitted to the Space and Facilities Committee. The walk-through committee should consist of, but is not limited to, a representative from each of the following: Plant Operations, Environmental Issues Committee, and Environmental Issues Sub-committee on Energy Conservation, Environmental Safety Committee, University Police, Student Government Association, and a member of Students Against Violation of the Environment (S.A.V.E.).

3) Full consideration should be given to the appropriate placement, density, and elevation of lights, to avoid over-illumination of any given area and to minimize glare and light trespass. As an example, a higher density of lower-elevation, lower-intensity light fixtures might be chosen over a smaller number of high-elevation, high-intensity fixtures providing comparable illumination. High-elevation lights particularly should be adequately shielded to minimize lateral glare. Properly shielded and well-placed fixtures should allow adequate illumination of the ground generally not exceeding 200,000 net lumens per acre for parking lots, and 20,000-100,000 net lumens per acre for other campus areas, depending on level of use; sport field lighting levels will be higher (exception 7c).

4) No single lamp should exceed 1800 lumens unless housed in a "full cutoff" fixture (i.e. it is fully shielded) so that all light is directed downward with no lateral glare. Full cutoff fixtures are recommended for all outdoor lighting. A recommended maximum per fixture of 180 watts Low Pressure Sodium (LPS), 250 watts High Pressure Sodium (HPS) or Metal Halide (MH), and 400 watts Mercury Vapor (MV, see 7c below) should provide adequate brightness for most campus uses (this equals 20,000 to 33,000 lumens per fixture depending on lamp type), especially when proper design and placement of fixtures is considered.

5) Because energy conservation is and will increasingly be an important consideration, preference should be given to the most efficient lamp type (highest lumens/watt) that is feasibly and effectively used in a given lighting situation. For light intensities typical of large scale outdoor uses, LPS is the most efficient lamp type, followed by HPS, and then MH; MV lamps are substantially less energy efficient; these and MH also produce potentially toxic mercury waste when disposed of, and should therefore be avoided, except in special circumstances where a case can be made for their necessity. Compact fluorescent is very energy efficient and may be feasibly used for some smaller-scale lighting needs. LPS lamps may be effectively used where true color rendering is not deemed important for security or other purposes (or where the latter could be provided for by additional individual lights of other types) and are particularly advantageous near the astronomical observatory. Although somewhat true of all lamp types, MH and especially MV lamps fade in intensity over time, providing less luminance and sometimes altered quality while drawing the same wattage.

6) In campus areas that experience very little nighttime usage, it is suggested that illumination be triggered by motion detectors or manual on/off switches wherever feasible. This could be done on an experimental basis.

7) Exceptions
   a) Any state or federal laws and/or regulations that may take precedence.
   b) Temporary emergency or construction situations that may require additional lighting for performance of specific tasks.
   c) Sporting or other special events, where the special lighting is used only during the event.
   d) Illumination of monuments, structures, or flagpoles, providing every
   e) Effort is made to direct the illumination to minimize light trespass and lateral glare.
   f) Any other situation in which the VSU Administration can make a special case for a variance, subject to consultation with the Environmental Issues Committee of the Faculty Senate.

Unless mandated by changes in state or federal laws and/or regulations, this policy shall be reviewed every five years with a date of last revision being noted on the bottom of the document.

Last Revision: Spring 2011

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