



VSU Connection

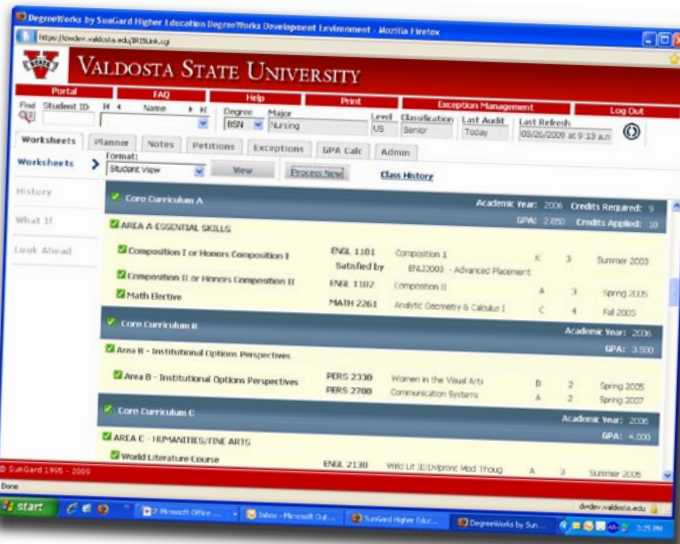
For the Faculty, Staff and Members of the Valdosta State University Community

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DegreeWorks Promotes Positive College Experience

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— said Alicia Roberson



College students are inundated with choices and decisions that can determine their educational path. According to National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), academic advising is a vital component that significantly influences positively or negatively a student's educational, social and personal development.

To assist students in obtaining a positive college experience, the University System of Georgia established an advising taskforce. The 26-member team examined current academic advising methods and outlined 10 recommendations to improve retention, progression and graduation at Georgia's public colleges and universities.

The need for an electronic advising tool to monitor and assist advising and enrollment management was a recurring theme within the taskforce findings. In response, Valdosta State, along with several other USG institutions, was selected to test DegreeWorks, a Web-based program designed to assist advisors in guiding a student's progress towards graduation.

“DegreeWorks offers features that are beneficial to students and advisors,” said Alicia Roberson, academic advisor at the

Student Success Center. “For advisors it will decrease the time it takes to complete checklists and increase accuracy when providing information to students.”

The DegreeWorks program includes online checklists, a four-year graduation planning function, GPA calculator and enrollment management.

The online checklist provides an easy and accessible method for students to monitor their course requirements for graduation and allows for greater time management and accuracy in the advising process.

Departments and colleges may create a standard four-year plan that applies to all students within the major, while still allowing flexibility in setting individual student goals. The planning component allows for enhanced scheduling options and greater enrollment management opportunities.

“If the courses are planned out prior to the advising session, this opens up time for the students to discuss issues such as study abroad, internships, graduate school and career plans with someone from the discipline in which they plan to work,” Roberson said. “Department heads will be able to pull records from the Student Education Planner to project

seats needed in courses to aid in data-driven enrollment decisions.”

The 18-member DegreeWorks implementation team includes faculty, professional advisors and representatives from the Office of the Registrar, Information Technology and the Student Success Center. Roberson, who serves as project manager, said the success of the program depends on a positive cross-campus effort.

“DegreeWorks is a significant improvement over the current CAPP module in BANNER,” said Dr. Jay Rickman, executive secretary of the Faculty Senate. “DegreeWorks is much clearer as to what requirements a student has completed and what requirements remains. DegreeWorks also has a planning function that will be very useful as well as other beneficial features, such as a GPA calculator.”

A campus-wide rollout of DegreeWorks is scheduled on June 15, faculty and can then access the program through BANNER and use the online tutorial to become more familiar with the features.

Training sessions will begin this summer and continue through the fall for student, faculty and professional advisors. For more information, call Alicia Roberson at 333-7572 or e-mail her at arroberson@valdosta.edu. ■

Need Help Advising Students?

Career and academic advising are significant aspects of faculty responsibilities. Faculty and staff are invited to “Advising In Action” from 2-3 p.m. April 23 in the HUB, located on the second floor of Odum Library. The session will explore the value of career advising and provide tips to improve advising strategies.

Call the Student Success Center at 333-7572 or e-mail Alicia Roberson at arroberson@valdosta.edu to register or for more information.



The Need Continues

Dozens of VSU faculty, staff and students have volunteered equipment and countless hours to assist neighborhoods and facilities recover in the wake of devastating flood waters. Community Development Coordinator Rhonda Barnes said she receives more than 20 calls each day from VSU employees and students asking how they can help flood victims.

“It is going to take some time to get our community back to where it needs to be and there is still a ton of need,” Barnes said. “We have all been so amazed at how VSU and the rest of the community has come together to help these people and businesses get back on their feet.”

Those interested in volunteering with the city should call 561-5612 or 671-2400.

Choir Concert Features Acclaimed Organist

The Valdosta State University Chamber Singers and Concert Choir will perform a free, public concert featuring guest organist, Dr. Joby Bell, at 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 26, at First United Methodist Church, 220 N. Patterson St. Other guest soloists include former director of VSU Choral Studies, Dr. David Johnson, baritone, and Steven Taylor on the cello.

Dr. Paul Neal, director of Choral Studies at Valdosta State University, will conduct the program, which includes two large-scale works for choir and organ — “Rejoice in the Lamb” by British composer, Benjamin Britten and “Requiem” by French composer, Maurice Duruflé.

Bell, a professor in the Hayes School of Music at Appalachian State University

in Boone, N.C., won the Audience Choice Award and second prize in the 2000 American Guild of Organists National Young Artists Competition in Organ



Performance. In August 2003, Bell served as visiting organist for weekend Masses at the churches of St-Jean-Baptiste-de-la-Salle and St-Sulpice in Paris. In 2005, he was a featured recitalist in the Summer Festival Series at the Washington National Cathedral. His concertizing throughout the United States has met with high acclaim while his performances

abroad have been enthusiastically received in Paris, Chartres, London, and throughout Scotland, Romania and Hungary. ■



Faculty and staff who graduated from VSU are encouraged to connect with students and other alumni by posting career information on the university’s Web-based mentoring network.

Career Services established the Alumni Mentoring Program on College Central Network — the nation’s leading application service provider of career services. J. Kevin Taylor, associate director of Career Services, said the network alleviates the frustration many students and recent graduates experience when they cannot locate professionals willing to share career advice. Taylor said the password-protected site will hopefully foster lasting personal and professional relationships among VSU alumni and students.

Alumni may create a mentoring profile that includes their name, job title, employer and answers to job-related questions, such as their first job, current job duties and career progression. Those who register have the option to list their e-mail addresses as a means of contact, but viewers will not be able to see mentors’ phone numbers or addresses. Alumni may update information at any time using their identification number and password.

For more about the Alumni Mentoring Network, call Career Services at (229) 333-5942 or e-mail Taylor at ktaylor@valdosta.edu.

Follow the below instructions to become an alumni mentor today!

1. Go to www.collegecentral.com/valdosta
2. Click the “Alumni” icon, then the “Mentoring Network” link
3. Select “Join Our Mentoring Network”
4. Enter the password “Mentor” and click “Add My Mentoring Profile”

Order commemorative bricks in recognition of VSU retirees
Deadline is Wednesday, April 22 ■ www.valdosta.edu/cosa/retirement



System Committed to Shared Services

As one of the state's largest employers, the University System of Georgia is committed to increasing functionality and service to approximately 40,000 employees. In 2008, the Board of Regents approved the shared services concept, which reflects the system's goals to operate more efficiently and provide greater risk management of the state's assets and dollars.

The multi-phase project includes the creation of a Shared Services Center, scheduled to open this summer in Sandersville. Located in Washington County, the new center will serve as a hub to consolidate the system's separate business functions, including payroll.

Positive Change

Dr. Denise Bogart, director of Human Resources and Employee Development, wants all Valdosta State employees to feel comfortable with the improved process and view the changes as positive.

"Change can be scary — but this is a good change, one that will strengthen and streamline many human resource and payroll functions. It also allows

employees to easily navigate and manage their personal information, payroll, benefits and leave time."

Transitions in Payroll

On July 1, VSU student employees, faculty, staff and retirees will transition to the new payroll process, administered by ADP (Automatic Data Processing). Through a secured Internet access, employees and retirees can manage annual and sick leave, payroll information, benefits and open enrollment information. All bi-weekly paid employees will report their hours via an electronic format, eliminating the need for paper timesheets and all employees will request leave time using the new system.

Most employees will not be affected by the payroll changes; however, those employees who have not registered for direct deposit or a pay card could experience a delay in receiving their monthly or bi-weekly paychecks.

According to Traycee Martin, interim vice president for Finance and Administration, as of July 1, checks will no longer be processed or mailed from campus.

"Checks will come from an alternate site and could be delayed for various reasons. Approximately 10 percent of our employees are not on direct deposit and to ensure prompt access to their paycheck, we encourage them to sign up for direct deposit or a pay card."

Bogart emphasizes that ample training will be offered to ensure a smooth transition to the new process. Employees wanting more information can visit the USG Web site at <http://www.usg.edu/sharedservices/>. ■

Due to the lengthy conversion process, Financial Services and Human Resources will be unable to perform the following from June 19 through July 17:

- Issue payroll checks or corrections (including off-cycle and direct deposit cancellations)
- Make changes to benefits
- Process new hires
- Change or reconcile leave accrual
- Process extra compensation forms

VSU Announces Policy on Policies

Valdosta State University adopted a Policy on Policies that establishes protocol for developing, editing, reviewing and archiving all university policies.

Valdosta State defines a policy as a long-term commitment by the university to an activity or practice. All university-wide policies will have a broad impact on the university community and a prescribed format for development, approval and cataloging.

Chaired by Dr. Kristina Cragg, assistant to the president for Strategic Research and Analysis, the Policy on Policies committee developed the vetting and approval process for university-wide policies.

"Establishment of the Policy on Policies allows the university to be more effective and efficient in completing its work, as the policy establishes the procedures under which university-wide policies are formed," Cragg said. "Prior to the Policy

on Policies, policies could be established in multiple ways and in some cases were not well publicized, resulting in duplication of work."

Streamlined Leadership

The 12-member committee was charged with developing the vetting and approval process for future policies. The committee's responsibility did not include developing new policies or revising existing university policies.

According to Cragg, the Policy on Policies improves the current process where divisions and departments issued separate policies, resulting in duplications, conflicts and often lacking university-wide application.

"Additionally, the Policy on Policies calls for a central repository of all university-wide policies so the entire campus can easily find answers regarding existing policies and their history," Cragg said.

Change in Motion

University policies are currently located within the jurisdiction of several divisions and/or departments, including Human Resources, Business Services, Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook and other campus entities.

Jeanne Severns, director of Internal Audits, has been charged with reviewing all existing university policies for consistency, compliance with laws and regulations, accessibility and understandability.

"We expect to begin cataloging and archiving extant policies in May, adding future policies as they are approved," Severns said. "The Policy on Policies Web site will serve as the one-stop policy reference for the Valdosta State community."

New policies can be proposed by using the Policy on Policies process, located at <http://www.valdosta.edu/vsu/policies/>. ■

Former VSU Bookstore Manager Endows Retail Award

Certified Collegiate Retailer Tommye Miller spent 30 years creating cozy store environments, employing creative merchandizing and supporting the academic mission at Valdosta State University. Since retiring in 2005 as the director and general manager for VSU Stores, Miller and her husband, Keith, have dedicated themselves to recognizing dynamic and forward-thinking college retailers.

In March, the couple announced their endowment of the National Association of College Stores (NACS) Foundation Collegiate Retailer of the Year Award - a \$5,000 award presented every other year beginning in 2011 to a college store that exemplifies retail excellence.

"My dream is that college presidents, deans of students, vice presidents of student affairs, and all of those really important people on campus will think so highly of their college stores that we won't have to rely on self-nomination," Miller told the NACS. "I want to recognize those stores who have gotten it right. This

is an award that will recognize excellence regardless of what type of store it is."

The Millers are well-known leaders in the college store industry. Tommye served as NACS president and foundation board member in addition to state and regional positions. She was presented NACS' highest award, the Order of the Eagle, in 2005. Keith Miller was committed to the college market as a sales representative for more than 20 years and served on many state and regional association boards.

Director of Auxiliary Services Rob Kellner said Miller was an invaluable member of the VSU community and remains a tremendous asset to the college retail profession. The Millers' financial support of the industry will encourage college bookstores to stay relevant in the age of digital books and increasing pressures from competing retailers.

"Tommye has always invested in professional development. She has been a leader in the field and a mentor to many

in the profession," Kellner said. "The recent contribution Tommye and Keith made to NACS will encourage others to grow professionally as they work to attain the recognition associated with this award."

The award reflects Miller's philosophy about the tools needed for successful college store operation. Award recipients must develop key relationships with faculty, students, and administrators and create an exciting and inviting store environment. They must also employ creative merchandising and emerging technologies while continuously developing staff to help them reach career goals. More specific award criteria will be posted in the future on the NACS Web site, www.nacs.org. ■



University Mourns Employee Deaths

The university community is mourning the death of two of its members. Dr. Robert Hull, 61, died April 6 at his home in Valdosta and Greg Gordon, 60, died April 10 in a vehicle accident in North Florida.

Hull was a professor of communication sciences for more than 22 years and was a vital contributor to the many aspects of shared governance of the university through his leadership as executive secretary of the Faculty Senate.

"Dr. Hull was one of the most dedicated members of his profession and instilled this dedication in every student who passed through the communications disorder program at Valdosta State," said Dr. Phil Gunter, dean of the Dewar College of Education. "This is simply a tremendous loss for the profession, his colleagues, and his students."

Hull was an active member of the Georgia Speech-Language Hearing Association for 22 years, and served in every position within the association, including two terms as president. On

April 3, the association recognized his contributions for "lifetime service to the state and national association."

For nearly five years, Gordon served as associate director of Physical Plant, where he supervised approximately 130 employees in the areas of maintenance, grounds, custodial, warehouse and work order management.

"Within Physical Plant there is a great amount of 'behind the scenes' work that is often unnoticed — Greg was masterful in coordinating these duties," said Ray Sable, director of Physical Plant and Facilities. "In addition to highly publicized events, Greg was involved in a multitude of details required to make the everyday event successful. Because of his position, Greg had the opportunity to work across the spectrum of the university and impact a lot of people. He was always concerned about the personnel at Physical Plant and making sure administrators understood how their decisions impacted the workers."

Gordon was a vital contributor in the initiation of the university's recycling program including creating a partnership with the City of Valdosta to incorporate the university's recycling efforts as part of the city's community wide program. He also recently supervised the relocation of faculty and staff from Nevins Hall and directed the renovations of Pine Hall, Ashley Hall, Environmental and Occupation Safety and the Farber Health facility. ■

Got some news to share?
Send it our way — news@valdosta.edu

VSUConnection

Editor | Kate Heine • **Photographer** | Bobby Lacey
Designer | Jeff Grant

The *VSU Connection* is a monthly newsletter designed to inform VSU personnel and students about the latest campus-wide news. Check out the *Connection* online at www.valdosta.edu/news/

For more information or to submit a story idea, e-mail Kate Heine, Communications Specialist, Communications Unit, at kaheine@valdosta.edu.