



VSU Connection

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

Vol.1 • No.12 | March 25, 2008



Reflections

*Outgoing Dean
Treaded Lightly,
but Leaves
Lasting
Footprints*

For an administrator who strives to be “transparent” in her work with faculty and students, Dr. Linda Calendrillo has made quite an impact on VSU and its constituents during her past five years as the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Brooklyn native, who swims in her backyard pool nearly every day, said she never wastes time dancing around answers. She openly assesses each issue and gives her opinion — yes or no. People appreciate her straightforward approach, the 56-year-old said.

“The thing I admire most about Linda is her ability to make decisions,” said Dr. Paul Riggs, head of the history department. “She’s a very tough-minded and decisive person — but she’s also transparent and human about it with a great sense of humor.”

Faculty and students throughout campus have made no secret they will miss Calendrillo when she leaves VSU at the end of the 2007-08 school year. Her innovative approach, Riggs said, has been instrumental in a number of important changes and new programs.

Calendrillo said she is most proud of her involvement with the creation of the Center for Applied Research and the formation of the Student Success Center.

“The Center for Applied Research is a

wonderful resource for our students to gain research experience and for faculty to offer their applied research expertise to our 41-county service region,” Calendrillo said. “I also pushed hard for the Student Success Center. It is important for students to have a centralized place to go to get the tutoring help they need.”

It was tutoring as a graduate student at Purdue University West Lafayette, Ind., that inspired Calendrillo to teach full time — a calling the avid reader found difficult to give up when she transitioned into administration.

“I realized that there are a lot more good teachers than there are good administrators,” said Calendrillo, who finds time to teach about one class each semester. “My strength as a professor was always one-on-one instruction, so I think that is why I have felt effective in the mentoring and personal interactions required of a dean.”

Dr. James LaPlant, associate dean for the College of Arts and

Sciences, said he feels honored to have begun his administrative career under Calendrillo’s leadership.

Beyond her outside-the-office guidance in the ways of Pai Gow Poker, LaPlant said the dean has taught him that having fun and working hard to make an impact are not mutually exclusive.

Calendrillo came to VSU during a time of great growth, but said she has been impressed with the poise and forethought the university has maintained through the transitions.

“We’ve brought in a lot more students, but we are not a revolving door,” said Calendrillo, who had previously worked as the head of the English department at Western Kentucky University. “We have worked hard to keep and cherish all students and their experiences.”

Calendrillo and her husband of 33 years, John Guzlowski — a Pulitzer Prize nominated poet, plan to move to Virginia to be near their daughter, a high school English teacher. Calendrillo said she is eager to finally take time for herself to visit family, travel with her husband and explore future career options.

“I have never taken a sabbatical or extended leave, so I am eager to have some time to take a deep breath and decide what to do next with my life,” she said. ■



Dr. Linda Calendrillo, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, shares a laugh with student assistant Jenna Mulvey. Calendrillo said she cherishes the one-on-one interaction she has with faculty, staff and students.

BOBBY LACEY

BOBBY LACEY

Sociology Classes Collected 600 Pounds of Food for the Hungry

More than 50 students in three sociology classes collected enough food to balance the scale with a giant Pacific octopus and its 16-foot tentacles.

Dr. Kathleen Lowney's Introduction to Social Problems classes donated about 600 pounds of food to America's Second Harvest, the largest domestic hunger-relief organization in the United States. The students — who are studying methods that bring about social policies — decided to be a mechanism for change instead of solely reading about them. Lowney set up a WebCT discussion for students to propose community service ideas, and the hearty list of suggestions gradually narrowed to collecting food for the hungry.

"Students said they were pleasantly surprised by the amount of food they collected, and that it was rather easy," said

Lowney, who has taught SOCI 1160 for 21 years. "I hope that is what they remember — that small groups of people can make a difference, and that all it takes is some organizing skills to get an idea off the ground."



Lowney said the discussion about which project the class should tackle spurred students to participate in additional volunteer opportunities.

Several students joined the VSU chapter of Habitat for Humanity, and a few other students established a Relay for Life team. Lowney said she remembers the first time she realized a small group of eager students could make a big impact. As an undergraduate at the University of Washington, she and her classmates were instrumental in the establishment of the university's first rape crisis and women's center.

"A class I took decided that we needed a women's center, so along with the UW administration, we strategized how to create one," Lowney said. "Several of us continued to agitate for the next year or so and the Center came to fruition. I think that taught me that students have power to create change on campus and to do good for their community. I try to pass that on to my students, and that is what our applied and clinical sociology program attempts to do."

To people who say the college students of today don't give back, Lowney says that perception is false.

"I think every generation thinks the one(s) that come after it are not as politically active, socially active, etc. Each generation cares, just in different ways," Lowney said. "College students today may use social networks like Facebook to get the word out about their activism. I think this U.S. presidential campaign season has shown that college students care deeply about the future of our nation." ■



About 500 people are expected to attend performances of Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues" at 7 p.m. March 28 and 29 in the Hugh C. Bailey Science auditorium (room 1011). Twenty-three VSU students will perform the award-winning episodic play based on 200 interviews Ensler conducted with women about sex, relationships, violence against women — and of course — their vaginas.

VSU's Women's and Gender Studies Program is sponsoring the event, which has grown throughout the world from a celebration of femininity to the premiere event associated with V-Day — a global non-profit movement established in 1998 to stop violence against women and girls. In 2008, more than 3,700 V-Day benefit events, such as "The Vaginas Are Coming!" at VSU, are being held between Feb. 1 and March 31 to raise money for shelters, crisis centers and educators working to end sexual and physical violence against women. Valdosta State's two productions will donate 10 percent of the proceeds to Katrina Warriors, women affected by Hurricane Katrina. The

remainder of the money raised from ticket sales will fund the Women's and Gender Studies Sexual Assault Prevention and Intervention Program.

"Some of the monologues are sad, some are funny; but they all relate to women's sexual experiences whether they be good or bad," said Heather Harvey, a junior Mass Media student involved with the monologues. "We want to get knowledge out there about sexual violence against women. We also want women to know its okay to love your body and all its parts."

Harvey said that although the performances are clearly focused on the female experience, men — women's sons, fathers and lovers — are encouraged to attend the event.

"Knowledge knows no gender, so it is important for both men and women to come," Harvey said. "We want to get knowledge out there about sexual violence against women, and we want to educate and share the female experience with both men and women."

Tickets to each performance, which cost \$10 for general admission and \$5 for students and seniors, may be purchased in advance at the Women's and Gender Studies Program office in Carswell Hall at 1526 N. Oak St. and at the Department

of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice in the University Center. Tickets may also be purchased at the door the night of the event, but since performances have sold out in the past, organizers encourage people to purchase tickets in advance.

"Last year was our first year of participating in V-Day and performing "The Vagina Monologues." We had three productions and all three nights were sold out," said Tracy Meyers, director of the Women's and Gender Studies Program. "We received lots of praise from students, faculty and staff for participating in this global movement. One man from the community said to me, 'I am so glad you are doing this; we were wondering if "The Vagina Monologues" would ever get performed here. It is about time.'"

For more information, call the Women's and Gender Studies Program office at (229) 249-4842. ■

VSUConnection

Editor/Designer | Kate Heine

The *VSU Connection* is a semimonthly 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 about the *Connection* or to submit a story idea, e-mail Kate Heine, Communications Specialist, Communications Unit, at kahaine@valdosta.edu.