

# President's Message

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## Working To Keep You Informed

In my first three weeks as president, a clear understanding of campus history and pride has begun to emerge. I've enjoyed the opportunities to meet with faculty, staff, students, community members, and look forward to working with all of you toward the continued success of Valdosta State University.

Part of my administrative focus will be to keep the campus and community informed about presidential activities and decisions. In this initial issue, I will address the vice presidential and dean searches, strategic planning, campus-wide address, and renovations to Nevins Hall.

### Searches

Although the search process for Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Student Affairs has been under way for several weeks, I find it necessary to extend the review of applications for both positions to March 1, 2002, and put on hold the search to fill positions for Dean, College of Education; Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; and Dean, College of the Arts. The search for the position of Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity Programs and Multicultural Affairs is also on hold until the selection of the two Vice Presidents.

It is appropriate for a new President to be actively involved in the selection of two key members of the President's Cabinet, and for the new Vice Presidents to have the same involvement in the selection of their Deans and other administrative positions within the University. The adjustment in the review process will allow time to advise colleagues both locally and throughout the United States of the available positions and broaden the pool of candidates.

I appreciate the search committees' work thus far, and plan to remain involved as candidates are narrowed to a select number. Faculty, staff, and students will have an opportunity to meet finalists during campus visits and hear a presentation focused on VSU's future. Each finalist will be required to outline his/her vision for the position, related responsibilities, and Valdosta State University.

### Strategic Planning

To date, I have completed two conference calls with Solutions 21, the professional strategic plan facilitator based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The company is well versed in developing strategic plans with institutions of higher education. I have worked closely with Solutions 21 during the last four years and remain confident team members will develop a quality planning document for VSU.

## President's Message

Tentative dates for the VSU planning retreat are March 21-23, 2002. Approximately 35 to 40 individuals will be invited to participate in the three-day retreat. I will request the Faculty Senate, Council on Staff Affairs, and Student Government Association to select four members from each constituent group.

A sound strategic plan begins with shared governance. My role is to work with you and serve as a catalyst to execute the plan. The retreat will be the first in a series of steps to develop a clear direction, defined goals, benchmarks, and accountability checks. I assure you the resulting planning documents will not draw dust on the shelf. The retreat outcomes will have a significant impact on VSU's future operations.

In forthcoming months, I will launch initiatives that will include an updated campus master plan, facilities plan, and budget plan, all coordinated to function in unison with the campus strategic plan and the University System's mandated benchmarks.

### **Campus-Wide Address**

I have scheduled my first address to faculty, staff, and students, Thursday, February 28, at 11:00 a.m., in Whitehead Auditorium. The purpose is to outline my early impressions of VSU, share points of discussion during my own search process, and respond to my first three weeks in office. The address is open to all faculty, staff, and students.

### **Nevins Hall**

Governor Barnes' mid-term budget included \$4.5 million for the renovation of Nevins Hall.

Nevins Hall was dedicated in 1966 when VSU's student enrollment was approximately 2000. Since then an annex was constructed and the student population increased to well over 9,000. VSU's programmatic needs have changed and the building is being renovated to reflect these changes. This particular project consists of the design and renovation of approximately one half of Nevins Hall (53,000 square feet). The following departments will be housed in the renovated space:

- Department of Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences
- Engineering Program (with Georgia Tech)
- Math and Computer Science Classrooms
- College of the Arts (Selected Programs)

I have met with VSU staff and assigned architects, and now have an overview of projected use of the renovated facilities.

The Lowndes County State Delegation has been instrumental in securing funds for Valdosta State University and on behalf of the entire University, I thank area legislators for strong support and dedication to our mission. "We are hopeful the House and Senate will approve the Governor's recommendation," said Senator Tim Golden.