

President's Message

Ronald M. Zaccari



March 24, 2003

Strategic Planning and Budgeting

One year ago, the campus was entering the initial phase of Strategic Planning. Today, thanks to the dedicated efforts of many faculty, staff, and students, VSU has a defined Strategic Plan with eight goals and accompanying action steps. Each week we witness further progress such as additional parking and advancement toward our goal to improve student housing. As stated during my campus-wide budget presentation, strategic planning is more critical now than ever in order to direct our resources toward the University's top priorities—the priorities you identified through the new budget process.

On March 4, using information obtained through the budget process, Cabinet members presented their department's or division's initiatives to the Budget Advisory Council. Based on these presentations, funds will be allocated for general budgetary items—operating supplies, travel, and capital equipment expenses. Beyond these general operating items, available funding will be allocated for new initiatives that directly support the University's Strategic Plan.

In the March 5 campus-wide address, I outlined the fiscal challenges currently facing the state of Georgia, the University System, and VSU. Tough times call for creative measures, and I asked each of you to propose creative solutions to produce greater efficiencies across campus. I am impressed with your support and understanding and, especially, your responses.

On March 11, 12 and 13, budget unit heads participated in follow-up sessions to identify measures that will produce increased efficiencies for the campus. There were 163 independent responses, leading to general themes that emerged from all three sessions, including conserving energy, conserving paper through greater use of e-mail and electronic forms, and centralized purchasing of routine supplies such as paper. The savings we realize through such measures will be **redirected** to meet VSU's prioritized needs.

University Planning Advisory Council

The first meeting of the new University Planning Advisory Council took place on February 19. The Council convened three additional times over the next two weeks to hear reports from the chairs of each of the eight Strategic Goal Committees.

President's Message

Council members include the following representatives from VSU and the community: Dr. Chet Ballard, Myrna Ballard, Dr. Robert Bauer, Mike Beverly, Dr. Ernestine Clark, Jason Davenport, Dr. Marty Giddings, Dr. Shirley Hardin, Mike Harpe, Dr. Phyllis Holland, Rebecca Kimbrough, Dr. Marsha Krotseng (chair), Sue Lampert, Emmitt Nolan, Brian Roberts, Dr. Ruth Salter, Dr. Ed Sheeley, Patrick Smith, Lee Williams, and Dr. Ronald M. Zaccari. Ex-officio members include: Paula Hutchinson, Charles Moore and Dr. Jerry Siegrist.

This group is vital to the success of the University's overall planning model, which consists of the strategic, budget, master, facilities, and external plans. Each member of the Council serves as an ambassador for VSU's planning process and assists in moving the process forward through communicating with the campus and external constituents.

HUB

For the past year, the university community has been focusing on the importance of strategic partnerships—on campus and throughout the region. The HUB Learning Cooperative has evolved through this focus.

HUB is an idea that began last year when faculty and administrators came together to seek creative solutions to address various needs on campus. It is an emerging and evolving concept of collegial professional development that is intended to connect people and support partnerships across campus. HUB embraces the true spirit of partnership, as it works to meet the common educational, professional, social and cultural needs of its members.

On April 25, VSU's faculty, staff and administrators are invited to attend an informal reception to learn more about HUB. This event will take place from 3–6 p.m., at the Georgia Avenue Reception House. It will allow the campus community to gather for a time of fellowship and to encourage and facilitate partnerships. I have made a firm commitment to HUB and have become a charter member. I hope you will join me in supporting the exciting work of HUB.

HUB's Web site is <http://teach.valdosta.edu/hub/>

Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee

The Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee held its initial meeting on Feb. 11, and since this time members have been actively identifying the parking and transportation needs of the campus. I support the tremendous advances this group has made in the first few weeks of its existence. One hundred new parking spaces have been reconfigured for students' use in locations convenient to main campus. On March 18, the committee released the results of the parking study and outlined future plans to open additional student lots close to campus.

The committee is comprised of three representatives each from the Council on Staff Affairs, Faculty Senate, and the Student Government Association, and one representative from both the City of Valdosta and the local community. Members are: Shannon McGee, Mike McKinley, Stanley Jones, Dr. Chris Eason (chair), Dr. Lee Allen, Michael Taylor, Cody Guined, Page Vickery, Angela Washington, Von Shipman, and Dr. Richard Saeger.

President's Message

Searches

The search process continues for a Vice President for University Advancement. In February, two candidates visited the campus for interviews and made formal presentations to faculty, staff and students. This search remains open and the search committee is working to attract additional candidates to interview in the near future.

Candidates for the position of Dean of the College of Arts and Dean of the College of Education have been narrowed to three candidates each. These interviews will take place in the next few weeks and each candidate will make a presentation to faculty, staff and students. Everyone is encouraged to attend the presentations and participate in the review process.

Committee members have selected 11 candidates from a pool of 113 applications for the Chief Information Officer position. Members will narrow the list to five candidates and complete extensive background checks. The committee will then select three finalists and invite them to campus for interviews during the month of April.

More than 50 applications have been submitted for the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences position. Committee members are in the process of reviewing applications. The committee will identify three finalists to invite to campus for interviews in April.

Enrollment for Spring Semester

Enrollment continues to rise. This semester's enrollment is 9,636—which is the highest spring semester enrollment in the University's history. It represents an increase of approximately 9 percent from spring semester 2002, which had an enrollment of 8,856.

The University System of Georgia's Fall 2002 Semester Enrollment Report showed that the System's overall enrollment was 233,098—an increase of 7.1 percent from fall 2001. VSU also experienced a 7 percent increase from the previous fall semester enrollment.

As we prepare for a projected 5 to 7 percent enrollment increase this fall, I encourage the entire campus to remain focused on our primary mission of teaching and learning, and service to the students.

Faculty Senate Support

After arriving at VSU last year, I established a priority of instilling a level of trust across campus. This atmosphere of trust was demonstrated during last month's Faculty Senate meeting, when members of the Senate determined that moving the mandatory summer meeting to May would satisfy the Senate's statutory requirements. In the past, there has been some concern that University policies were changed during summer months, when the Senate was not in session. This concern goes against the spirit of trust and cooperation that we have worked so hard to establish. I believe the Senate's support represents the spirit of open communication that is continuing to develop between the faculty and administration.

President's Message

I am pleased to announce that the Faculty Senate has formed an ad hoc committee to design a commencement ceremony that will celebrate both students and faculty. I encourage faculty and staff to volunteer to serve on this committee and create new ideas for improving this ceremony. Dr. Bob Hull is chairing the newly formed committee.

Administrative Interns

I am very pleased with the progress of the University's administrative internship program. In January, Drs. Deborah Robinson, Andrew Brovey, and Paul Fadil were selected as administrative interns.

Dr. Robinson has been working directly with Dr. Louis Levy, vice president for Academic Affairs, on various University issues including the budget, strategic plan, the faculty annual evaluation process and numerous academic projects.

Dr. Brovey has been working with Dr. Marsha Krotseng, chief planning officer, in reviewing the eight goals associated with VSU's strategic plan. He has also assisted in consolidating reports from the strategic planning committees and will work with focus groups to establish some specific implementation plans related to teaching and learning.

Dr. Fadil was given the responsibility of coordinating a faculty workload study. This study will assist in determining how the faculty workload at VSU compares to similar institutions across the country. It will provide crucial data for the strategic planning and budgeting process.

Thank You

I appreciate the high level of enthusiasm you have continuously demonstrated this past year. Your enthusiasm will provide the momentum needed to accomplish our current strategic goals and define new initiatives that will contribute to the ongoing excellence we have embraced at VSU.