

**Regional Impact and Partnerships Task Force
University Planning Advisory Council
Valdosta State University
MINUTES
March 12, 2004 Meeting**

The first meeting of the Regional Impact and Partnerships Task Force of the VSU University Planning Advisory Council took place on Friday, March 12 at 1:30 p.m. in the Seminar Room of the Department of Psychology and Counseling.

Task Force members in attendance included Bob Bauer (Co-Chair), Lynn Bell, Richard Lee, Kurt Keppler, Jan Fackler, Christy Yates, Myrna Ballard, John Boatwright, and Charles Harmon (Co-Chair)

Task Force members absent included Ann Kasun, James LaPlant, Pamela Hertzog, Chere Peguesse, and Mary Willis.

Dr. Bauer began the meeting at 1:30 p.m. with a welcome and asked Chief Planning Officer Dr. Marsha Krotseng to provide the charge to the Task Force.

Dr. Krotseng thanked the members for volunteering to serve on the Task Force. She said the overall charge is to identify and review existing data that indicate the economic impact of VSU and to look at ways in which members of the VSU community broadly serve the region through boards, partnerships and collaborative efforts. She said the Task Force should provide recommendations “on how we can get some broader input from faculty, staff, and students” on the outreach and economic impact efforts of the University. Dr. Krotseng said the recommendations are due by mid-April and no later than April 26.

Dr. Bauer pointed out some of the data provided to the Task Force by Dr. Ruth Salter of Institutional Research & Policy Analysis. Charles Harmon provided some additional information on news coverage of three previous economic impact studies and the resulting publicity.

Dr. Bauer said that as a future economic impact study is prepared, it is important to review VSU’s overall impact on economic development in the region it serves and not just a few counties. He also said it is important to note the overall quality of life issues that are enhanced by the activities of VSU.

The Task Force discussed ways in which current data could be structured to provide an updated economic impact report. Jan Fackler was asked to contact the Board of Regents to see if they plan to do an economic impact update soon.

Dr. Keppler provided a handout of a recent economic impact overview he used in discussions with a special committee of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of

Commerce, including local businesses. The information and a survey of students provided a message from the students that they would spend a lot more money in the city and county if more businesses would cater to their interests. Dr. Keppler and Myrna Ballard are working on this project together along with business and student leaders. The effort is designed to help retail business learn to market to students and for students to have an overall better quality of life near the campus and in the surrounding area.

Dr. Bauer said he was glad to see the University and the Chamber working together. “VSU has to be the best industry in the community and we hope others will recognize this and respond to the needs of our students.”

There was discussion about reviewing the overall housing and transportation logistics related to campus growth and the need for additional parking.

Dr. Bauer provided a brief slide show listing some additional data. As a follow-up, he said a part of the Task Force role is to “do an audit of what is going on.” Statistics he pointed to included that Georgia is ranked 24th in per household income and has the 10th best unemployment rate. He stated some additional positives, but said programs for Georgia’s children are behind other states. He said the University serves an area of counties including persistent poverty counties and that this has an impact on children and their ability to enter college. He said the University could play a greater role in helping to encourage a better quality of life in the region.

Dr. Keppler stated that Georgia ranks #3 in the nation in the number of people coming to the state from other states.

Myrna Ballard said that a major goal of the Chamber is to bring more jobs to the area. VSU needs to work with the business community to grow jobs for college graduates. She said there is a community need to establish a vision for the overall area.

Richard Lee pointed to the current efforts in the community where more partnerships are being established

Dr. Bauer said that in summary the Task Force needs to encourage the updating of the University’s economic data, showcase student and faculty achievements through publicity, educate local businesses, and talk about entrepreneurial development and the changing role of VSU in the community with all of its diversified activities.

Myrna Ballard and Dr. Keppler will look at the best practices of other schools that are VSU’s peer institutions or benchmarks and the roles chambers of commerce play in promoting their overall economic development efforts.

It was decided the Task Force will next meet again at 2 p.m. on Monday, March 29.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3 p.m.
(Respectfully submitted by Charles Harmon, Co-Chair)