

**Valdosta State University
General Faculty Meeting
January 11, 2008**

The Valdosta State University General Faculty Meeting was held at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, January 11th in the Magnolia Room, University Center.

President Ronald M. Zaccari welcomed everyone to the meeting. He provided a brief overview of the agenda and informed the group that he would leave the meeting prior to the last agenda item, which was the discussion regarding the presidential search.

SACS/QEP update – Dr. Jane Kinney

Dr. Jane Kinney, Director of Accreditation and Compliance, provided an overview of VSU's SACS reaffirmation process. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) is scheduled to conduct an on-site review at VSU in 2010. Of the 91 institutions scheduled for reaffirmation in 2010, 19 are like VSU – public universities offering one or more doctorates. One of the most notable changes in the SACS assessment process is the emphasis on assessment, linking educational objectives with learning outcomes and the mission statement for continuous improvement. Dr. Kinney noted that another new aspect of SACS's reaffirmation process is that pre-reaffirmation evaluations will be conducted at the 5th year. Therefore, VSU's first pre-reaffirmation visit is scheduled for 2015.

The faculty's role in preparing for the 2010 SACS visit includes:

- Including statements of learning outcomes and standards in all syllabi**
- Starting summer 2008 submitting e-copies of all syllabi to department head**
- Completing credential and electronic CV forms when faculty receive them (May 2008)**
- In each department, evaluating its assessment program to make sure it is viable, up-to-date, and producing useful data that is being used to determine any changes in curriculum, etc. (i.e., "closing the loop")**
- In each department, instituting a system for evaluating part-time/adjunct faculty**

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a new project linked to the mission of the institution and demonstrating that learning is at the heart of this institution. The QEP is focused on enhancing student learning and should be tailored to the needs and strengths of VSU. Mr. Mike Savoie is the chair of the Phase I Task Force for QEP.

Additionally, a University Assessment Committee is being established to assist all academic departments, programs, and divisions as well as all

administrative divisions to continuously develop and refine their assessment plans. Dr. Julia Lee is the chair of the University Assessment Committee (UAC).

Whom to contact if you have questions regarding specific aspects of SACS

SACS Leadership Team

- President Ronald M. Zaccari, Chair
- Dr. Louis Levy, Vice President for Academic Affairs
- SACS Liaison, Dr. Kristina M. Cragg, Strategic Research and Analysis
- Compliance Certification Coordinator – Dr. Jane Kinney, Director of Accreditation and Compliance

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

- Phase I Task Force – Mr. Mike Savoie, Chair
- Phase II Task Force – TBA
- Phase III Task Force – TBA

University Assessment Committee (UAC)

- Dr. Julie Lee, Chair

A PowerPoint regarding SACS reaffirmation process, provided by Dr. Kinney, may be viewed at

[http://www.valdosta.edu/sacs/documents/What Is SACS General Faculty Meeting.pdf](http://www.valdosta.edu/sacs/documents/What_Is_SACS_General_Faculty_Meeting.pdf).

Enrollment and Retention Rates – Dr. Kristina Cragg

Dr. Kristina Cragg provided a presentation (including charts and graphs) on enrollments, retention rates, and a brief overview of action steps VSU is taking to improve retention rates. Enrollments at VSU have steadily increased over the past four years with current undergraduate enrollment at 9,653. Fall 2007 was a record year of enrollments – undergraduate, record graduate, and total enrollments.

While VSU has retained 134 more students in Fall 2007 compared to Fall 2006, the retention rate has fallen because the number of first-time full-time students retained was a smaller percentage of the total number of first-time full-time students, compared to previous years. Freshmen retention rates are based upon first-time, full-time freshmen – which does not include transfer or part-time students.

Dr. Cragg noted that Fall 2007 marks the second consecutive year that VSU's retention rates have fallen to their current level of 71.4%. Of the students who leave VSU, most do so after the first year (24% to 29%). A number of other students (12% to 18%) leave after their second year. Students who continue through their third year at VSU tend to stay through graduation.

Dr. Cragg showed data with the first to second year (i.e. freshman) retention rates by SAT score from Fall 2002 through Fall 2006. The chart showed that there was little difference in retention rates of students when examining SAT scores. However, high school GPA and first-semester GPA served as better predictors of retention. Dr. Cragg provided detailed data that showed the

retention rates of students using a combination of SAT score and first semester GPA as well as high school GPA and first semester GPA. The results show that despite the SAT or high school GPA that a student enters VSU with, it is the student's first-semester GPA that proves to be a critical indicator of retention. Dr. Cragg noted that VSU is not the only institution in the USG system that has experienced a decline in retention rates this year. Eighteen of the 33 institutions (Medical College of Georgia and Gwinnett College excluded) experienced a decline in retention rates from Fall 2006 to Fall 2007. While 15 institutions experienced a decline in system-wide retention rates (i.e., the student left their first institution, but continued to attend college at another institution in USG), VSU's system-wide retention rate increased by 0.88%. One possible reason for the system-wide decrease is changes to eligibility for the HOPE scholarship. For example, 85% of freshman at VSU received a HOPE scholarship in Fall 2006. By Fall 2007, the number dropped to 50%. Dr. Cragg recognized that there may be other factors that need further investigation.

Dr. Cragg outlined a two Phase process for increasing student retention. Phase I – Right now includes identifying students who have a high probability for not being retained to Fall 2008. Using statistical modeling based on eight years of historical data, 542 first-time, full-time freshman were identified as in need of developing a "Student Success Plan" for spring 2008. The names of the 542 students have been divided among the Student Success Enhancement Team (chaired by Dr. Levy, Vice President for Academic Affairs) that includes Dr. Cragg, Dr. Chere Peguesse, Alicia Roberson, Terence Sullivan, Maggie Roberts, Marsha Walden, and Rozelle Slaymon. Each advisor is working with their list of students to contact them and help them be successful in spring 2008. So far, response from students has been positive. Phase II – Spring 2008 will take the entire semester to look further into VSU's data to examine trends, talk with faculty, staff, and students across campus, and examine peer institutions student retention efforts, before drawing conclusions.

Additionally, Dr. Cragg demonstrated the new "Summary Fact Reports" that were created by Strategic Research & Analysis that are available through the department's EAS Portal. Fact Reports are available at the university, college, department, and major levels and provide granular data such as retention rates, graduation rates, numbers of students, etc. – in a "user-ready" format (pdf, excel, html, etc.). These Fact Reports are available for the last 30 semesters (fall, spring, and summer for 10 years). These documents are accessible by all VSU employees with an EAS Portal account (which can be obtained through Strategic Research & Analysis). A copy of the Fall 2007 Fact Reports have been provided to all Deans along with an additional copy to provide to department chairs. Dr. Cragg welcomed comments and feedback for improving the data provided on the Fact Sheets.

A PowerPoint regarding the update on enrollments and retention rates, provided by Dr. Cragg, may be viewed at http://www.valdosta.edu/pres/documents/fall_enrollment.pdf.

Dean of Arts and Sciences Search – Dr. Louis Levy

Dr. Louis Levy thanked Dr. Linda Calendrillo for her service as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. She played an integral role in starting the initiative for the student success center as well as the center for applied research.

Dr. Levy informed the group that Dr. Paul Riggs will chair the search committee for the Dean's position and a list of committee members will be sent out on the VSU faculty listserv. An announcement has been placed in the Chronicle of Higher Education and 18 applications have been received as of January 11th, 2008. The application review process will begin in February and continue through March. The applicant pool will be narrowed down to 10 candidates during April after which five unranked names will be submitted to the President as well as the Vice President for Academic Affairs. After review of the five candidates the list will be narrowed down to 3 candidates and those individuals will be invited to VSU for on-campus interviews. The anticipated start date is July 1, 2008.

Enrollment/Freshman Academic Probation – Mr. Walter Peacock

Mr. Walter Peacock informed the group that intervention letters were sent by the Office of Admissions and the Student Success Center to all freshmen who were on probation at the end of Fall 2005, Fall 2006, and Fall 2007. The Student Success Center letter invited students to use the resources of the Center. The letter from the Office of Admissions required students to make an appointment with their department head or the department head's designee for a conference to discuss grades and how they could improve their academic performance. Upon completion of the conference the students would be asked to sign an academic contract. Emails, under Dr. Louis Levy's name, were sent to students with unsatisfactory in-progress grades (Fall 2007) recommending the following action(s): see their instructor, visit the student success center, see their advisor, or possibly withdraw if all is lost.

Mr. Peacock indicated that Spring 2007 enrollment was 10,225 and as of the date of the General Faculty meeting the Spring 2008 enrollment numbers were still being calculated. Mr. Peacock also noted that during the six year period that Dr. Zaccari has been President at Valdosta State University that undergraduate enrollment has increased by 1,883 students and overall enrollment has increased by 2,045 students.

Mr. Peacock also noted that as of January 11, 2008 there have been 3,665 applications received for Fall 2008 which is an increase of approximately 750 applications over the same time last year.

Presidential Search – Dr. Cindy Tori

Dr. Cindy Tori introduced herself as the chair of the presidential search committee and introduced other members of the committee who were in attendance at the General Faculty meeting. The members of the committee are

- **Dr. Cynthia R. Tori, associate professor, marketing & economics, chair of search committee**
- **Dr. James T. Baxter, chair, chemistry**
- **Dr. Christine A. James, associate professor, philosophy & religious studies, faculty senator**
- **Dr. Philip L. Gunter, dean, College of Education**
- **Dr. John Gaston, dean, College of Arts Outreach**
- **Ms. Verna Harvey, legal assistant, Legal Affairs**
- **Mr. Raymond Sable, director, Physical Plant & Facilities Planning**
- **Mr. Russell F. Mast, dean of students, Division of Student Affairs**
- **Mr. Jonathon Stroble, president, Student Government Association**
- **Ms. Katisha Mathis, student**
- **Mr. Wayne Rambo, alumni, VSU Alumni Association**
- **Mr. Tyson McLane, chair, VSU Foundation**

All committee members were asked by the University System of Georgia Chancellor's office to serve on the committee. During early January the search committee met with Dr. Susan Herbst, University System of Georgia executive vice chancellor and chief academic officer as well as Regent Elridge W. McMillan, chair of the Special Regents' Search Committee, to receive the charge to the committee. The search committee will develop a position description, place announcements in appropriate national media and conduct on-campus interviews. Parker Executive Search of Atlanta will assist the committee in the search and recruitment process. The campus-based committee will forward the credentials of five unranked candidates to the Special Regents' Search Committee, to be chaired by Regent Elridge W. McMillan. Regents Robert F. Hatcher, Doreen Stiles Poitevint, Benjamin J. Tarbuton III and Allan M. Vigil will serve as members of the Special Regents' Search Committee. This committee is responsible for recommending finalists to the chancellor of the University System who then recommends a single candidate to the full Board of Regents. As information is available it will be posted on <http://www.valdosta.edu/presidentialsearch>. Anyone who would like to nominate an individual for the position of President may contact Dr.

Tori via email at crtori@valdosta.edu or Parker Executive Search via email at lwilder@parkersearch.com. The applicant's names will remain confidential throughout the process. The only names that will be released will be those of the individuals that are invited to VSU for on-campus interviews. Dr. Tori welcomed questions and comments.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.