



Notes From The President

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“Thank you all for joining me. I do not deserve your kindness. We are not only friends on the job, we are friends beyond the job. This is my life, this is my passion. This is what I wake up in the morning to do. If I were not able to get excited about this, I would just wait in bed and wait for the Lord to take me.”

These are the words shared by Mr. Earnest Duncan on the occasion of his 40th anniversary of service to students, faculty, and friends of Valdosta State University. If you know Ernie, you will know that these words are genuine.

I am humbled to know that Ernie, like many of our faculty and staff, find meaning in their service far deeper than an hour’s work for an hour’s pay. I recognize this when I see faculty joining students in labs on Saturday mornings, ensembles traveling throughout the night on uncomfortable busses, and staff in service centers handling complaints for individuals who seem to have lost perspective.

Mostly, I am humbled to recognize an achievement almost unheard of in higher education. Despite a \$15 million budget reduction, our faculty and staff have provided the class schedules for 12,400 students, 900 more than last year. The average number of credit hours taken by each student has gone up, despite the new tuition structure charging students for additional courses. The faculty and staff have obviously provided opportunities that may not have been available in better financial times.

Echoing Ernie Duncan, your kindness and commitment distinguish Valdosta State among all other regional universities. Like Ernie, all evidence supports that your work is your passion. Your efforts rise above any monetary incentive or reward.

During 2008-09, Valdosta State was awarded \$2,607,292 in new grants and contracts, with a total of 70 proposals. Already this semester, several grants have been secured, including:

- Dr. Jean Temple, College of Nursing, received an award from the Department of Health and Human Services and Health Resources and Services Administration to assist the Lowndes County Partnership for Health in providing medical services for the uninsured employed adults in Lowndes County.
- Dr. Cliff Lipscomb, Langdale College of Business Administration, received a grant from the Department of Transportation-Federal Highway Administration, Georgia Department of Transportation, and the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to conduct a forecasting study of population and economical variables through 2035.

- Frank Barnas and Mike Savoie, Communication Arts, received funds from the City of Valdosta to continue operating Mediacom channel 17, a governmental access channel that provides information to the Valdosta-Lowndes community.
- Dr. Mark Blackmore, Biology Department, received funds to continue assisting the Lowndes County Board of Health with a mosquito collection project and West Nile virus research.
- Dr. Michael Baun, Political Science, received a continuation award from the U.S. Department of Education through North Georgia College and State University to expand the development and implementation of an online interdisciplinary bachelor's degree in transatlantic studies.
- Dr. Dorothy Dye, director of My Friend's House, Alzheimer's Day Care Program and Dr. Marty Giddings, Division of Social Work, received a grant from the Department of Human Resources and Southeast Georgia Area Agency on Aging for the continuation of the Alzheimer's Day Care Program.
- Dr. Robert L. Gannon, Biology Department, received a grant from the Institut de Recherches Servier to continue research on the evaluation of the efficacy of proprietary compounds developed by Servier in modulating hamster circadian activity rhythms and anti-anxiety and anti-depressive properties in the compounds.
- Dr. Brian Ring, Biology Department, received an award from the National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Development for research to understand gonadal development using a fish hermaphroditic model. Data generated from this study will contribute to the general knowledge of reproductive biology of vertebrates.

A new academic year has begun with one of the largest freshmen classes and more students living on campus in the university's history. Parents' Weekend, lecture series, art exhibits, faculty recitals, and student organizational meetings have all been part of the first few weeks of a very busy semester.

Last week, the Blazer football team opened its season to a near capacity filled stadium — students, faculty, staff, and members of the community wore red and black and proudly displayed their VSU insignia. Die-hard Blazer fans returned this week and sat through a rain drenched game to witness the Blazers defeat Southern Arkansas. The Lady Blazers volleyball team had a great win over Albany State and is 8-2 for the season. The men's and women's cross-country team traveled to Huntsville and placed fifth and eighth respectively in this weekend's invitational.

Blazer pride is apparent not only in our athletic competition but scholarly engagement as we see an increase in grant awards and faculty and student research opportunities.

The circumstances in which we find ourselves are not by our choosing. We are fully responsible for the manner that we have reacted to them. No one is doing it better. Well done!

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Schloss, President