



Notes From The President

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Observing the first iteration of Strategic Focus 2010 was a career highlight. I am impressed that the process was initiated from the ground up, involved the entire academic community, occurred in the sunshine, and was fiscally responsible.

It has been rewarding to see base budget decisions move to ground level advisory groups closely connected, in most cases, to the most important governance group in the academy — the Faculty Senate.

This change moved resource allocation for critical but routine activities from the President's office to our most knowledgeable professionals. Equally important, it allowed the Planning and Budget Council to focus on strategic processes.

Your efforts will ensure our destiny as a community of scholars recognized across the country for standards of excellence. You are creating and fulfilling a vision for which all can be proud.

I was impressed to watch the university community join together to establish priorities and evaluation standards. It was exciting to watch the momentum grow as individuals and departments conceptualized projects. As a consequence of this work, approximately \$2 million was allocated in support of 18 projects.

It is too early to declare the initiative process a “culture changing” event. However, there is no doubt that the process has made us more collaborative and entrepreneurial.

It is curious that we would promote new initiatives during the worst financial year in recent history. As my dear father would say about the Depression era in the Dakotas, the only certainty was that a family would scrape together enough money to buy seeds and plant crops. Planting was also the only occasion for hope. Those engaged in the initiative process have planted seeds certain to pay dividends in good times and bad.

In this vein, my hat goes off to Traycee Martin, interim vice president for Finance and Administration, and the finance division, for ensuring the fiscal responsibility of 2010. Closing the circle on my agriculture metaphor, even if a fourth of the projects meet their goals, the effect of Strategic Focus 2010 will be more revenue coming into the university than that expended. More importantly, the state of Georgia and the nation will benefit from our expanding role.

The initiatives funded through Strategic Focus 2010 will provide Valdosta State University with new academic programs, improved extracurricular programs and services, additional classroom space, and better recruiting tools. The process will open the door to increase athletic opportunities for young women and the development of an “early leavers” degree completion program.

More than 65 proposals were submitted and 18 were selected by the Planning and Budget Council. For a complete list of the Strategic Focus 2010 initiatives, visit the Strategic Research and Analysis Web site at www.valdosta.edu/sra/StrategicFocus.shtml

I am reminded of the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, “If the highest aim of a captain were to preserve his ship, he would keep it in port forever.” You have set sail. Valdosta State University and the nation are better because of your talents and efforts.

Bring on Strategic Focus 2011!

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Schloss, President