



Notes From The President

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Saint Thomas Aquinas said, “If the highest aim of a captain were to preserve his ship he would keep it in port forever.” The state of Georgia is sailing amidst some of its most tumultuous times as state revenues decline and unemployment continues to rise.

With a two-year budget deficit of more than \$12.5 million and budget projections for the rest of the year continuing to be pessimistic, Valdosta State University is weathering a major storm.

While we are not responsible for the challenging circumstances, we must accept our role in planning and producing a response.

Key to our reaction is the new strategic budget process. This process allows us to direct resources — even on short notice — toward opportunities that maximize value and provide the greatest long-term value. The days of managing a substantial “year-end sweep-up” by those closest to the money is replaced by a deliberate process managed by those closest to the mission.

One of the most visible results of the work of the Planning and Budget Council and the budget plan is the addition of essential academic space. With the assistance of federal stimulus funds, Valdosta State will construct a 33,000 square-foot academic building. This week, the Board of Regents approved plans to demolish the north wing of Converse Hall and build a three-story building that will include classrooms, laboratories, clinical space, and administrative offices for the Department of Psychology and Counseling. Administrative offices for the Graduate School and Sponsored Programs and Research Administration will also relocate to the new building.

The Planning and Budget Council reviewed several projects and determined that moving the Department of Psychology and Counseling to the main campus will be most cost effective and beneficial to the university’s overall academic mission. It will also produce long-term savings by reducing bus schedules.

In its current location, psychology and counseling students and faculty are at a severe disadvantage. With more than 600 majors it has been difficult for the students to utilize a back-to-back class schedule. The existing facility was also not conducive to fulfilling the purpose of instruction, service and research in a clinical science.

The new facility will allow students and faculty to be part of the core academic environment, move closer to the Odum Library, and align academic disciplines and administration. More importantly, it will be designed and constructed for its intended purpose. The building will have clinical space, classrooms, offices, research space, and common areas for graduate students. The phrase “state-of-the-art” is overworked, but this facility will be “state-of-the-art.”

I deeply appreciate the work of the Planning and Budget Council in recognizing this priority. I also appreciate the council's wisdom in budgeting around this priority. Thanks to Traycee Martin for her expert budget analysis that allowed us to spend money early in the budget cycle rather than dispensing funds that have not been vetted by the end of the year.

I would also like to thank Dr. Phil Gunter, Dr. Robert Bauer, and the faculty for making a great case for this budget priority. Coaches will tell you that a key to success is getting the ball into the hands of great athletes and letting them make a play. We have placed the ball into the hands of some great scholars.

The year 2010 is important for Valdosta State as we prepare for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation. The on-site review is scheduled for April 6-9.

A major aspect of the reaffirmation process involves the development and implementation of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Valdosta State has selected the QEP theme "Undergraduate Engagement in Discipline-Based Inquiry," which will focus on opportunities to engage students and faculty in research and scholarly activities. A total of 24 proposals were received and evaluated by the QEP task force. The final selection includes six outstanding projects:

1. *Cutting Edge Cancer Research with Undergraduates*: Undergraduate students will work to produce economical and effective medicinal agents for testing as an anti-cancer pharmaceutical.
2. *Summer Archival Field Experience in History*: Undergraduate students will learn how to conduct archival research in military history and have an archival field experience at the U.S. Army Heritage Education Center.
3. *Preparing Scholars of Tomorrow to Effectively Analyze Language Sample Data for Parent-Child Turn Taking*: Undergraduate students will collect and analyze language samples of child-parent dyads, learning how to conduct ethical research, review literature, collect data, and perform analyses of the data.
4. *Evidence-Based Practice Strategies for Nursing and Health Care*: Nursing students will work with nurse researchers in clinical settings, generating evidence-based clinical questions in collaboration with nurses and health care professionals involved in clinical research projects.
5. *Discovering Unrealized Generational Differences in Kitchen Design Preferences between Next-Generation Interior Designers and Current Resident-Users*: Interior design students will research the differences between kitchen layouts in assisted living residences designed by interior design students and those designed by residents, developing research-supported methods for inquiry into the processes and outcomes of interior design practice.
6. *Investigating Social Inequalities of Hispanic Immigrants through the U.S.-Mexico Borderland Experience*: Undergraduate students will engage in qualitative research via ethnographic interviews and participant observation, examining the social construction of race, gender, class, and ethnicity and the impact of globalization on the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez border region.

I began this note by alluding to a goal that requires us to leave port. I know you share with me a more precise understanding of our aspirations. We must earn our designation as a regional university; and more importantly, we must position ourselves as one of the finest in the nation.

Planning, budget and continuous improvements are key to this aspiration. While leaving port in a storm produces some tension, it is rewarded by unparalleled facilities, opportunities for student engagement, and recognition as a community of scholars.

Sincerely,
Patrick J. Schloss, President