



Notes From The President

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This week an accreditation team from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges visited Valdosta State University. **It is with enormous pride that I report the team had no recommendations for corrective action.** The overall response from the on-site team was very positive, and the outcome of their visit exemplifies the culture of excellence that exists on this campus. The absence of recommendations is highly uncommon and typical of only the finest institutions.

During the exit interview Dr. Homer Kemp, chair of the accreditation team, praised the students, faculty and staff for their cooperation and hospitality. The team was in full agreement that the university is committed to preparing students to meet global opportunities and challenges, and that we showcase excellence in teaching and learning.

The team was very complementary of the beautiful campus and well maintained facilities. They highlighted the quality of service displayed by our staff.

Students who depend on our service are the primary beneficiary of this achievement. The accreditation team has validated that the quality of instruction and student services exceed the standards against which quality institutions are judged. Beyond the accreditation standards, I know the passion that each and every member of the academic community shows for student development. There is no question why Valdosta State has nearly doubled in size over the last decade.

Many of us have served as members of accreditation review teams for other institutions. We know how unusual it is to be commended with no need for corrective action. Those of us who know Valdosta State — the integrity of the faculty and commitment of the staff — are not surprised by this result.

The highlight of the review was the team's focus on the Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) — Faculty and Undergraduate Student Engagement. The team recognized Valdosta State as an emerging regional university with an increasing commitment to scholarship and student engagement. Most importantly, they recognized that the faculty provides the energy and insight leading to this transformation. The team highlighted that the engagement of faculty and students in research and scholarship as a culture changing initiative. **They also recognized our budget process, strategic focus, and decentralized budget pools as a catalyst for this initiative.**

The team determined that the university has an assessment process for the QEP that consists of direct and indirect measures enabling students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The team also stated that the university has the financial and human resources needed. Additionally, the team praised the planning and budget process, which they found provides reasonable assurance that those funds will continue to be available.

I am excited to recognize the entire faculty and staff for their commitment to continuous improvement. The accreditation of Valdosta State is gained from efforts of every person on each and every day. It recognizes that we are truly a community of scholars residing in a culture of excellence.

It is also important to recognize the individual leaders of the accreditation effort. My deepest admiration and appreciation goes to Kristina Cragg, who served in the role of SACS liaison. The team was effusive in their praise for her attention to detail and energy. I cannot say enough about Jane Kinney, Phil Gunter, Karla Hull and James LaPlant, who had distinctive leadership roles.

Additionally, I would like to thank the following individuals for their commitment to the process:

- Angela Henderson, Jessica McCorkel, Michael Black, Pat Rozier, and graduate assistants (Strategic Research and Analysis staff)
- Joe Newton, Lisa Baldwin, Brian Haugabrook, and Art Rinberger (Information Technology)
- Julie Reffel, Chair of the University Assessment Committee
- Sheri Gravett, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Traycee Martin, John Crawford, and Russ Mast (Vice Presidents)
- QEP Taskforce members

More than 30 of our finest students met with the accreditation team. They were described by the team as “exceptionally proud of their institution.”

Finally, Regent James Bishop made the trip from Coastal Georgia to Valdosta to meet with the accreditation team. They were impressed by his insight into the relationship between a remarkable system of higher education and an outstanding university.

I congratulate the entire campus community and wish warmest regards for continued professional success.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Schloss, President