

Enhancing Academic and Extracurricular Programs Valdosta State University

Valdosta State University is a premier residential university. It is characterized by outstanding instruction, a wide range of student life opportunities, and a close connection to the community. We seek to advance the University by expanding the range and size of existing academic and student life programs. Expansion will build on the University's tradition of excellence and will embellish the University's national reputation. While the University System of Georgia and the General Assembly have offered support for program expansion in the past, present economic realities and state funding difficulties lead us to be highly cost conscious. Thus, new degree programs and expanded programs will have to demonstrate immediate or subsequent self sufficiency and productivity.

The following sections outline the general guidelines for developing/expanding programs and the priorities for programmatic support:

General Guidelines for Expanding Existing Programs or Developing New Programs

- Programmatic need must be established through an analysis of the supply and demand for disciplinary practitioners at the state, regional, and national levels. This analysis may also be completed for extracurricular activities or graduate assistant programs which have the potential to bring new students to VSU (e.g. marching band, soccer, etc.). This supply/demand analysis will be conducted by Strategic Research and Analysis in collaboration with the department.
- The financial/productivity analysis (see attached) will demonstrate that the new/expanded program produces tuition, fees, and formula funding sufficient to cover all of the costs of the program and related university costs. While it is desirable that the new/expanded program produce positive net revenue, it is not a requirement. In some rare instances, university funding may support a proposal to offset unmet costs. Personnel costs are especially critical for this analysis. This analysis will be completed by the proposer in conjunction with Strategic Research and Analysis. Certain allowances will be made for significant programs that add symbolic value to the University.
- Strong student interest in the academic or extracurricular program must be demonstrated. The Admissions Office and the Graduate School will establish the student demand for the program. The offices will track the number of potential students who do not attend VSU due to the lack of the particular program at VSU or the lack of capacity in an existing VSU program.
- The program must be central to the University Mission and must comprise a new or expanded program. A new program should not duplicate already existing programs. Students must not be fractionated (double counted) across multiple units.
- In conducting needs and financial analyses, the likelihood that existing students will migrate from an existing program to a new program must be considered.
- The University must demonstrate that it possesses the financial resources, the infrastructure, and the leadership to develop/expand the program.

- Expansion of existing programs requires a sustained high level of students such that the historical student/faculty ratio and the data above demonstrate a need for future and sustained staffing support.
- Programs must address the issue of sustainability (student demand) and viability (economic need). Once there is sufficient data to show that the new/expanded program has sustainability and viability, temporary positions or part time positions may become permanent faculty positions. If program productivity does not meet standards, then part time or temporary positions will be eliminated or reassigned proportionate to the shortfall; programs may be decommissioned.
- The program's dean and department head must present the new/expanded program to the Planning and Budget Council that will provide advice/review prior to implementation.
- New academic programs (degrees, minors, etc.) must be presented through the University's shared governance system. The proposal format is available from the University System and the proposal is submitted for recommendation to the departmental curriculum committee, college executive committee, Graduate Executive Committee, Academic Committee, and the Faculty Senate. The Provost and the President make final determination before the proposal is sent to the University System for approval.

Priorities for Support

- Existing programs with a potential for higher productivity (e.g. existing program capacity is far below the number of acceptable applicants) and new programs with immediate demand will have a preference for development (low hanging fruit);
- Those new/expanded programs that offer a plan for attracting new students to the University will have precedence over programs that attract students from one VSU program to another VSU program (net gain in enrollment);
- Existing graduate programs with a backlog of majors will receive special consideration (curriculum stops due to staffing shortages).
- Personnel support may be in the form of graduate teaching assistants, part time faculty, or temporary full time faculty (flexible types of support depending on demonstrated potential for program productivity).

Performance Factor

- Ultimately successful programs will balance cost and revenue.
- An annual report (for five years) will be submitted to the Provost from each proposing department, detailing the additional number of students that have materialized over the past year against the approved plan. In the event that there is a decline, resulting in a more costly program than anticipated (i.e., not revenue neutral), resources will be removed as soon as possible. This includes not replacing the next available vacancy in the department.

Timing and Number of Submissions

- There is no limit to the number of submissions. Proposals will be accepted on a cyclical basis within the timeline specified in the strategic initiative review process. Occasionally, a proposal may be accepted on an emergency basis. Proposers should consult with their Dean and/or Vice President prior to seeking assistance from Strategic Research & Analysis.

Documentation of Requests

- Support for new or expanded programs can be in a variety of forms. The most obvious support will be the demonstrated need for additional faculty. The academic department and Strategic Research and Analysis will determine the amount of additional staffing necessary to accommodate the desired increase in the student majors. Support for faculty offices, travel, and operations might be requested. Whatever the request, the need must be documented in the program proposal and in the strategic database/initiative process. And financial support in the form of new students, grants, and supplemental funding must be documented.