

To: Valdosta State University Faculty, Staff, and Students

From: Dr. Patrick Schloss – President
Dr. Louis Levy – Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Ms. Traycee Martin – Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration
Dr. Kurt Keppler – Vice President for Student Affairs
Mr. John Crawford – Vice President for University Advancement

Subject: Strategic Focus 2011: Call for Campus-Wide Input

Date: October 16, 2009

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Dear VSU Faculty, Staff, and Students:

Please find below *Strategic Focus 2011*, a call for campus-wide input of standards for advancing Valdosta State University through the funding of strategic initiatives. Every faculty member, staff member, and student is invited to participate in this process by suggesting **three to five standards** by **Friday, October 30, 2009**. [Suggestions can be sent to Dr. Kristina Cragg, Assistant to the President for Strategic Research and Analysis (kmcragg@valdosta.edu).]

Last year, the following [standards were approved for Strategic Focus 2010](#):

- Recruitment/Enrollment
- Retention and Graduation
- Scholarship/Research
- Financial Solvency Resources
- Development of New Academic Initiatives

New suggested standards can be submitted for [Strategic Focus 2011](#). In November, all suggestions will be integrated, combining multiple and similar suggestions, with existing standards. Results will be presented to the Planning and Budget Council for consideration.

Thank you for your participation.

Strategic Focus 2011

Valdosta State University's revised budget model calls for us to focus clearly on our strategic priorities. In the past budget cycles, we have often distributed a substantial amount of money to wide-ranging, but routine projects (e.g., repairing roofs, procuring instructional technology, enabling transportation). The revised process will remove these routine items (and the typical budgetary support for them) from the strategic funding pool. Instead the appropriate divisions will be expected to establish and efficiently manage these routine projects and their associated funds. To ensure transparency and shared governance, the divisions will be expected to use existing budget advisory groups or to develop new advisory groups to assist with their operations. Budget unit heads will continue to be responsible for the day-to-day operations of their units.

Because of the limited amount of funds for (non-routine) strategic priorities, we are identifying a limited set of standards against which proposals can be evaluated. The standards are those elements that, when achieved, will advance Valdosta State University to an increased position of excellence. Consistent with our philosophy of shared governance, we are engaging a modified Delphi method to arrive at a consensus regarding this set of standards.

To this end, we will further define the character of Valdosta State University and outline our general aspirations. In October, we are asking individuals and governance groups to provide suggestions for this set of standards. In November, the list will be culled to 3 to 5 standards. These standards will be used to develop a rubric for evaluating strategic funding initiatives. The following sections provide background information that may be used for identifying standards.

The Mission

Valdosta State University is a "community of scholars in a culture of excellence." The propagation of scholarship through teaching, research, and service is our reason for being. All other activities either enable this work or are secondary to this work. Standards should either focus directly on the propagation of scholarship through teaching, research, or service, or they should enable these activities.

The Vision

Valdosta State is a premier residential comprehensive master's level institution with limited doctoral programs and relatively open admission.

We aspire to be a nationally prominent institution distinguished for its attention to students and their engagement in significant disciplinary scholarship. We believe that doctoral students enrich the experience for undergraduate students. Similarly we aspire to be distinguished for our leadership training and innovative instructional methods, programs, and services.

We aspire to rise from prominence in the southeastern United States to prominence across the country.

Strengths and Weaknesses / Opportunities and Challenges

We are constrained by modest Foundation support, limited extramural support, declining state appropriations, a heavy teaching load, a challenging geographical footprint for our campus, a limited population base close to our campus, and a non-central location in the state.

Using our shared governance model and the support of the Board of Regents we have the opportunity to set our own destiny, advancing Valdosta State University. Though distant from large population centers, the interstate highway system gives us access to all parts of a growing region. We are surrounded by a very supportive community, and we have a vital, student-centered campus community of learners and scholars. We have a national reputation for the quality of campus life including intercollegiate athletics. We have an attractive campus with an award-winning architectural style.

Standards for Change: Your Thoughts Needed

Against this backdrop, please identify the **top three to five standards** that would advance Valdosta State University from its status as a premier regional comprehensive master's institution to a national university with an increasing number of advanced degree programs.

Last year, the following [standards were approved for Strategic Focus 2010](#):

- Recruitment/Enrollment
- Retention and Graduation
- Scholarship/Research
- Financial Solvency Resources
- Development of New Academic Initiatives

Please send your recommendation for standards to Dr. Kristina Cragg (Assistant to the President for Strategic Research and Analysis) at kmcragg@valdosta.edu.

The deadline is **Friday, October 30, 2009**.

Thank you for your participation.

Process for Identification and Selection of Three to Five Standards

