

To: Valdosta State University Faculty, Staff, and Students

From: Dr. Pat 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 2010: Call for Campus-Wide Input

Date: February 17, 2009

=====

Dear VSU Faculty, Staff, and Students:

Please find below *Strategic Focus 2010*, 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 reviewing *Strategic Focus 2010* and suggesting the **top three to five standards** by **Friday, February 27, 2009**.

[Suggestions can be sent to Dr. Kristina Cragg, Assistant to the President for Strategic Research & Analysis (kmccragg@valdosta.edu).]

In March, all suggestions will culled together, combining multiple and similar suggestions. This information will then be presented at campus-wide forums for additional input and discussion. Campus-wide forums include, but are not limited to:

- Cabinet
- Council on Staff Affairs
- Dean's Council
- Faculty Senate
- Foundation Board
- Student Government Association
- University Council

Comments and recommendations from each forum will be returned to the President and Vice Presidents when selecting the three to five standards for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Thank you for your participation.

Strategic Focus 2010

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. We will ask individuals and governance groups to provide suggestions for this set of standards. Later we will cull this list 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 masters institution to a national university with an increasing number of advanced degree programs. Several examples of standards could include such items as the following:

- Increase engagement of undergraduates in discipline-based scholarship
- Enhance retention of undergraduate students

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

The deadline is Friday, February 27, 2009.

Thank you for your participation.