

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

*ANNUAL REPORT OF
INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS
2006-2007*

Prepared for:

**THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF
THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF
GEORGIA**

NOVEMBER 16, 2007



Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of the institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, or handicap of the individual. It is the intent of the institution to comply with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent executive orders as well as Title XI in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

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INTRODUCTION

Valdosta State University is pleased to provide a summary of critical areas of progress and challenges over the 2006-2007 academic year, especially in the area of institutional effectiveness.

VSU's dedicated faculty and staff are committed to the institution's mission, which is to:

- Prepare our students to meet global opportunities and challenges through excellence in teaching and learning.
- Expand the boundaries of current knowledge, and explore the practical applications of that knowledge, through excellence in scholarship and creative endeavors.
- Promote the economic, cultural, and educational progress of our community and of our region, through excellence in service outreach.

VSU seeks to accomplish this mission in a dynamic, student-centered learning environment marked by respect for the diverse abilities, backgrounds, and contributions of all members of the university community.

OVERVIEW

This report includes the following sections:

- **VSU and USG's Goals** – This section details VSU's achievements as they relate to the University System of Georgia's goals.
- **Section 1: Annual Progress in Assessing Institutional Effectiveness** - Describes the major changes over the past year.
- **Section 2: Overall Institutional Health** - Describes major changes identified in the past year in the overall condition of the institution.
- **Section 3: Summary of Major Institutional Accomplishments in 2006-2007**- Includes additional information on VSU's accomplishments for 2006-2007 that is not already included in sections 1 and 2.

VSU AND USG'S GOALS

Valdosta State University supports the mission and goals of the University System of Georgia. Exhibit 1 displays a matrix of VSU and USG goals and details specific examples of VSU accomplishments that have contributed toward VSU and USG goals.

EXHIBIT 1: EVIDENCE OF CONTRIBUTIONS OF VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY AND THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF GEORGIA

BOARD OF REGENTS OF GEORGIA - GOALS						
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY - GOALS	1. Renew excellence in undergraduate education to meet students' 21st century educational needs.	2. Create enrollment capacity to meet the needs of 100,000 additional students by 2020.	3. Increase the USG's participation in research and economic development to the benefit of a Global Georgia.	4. Strengthen the USG's partnerships with the state's other education agencies.	5. Maintain affordability so that money is not a barrier to participation in the benefits of higher education.	6. Increase efficiency, working as a System.
1. Intentionally grow undergraduate and graduate enrollment (to 12,000 over the next 5 years) through additional new students and increased retention and graduation rates of existing students.	Evidence: Increasing enrollment, (p. 17), Student Success Center (p. 16)	Evidence: Improving Student Retention and Graduation (p. 16), Increasing Housing Occupancy (p.13), Approval of Doctorate in Public Administration (p.18)	Evidence: Partnership with SGMC through establishment of VSU College of Nursing-South Georgia Medical Center Alliance (p. 19)	Evidence: "If I Had a Hammer" educational building project with local schools (p. 16), College of Education participated in the Georgia Teacher Success effort in conjunction with UGA and GSU (p. 19)	Evidence: Distribution of Financial Aid (p. 13)	Evidence: Emphasis on goal based metrics for university decision-making (p. 15)
2. Move beyond tolerance by actively promoting acceptance, inclusion, appreciation, and respect for human similarities and differences.	Evidence: Diversity Week, Diversity Audit (p. 15), Increasing diverse enrollment (p. 17)	NA	Evidence: Hosted four Louie Brown Scholars (p. 11)	Evidence: Introduced collaborative program with Fulbright Foreign Languages TA program and U. S. State Department (p. 10)	NA	NA
3. Develop programs in health-related professions; while continuing to offer, identify and develop programs which prepare students to be responsible, thoughtful and productive citizens.	Evidence: Received additional funding from ICAPP for an Expedited BSN Second Degree Program (p. 19), Increased NCLEX scores (p. 19)	NA	Evidence: Partnership with SGMC through establishment of VSU College of Nursing-South Georgia Medical Center Alliance (p. 19)	NA	NA	NA
4. Enhance employment excellence and identify best practices in developing and retaining quality faculty and staff.	Evidence: Faculty recognition awards (p.16), Employee Recognition Luncheon (p. 16)	NA	NA	Evidence: Grant distribution (p.18)	NA	Evidence: MGT Study (p. 5), Employee and Organizational Development Training (p. 5), Supervisory certification program (p. 15)
5. Establish the infrastructure and processes to increase sponsored research and private gifts as a percentage of the total budget; positioning VSU to enhance the achievement of its mission.	Evidence: Creation of VSU Auxiliary Services Real Estate Foundation, Inc. (p. 11), Gifts and revenue (p. 14), Center for Applied Research (p.18), Grant distribution (p.18)	NA	NA	Evidence: Grant distribution (p.18)	NA	NA

Source: Valdosta State University, Strategic Research & Analysis, 2007.

SECTION I: ANNUAL PROGRESS IN ASSESSING INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS***STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES IN GENERAL EDUCATION AND/OR THE DEGREE MAJORS***

A number of external and internal assessments of student learning have been completed over the last year and offer clear quantitative examples of outcomes. For example:

- The annual senior exit survey for 2006-07 indicated a high degree of satisfaction with VSU; 95% of all responding seniors would recommend VSU to others; 89% would choose to attend VSU again.
- Of the seniors responding to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in Spring 2007, 81% reported acquiring a broad general education “quite a bit” or “very much”, 84% indicated VSU developed their ability to think critically and analytically “quite a bit” or “very much”, 74% reported VSU increased their ability to write clearly and effectively “quite a bit” or “very much”, and 73% responded that VSU developed their ability to analyze quantitative problems “quite a bit” or “very much.”
- Students completing an approved program through VSU demonstrated success on the Praxis II examination in the area(s) of their preparation with an estimated overall institutional pass rate of 97%.
- 100% of students in the American Sign Language Interpreting program who took the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) passed.
- The overall 2006 NCLEX pass rate for the College of Nursing was 86%.
- Graduates of the Master’s in Social Work program scored a 90% pass rate on the LMSW national examination for beginning social work practitioners.

OUTCOME MEASURES IN ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

VSU’s administrative and support functions have made many contributions toward institutional effectiveness. For example:

- Employee and Organizational Development delivered and assisted other departments in delivering 68 professional development courses for VSU faculty, staff, student employees, and local law enforcement agency members. More than 1,100 individuals participated in the trainings, with a total of 1,949 attendees and 6,526 contact hours.
- Information Technology’s Helpdesk fielded 11,031 telephone calls, Service Centers completed 6,418 work orders and distributed 1,246 new/refurbished computers across campus, and Instructional Support facilitated 122 video conferences and 23 web conferences.
- Odum Library added 16,292 volumes, increasing the book collection to 515,793 and the total holdings of the library to 1,781,371, a 1.1% increase from last year. The library also experienced a 2.8% increase in circulation, a 13.7% increase in Reference Desk transactions, and a 3.7% increase in media equipment circulation.
- The MGT Classification and Compensation study was proposed, administered, and phased in during this year. Over 25 training sessions were held to introduce the Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) to employees and to assist them in filling out the form to update their position description.

This project affected approximately 267 job classifications and 673 employees. Implementation of recommendations for 2006-2007 included increases for 165 individual staff members who were below the pay grade minimum for new pay grades 11 through 16.

- The Farber Student Health Center provided acute, routine, and preventive health care for 23,675 students (an increase of 3%). This includes patient clinical visits (14,197), screenings and outreach (9,478), lab tests (7,515), and prescription pick-ups (16,119).

INSTITUTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW METHODS OR FOLLOW-UP AS THE RESULT OF ASSESSMENT

The Annual Reports from academic and support units help to monitor the institution's ongoing improvements in effectiveness. The following are illustrations of changes made based on systematic feedback and are grouped into two categories: functional changes and attainment.

FUNCTIONAL CHANGES

- The Biology Bachelor's of Science curriculum is being revised and minimum mandatory scores have been implemented on Major Field Tests in response to previously low scores on the Major Field Tests and indications that changes were desirable.
- The English Department began implementing increased supervision of composition instructors to increase consistency among courses. In 2007, plans are underway to assign mentors. The department also began annual evaluations of part-time instructors conducted in the same manner as those for full-time faculty. These changes were prompted by a review of grade distribution reports and student evaluations.
- The Computer Science Program Committee began an overall assessment of the Computer Science and Computer Information Systems Curriculum. This internal study was prompted by a report from the Joint Task Force for Computing Curricula in 2005 which provided a guide for assessing outcomes in undergraduate Computer Science and Computer Information Systems degrees programs.
- The Department of Modern and Classical Languages introduced WEBCAPE, software to assist faculty in determining initial placement of incoming students in French and Spanish in lower-level language courses. Student evaluations, advisors' comments, and a growing need for appropriate advising of language placement by faculty suggested this action.
- In an effort to improve the effectiveness of the First-Year Experience (FYE) academic advising program, the OASIS Center for Advising and First Year Programs has provided five additional Freshman Seminar courses for students who have not yet declared a major, allowing First-Year Experience to offer an additional 125 students space in the program. Academic advisors assigned by cohort attend the Freshman Seminar classes and provide an opportunity to meet with advisees on a continuing basis. Student advising questionnaires indicated that the advising process for undecided students not participating in First-Year Experience was not as effective as the advising program in First-Year Experience.
- Based upon enrollment data, NSSE survey results, VSU alumni survey response data, VSU Senior Exit response data, and retention and graduation data from the OASIS Center for Advising and First Year Programs, all core tutoring on campus was consolidated into the Student Success Center. This change was advertised heavily across campus to inform faculty and staff and attract students.

- The Student Success Center implemented standardized training and self-assessment for tutors as a step towards national certification based upon College Reading and Learning Association standards and data.
- Reorganization and realignment of the curriculum in the Middle Grades and Secondary Education graduate program was encouraged by student comments from Faculty and Course Evaluations which indicated an overlap of content in courses in the M.Ed. program.
- Based upon suggestions from mentor teachers in Special Education, who have consistently stated that student teachers in Special Education need to spend a full day on-site, Special Education student teachers will begin full-day placement instead of the graduated half day schedule.
- Upon reviewing Special Education student input from surveys and interviews which suggested that the current method of assigning advisors was resulting in confusion, the department implemented a new policy which assigns students to a single advisor for the duration of their three years in the program.
- The Department of Early Childhood Education implemented several course and curriculum changes in response to the Board of Regents' mandated changes for Area F (courses appropriate in the major) including the addition of Life and Earth Science for Early Childhood Education Teachers (ISCI 2001), Physical Science for Early Childhood Education Teachers (ISCI 2002), Foundations of Numbers and Operations (MATH 2008), Investigating Critical and Contemporary Issues in Education (EDUC 2110), Exploring Socio-Cultural Perspectives on Diversity (EDUC 2120), and Exploring Learning and Teaching (EDUC 2130).
- The Department of Early Childhood Education, prompted by the accreditation process, worked to develop specialized assessment plans for each program based upon content assessment (Georgia Assessment for the Certification of Educators), secondary content assessment, pedagogical knowledge and skills assessment, student learning assessment, disposition assessment, candidate portfolio assessment, and surveys for teacher improvement (Graduate, Employer and Candidate).
- In response to the Board of Regents mandate for Education programs, the Department of Art revised the BFA Art Education program and introduced Fundamental Concepts in Interior Design (ARID 1120), which addresses learning outcomes and provides additional professional resource materials.
- Based upon student feedback, faculty discussions, historical data, and proposals by the head of the department, the Department of Music implemented a revised enrollment management plan to track prospective students through audition and eventual enrollment in the department. The department hopes to add a retention component as a second phase of the management plan.
- The College of Nursing instituted an open house each semester for Graduate students suggested by student and faculty feedback indicating a need for greater opportunities for interaction with Graduate students.
- Based on input received from the Summer 2006 Orientation evaluation forms and in conjunction with Information Technology, Admissions, Bursary, and Orientation, the Dean of Students Office developed and implemented an on-line registration system for the new student orientation program. During this summer, approximately 70% of all participants registered using the on-line system.

- Prompted by changes in Secondary Education requirements introduced by the BOR and the need to be aligned with national best practices, the Department of Modern & Classical Languages (MCL) has completely redesigned its major curricula in French and Spanish. Two tracks have now been created in the major: Language and Culture and Foreign Language Education. MCL will now award a Bachelor's of Arts in French or Spanish Foreign Language Education that will include P-12 certification.
- The Department of Curriculum, Leadership, & Technology implemented LiveText assessment management system for Library Media Specialist program and Educational Leadership Ed.S. Professional Option candidates to better meet Specialized Professional Association Standards and NCATE Standards.

ATTAINMENT →

- Prompted by PSC/NCATE accreditation preparation, review and visit, the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education faculty improved program assessments, increased technology usage and applications through the utilization of LiveText, and thoroughly examined the initial (undergraduate) and advanced (graduate) health and physical education programs.
- The Department of Psychology & Counseling introduced detailed measures of school counselor candidate performance in the field. Measures such as self-appraisals, instructor grading of course projects, end-of-course-grades, samples of supervisor ratings on different surveys, advisory committee ratings, and PRAXIS II/GACE II and Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) scores were used to determine each school counseling candidate's performance in class and in the field.
- The Division of Social Work developed and implemented a skills-based laboratory course, SOWK 6001, to be used as a way of evaluating whether students can perform basic practice skills prior to their entry into practicum or the remainder of the MSW program. This course was developed based upon data gathered from student grades and practicum evaluations.
- The College of Arts & Sciences established new cohorts of first-year students in Biology and Pre-Pharmacy, continued cohorts in Political Science and English, supported FYE cohorts, and cohorts for Early Childhood and Middle Grades to improve retention.

MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW →

Valdosta State University is committed to planning, evaluating, and ensuring that all academic departments use evaluation results to improve programs. VSU's core curriculum is composed of five general areas (Essential Skills, Institutional Options (Perspectives), Humanities/Fine Arts, Science, Math and Technology, and Social Sciences) and one area specific to the major. These areas consist of over 100 possible courses drawn from at least 22 different departments. The institution is committed to ensuring systematic, across-the-board, documented evidence that demonstrates this use. This is achieved through the following:

- Each department/unit has been required to present evidence that steps are taken to use evaluation results to improve effectiveness. VSU continues to follow its approved plan for cyclical review of academic programs.
- For the past six years, VSU has been conducting Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) on all its academic programs, graduate and undergraduate.

- For the seventh and final year in its CPR cycle, VSU is focusing on its general education curriculum to assess its productivity, quality, and viability.
- To conduct General Education CPR, VSU established a participatory review process with 35 faculty members serving on five subcommittees, each examining one of our five common core areas.

SECTION 2: OVERALL INSTITUTIONAL HEALTH

Student Success serves as a barometer of institutional health and a unifying goal for all divisions and departments on campus. VSU is pleased to share the following **Student Success** accomplishments during the 2006-2007 academic year:

- Graduation rates continued to increase, reaching the record high level of 42.2%.
- Twenty-one students completed Honors Program certification during 2006-07; 28 students who had completed all honors program requirements graduated during the same time period. 105 new students were admitted to the Honors Program.
- In its fourth year, the Emerging Leaders Program, a joint venture between Student Affairs and the OASIS Center for Advising and First Year Programs, enrolled more than 60 students.
- The VSU College of Arts and Sciences sponsored the 13th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, which boasted a record number of student participants, as well as awards for best paper and best poster submissions.
- VSU Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) implemented 46 service-learning projects, accumulating over 13,000 hours of local and regional service, won the Atlanta regional competition, won the national personal finance case competition, “Duel in the Desert”, and finished in the top 20 in the national SIFE competition in Dallas, Texas.

VSU attributes its student successes to campus-wide effort from each division and department. The remaining portion of this section details notable achievements by divisions or departments that report to the President.

Notable Achievements of the Division of Academic Affairs

The *Office of Admissions* processed over 8,500 admissions files and hosted over 4,000 prospective students on campus via campus tours and visitation days. The office also received a rating of excellent from an audit conducted by the Office of Internal Audits. In an effort to aid recruitment, Admissions selected six freshmen to document their first year experiences at VSU through blogs hosted on the VSU Admissions website.

The *Office of the Registrar* also achieved several notable results this year, including:

- Initial implementation of “Banner Extender” document imaging system which produces electronic images and indexes these with a student’s electronic Banner record.
- Implemented a major change in the Banner Student Information System which moved all data input and retrieval to the internet.

With the support of the *Office of International Programs* and in part a response to the Board of Regents’ initiative on the internationalization of the campus, VSU:

- Introduced a collaborative project with the Fulbright Foreign Languages Teaching Assistants program and the U.S. State Department to teach Arabic and Turkish on campus.
- Initiated and assisted in the implementation of VSU Business study abroad summer program in Germany, the sole USG Business study abroad program at the moment.

- Hosted four visiting international Louie Brown Scholars who conducted classes and joint research projects with VSU faculty.
- Assisted in the submission of applications to the joint German Bundestag – U.S. Congress young professionals program; two VSU graduates were awarded one-year internships in Germany amongst a total of 75 awards nationally.
- Lead USG institution in the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP).

Notable Achievements of the Division of Athletics

An important component of campus culture, this division's accomplishments further enhances the health of the University. Major achievements of 2006-2007 include:

- Blazers boasted a league-high of 14 members at the Gulf South Conference's Spring All-Academic Team.
- VSU tied for league best in student-athletes on the Gulf South Conference Academic Honor Roll with 40 members.
- Eight of VSU's 11 intercollegiate sports teams participated in NCAA post season championships/playoffs. The men's tennis team participated in the national championships. The competitive coed cheerleading team finished second in the nation. The dance team finished ninth in their initial year of national competition.

Notable Achievements of the Division of Finance and Administration

The Division of Finance and Administration contributes to VSU's mission by promoting efficient and effective business practices and services. Accomplishments during the 2006-2007 year include the following:

- Created the *VSU Auxiliary Services Real Estate Foundation, Inc.* to serve as a vehicle to permit the development of new auxiliary facilities needed as infrastructure to support VSU's growth.
- Completed the transition of *Dining Services* from self-operated to out-sourced with Sodexo.
- The *VSU Bookstore* continued its textbook reservation program for incoming freshman and nearly tripled reservations from the previous year with over 800 reservations completed.
- *Financial Services* initiated a regular review of revenues, created and implemented quarterly shadow budgets, and developed a web-based personal services calculator for budget preparation.
- Introduced Quizno's, Einstein's Bagels, Jazzman's Cafe, and Salsa Rico to campus as well as completed renovations on *Palms Dining Hall* and food service facilities in the Education Center and Library.
- The *Office of Environmental and Occupational Safety* partnered with the Georgia Office of Homeland Security/Georgia Emergency Management Agency and others on campus to develop Valdosta State's Disaster Mitigation Plan, required before disaster funding is available from State and Federal government.
- *Physical Plant and Facilities Planning* established a campus-wide recycling program in conjunction with the City of Valdosta.
- The recently established *Office of Student Employment* received 105 applications, posted 14 job announcements, and reported 659 visits to their website.

- *University Police* received excellent ratings from both the Georgia Crime Information Center State Audit and the Valdosta State University Internal Audit.

Notable Achievements of Equal Opportunity Programs and Multicultural Affairs

Diversity is a key component of a healthy campus. The *Office of Equal Opportunity Programs and Multicultural Affairs* promotes diversity on campus. This year the office:

- Conducted cultural diversity training for VSU.
- Sponsored the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration featuring guest speaker Omar Tyree.
- Sponsored Cultural Diversity Week.

Notable Achievements of Information Technology

Information Technology has permeated and enhanced every segment of the VSU community. Examples of accomplishments in 2006-2007 include the following:

- Upgraded 17 student computer labs with 380 computers, 283 (74%) of which were new equipment. New equipment standards have been increased to provide at least 19" display, 2GB memory, and Intel Core 2 Duo processor.
- Completed conversion of about 190 (95%) of 200 institutional web sites to the new web site design and content management system.
- Created an online reporting and data warehouse portal to host official data for Strategic Research & Analysis and provided access and training to campus administrators, deans, and department heads.
- Enhanced information security by upgrading the campus firewall, implementing non-disclosure agreements for IT personnel, using the Nexpose service to scan for vulnerabilities in server systems and working with systems administrators to reduce or eliminate those vulnerabilities, and pursuing or supporting investigations of stolen equipment, network abuse, and copyright infringement.
- Upgraded 22% of all smart classrooms to the new design, improving ease of use for instructors.
- Began upgrading to Microsoft Office 2007 by presenting orientation and training sessions to 258 employees and installing the software for 108 faculty/staff and 29 student computer labs.

Notable Achievements of the Office of Legal Affairs

The *Office of Legal Affairs* promotes an increased awareness of legal issues surrounding higher education. The Office has:

- Processed over 1,500 contracts since its inception in 2002.
- Implemented policies in accordance with the mandates of state and federal law
- Proactively presented a number of workshops relative to crucial legal issues.

Notable Achievements of Strategic Research and Analysis

VSU's *Strategic Research and Analysis* played a vital role in documenting institutional health and effectiveness, monitoring progress toward the University's strategic goals, and communicating information to enhance decision-making across campus. Throughout the past year, this area:

- Actively engaged in planning, coordinating, analyzing, and disseminating information related to student enrollment, graduation, and retention issues.
- In conjunction with *Information Technology, Strategic Research & Analysis* implemented the EAS Portal which increases accessibility of data available to campus constituents.
- Offered training sessions on how to utilize the EAS Portal for departmental data needs.
- Participated in the national Delaware Study of Faculty Productivity for the fourth consecutive year and expanded participation to include the Out-of-Classroom Activity component. Gathered and disseminated data from the Delaware Faculty Activity Study to Department Heads to facilitate accurate reporting in departmental Annual Reports.
- Implemented Data & Information Analysis Look-up System (DIALS) online data request system on Strategic Research & Analysis webpage to facilitate information and data requests.
- Created information newsletters and benchmark summaries to increase data awareness across campus.

Notable Achievements of the Division of Student Affairs

Through its programs and services, VSU's Division of Student Affairs continued to improve the quality of life on campus. Examples of its many contributions include the following:

- *Access Services*, in conjunction with IT, worked to make all VSU websites accessible in a text only format. Access Services also hosted "Blaze Ahead to Success," which is a 3 day intensive transition experience for high school students with disabilities from Georgia.
- *Campus Recreation* completed construction of the new intramural outdoor field complex and began construction on the new ropes challenge course.
- A total of 9,200 jobs were listed with *Career Services*, while 3,057 referrals were made to 247 area employers, on behalf of 929 students seeking part-time off-campus employment. More than 340 employers participated in on-campus recruitment efforts. *Career Services* also conducted 103 career workshops and other presentations with a combined student participation of 1,351.
- The *Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Education* reached a potential 12,382 parents and employees through 14 campus events while KARMA Student Peer Education conducted an additional 19 presentations to residence halls, classes, and community groups.
- The *Counseling Center* was awarded an eighth year of full accreditation from the International Association of Counseling Services, Inc. During the academic year 2006-2007, the *Counseling Center* provided individual and group counseling to a total of 755 individuals, generating over 2,676 client contact hours.
- The *Office of Cooperative Education* presented sessions to 1,247 students.
- The *Office of Financial Aid* processed and disbursed over \$70 million in various types of aid to more than 9,200 students. Of these funds nearly \$40,000,000 came from federal loan programs, nearly \$15.3 million from the HOPE Scholarship, and over \$7.54 million from the Pell Grant Program. The *Office of Financial Aid* also processed nearly \$7 million in student and parent loans through the Federal Family Education Loan Program using the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation as the guarantee agency.
- *Housing & Residence Life* reported 100% Fall semester occupancy and 96% Spring semester occupancy. More than 580 programs were offered by Housing staff to a total of 13,846 attendees.

Patterson Residence Hall reopened to students in August 2006 after extensive renovations. Hopper Hall closed in May 2007 for demolition and reconstruction into a 500+ suite style facility scheduled to open August 2008.

- The *Office of Orientation & Leadership* hosted the Annual Student Leadership Conference for VSU students and area high school students which was attended by 75 students. A total of 2,706 students and 2,582 parents or guests participated in orientation sessions.
- The *Judicial Affairs Office* was renamed to Student Conduct Office (SCO) to better identify and clarify their mission and function.
- *Student Life* celebrated a successful Parents Weekend with 734 people attending the two-day event.

Notable Achievements of University Advancement

Many of the accomplishments outlined in this report would not have been achieved without the support of private donations through the Division of University Advancement. Highlights from that area include:

- Celebration of the Centennial of the University's founding with a "birthday bash" on the front lawn. It was a major volunteer effort with participation by faculty/staff, students, alumni, donors, and local community members.
- Design, purchase, and installation of more than 100 Centennial banners throughout city streets surrounding and running through the campus, as well as placement of new directional signs, make it easier for first time visitors to reach the campus.
- The *University Relations* Department's Publication and Design Services unit won three CASE awards for publications and advertisements and produced over 1,000 individual publication/design projects for campus, 158 news releases, 255 "hometown" news releases for students making the Dean's List, 217 "hometown" news releases for new graduates, 10 Blazer Football half-time reports, two Alumni News tabloids, and one Alumni Voice magazine which was distributed to 40,000 alumni.
- Held the first combined VSU Faculty/Staff Campaign in conjunction with the State Charitable Contributions Program and raised our second highest dollar amount ever, \$127,266. VSU also received \$1,807,052 in gifts from 2,766 individuals, corporations, and foundations in support of VSU's mission.
- An additional estimated \$2 million in ticket revenues and "other income" passed through the *VSU Foundation*. Nearly \$670,000 was contributed in support of over 91 different chairs, professorships, graduate and undergraduate scholarships, and various departments' support funds.

SECTION 3: SUMMARY OF MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS***ANNUAL PROGRESS IN INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING***

The Office of Strategic Planning placed particular emphasis this year on educating the campus on strategic planning and providing professional development opportunities related to implementing best practices in planning. To those ends, three for-credit courses were offered and approximately 60 employees completed portfolios related to specific planning goals in their respective campus units. Each participant conducted SWOT analyses of their areas, developed goals using the SMART technique, wrote metrics to create measurable outcomes for their goals, and learned how to document their effectiveness. They also completed modules on conducting internal process improvement efforts and communicating their plan to their employees.

In addition to this intensive study in strategic planning, over 100 employees participated in a variety of workshops designed to build skills in certain aspects of the planning process. These workshops included topics in creating a budget plan and using a budget tracking spreadsheet; utilizing the planning database to record plans, measures and outcomes; and writing metrics to assess the measurable outcomes of goals and funding initiatives. The Planning Office staff also held individualized planning retreats with the Offices of Student Affairs, Odum Library, the Recreation Center, the Council on Staff Affairs, the Division of Athletics, and the Division of University Advancement. Each of these retreats resulted in well defined goals and appropriate metrics for determining effectiveness; further developing our campus' focus on accountability and participation in the planning process.

VSU's web-based planning system continued to evolve over the past year, and has supplied the President's Budget Advisory Council with key information that has been critical to decision-making. The enhancements made during the previous year were expanded to include required metrics and progress updates for both goals and funding initiatives. This is a significant improvement, as it allows the planning database to house all departmental, divisional, and university-wide goals with accompanying performance measures and documentation of the successes made in each area.

In addition to completing metrics for each goal, all participants in the planning processes at VSU will be required to submit quarterly updates on the progress of their goals and funding initiatives. These updates will focus on reporting the results of their plans according to the metrics they established at the beginning of the fiscal year. In this way, the entire campus will participate in a renewed focus on accountability, achievement, and continuous improvement. This data will enable the university to assess goal attainment to a greater depth and breadth during the coming year and will serve as decision making data when considering requests for additional funding, program expansion, or resource allocation.

During the past year, the University Council developed specific action steps and measures for each of the five university-wide strategic planning goals adopted in 2006: Enrollment and Retention, Academic Programs, Faculty and Staff Development, Diversity, and Financial Support. Of particular note is the Diversity goal, which is moving forward with the implementation of a Diversity Audit project funded by an initiative approved through our campus-wide planning and budgeting process. The audit will consist of both qualitative and quantitative assessments analyzed by off-site professionals. The recommendations resulting from the audit will provide baseline data on perceptions of diversity on campus amongst faculty, staff and students and will serve as a foundation for the revised campus diversity plan.

The Faculty and Staff Development goal has also experienced great momentum as a supervisory certification program was launched, allowing employees to earn their 5% minimum time spent in

professional development. The campus has made great strides in coordinating with the Office of Employee Development to centralize record keeping for documentation of employee development.

Lastly, our Financial Services Goal has recently seen progress through an internal reorganization and on-going process improvement audit. The result of this audit is the creation of a team of communication professionals more closely aligned with the President's Office, and the development of measurable goals for the entire division, as well as for its component units. In addition to working directly with the five goals, University Council also collaborated with the Faculty Senate, the Council on Staff Affairs, and the Student Government Association in reviewing and approving several campus guidelines including the Environmental Policy (including statements on energy usage, lighting, campus safety, recycling, and preservation of green spaces), the Emergency Management Policy, and the Electronic Communication Policy (which sought efficiency and resource conservation through designation of email as the official university communication channel). University Council will continue to monitor progress on the five university goals, and will focus more closely on gaining a comprehensive view of all retention and progression related efforts occurring on campus this year.

While the above-mentioned refinements were made to the planning process, VSU moved forward with the implementation of numerous actions related to the original eight-goal Strategic Plan and advanced several Master Planning projects. For example, the university

- In its inaugural year, the Student Success Center provided one-to-one advising for 904 students in Fall 2006 and for 1,376 in Spring 2007. Total contact/duty hours rose from 5,458 to 20,246 from Fall 2006 to Spring 2007. The Center trained 28 graduate students to help with advising in departments across campus, hired and trained 42 tutors for core curriculum courses, and taught a special section of VSU 1101 for first-year students on probation. (Goal 3: Excellence in Student Learning and Retention)
- Enhanced VSU's visual identity through the use of consistent logos and signage on the University's website, in printed materials, and physical design of landscape elements and facilities. (Goal 4: Access and Participation)
- Hosted more than 1,000 students from local schools who participated in the Dewar College of Education's "If I Had a Hammer" educational building project. (Goal 5: Student Preparation)
- Recognized faculty members for Excellence in Teaching, Research, Service, and Advising; and a staff member for Excellence in Service. The second Employee Recognition Luncheon jointly honoring both faculty and staff was held in April 2007. (Goal 6: High Quality Personnel)
- Began implementation of recommendations for the faculty salary study and classification study. (Goal 6: High Quality Personnel)
- Continued communication with the local legislative delegation as well as with our representatives in the federal House and Senate to share VSU's vision and the unfolding of the Strategic and Master Plans. (Goal 8: Strategic Alliances)

IMPROVING STUDENT RETENTION AND GRADUATION

Retaining students through graduation is an integral part of VSU's Strategic Plan. Goal three of the VSU Strategic Plan, implemented in 2002, encourages continuous enhancement of curricula and research opportunities, resulting in informed graduates and increased student retention and graduation rates. Examples of action steps that were accomplished during 2006-07 to increase graduation and retention

rates include the opening of the Student Success Center; and the implementation of GoalQuest and the FYE Trailblazin' website. The university's retention and graduation rates have risen in recent years, primarily as a result of higher admissions standards. VSU is committed to further increasing retention and graduation rates to exceed the average rates at peer institutions.

Valdosta State University experienced continued growth and transformation during 2006-07 with a record enrollment of 10,888 students in Fall 2006, a 3.7% increase over the 10,503 students enrolled in Fall 2005. VSU's undergraduate enrollment rose 4.4%. In addition, VSU experienced an increase in first-time freshmen, totaling a record number of 2,059. VSU's institutional graduation rate for first-time, full-time freshmen rose to a record 42.2% from 41.0% in the previous year. The Graduate School reported a total enrollment of 1,399 in Fall 2006.

VSU has maintained its ability to attract, retain, and graduate African American students over the years of rising admission standards, increasing African American enrollment from 21.3% in Fall 1998 to 22.5% in Fall 2006. This fact can be attributed largely to an environment that is conducive to addressing the needs of a diverse student body. As of Fall 2006, 28% of VSU's Fall 2006 students represented ethnic minorities.

VSU's retention rates have also seen an increase, rising from 64.3% in the 1996-97 cohort to 73.6% for the 2005-06 cohort. System-wide rates, which include students who began at VSU and returned and those who transferred to other USG schools, have also increased, from 74.2% for the 1996-97 cohort to 82.6% for the 2005-06 cohort. During FY 2006-07, the six-year graduation rate rose to 42.01% (2000 cohort institutional rate). The six-year graduation rate for VSU students finishing their degrees either at VSU or at another system institution has increased to a new high of 52.1%.

OTHER MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Several academic programs successfully completed accreditation reviews during 2006-07.

- The Langdale College of Business prepared and submitted its Fifth-Year Maintenance of Accreditation Report and supporting documents to AACSB-International and the review team, completed the review team visit, and received re-accreditation.
- The Dewar College of Education was reviewed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) during a five day on-site visit in October with the resulting notice from their Unit Accreditation Board in April 2007 that all standards were met. The BFA Art Education program met all standards as part of the College of Education NCATE and PSC accreditation visit. All of the programs housed within the Dewar College of Education, as well as the Art Education and Music Education programs, were also approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission following the on-site review in October 2006.
- The Master's in Library Information Systems program received notification that it had received accreditation status, valid for the next seven years, by the American Library Association.
- The Marriage and Family Therapy program successfully received fully accredited status from the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.
- Modern & Classical Languages received American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages accreditation for its Foreign Language Education Program and passed both National

Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and Professional Standards Commission (PSC) reviews without any areas being cited for improvement.

- The Master of Music in Performance received full approval status from the National Association of Schools of Music in Fall 2006.

The College of Arts & Sciences congratulated the Department of Political Science for receiving approval from the Board of Regents for the Doctorate of Public Administration (the first doctoral degree in the College of Arts and Sciences) and the admission of students into the first cohort beginning Fall 2007.

During 2006-07, VSU received 38 funded grant awards totaling \$3,765,993. The Office of Grants and Contracts also administered 24 internal Faculty Research Grants, totaling \$22,622, and the Institutional Review Board completed 298 reviews for students and faculty proposing research involving human subjects.

A number of VSU's student programs earned national or regional recognition for outstanding achievements during the 2006-2007 year.

- In addition to completing 46 service-learning projects and volunteering over 13,000 hours in the community, VSU's Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) received a \$15,822 grant to conduct a personal finance case management competition at VSU.
- The Model United Nations Team participated at the regional competition in Atlanta and went on to win a major award at the national competition in New York City.
- Students from the Department of Communication Arts won five national awards at the Society for Collegiate Journalists.
- VSU's Society for Human Resource Management Student Chapter earned the Superior Merit Award from the National Society for Human Resource Management for the third year in a row.

Each of VSU's colleges reached out to the community and region through a diverse array of outstanding programs and activities. For example, the College of the Arts welcomed 6,566 recorded viewers to the Fine Arts Gallery and offered over 200 performances by members of the Music Department, both on and off campus, as well as an additional 100 non-VSU related performances by faculty in 2006-07. The Theatre Program performed 68 shows for over 10,273 audience members.

The College of Arts & Sciences witnessed a productive second year for the Center for Applied Research in which the Center distributed \$9,960 in seed grants to 13 faculty across 5 departments in Arts and Sciences to support applied research projects, received \$14,000 from the City of Valdosta and the State of Georgia for a homeless count and focus groups, provided financial support for 15 undergraduate students from five departments and the Honors Program to present at academic conferences, and provided technical expertise throughout VSU's service region.

In the Langdale College of Business Administration, VSU's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) exceeded most contract deliverables for continuing education and consulting throughout the region by providing 1,805 consulting hours to 244 businesses, acquiring over \$2.6 million in capital, and offering 35 programs to 492 attendees.

The Dewar College of Education, supported by a grant from the Georgia Department of Education, participated in the cooperative Georgia Teacher Success effort between the University of Georgia,

Georgia State University, and Valdosta State University to develop a new assessment and support system for Georgia teachers and education leaders. Additionally, J. L. Newbern (Middle School in the Valdosta City Schools System) became a Comprehensive Partner School and with assistance from faculty members and students the Department of Middle and Secondary Education met Adequate Yearly Progress benchmarks for this first time in the history of the school.

The College of Nursing received additional ICAPP Partnership Proposal funding for the development and implementation of an Expedited BSN Program for Second Degree Students and welcomed a third cohort of 24 students into the accelerated Baccalaureate Nursing Program for Second Degree Students while successfully graduating the first cohort. This program addresses the nursing shortage in South Georgia by offering an expedited Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree for students who already hold a four-year degree in a field other than nursing. A full cohort of 24 students entered the program in May 2007. Additionally, the College of Nursing attained full approval from Georgia Board of Nursing with sustained increase in NCLEX examination scores and participated in a restructuring of the existing partnership with South Georgia Medical Center through the establishment of the VSU College of Nursing-South Georgia Medical Center Alliance.

Continuing Education experienced an active year, generating 4,674 institutional Continuing Education Units (CEUs). Distance learning opportunities continued to expand through the use of online and CD-ROM technologies. Professional Development courses offered directly through Continuing Education rose from 193 to 249, an increase of 29%. Additionally, the Learning in Retirement program, which provides learning and social activities for area seniors, had over 3,354 registrations in 182 courses from 317 individuals during FY2007.

Modern and Classical Languages received an Honorable Mention from the Andrew Heiskell Foundation Award for Best Practices in International Education for its Study Abroad Program in Guadalajara. Two areas of excellences were cited: Initiatives in offering the ESOL Endorsement with Mexican field experience and initiatives to encourage minority students to travel abroad.

CONCLUSION



VSU is proud of our achievements this year, which were made possible by the dedication of its administrators, faculty, staff, and students. We look forward to another successful year at VSU in 2007-2008.