Items in **bold print** are items that require action by the Faculty Senate. Other items are for information only.

### Special Request:
At the request of the Senate’s Executive Committee, any actions sent to the President for possible inclusion in the Senate agenda should be accompanied by a written document with the rationale and purpose of the decision. The Executive Committee requests that these documents be submitted via email as Word.doc attachments.

For the benefit of record keeping, we ask that senators and visitors please identify themselves when speaking to an issue during the meeting. Please use the microphones to assist with accurate recording. All senators must sign the roster in order to be counted present. If you have a senator’s proxy, please place their name tag beside your name tag on the table in front of you.

1. **Call to Order** – Peggy Moch.
   
   *The meeting was called to order at 3:33 PM*

2. **Approval of the minutes** of the November 19, 2015 meeting of the Faculty Senate.
   
   [http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/faculty-senate/minutes.php](http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/faculty-senate/minutes.php) (See link here for minutes for all faculty senate meetings).

   A motion was made to approve the minutes and it was seconded. There was no discussion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Reading of proxies obtained prior to the meeting; Request additional proxies for those not given from Senators in attendance – Sudip Chakraborty.

   The following were the proxies: Karl Wildman for Karl Paoletti, Kalina Winska for Shannon Lowe, Tommy Crane for Linda Jurczak, Donald Thieme for Fred Knowles, Arsalan Wares for Krishnendu Roy, Rebecca Gaskins for Ubaraj Katawal, Theresa Grove for Brian Ring, Grazyna Walczak for Michelle Ocasio, Fleming Bell for Victoria Russell, Eric Howington for Luis Gonzalez, Sonya Sanderson for Han Chen, Shaunita Strozier for Rudo Tsemunhu, Serina McEntire for Stacey Walters, Mike Holt for Colette Drouillard, and John Dunn for Fred Ware.

   **Note:** Please send an email to Sudip Chakraborty ([schakraborty@valdosta.edu](mailto:schakraborty@valdosta.edu)) regarding proxies a minimum of one (1) week prior to the scheduled Faculty Senate meeting or as soon as possible if an unexpected absence needs to occur.
4. Interim VSU President, Dr. Cecil Staton: VSU Updates

President Staton gave several updates and answered questions from senators. In the Capital Campaign over $45 M has been received cash-in-hand and in pledges, with nearly 30% as cash-in-hand. $52-53M is projected by the end of the campaign. He mentioned the Spring Open House had more than 2500 visitors signed up compared to 1800 in Fall 2015. Spring 2016 had 849 new students and more than 1700 applications have been received for Fall 2016. The retention rate from Fall 2015 to Spring 2016 was 94.7% compared to 93.8% last academic year. 49 applications were received for the Innovation Grants and the results will be available sometime in March.

A senator asked Dr. Staton whether there were any plans to bring back any of the faculty receiving non-renewal letters due to the application increases. President Staton replied that “we have to be very prudent and strategic about using the growth”.

Another senator asked two questions: i) Will there be a search for a new VSU President. Dr. Staton mentioned the Chancellor will be making an announcement regarding this in 2-3 weeks; ii) What is President’s vision for VSU? Are we moving towards becoming a comprehensive university or remaining a teaching school? Dr. Staton replied we want to be the intellectual and cultural center of our region and state. We need to impact our region and community even though 38% of our students come from Metro Atlanta region. We have been expanding our scope by growing interest in VSU from neighboring states (560 applications from Florida). Our focus is on teaching and research that applies to advancing our students knowledge. We want to be the best comprehensive university in USG. We will position ourselves through innovation and excellence. Dr. Staton believes VSU is positioned well to thrive.

A senator wondered if there was any policy regarding the news that some departments were hiring new faculty while some existing faculty had received non-renewal letters? President Staton mentioned the issue was handled through Academic Affairs and that hiring would be done based on unit/departmental needs as related to credit hour production.

A senator requested the President to comment on recent changes in the graduation ceremony process. Dr. Staton mentioned that different groups (students, parents, and event services) were consulted and the changes were done to enhance the graduation experience. The idea was to have a “grand send-off” for our students. He ended by letting everyone know the administration has been listening to everybody and will continue to do so.

5. Old & Unfinished Business
a. Statutory Committee Reports
   i. Academic Committee – Sheri Gravett; Report located at http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/registrar/academic-committee.php
      Dr. Gravett stated the minutes were available online. She highlighted information about the deactivation of a Master’s program in the College of Education, a lower GPA requirement for admission to the College of Business, and a request to include a Macroeconomics course as part of the core. There were no questions during discussion and the changes were accepted by a unanimous vote.

   ii. Committee on Committees – Kalina Winska: Progress on assignments?
      Ms. Winska presented an update that the committee was waiting on senate representation from the Colleges of Nursing, Business, and Education. In February-March, a Qualtrics survey for new senators to request preferences for Statutory and Standing Committees will be distributed.

   iii. Faculty Affairs – Alicja Rieger: Progress on assignments? See Attachment A and Retirement Policies document available separately on the FS agenda page.
Dr. Rieger summarized the differences between the TRS and ORP retirement plans and recommended faculty speak to Human Resources and choose carefully upon being hired. It was mentioned there is now a form new employees must sign to acknowledge their understanding of the differences between the plans. It was pointed that switching between plans is cost prohibitive and therefore not allowed.

iv. Faculty Grievance Committee – John Dunn: Any report?

Dr. Dunn reported that one grievance was pending and would be taken to the full Grievance Committee for discussion shortly. Information regarding the action will become available as is prudent.

v. Institutional Planning Committee – Donald Thieme: Any report?

Dr. Thieme reported the bylaws were changed in their December 1, 2015 meeting. The IPC chair or another IPC senator will be one of the representatives of FS on the PBC.

b. Meeting minutes from the various committees should be sent to FS Secretary (Sudip Chakraborty (schakraborty@valdosta.edu)) to be uploaded to the Faculty Senate website AND to the library (archives@valdosta.edu) with “Archives Faculty Senate Papers” in the subject line. Minutes from 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 meetings from the various committees should be sent so these documents can be archived properly. Please label minutes documents as shown in the following examples:
   i. Technology_Minutes_04-29-2015
   ii. Academic_Honors_and_Scholarship_Minutes_08-28-2015
   Thank you for your assistance in getting our records keeping up to date.

c. Work is continuing on the updating of the VSU Statutes with representation from the Provost’s Office, Faculty Senate, and the Council on Staff Affairs.

6. New Business
   a. End of year reports are currently due by the end of April. All committee chairs, please prepare your reports in a timely fashion and send them to the Faculty Senate President. Thank you! 😊

b. Standing Committee Reports: No reports received
   i. Academic Honors & Scholarships – Han Chen
   ii. Environmental Issues – Arsalan Wares
   iii. Faculty Scholarship – Maura Schlairet
   iv. Library Affairs – Michael Forbes Ocasio
   v. Internationalization and Globalization Committee – Fleming Bell
   vi. Diversity and Equity – Karen Acosta
   vii. Student Affairs – Kelly Davidson Devall

c. Standing Committee Report

   The proposal for new design of SOI was presented for a vote. FS President, Dr. Moch, made the senators aware that anyone can request voting by ballots for any voting procedure. Ballot voting was requested by a senator. Dr. Jewusiak explained the vote was to allow flexibility in SOI design. The new model would retain a few core questions and allow for customizability of additional questions. During discussion it was mentioned that universities in different states (Illinois, Michigan, California) use from 2-5 questions on their SOIs and this practice has been going on for a long time. A question was asked whether these universities used the SOI score in promotion & tenure decisions and it was answered
affirmatively. A concern was raised that by limiting (reducing) the number of questions we may bring down the overall SOI score thereby impacting the promotion & tenure. Another senator wondered whether this might increase the response rate. Dr. Jewusiak responded that hopefully IT would create some app to potentially increase the response rate. It was also mentioned that passing this motion would allow the committee to move on to the next phase.

Ballot vote conducted and the motion was passed with 36 ‘yes’ and 21 ‘no’ votes.

ii. Technology Committee – Mike Holt

Mike Holt presented the update about creating a “campus-wide master technology needs list”. He encouraged everyone to discuss among peers about the needs for their departments and colleges. A spreadsheet will be sent out soon from the Technology Committee to solicit input.

iii. Athletic Committee – Peggy Moch: Faculty Athletic Representative Search

Dr. Moch mentioned the search for the FAR, required for our athletic accreditation is currently underway.

iv. Academic Scheduling & Procedures – Katharine Lamb: Results of Summer Schedule Vote

The Summer Schedule vote passed unanimously.

d. Dean Wayne Plumly’s letter to the Faculty Senate: See Attachment B.

e. Resolution in Support of Faculty and Staff Receiving Letters of Non-Renewal at Valdosta State University: See attachment C.

During discussion a comment was made that if faculty senate was not going to pursue the actions mentioned on the resolution, then there was no point to including these items on the document (attachment C). Another comment was made regarding the shorter version of the resolution: why not accept the short version or accept both long and short versions. It was mentioned that while the long version was a collective work of many people, the short version was a work of a single individual.

A motion was made to include the short version of the resolution (see Attachment C-1) to the meeting agenda. A ballot vote was requested and the motion carried with 43 ‘yes’, 15 ‘no’, and 1 ‘abstain’ vote. A motion was made that if the long version passed then the short version should be rejected. The motion was seconded.

A senator mentioned that she was actually doing some of the actions listed in the resolution. A ballot vote was requested for voting on the long version (attachment C) of the resolution. There were 28 ‘yes’ votes, 26 ‘no’ votes and 5 abstentions. Initially it was declared that the motion passed but a senator read from online source of Robert’s Rules citing that the motion could not carry as it failed to reach a majority of the quorum (51% of 28+26+5=59). It was then declared that the motion did not pass.

It was discussed that the short version of the resolution did not include all of the ‘action’ items from the long version. A new motion was made to amend the short version by including the section with 12 actions (except removing 5, 6, and 7 as they were already on the short version, and correcting the number in item 2) from the long version. The motion was seconded and a ballot vote was requested. The motion to amend the short version was passed with 39 ‘yes votes, 12 ‘no’ votes, and 2 abstentions. Finally, the now amended short version (see attachment C-2) was up for voting. Again a ballot vote was used and there were 39 ‘yes’ and 11 ‘no’ votes, with no abstentions. Thus the resolution passed.
7. General Discussion
   a. We added two (2) additional senate meetings (January and August) with the reorganization of
      the Faculty Senate. Attendance at the May meetings is sporadic and we do not always have a
      quorum. Should we do away with the May 2016 meeting? End of year reports would be due
      the end of March or by mid-April at the latest. Is this doable?
   b. Please start thinking about whom among you will be running for VP/President-Elect. The
      election will be held in April (or in March if we decide to eliminate the May meeting).

      Due to the lateness of the hour, there was no general discussion.

8. Adjournment
   A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 PM

   Respectfully submitted by:  Sudip Chakraborty
Attachment A:

Dear Dr. Peggy Moch,

The Faculty Affairs Committee was remanded by the Faculty Senate to review policies concerning unused sick leave in relation to the two available faculty retirement options, Teacher’s Retirement System (TRS) and Optional Retirement Plan (ORP; See TRS & ORP Comparison sheet).

The Faculty Affairs Committee acknowledges that important differences exist between the two available retirement options:

The TRS was established by the General Assembly in 1945 and is available to all teachers in Georgia (See O.C.G.A. 47-3-92). The TRS offers an attendance incentive program which allows for employees the option of vacation leave payout and sick leave credited toward retirement (www.trsga.com). However, only elementary and secondary school teachers and not post-secondary teachers, have the option of a sick leave payout (See O.C.G.A. 20-2-853).

Effective September 1, 1990, the Board of Regents adopted the ORP (See O.C.G.A. 47-21-3 and ORP Handbook). While the ORP does not require an employee be vested after 10 years as with the TRS, employees do not accrue vacation leave with ORP and it does not allow for sick leave credit toward retirement/payout.

More detailed information regarding the two retirement options may be found in the above referenced documents (pdf attached) and/or the VSU Human Resource and Employee Development webpages available at http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/human-resources/

https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/human-resources/forms/ORPUSGRetirement_Election_Form.pdf

New faculty are encouraged to carefully consider the two available retirement options, within the 60 day review period from the date of hire. Consultation with a Human Resource Representative may be beneficial in identifying important considerations including faculty mobility, vested time required, credited sick leave toward retirement, and other investment options. Careful consideration is warranted as the retirement plan choice is irrevocable during University System of Georgia employment.

Respectfully submitted,

Faculty Affairs Committee
Valdosta State University
Dear Faculty Senators,

The purpose of this letter is threefold: 1) to correct any misperceptions dealing with the Langdale College's representation on the Resolution of Support Committee, 2) to inform the Senate of Langdale College's support of all colleges of VSU, and 3) to reiterate an offer of collaboration with other colleges.

Neither I nor the Executive Committee have ever "banned" any faculty member from serving on any committee. I was chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee when President Bailey asked me to create a faculty senate at VSU. We worked on the document for two years and we succeeded in creating the first ever faculty senate at VSU. I am a strong believer in faculty governance and have always taken senate committees seriously. The Resolution of Support Committee appeared not to have a clear charge and materials coming out of that committee seemed to inflame rather than to assist. After the LCOBA representative resigned from the committee, no other LCOBA faculty member volunteered. Apparently, the LCOBA representative was not the only one who resigned from the committee. To reiterate, neither I nor the Executive Committee have ever banned anyone from serving on this or any committee.

The faculty of the Langdale College have been fully supportive of other faculties around campus. The LCOBA financed the Core Matters Conferences (2010- $2,500, 2011-$2,000, and 2012- $2,000). We assisted in financing the orientation speaker this past fall ($10,000). LCOBA financed the Harvey Brightman Master Teaching Seminars. We raised $10,000 for VECA. We have sponsored several Peach State Summer Theatre plays (each for $5,000) and a Symphony Orchestra performance ($5,000). We sponsor Athletics ranging from $3,500- $5,000 depending on sufficient resources. We supported the Inclusion Celebration ($2,000) and Black History Month Celebration ($1,000). There are many other examples of financial support. LCOBA faculty also actively participate in many campus activities. The Langdale College knows that we are one academy.

Over the past several years LCOBA has added new majors and seven new minors. We have purposely opened our doors to other majors wanting our classes. We have done so without any new resources. Our average undergraduate class size now approaches 43 students per section. We have constructed these majors and minors to serve our student body including non-business majors better. We feel that collaboration should be a campus priority. A prime example is the theatre management track in Fine Arts.

We care deeply about all of our colleagues and will actively work to prevent future layoffs. We value our colleagues all across our campus and are willing to work together to increase enrollment and provide high quality programs.

Thank you for your considerations,

L. Wayne Plumly, Jr.
Dean, Langdale College of Business
Resolution in Support of Faculty and Staff Receiving Letters of Non-Renewal at Valdosta State University

WHEREAS, failings or insufficiencies of the faculty, support staff or students, are not responsible for enrollment decreases since 2011, and

WHEREAS articulation agreements with less expensive community and technical colleges and ineffective marketing of Valdosta State University represent administrative decisions that more likely contributed to enrollment declines, and

WHEREAS, the Chancellor of the University System of Georgia (USG) and the Board of Regents (BOR) determined the need for a significant budget cut to VSU that resulted in upper level administrators determining where cuts had to be made based on credit hour production, and

WHEREAS, the Deans of the various units were provided the budget reduction information to pass to Department Heads impacted by the reduction in credit hour production. Following instructions from USG BOR attorneys, Department Heads made the decisions on how to reach the targeted budget cut by reducing operating budgets or numbers of non-tenured faculty, instructors and staff based on length of time employed at VSU. These decisions resulted in reduction of departmental operating budgets and 33 faculty and staff (26 from the College of Arts and Sciences, seven of them tenure-track faculty) who were notified on or before August 7, 2015 for the 2016-2017 academic year, and

WHEREAS, these faculty increased the diversity and breadth of undergraduate and graduate courses because of their areas of expertise, and

WHEREAS, these tenure-track faculty had active research and professional development programs that led to publications, external funding and opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students that cannot, and will not, be duplicated by other faculty currently employed at VSU, and

WHEREAS, these faculty received non-renewal letters based primarily on credit hour decline within individual units and the length of time each person was employed at VSU with little regard to other factors to determine the value-added to the education of the students (e.g. expertise of, productivity of, courses taught by and external funding received by the faculty as well as opportunities provided to students such as research jobs and directed-study opportunities), and

WHEREAS, low student-to-faculty ratios not only attract new students, but also lead to increased student retention and success due to greater interactions between faculty and student and mentoring of students by faculty, and

WHEREAS, VSU is now using resources aimed at improving recruitment, enrollment and retention that include the 70/80 Committee, Project Innovate, VSYou Marketing Campaign, and in-state tuition for students from border states with the expectation of increased enrollment Fall 2016.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, the VSU Faculty Senate

1) Regards with concern and questions the necessity and does not approve of the non-renewal of these faculty and staff,

2) Recognizes the sanctity of the tenure-track at a comprehensive university,

3) Recognizes and appreciates the dedication and contributions of these faculty to help VSU reach the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan and support the values of the Blazer Creed,
4) Recognizes that the loss of these faculty and staff negatively impacts both current and future students because of the loss of value-added opportunities for students in terms of the areas of expertise, research opportunities and diversity of course offerings provided by these faculty,

5) Is concerned that the loss of these faculty and staff has hurt VSU’s reputation and negatively impact its ability to recruit and retain future and current students,

6) Is concerned that the loss of these faculty and staff has hurt VSU’s reputation and its ability to attract qualified applicants to fill open faculty and staff positions in the future, and

7) Is concerned that when enrollment and retention increase, a shortage of faculty and instructors will result in student frustration when spaces are unavailable in classes.

FURTHER the VSU Faculty Senate will support Non-Renewed Faculty and Staff and work to prevent future reductions in faculty and staff by

1) Encouraging all members of the VSU community to notify affected faculty and staff through list serves or other means of open positions at other USG institutions or at other institutions and places of business that match their expertise,

2) Continuing to monitor the use of funds set aside to assist the 33 faculty and staff members affected to support their travel to additional venues for the purpose of securing alternate employment,

3) Being good colleagues to those impacted by this reduction in force by providing references upon request that include an explanation of situation at VSU that led to them leaving their current position, editing resumes and CVs, editing manuscripts and drafts for publication and offering moral support.

4) Posting a letter on the Faculty Senate website to which individuals could provide link in their cover letter explaining the situation that anyone who was affected by reductions in force can use when applying for other positions,

5) Working with the Administration in the spirit of transparency and shared governance to develop a plan to rescind non-renewal letter(s) based on accreditation, attrition and enrollment and retention increases,

6) Working with the Administration to determine the feasibility of placing the faculty and staff who received non-renewal letters on furlough for the next academic year so that, if enrollment increases, these qualified, highly trained and productive faculty may resume their positions in the faculty workforce, thus avoiding the costs required for new searches,

7) Working with the Administration to investigate the potential for increasing opportunities for high school students through dual enrollment at VSU,

8) Working with the Administration to investigate the potential for developing opportunities for students to earn associate degrees in fields (e.g. business and education) where many students complete the core courses within first two years and then focus on courses directly pertaining to their major. However, at the same time VSU must recognize that this plan of completing the core during the first two years is not appropriate in many disciplines (e.g. STEM) where it is wise to spread the core courses out throughout one’s undergraduate education,

9) Being the voice for faculty at VSU, a comprehensive university where faculty are both educators and scholars who are recognized nationally and internationally in their respective fields in the same arenas in which faculty from the state’s “flagship” universities compete,

10) Continuing to generate enthusiasm and to work with the Administration to market the strengths of our faculty and our students at VSU, where we can boast of low student-to-faculty ratios in classrooms, more research opportunities per student and open doors to faculty offices that provide a level of access to VSU students available only to the most assertive students at large research universities,
11) Requesting that the Administration continues to look for innovative alternative approaches to reduce or eliminate the need to permanently terminate these members of the VSU community, and

12) Requesting that faculty continue to innovate in the classroom and research settings and be leaders in their respective fields to further increase enrollment.
Resolution in Support of VSU Personnel Receiving Letters of Non-Renewal

Whereas, continuing federal and state budget cuts in higher education pose enormous challenges to the academic integrity, quality, and stability of institutions like Valdosta State University, and

Whereas, this financial insecurity is further exacerbated by demographic shifts which have resulted in enrollment declines at more than half of all USG institutions since 2011, including VSU, and

Whereas, past administrations at VSU have not paid adequate attention to enrollment and budgetary developments, thereby contributing to the challenges our institution is facing today, and

Whereas, in the summer of 2015 the system office of the University System of Georgia (USG) and the Board of Regents (BOR) determined that because of declines in head count and credit hour productivity, VSU had to address its revenue shortfalls by considering cuts in its faculty and staff positions, and

Whereas, the system office and the BOR did not carefully consider the long-term economic and academic benefits of investing in early retirements via buy-outs, instead of laying off younger faculty and staff, and

Whereas, in August of 2015 VSU’s administration informed 30 faculty and staff members that their contracts would not be renewed for the academic year 2016-2017, and

Whereas, efforts at all levels since Fall 2015 (in connection with our ability to now offer in-state tuition to students from Alabama, South Carolina, and Florida) are showing initial results, likely leading to increases in student head count and credit hour productivity by next Fall; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Faculty Senate

1) supports efforts at VSU to increase student enrollment and student retention, to provide more opportunities for high school students through dual enrollment, and to uphold the quality of our diverse academic programs which are ultimately needed to sustain current initiatives;

2) is concerned that the loss of 30 faculty and staff members will undermine the longevity of VSU’s academic programs, lead to increased student-to-faculty ratios, and negatively impact students due to a loss in diverse research projects and course offerings;

3) is determined to work with the administration to rescind nonrenewal letter(s) based on accreditation, attrition, and anticipated increases in student enrollment and student retention;

4) requests that the administration determine the feasibility of placing personnel who received non-renewal letters on furlough for the next academic year, so that these highly qualified VSU members may resume their positions should projected enrollment increases be confirmed by Fall 2016, and in order to avoid costs required for new searches as a result of either increasing enrollment figures or possible retirements;

5) insists that the administration recognizes and supports the significance of tenure-track at VSU.
January 28, 2016

Resolution in Support of VSU Personnel Receiving Letters of Non-Renewal

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Date: January 28, 2016

Faculty Senate Attendance: Please initial to the right of your name. If you are a proxy for someone, write proxy to the right of their name.

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