



FACULTY SENATE

Est. 1991

Michele Blankenship
President

Chunlei Liu
**Vice President/
President Elect**

Taralynn Hartsell
Secretary

Melissa Pihos
Parliamentarian

Kelly Davidson
Past President

Agenda September 16, 2021, 3:30 pm Microsoft Teams

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 (fsec@valdosta.edu), any actions sent to the president (sblankenship@valdosta.edu) 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 a Word.doc attachment(s).

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.

Attendance link here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=QNOIJbyKU0C0vdwSEygDU4DGNC7nE41BIELqpw2zy6BUQUVDSUdBR1JLN0xCOEUxRVMYRTVBTThWRS4u>

1. Call to Order – Michele Blankenship
 - a. Guidance for online meetings (Attachment A)
2. Reading of proxies obtained prior to the meeting; Request additional proxies for those not given from Senators in attendance – Taralynn Hartsell

Note: Please send an email to Taralynn Hartsell (tshartsell@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.

- 3. Approval of the minutes of the August, 19 2021 meeting of the Faculty Senate.**
<http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/faculty-senate/minutes.php> (See link here for minutes for all faculty senate meetings). – Melissa Pihos

4. Updates from President's Office: Dr. Carvajal and/or Dr. Smith
5. Faculty Handbook: Sheri Gravett
 - a. Remand to Faculty Affairs (Attachment B)
6. Old & Unfinished Business
 - a. Statutory Committee Reports
 - i. Academic Committee (fs-stat-ac@valdosta.edu) – Sheri Gravett; Find agendas and minutes here:
<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/registrar/academic-committee.php>
 - ii. Committee on Committees (fs-stat-coco@valdosta.edu) – Nicole Alemanne
 - iii. Faculty Affairs (fs-stat-fa@valdosta.edu) – Mitch Lockhart
 - iv. Faculty Grievance Committee (fs-stat-fgc@valdosta.edu) – Attila Cseh
 - v. Institutional Planning Committee (fs-stat-ipc@valdosta.edu) – Shaffat Mubin
 - b. Meeting minutes from the various committees should be sent to fsec@valdosta.edu **AND** to archives@valdosta.edu with “Archives Faculty Senate Papers” in the subject line. Please label minutes documents as shown in the following examples:
 - i. Technology_Minutes_04-29-2021
 - ii. Academic_Honors_and_Scholarship_Minutes_08-28-2021Thank you for your assistance in getting and keeping our records up to date. ☺
7. New Business
 - a. Standing Committee Reports:
 - i. Academic Honors & Scholarships (fs-stand-ahs@valdosta.edu) – Ericka Parra
 - ii. Academic Scheduling & Procedures (fs-stand-asp@valdosta.edu) – Robert Taylor
 - iii. Athletic Committee (fs-stand-ac@valdosta.edu) – Megan Wood
 - iv. Diversity and Equity Committee (fs-stand-dec@valdosta.edu) – Duke Guthrie
 - v. Educational Policies (fs-stand-ep@valdosta.edu) – Nandan Jha
 - vi. Environmental Issues (fs-stand-ei@valdosta.edu) – Gopeekrishnan Sreenilayam
 - vii. Faculty Scholarship (fs-stand-fs@valdosta.edu) – Kelly Lowery
 - viii. Internationalization and Globalization (fs-stand-igc@valdosta.edu) – Brian Gerber
 - ix. Library Affairs (fs-stand-la@valdosta.edu) – A. J. Ramirez
 - x. Student Affairs (fs-stand-sa@valdosta.edu) – Lenese Colson
 - xi. Technology Committee (fs-stand-tc@valdosta.edu) – Lee Grimes
8. General Discussion
9. Adjournment

Attachment A

Guidance for Online Meetings

During this exceptional time, all Faculty Senate meetings will be held online using Microsoft Teams. The information to connect will be sent over email. This is an open meeting.

To access the meeting easily, use the TEAMS link found in the email containing the agenda or through your calendar link (Outlook).

For the benefit of record keeping, we ask that senators and visitors please identify themselves when speaking to an issue during the meeting. Please note the following:

1. All senators must sign the roster in order to be counted present. We will be using an online roster which can be found by using [using this link](#) (also copied below) on the day of the meeting. If you have a senator's proxy, please include this information using the online form, in addition to emailing Taralynn Hartsell ([tshartsell @valdosta.edu](mailto:tshartsell@valdosta.edu)) at least one week in advance as per Senate By-Laws.

Attendance link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=QNOIJbyKU0C0vdwSEygDU4DGNC7nE4IBIElqpw2zy6BUQUVDSUdBR1JLN0xCOEUxRVMYRTVBTTThWRS4u>

2. Given the new online format, the following points are very important for record-keeping and parliamentary rules:

- a. If you would like to join the online discussion, use the "raise hand" feature. The Executive Committee will work to ensure that everyone is able to participate in a timely and organized manner. **Please do not use the chat function to pose questions unless otherwise directed due to technical difficulties by the meeting coordinator or IT.** Doing so can create confusion and timing for responses.
- b. If you are not actively speaking, please mute your microphone in order to avoid feedback and/or background noise interruptions.
- c. When a vote is called use the "raise hand" feature to vote. If you have a proxy, you will need to type the name and vote using the chat feature. Please keep in mind that the online function takes time. We will call for votes in one category and count "raised hands," then ask for proxies through the chat feature. After the votes have been officially counted, you will need to "lower your hand" so that we can call for votes in subsequent categories. Please only use the chat feature for proxy voting. We thank you for your patience as we accurately count all votes.

It is encouraged that all senators and possible attendees contact VSU IT to address any connection concerns before the meeting.

Attachment B

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY FACULTY HANDBOOK DRAFT

Foreword

Valdosta State University, a unit of the University System of Georgia, is governed by the Board of Regents through a Chancellor. General policies of the Board of Regents are published in the Board of Regents [Policy Manual](#) and policy adoption is recorded in the [official minutes](#) of the Board. The University is governed by statutes which have been approved by the Board of Regents. These statutes contain official statements of general policy, rules, regulations, procedures, organizations, and governance. This Faculty Handbook is a compilation of general policies and procedures which affect the professional activities of VSU's faculty. This handbook nor its provisions constitute an employment contract or agreement between the University and any employee. The rules and regulations within this handbook are subject to change by appropriate action of the faculty and/or administration. Changes may become effective on the date they are approved by the President of the University or designee.

1.0 University Mission and Vision

Valdosta State University is one of four comprehensive universities in the University System of Georgia (USG) overseen by the Chancellor of the University System of Georgia and the Board of Regents. For further information about the BOR and the USG, see <https://www.usg.edu/news/usgfacts>. The Board of Regents' [Policy Manual](#) §2.8 defines the scope of these universities as follows:

Comprehensive Universities. . . offer a number of undergraduate and master's-level programs with some doctoral programs. Typically, associate-level degrees are not offered at comprehensive universities. Graduate programs at comprehensive universities are characterized as master's-dominant. While teaching is a core focus at all USG institutions, the emphasis on basic and applied research is heavier at comprehensive universities than state universities or state colleges, but not emphasized as heavily as research universities. It is expected that institutions within this sector will be committed to being world-class academic institutions.

<https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section2/C324>

VSU's **mission** as a comprehensive university is reflected in its [mission statement](#):

As a comprehensive institution of the University System of Georgia, Valdosta State University (VSU) is a welcoming, aware, and vibrant community founded on and dedicated to serving our communities' rich and diverse heritages. Through excellence in teaching, basic and applied research, and service, VSU provides rigorous programs and opportunities that enrich our students, our university, and our region. As such, the VSU mission consists of three interrelated parts:

- **Student Mission:** To provide a diverse student population with an inspired education, a safe learning environment, a nurturing community, and a wealth of experience that assists students in molding their futures in a creative, conscious, and caring fashion while preparing them to be lifelong learners who will meet the needs of a changing global society.
- **University Mission:** To operate the university with a focus toward human, environmental, and financial sustainability while increasing value to our local, regional, national, and international stakeholders. To

expand opportunities for our students, employees, and varied community members by promoting social justice and service learning.

- **Regional Mission:** To provide our region and our home with the resources and support necessary to develop and sustain a higher quality of living, greater economic and community development, and inspired innovation that nurtures and respects our diverse population and beautiful environment while promoting academic outreach, public and private entrepreneurship, and collaboration with all regional entities.

Valdosta State University fulfills its mission by focusing on inclusion in all aspects of the educational experience.

Developed by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, August 2013. Approved by the President's Cabinet, September 16, 2013. Approved by University Council, March 24, 2014. Approved by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, August 20, 2014. Reviewed and reaffirmed by University Council, October 9, 2019. Reviewed and approved by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, February 9, 2021.

<https://www.valdosta.edu/about/facts/organization-and-mission.php>

VSU's Vision: Valdosta State University will be a catalyst for regional comprehensive progress.

1.1 University Organization

Organizationally, VSU operates under the leadership of a President. The Board of Regent's Policy Manual defines the role of the President as follows:

The President of each University System of Georgia (USG) institution shall be the executive head of the institution and all its departments and shall exercise supervision and direction to promote the efficient operation of the institution. The President is responsible to the Chancellor for the operation and management of the institution and for the execution of all directives of the Board of Regents and the Chancellor.

<https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section2/C322>

At VSU, the President directly oversees seven major divisions, led either by a Vice President or Director:

Academic Affairs (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/>)

This division oversees the academic mission of the university and is headed by the Chief Academic Officer (CAO), the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Student Affairs (<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/>)

The division of Student Affairs oversees student life across campus and works closely with Academic Affairs and Student Success to ensure students have a well-rounded collegiate experience. This division has offices such as campus recreation, career opportunities, counseling, health services, housing and

residence life, student conduct, and student diversity and inclusion. This division is headed by the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Student Success (<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/enrollment-management/>)

The division of Student Success supports the academic mission of the university through intentional recruiting, professional advising and academic support, and marketing and design. This division is headed by the Vice President for Student Success.

Finance and Administration (<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/>)

Finance and Administration provides services that facilitate the business and financial functions of Valdosta State University. These services include the processes to purchase products, hire and pay employees, manage university accounts, train employees, build and maintain campus structures and grounds, and protect property and life. Services for students are available through the Student Online Account Center and the Bursary. This division is headed by the Chief Financial Officer, the Vice President for Finance and Administration.

University Advancement (<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/advancement/>)

Advancement is a systematic, integrated method of managing relationships in order to increase an educational institution's support from its key outside constituents, including alumni and friends, government policy makers, the media, members of the community, and philanthropic entities of all types. The primary core disciplines of educational advancement are alumni relations, and development (fundraising). The division also houses Event Services, the VSU Foundation, and Strategic Communications. The division is headed by the Vice President for Advancement.

Information Technology (<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/it/about/>)

The Division of Information Technology (IT) manages the majority of Valdosta State University's network and communications, and computing technologies. Its purpose is to support the university's mission of teaching and learning, research, and service by expanding access to a sound, secure, and sustainable technology infrastructure in terms of business intelligence, instructional technology, information systems and security, networking, and client support. This division is headed by the Chief Information Officer (CIO).

Athletics (<https://vstateblazers.com/>)

This division oversees VSU NCAA Division II Athletics Teams and is headed by the Director of Athletics.

1.2 University Governance

In matters of University Governance, the President is advised by groups representing the three major constituencies of the University: the faculty, the staff, and students.

1.2.1 The Faculty Senate

The Valdosta State University Faculty Senate serves as the mechanism for shared governance at the University and is the body to which the statutory, standing, and special committees of the Senate report.

The Faculty Senate functions as the representative, deliberative, advisory, and legislative body of the General Faculty. For more information about the Senate, visit its website at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/faculty-senate/>. Faculty members may serve as elected Senators from their college, or they could also volunteer to serve as members of various Senate committees.

1.2.2 The Council on Staff Affairs (COSA)

The Council on Staff Affairs (COSA) recommends to the President of the University suggestions for the improvement of policies and procedures related to the general welfare of all concerned within the University community. COSA is comprised of classified-staff employees, representing every division and two “at large” members. Further information about COSA is available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/council-on-staff-affairs/>

1.2.3 Student Government Association (SGA)

The Student Government Association (SGA) works closely with the Valdosta State University (VSU) administration striving for data-driven decision-making solutions to VSU’s opportunities and challenges. Uniquely, the Valdosta State University Student Government Association serves as the mechanism to ensure VSU students feel heard and valued. SGA seeks to ensure the VSU student experience is continually improving. More information about the SGA is available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-government-association/>

1.2.4 University Council

The University Council is an advisory group to the President that is charged with strategic planning, policy approval, and information sharing. Its membership includes representatives from the groups listed above as well as the President’s Cabinet and other members of the administrative leadership team.

1.2.5 Budget Advisory Council

The Budget Advisory Council (BAC) is an advisory group to the President’s Cabinet on matters pertaining to VSU’s budget. Its membership includes the President’s Cabinet as well as representatives from faculty, staff, and others groups across campus.

2.0 Academic Affairs Organization and Personnel

2.1 Organization

The largest division in the University, Academic Affairs, is composed of six undergraduate colleges:

- The College of the Arts (<https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/arts/>)
- Harley Langdale, Jr. College of Business Administration (<https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/business/>)
- James L. and Dorothy H. Dewar College of Education and Human Services (<https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/>)
- College of Humanities and Social Sciences (<https://www.valdosta.edu/chss/>)
- College of Nursing and Health Sciences (<https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/nursing-and-health-sciences/>)
- College of Science and Mathematics (<https://www.valdosta.edu/csm/>) as well as
- the Graduate School (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/>),
- the Honors College (<https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/honors/>), and
- Odum Library (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/library/>).

Academic Affairs is also home to a variety of administrative offices supporting the academic mission of the university, including the following:

- Adult and Military Programs (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/amp/>)
- The Center for International Programs (CIP) (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/international-programs/>) and the English Language Institute (ELI) (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/international-programs/english-language-institute/>),
- The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) (<https://www.valdosta.edu/celt/>),
- The STEAM Center for Applied Creativity and Innovation (<https://www.valdosta.edu/steamcenter/>),
- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/institutional-effectiveness/>),
- Center for eLearning (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/elearning/>),
- Professional and Community Education (<https://www.valdosta.edu/pace/>), and
- The Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Administration (OSPRA) (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/research/office-of-sponsored-programs-research-administration/>).

As needed, the Provost and Vice President will establish ad hoc and/or standing committees, taskforces, and advisory groups to support the academic functions of the institution.

2.2. Academic Affairs Personnel

The Office of Academic Affairs oversees the University's academic affairs division. Personnel in this division include the following:

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs: The Provost and VPAA serves as the Chief Academic Officer who works in liaison with the President and the University System of Georgia to lead the campus in issues pertaining to all academic matters, including curriculum and degree program approvals, faculty appointments and contracts, promotion and tenure recommendations, academic budget allocation, and academic policies. The Provost is assisted in these tasks by Associate Provosts and Academic Affairs staff. The Provost is a faculty member but serves in an administrative role at the pleasure of the President.

Deans: Deans are the chief executive officers of each college and report to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. They are responsible for the development and coordination of programs within their colleges as well as the recommendations for all faculty personnel actions. Deans also have appointments as faculty but serve in their administrative role at the pleasure of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Department Heads: Department heads have direct supervision over faculty and are responsible for the general direction of the department; the quality of instruction; the coordination of instruction; and for recommendations for personnel actions. Department Heads have faculty appointments but serve in their administrative role at the pleasure of the college dean.

Directors: Directors in the division of Academic Affairs oversee various administrative offices that provide support to the colleges and departments. Some of these directors may hold faculty status, but all serve in their administrative capacity at the pleasure of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Faculty: According to the Board of Regents' Policy Manual, full-time faculty members are part of the Corps of Instruction: "Full-time professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers, senior lecturers, principal lecturers, and teaching personnel with such other titles as may be approved by the Board, shall be the Corps of Instruction. Full-time research and extension personnel and duly certified librarians will be included in the Corps of Instruction on the basis of comparable training. Persons holding part-time and adjunct appointments or other honorary titles shall not be considered to be members of the faculty."

https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section3/C337/#p3.2.1_faculty_membership

It is the responsibility of the faculty in each college to establish entrance requirements, define courses of study, establish requirements for degrees offered in the College, provide guidance and advising for the students in the College, and adopt regulations to govern its own procedures for the orderly and efficient administration of the school

The faculty is responsible for regulations affecting academic activities, the general educational policy of the University, the welfare of the faculty, and other matters as may maintain and promote the best interest of the faculty and of the University. The representative and legislative agency of the faculty is the Faculty Senate.

A current organization chart for the Division of Academic Affairs is posted at

<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/colleges-and-units.php>

3.0 Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty

3.1 Academic Freedom

The following statement regarding Academic Freedom is included in the Statutes of Valdosta State University.

Section 1. Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.

Section 2. Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject.

Section 3. Teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

VSU Statutes 2007 <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/statutes.pdf>

3.1.1 Intellectual Pluralism and Academic Freedom

<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/documents/intellectual-pluralism.pdf>

The University System of Georgia and Valdosta State University subscribe to the statement below by the American Council on Education.

**Statement on Academic Rights and Responsibilities
American Council on Education**

Intellectual pluralism and academic freedom are central principles of American higher education. Recently, these issues have captured the attention of the media, political leaders and those in the academy. This is not the first time in the nation's history that these issues have become public controversies, but the current interest in intellectual discourse on campus suggests that the meaning of these terms, and the rights and responsibilities of individual members of the campus community, should be reiterated.

Without question, academic freedom and intellectual pluralism are complex topics with multiple dimensions that affect both students and faculty. Moreover, America's colleges and universities vary enormously, making it impossible to create a single definition or set of standards that will work equally well for all fields of academic study and all institutions in all circumstances. Individual campuses must give meaning and definition to these concepts within the context of disciplinary standards and institutional mission.

Despite the difficulty of prescribing a universal definition, we believe that there are some central, overarching principles that are widely shared within the academic community and deserve to be stated affirmatively as a basis for discussion of these issues on campuses and elsewhere.

- American higher education is characterized by a great diversity of institutions, each with its own mission and purpose. This diversity is a central feature and strength of our colleges and universities and must be valued and protected. The particular purpose of each school, as defined by the institution itself, should set the tone for the academic activities undertaken on campus.
- Colleges and universities should welcome intellectual pluralism and the free exchange of ideas. Such a commitment will inevitably encourage debate over complex and difficult issues about which individuals will disagree. Such discussions should be held in an environment characterized by openness, tolerance and civility.
- Academic decisions including grades should be based solely on considerations that are intellectually relevant to the subject matter under consideration. Neither students nor faculty should be disadvantaged or evaluated on the basis of their political opinions. Any member of the campus community who believes he or she has been treated unfairly on academic matters must have access to a clear institutional process by which his or her grievance can be addressed.
- The validity of academic ideas, theories, arguments and views should be measured against the intellectual standards of relevant academic and professional disciplines. Application of these intellectual standards does not mean that all ideas have equal merit. The responsibility to judge the merits of competing academic ideas rests with colleges and universities and is determined by reference to the standards of the academic profession as established by the community of scholars at each institution.
- Government's recognition and respect for the independence of colleges and universities is essential for academic and intellectual excellence. Because colleges and universities have great discretion and autonomy over academic affairs, they have a particular obligation to ensure that academic freedom is protected for all members of the campus community and that academic decisions are based on intellectual standards consistent with the mission of each institution.

The following organizations have endorsed this statement:

- American Association of Community Colleges
- American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- American Association of University Professors
- American Council on Education
- American Dental Education Association
- American Political Science Association
- Association of American Colleges and Universities
- Association of American Law Schools

- Association of American Universities
- Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
- Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
- Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers
- Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
- The College Board
- ACPA - College Student Educators International
- College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
- Council for Advancement and Support of Education
- Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
- Council for Higher Education Accreditation
- Council for Opportunity in Education
- Council of Graduate Schools
- Council of Independent Colleges
- EDUCAUSE
- Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
- National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
- National Collegiate Athletic Association
- University Continuing Education Association

3.2 Academic Code of Professional Ethics

The following Academic Code of Professional Ethics was adopted by the General Faculty on April 29, 1991. Editorial changes have been made wherever necessary to reflect alterations of institutional structure and nomenclature mandated by the revised Statutes of the University and Bylaws of the Faculty Senate.

An Academic Code of Professional Ethics

1. The Ethics of Adopting an Academic Code of Professional Ethics

- a. The purpose of a code of professional ethics, academic or otherwise, is to provide a uniformly respected incentive to the appropriate fulfillment of one's professional commitments.
- b. To this end, a code of professional ethics should concentrate upon providing a positive statement of those principles of action which, it can generally be agreed among those who practice the profession, contribute to commendable professional performance.
- c. It is to be inferred from the foregoing that a code of professional ethics places greater emphasis upon conveying what a practitioner of the profession ideally ought to do, rather than upon what he or she ought not to do.
- d. It is further to be inferred, therefore, that both in spirit and in practical application, a code of professional ethics is intended as both a general guide and an encouragement.

2. Available Resources and the Scope of this Document

- a. The patterns of action considered appropriate to various aspects of one's academic performance are stated, with varying degrees of coverage and focus of interest, by one or all of the following--depending upon the nature of the institution: the American Association of University Professors; the discipline with which a particular individual identifies; the institutional Board of Trustees or its equivalent (in the case of Valdosta State University: the Board of Regents of the University System); and the Administration, Committees, and Faculty Senate of the particular institution.
- b. The Ad Hoc Committee on Professional Ethics, which has been charged with drafting this present statement, has unanimously recommended that the Administration and Faculty of

Valdosta State University adopt the 1987 professional ethics statement of the American Association of University Professors. A copy of this statement follows this Code.

- c. The attention of all faculty is directed to the professional code, if any exists, of his or her discipline.
- d. The Ad Hoc Committee on Professional Ethics directs attention to the fact that numerous overt references and/or implied expectations regarding academic professional standards are contained in the following authorized documents of this institution: (a) the annual Undergraduate Bulletin and Graduate Bulletin; (b) the Statutes of Valdosta State University; (c) the criteria provided in the application forms pertaining to promotion and tenure; and (d) the criteria provided in the annual faculty evaluation forms.
- e. It is the intention of this statement of professional ethics to attend only to those guidelines for professional academic practice which might especially pertain to the Faculty and Administration of this institution, and to do so by incorporating the major interests of the previously cited institutional documents (cf. 2.4), and by conforming to the outline of the 1987 professional ethics code recommended by the American Association of University Professors and endorsed by this committee (cf. 2.2).

3. The Responsibility of Faculty to Their Subjects

- a. While responsibility priorities at a given moment are frequently determined by an immediate need at hand, all faculty are everywhere and at all times rightly perceived as publicly recognized members of their respective disciplines.
- b. As publicly recognized members of their disciplines, faculty enjoy the responsibility of sustaining their academic expertise through regular and conscientious inquiry, reflection, and research--thereby deepening and broadening their facility in their elected field(s) of interest.
- c. In consequence of the foregoing (3.2), faculty recognize their obligation (a) to convey their knowledge and perceptions accurately and fairly to others--acknowledging diversities of interpretation as may be pertinent, and (b) to exercise scrupulous regard for the ethical standards of their disciplines (cf 2.3) and of the general academic community in the management of research personnel, techniques, findings, and reporting.
- d. Faculty likewise accept responsibility, however difficult or unpleasant this may be on occasion, for speaking the truth as they perceive it regarding the issues entailed in their several disciplines, and to do so uncompromisingly, irrespective of institutional, community, political, or other insistence that truth be subverted.

4. The Responsibility of Faculty to Their Students

- a. The fundamental responsibility in this regard to which faculty obligate themselves is that of respecting the human dignity of each student, irrespective of his or her academic status. All recommended practices cited hereafter in this section assume concurrence with the foregoing principle.
- b. Respect for each individual student entails confidentiality regarding not only personal matters discussed, but likewise regarding a student's performance and grades other than for institutionally sanctioned purposes.
- c. Respect for each individual student restrains faculty from exploiting students for personal advantage, permitting personal likes or dislikes to affect grades assigned or evaluations written, engaging in sexual harassment, directing ad hominem remarks against a student, or otherwise demeaning or degrading a student (not to be confused with a professional academic exchange of contrary viewpoints with a student).
- d. Faculty are privileged to serve as intellectual guides for their students, not only by stimulating interest in the subject matter of the class, in learning, and in the principles of academic honesty,

but also by rendering personal assistance as required and by setting a personal example of academic commitment.

5. The Responsibility of Faculty to Their Colleagues

- a. Faculty are responsible no less to their colleagues than to their students regarding the fundamental principle of respect for persons.
- b. Respect for his or her colleagues obligates faculty to refrain from ethnic, sexual, religious or other categories of verbal abuse; from discriminatory practices; from ad hominem remarks against colleagues; and from other forms of harassment.
- c. Respect for persons likewise entails a respect for opinions, whether agreeable or disagreeable--with the implied corollary that another's right to free inquiry and to the free dissemination of the results is to be defended.
- d. Faculty accept responsibility for discharging their appointed share of committee assignments, student advising, and other governance tasks assigned to the faculty.

6. The Responsibility of Faculty to Their Institution

- a. Faculty are likewise responsible, and in equal degree, to the institutional administration regarding the fundamental principle of respect for persons.
- b. Faculty, while committed to exhibiting in their practices those regulatory provisions of the institution which do not inhibit academic freedom, are nevertheless privileged to question and to seek alteration of those provisions through the institutional means, both formal and informal, approved for that purpose.
- c. Faculty are expected to honor the terms of their employment, especially with respect to the fact that they are receiving remuneration to ensure, among other expectations, that the institution is entitled to lay first claim upon their time and commitments during the course of a regular and reasonably defined work-week.
- d. In view of the preceding (6.c), it is anticipated that faculty will be conscientious in self-monitoring the employment of their time, and that they will be judicious in allotting exemptions from their schedules--confining themselves in this regard primarily (though not exclusively) to debilitating personal and/or family situations, holy days of religious obligations, community requirements, and professional meetings of significance to the improved performance of their primary obligations as scholars and teachers.
- e. In view of the preceding (6.c), it is also anticipated that faculty will submit themselves to non-institutional and/or non-academic commitments only upon careful review of their prior professional commitments, so as not to infringe upon the proper performance of the latter.
- f. Requests to terminate or interrupt service to the institution ordinarily should be submitted well in advance of the proposed date of implementation, thereby allowing those responsible adequate time to provide alternative arrangements.
- g. The Administration is entitled to suppose that all faculty are acquainted with the stipulations of the Statutes of Valdosta State University, especially those of Article VI, and that their acceptance of employment within the institution is to be construed as tacit consent to abide by these stipulations--irrespective of whether or not all stipulations are found to be equally agreeable.

7. The Responsibility of Faculty to Their Community

- a. It is incumbent upon faculty to clarify the roles and interests of their profession, their discipline, and their institution fairly and objectively within the broader community.
- b. It is further incumbent upon faculty to resist attempted abridgements of free inquiry and the free transmission of ideas, irrespective of the source of those attempts, and to exhibit within the community the meaning of responsible academic freedom.

- c. Faculty are obligated to take their professional responsibilities into consideration when committing themselves to community service, and to ensure that the latter is not undertaken to the detriment of the former (cf. 6.d, 6.e).
- d. While enjoying the prerogatives of any other citizens, faculty are enjoined to advertise all opinions as either personal or professional rather than as institutional, unless they are specifically authorized to claim otherwise.

8. The Role of the Administration in Sustaining an Environment Conducive to Fulfilling the Terms of an Academic Code of Professional Ethics

- a. If faculty are to be expected to discharge their professional commitments with reasonable fidelity to the foregoing code of ethics, they in turn are entitled to suppose that support and encouragement in so doing will be a priority item on the administrative agenda.
- b. It is taken for granted that the ethical principles commended to the attention of faculty will likewise be observed, *mutatis mutandis*, by the administration.
- c. Faculty, in order to discharge their professional responsibilities effectively, are sustained by the assurance that traditionally valued emphases of a liberal arts education will not be eroded or sacrificed; that the priorities and practices of the academic institution will continue to support and encourage these emphases; and that the requirements of academic excellence will receive foremost consideration in determining both admission policies and curriculum offerings.
- d. Faculty are entitled to suppose that they and their department head will be consulted and kept informed regarding all matters directly affecting them or their department.
- e. Faculty are further entitled to suppose that their service on a committee (or in any other elected or appointed capacity) represents a worthwhile, creative, and determinative expenditure of interest and energy.
- f. It is understood by all faculty that they, rather than the students, determine the level and conditions of acceptable academic performance, and that the administration will seek to foster such a perception of higher education.
- g. Just as the Administration is entitled to assume that the Faculty will conscientiously seek to adhere to and to exhibit the relevant provisions of the Statutes of Valdosta State University, the Faculty is entitled to assume that the Administration will conform likewise.

An Academic Code of Professional Ethics, Appendix A:

The 1987 Association of University Professors Statement on Professional Ethics, printed in *Academe*, July-August, 1987. The statement that follows, a revision of a statement originally adopted in 1966, was approved by Committee B on Professional Ethics, adopted by the Council as Association policy, and endorsed by the Seventy-third Annual Meeting in June 1987.

Introduction

From its inception, the American Association of University Professors has recognized that membership in the academic profession carries with it special responsibilities in major policy statements, providing guidance to professors in such matters as their utterances as citizens, the exercise of their responsibilities to students and colleagues, and their conduct when resigning from an institution or when undertaking sponsored research. The Statement on Professional Ethics that follows sets forth those general standards that serve as a reminder of the variety of responsibilities assumed by all members of the profession. In the enforcement of ethical standards, the academic profession differs from those of law and medicine, whose associations act to assure the integrity of members engaged in private practice. In the academic profession the individual institution of higher learning provides this assurance and so should normally handle questions concerning propriety of conduct within its own framework by reference to a faculty group. The Association supports such local action and stands ready, through the general secretary and Committee B, to counsel with members of the academic community concerning questions of professional ethics and to inquire into complaints when local consideration is impossible or

inappropriate. If the alleged offense is deemed sufficiently serious to raise the possibility of adverse action, the procedures should be in accordance with the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, the 1958 Statement on Procedural Standards in Faculty Dismissal Proceedings, or the applicable provisions of the Association's Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure.

The Statement

Professors, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end professors devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence. They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although professors may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise their freedom of inquiry.

As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to assure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom.

As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas professors show due respect for the opinions of others. Professors acknowledge academic debt and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution.

As members of an academic institution, professors seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. Although professors observe the stated regulations of the institution, provided the regulations do not contravene academic freedom, they maintain their right to criticize and seek revision. Professors give due regard to their paramount responsibilities within their institution in determining the amount and character of work done outside it. When considering the interruption or termination of their service, professors recognize the effect of their decision upon the program of the institution and give due notice of their intentions.

As members of their community, professors have the rights and obligations of other citizens. Professors measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. When they speak or act as private persons they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their college or university. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom.

- 1961 Statement on Recruitment and Resignation of Faculty Member
- 1964 Committee A Statement on Extramural Utterances (Clarification of sec. 1c of the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure)
- 1965 On Preventing Conflicts of Interest in Government-sponsored Research at Universities
- 1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities
- 1967 Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students
- 1970 Council Statement on Freedom and Responsibility
- 1976 On Discrimination
- 1984 Sexual Harassment: Suggested Policy and Procedures for Handling Complaints

3.3 Faculty Workload Policy

VSU's teaching load is as follows:

- For tenured and tenure-track academic year (fall/spring) faculty: no more than 24 credit hours, 24 contact hours, or equivalent per academic year; guidelines for maximum number of course preparations per term and maximum/minimum class sizes should correspond to program policy.¹
- For non-tenure track academic year (fall/spring) faculty: no more than 30 credit hours, 30 contact hours, or equivalent per academic year; guidelines for maximum number of course preparations per term and maximum/minimum class sizes should correspond to program policy.
- For tenured and tenure-track fiscal year (12 month) faculty: no more than 36 credit hours, 36 contact hours, or equivalent per year; guidelines for maximum number of course preparations per term and maximum/minimum class sizes should correspond to program policy.
- For non-tenure track fiscal year (12 month) faculty: no more than 45 credit hours or 45 contact hours or equivalent per year; guidelines for maximum number of course preparations per term and maximum/minimum class sizes should correspond to program policy.

This teaching load assumes that faculty will be able to fulfill the other expectations required in their promotion and tenure documents, their annual evaluations, or in their position descriptions. The colleges and the library, working in concert with their faculty in their various academic programs, will determine variations from this load by the procedures listed in the document and in the unit documents (see <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/documents/faculty-workload-policy-2019.pdf> for the full policy).

3.4 Teaching, Advising, and Mentoring Expectations

3.4.1 Office Hours and Absences

All faculty members are expected to observe reasonable office hours (whether in person or online) during the week and to post the schedule, in order to provide time on a systematic basis for student conferences and consultations with colleagues and visitors. Some colleges may have specific guidelines about office hours.

All absences of faculty members from ordinary service in the University will be reported via OneUSG. No service to the University, however exceptional, will be deemed sufficient to overcome failure to render adequate service in teaching.

3.4.2 Advisement and Mentoring of Students

All undergraduate students will be advised by the appropriate college advising center while graduate students will generally be advised by departmental faculty. Each program will develop a process by which students have regular contact with a faculty mentor.

3.4.3 Course Syllabi

A detailed syllabus helps both faculty members and students. It communicates important information about a class--what it is about, why the course is important, how the faculty member will teach it, and what is required to complete the course successfully. The syllabus also helps set the tone for the course. As part of VSU's compliance with SACSCOC accreditation, all faculty

¹ For credit and contact hour guidelines, consult <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/documents/credit-contact-guidelines.pdf>. Furthermore, for academic year faculty (fall/spring), summer is an additional term operating under different guidelines.

members must upload their syllabi each semester to APL NextEd (<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/sacs/faculty-credentials.php>). For further information about preparing a course syllabus, consult <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/syllabi.php>

3.4.4 Adding and Dropping Courses

The official add/drop period is normally the first few days of a term. Students may add or drop a course online via BANNER. As a result of their actions, class enrollment will change. Therefore, faculty members should look at class rolls on BANNER regularly during the first week of class. After the drop/add period has concluded, students may still add or drop classes but it becomes a paper process. Faculty members will be asked to sign the add or drop forms; if they have questions, before signing, they should consult with their department head. In general, if a student has been attending class, the more appropriate route may be a withdrawal. For full information on the drop/add process, see <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/adding-or-dropping-a-course.php>.

3.4.5 Attendance Verification

After the drop/add period has ended, the Registrar's Office will ask faculty to verify whether or not students are attending their classes; the class roll in BANNER is the official record of students in the class. Faculty members will be asked to verify if students are attending or if they have never attended. Faculty members must verify student attendance or non-attendance because student financial aid cannot be dispersed until attendance is verified.

If a faculty member wants to add a student to the BANNER roll, the faculty member may type in the student's name and identification number. The student should also complete an add form (signed by the faculty member and the department head).

3.4.6 Dropping Vs. Withdrawing from Classes and Late Withdrawals

After the official add/drop period has ended, students may choose to withdraw from a class until a designated point in the semester (usually around midterm). If students withdraw from a class, they will receive a "W" on their VSU transcript. For more information on the difference between dropping and withdrawing, see <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/dropping-vs-withdrawing-from-classes.php>.

[After the designated midterm point, students may only withdraw via an application for a late medical or hardship withdrawal. Information about the process, which is handled through the Dean of Students Office, is available at https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/advising/withdrawal-policy.php](https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/advising/withdrawal-policy.php). If a student is granted this withdrawal, a "W" will appear on the BANNER transcript. Students are encouraged to keep coming to class, if possible, until the withdrawal process is completed.

3.4.7 Academic Honesty

As part of its mission, Valdosta State University aims to accomplish the following:

- 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 our region, through excellence in service outreach

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

To meet this mission, we must ensure that all faculty, students, and staff conduct their academic responsibilities with honesty and integrity.

3.4.7.1 Academic Integrity Student Conduct Code

APPENDIX A. SECTION I. (ACADEMIC STUDENT CONDUCT CODE)

UPDATED FEBRUARY 2, 2017

Section I Academic Integrity Conduct Code

Academic integrity is the responsibility of all VSU faculty and students. Faculty members should promote academic integrity by including clear instruction on the components of academic integrity and clearly defining the penalties for cheating and plagiarism in their course syllabi. Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Academic Integrity Policy as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct and the faculty members' syllabi. All students are expected to do their own work and to uphold a high standard of academic ethics. Examples of Academic Integrity Violations may be found at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/student-code-of-conduct.pdf>.

Valdosta State University policy is that a violation of Appendix A, Section I may and should be handled by the professor, the student, and possibly the department head or academic dean concerned with the offense. Sanctions for an academic integrity violation should be outlined in the course syllabus.

Any faculty member who has documentation and/or suspects that academic dishonesty has occurred shall

- gather all pertinent information, and
- meet with the student or students involved, and
- inform the student or students of the academic response to an alleged violation of academic integrity. The faculty member will notify his/her department head and/or dean of these decisions and may also contact the Student Conduct Office in the Dean of Students office for procedural clarification if desired.

The most severe action that may be administered by any faculty member is a grade of "F" in that particular course. This is an academic response and not a disciplinary recommendation. A student who wishes to appeal an academic response to an alleged violation of academic integrity may follow the grade appeal process (grade appeal form).

To initiate the disciplinary response process to an academic integrity violation, a faculty member should submit an Academic Integrity Report, along with supporting documentation as noted on the report to the Student Conduct Office in the Dean of Students Office. This report shall be made part of the student's disciplinary record and shall remain on file with the Student Conduct Office in the Dean of Students Office in accordance with Board of Regents record retention policy. A student's file on academic dishonesty is not intended nor designed to allow access by faculty members seeking historical information or otherwise concerning a particular student. The purpose of the file is for the Dean of Students Office to determine if multiple cases of academic dishonesty have occurred during a student's academic career at Valdosta State University. If a student is found to have cheated/plagiarized and withdraws from the course prior to the awarding of a grade, the Academic Integrity Report will still be placed on file in the Student Conduct Office.

After a second (or subsequent) Academic Integrity Report has been submitted to the Student Conduct Office in the Dean of Students Office, official charges will be drawn up and the disciplinary matter will be referred to the Valdosta State University Judicial Committee. The VSU Judicial Committee will utilize the disciplinary procedures outlined in Appendix B, Sections II.-V. of the Student Code of Conduct. The most severe sanctions such as expulsion or suspension should only result from a VSU Judicial Committee hearing and can be appealed via Appendix B, Section V of the Student Code of Conduct.

Faculty members may request that a particularly serious violation of the Academic Integrity Policy (buying or selling papers, stealing an exam, significant plagiarism at the graduate level, etc.) be referred directly to the VSU Judicial Committee. The Dean of Students and the academic dean of the student's major will consult concerning the referral of a particularly serious first offense to the VSU Judicial Committee.

3.4.7.2 Using Turnitin at VSU

Turnitin is an originality matching service that works with VSU's BlazeVIEW course management system. This service helps faculty prevent plagiarism by detecting unoriginal content in student papers. In addition to acting as a plagiarism deterrent, it also has features designed to aid in educating students about plagiarism and importance of proper attribution of any borrowed content. (Turnitin).

Instructors who choose to use Turnitin in their classes should use it as a tool to assist students in detecting and preventing plagiarism. Using the Turnitin tool in BlazeVIEW, instructors may directly submit any student work or they can allow students to submit work themselves and receive an originality report in order to make needed corrections. At VSU, faculty members who would like to begin using Turnitin with any of their classes should complete the ONLINE TURNITIN ORIENTATION, located in the BlazeVIEW D2L Faculty Course Tools module.

Remember that Turnitin only helps to identify passages in a student's work that are unoriginal and provides the instructor (and the student) with a similarity

<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/using-turnitin-at-vsu.php>

3.4.8 Timely Assessment of Student Progress and Midterm Grades

Any student has the right to an evaluation of his/her grade in a course prior to the end of the withdrawal period. Faculty must report midterm grades for all lower division (1000- and 2000-level courses) via BANNER. Generally, faculty are required to submit these grades approximately one week before midterm. VSU's Learning Management System (LMS)—BlazeVIEW—also has a gradebook. If faculty are able to keep an up-to-date gradebook, students will always have their grades accessible to them.

3.4.9 Textbook Policies

3.4.9.1 Faculty-Authored Textbooks

The practice at VSU has been to allow for the use of faculty-authored texts (Educational Policies Committee, Faculty Senate Minutes, April 15, 2004), provided that the department/program provides an appropriate third-party review process for the adoption of these texts (BOR Policy Manual 3.10).

3.4.9.2 Textbook Ordering Deadlines

One of the provisions of Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) is that institutions must “disclose, on the institution's Internet course schedule and in a manner of the institution's choosing, the International Standard Book Number and retail price information of required and recommended college textbooks and supplemental materials for each course listed in the institution's course schedule used for preregistration and registration purposes. . . .”

(<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html>).

Therefore, faculty must order texts and materials according to the schedule below:

- For summer and fall terms: last working day in February
- For spring term: no later than October 1

See “Textbooks and Materials Policies and Options” at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/textbooks-and-materials.php>.

3.4.9.3 Textbook Policies from the University System of Georgia

- Board of Regents' Policy Manual <https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section3/C345>

- Academic and Student Affairs Handbook
https://www.usg.edu/academic_affairs_handbook/section2/C784

3.4.10 Field Trip Authorization

Completion of the Field Trip Authorization Form (https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/documents/field_trip_authorization.pdf) is required for any off campus activity involving a student group in an academic class (other than those regularly scheduled classes for off-campus courses). The form is also required for University-sponsored field trips not directly related to an academic course. Participation by students in Field Trips outside regularly-scheduled class meetings or off-campus events is not normally required. Student transportation in University or University-rented vehicles must have approved drivers such as current University employees or hired licensed commercial drivers. Students who provide their own transportation assume all liability. Students should, prior to the Field Trip, present a completed copy of this form to professors of classes that will be missed and should request permission to be absent and an opportunity to make up work as appropriate. The Field Trip Authorization does not excuse the student from other classes except with the approval of the professors of those courses.

3.4.11 Grading System

Grades and quality points represent the instructor’s final estimate of the student’s performance in a course. All grades assigned remain on the student’s permanent record and transcript. The following letters denote grades that are included in the computation of the grade point average:

Grading	Quality Points
A = Excellent	4 per semester hour
B = Good	3 per hour
C = Satisfactory	2 per hour
D = Passing	1 per hour
F = Failing	0
WF = Withdrew failing	0

When faculty members are requested to enter final grades through BANNER at the end of the term, they will have the option of assigning the letter grades of A-F. If faculty members assign a failing grade, they will be prompted to add an approximate date when the student stopped attending a class (the default setting will be the final class day).

Grades not available for a faculty member to assign in BANNER:

W: a withdrawal means that students have withdrawn themselves from a class prior to the designated withdrawal date or that they have completed an approved medical or hardship withdrawal after that date. In this instance, the faculty member will see the “W” already entered in the grade sheet. For complete information about VSU’s Withdrawal Policy, see

<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/advising/withdrawal-policy.php>. If a student has withdrawn from a class in order to avoid a failing grade for academic dishonesty, a faculty member may call the Registrar’s Office to change the grade from a “W” to a “WF”.

I: In order to request an incomplete, a student, in conjunction with the faculty member, should complete the “Request for a Grade of Incomplete” form available from the Registrar’s Office (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/registrar/documents/request-for-incomplete-form.pdf>). An incomplete “I” (incomplete) should indicate that a student was doing satisfactory work at the end of the term but, for non-academic reasons, was unable to complete all requirements. A report of “I” requires the subsequent completion of all course requirements within a time limit specified by the instructor, not to exceed one calendar year from the end of the term in which a grade of incomplete is assigned, regardless of the student’s enrollment status during the period specified for completion. It is the student’s responsibility to request that a grade of “I” be assigned for a class. Faculty members should encourage students to keep attending class, if possible, until the

paperwork for the “I” is submitted. Additionally, their graduation dates will be adjusted if their incompletes are not resolved by their projected graduation date.

A grade of “IP” indicates that credit has not been given in courses that require a continuation of work beyond the semester for which the students signed up for the course. The use of the symbol is approved for dissertation and thesis hours and project courses. It cannot be substituted for an “I.”

3.4.11.1 Grade Posting Policy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) specifically prohibits the posting of grades by social security number or in any manner personally identifiable to the individual student.

Grades may be posted within the BlazeVIEW learning management system (LMS) that students may access with a unique username and password.

More information about FERPA is available at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/reg/ferpa/index.html> and <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/>

3.4.11.2 Grade Changes

In cases of reporting or other errors, faculty members may submit grade change forms. These forms must be signed by the faculty member and the faculty member’s department head. If a faculty member is changing a grade to a “W,” the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs must also sign the form. These forms are kept in the Registrar's Office and in departmental offices. **Under no circumstances should students be allowed to handle these forms.**

3.4.12 Student Evaluation Policy

The main goal of student evaluations is to help faculty improve courses and instruction; moreover, student evaluations are used in the annual evaluation of faculty. Therefore, faculty will administer student evaluations for each course they teach during the fall and spring semesters, and the summer sessions. All student evaluations must include both quantitative and qualitative sections and be completed by the last teaching day of the semester or summer session. Results from these evaluations will be returned to the faculty member in a timely manner. All academic units are expected to follow this policy and exceptions should be reported to the Academic Affairs Office. The [Faculty Evaluation Model \(FEM\)](#) was approved by VSU Faculty Senate April 19, 2007 and March 25, 2021. This model included a standard Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI), a [university-wide evaluation form](#) with ten standard quantitative questions and three qualitative questions.

Procedures for administering VSU’s SOIs are located at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/sois/>

3.4.13 Request for a Grade of Incomplete

To request a grade of incomplete, a student must have completed most of the work for a class, be passing the class, and for non-academic reasons be unable to complete the remaining assignment(s). Students must complete their portion for the “Request for a Grade of Incomplete” form (available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/registrar/documents/request-for-incomplete-form.pdf>). If instructors agree to the incomplete, they will work with the student to list the remaining assignment(s) and a timeline. The student will submit the form to the Registrar’s Office and the Registrar will enter the grade of “I.” When the work is completed, the instructor must submit a change of grade form. All incompletes must be finished within one calendar year or the grade will change from an “I” to an “F.”

3.4.14 Final Exam Schedule

Each faculty member is expected to select appropriate times for the periodic examination or assessment of students. The complexities of an academic institution make it necessary that all faculty comply with the schedule of final examinations.

A copy of the final examination schedule is included as a part of each semester's published Registration Guide and on the Registrar’s Office website (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/registrar/final-exam-schedules.php>). Each faculty member is required to use the specified schedule for final examinations and assessment. Whenever unusual circumstances require a departure from the published schedule, clearance for such deviation must be obtained in advance from the department head and dean and be announced in

the course syllabus, or, if the departure is not anticipated at the beginning of the semester, students should be informed in time to allow adequate preparatory time.

3.4.15 Student Grade Appeals

Students have the right to appeal their grades; however, they should do so within thirty days of the grade's posting on BANNER. To appeal their grades, the student access the grade appeal form on the Registrar's website (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/registrar/forms/>). The student should complete the form and then speak with the faculty member about the change. If the faculty member and the student do not resolve the situation, the student may then proceed to appeal to the department head and the dean.

3.4.16 Records Retention Policy for Course Materials

According to the USG Record Retention Policy, instructors should keep copies of examinations, tests, term papers, homework records, and gradebooks for at least one term after the student has completed the course if the course grade was uncontested or until a grade appeal is resolved (https://www.usg.edu/records_management/schedules/all_schedules).

3.4.17 Proposing or Revising Curriculum

A faculty member has the right to propose new courses or revisions of existing courses. Curriculum proposals must be approved by each of the following:

- the faculty member's Department or Division,
- the College's or Division's Executive Committee,
- the Graduate Executive Committee (if the course or curriculum is on the graduate level),
- the Academic Committee of the Faculty Senate.

Some new curriculum or courses may require further approval or notification to the University System of Georgia. Faculty members should follow the guidelines and use the forms available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/guidelines-for-new-or-changed-courses-or-curriculum.php>

3.5 Professional Expectations

3.5.1. Outside Consulting Activities

VSU believes that its educational program and effective teaching in all its aspects can flourish only when sustained by continuous, active participation of its faculty and staff in research, enriched in many cases by interaction with industry, business, government, and other activities and institutions of our society. This interaction, including outside consulting, is of greatest value when it contributes significantly to the public welfare, offers an opportunity for professional challenge and growth, or otherwise enhances the effectiveness of an employee's service to the institution.

Faculty and staff members shall make known to their department head, director, and/or academic dean the prospect of each continuing engagement, including, at a minimum, all engagements expected to extend for a substantial portion of an academic term. Employees should decide to enter a relationship only if, after discussion with their supervisor, there is concurrence that the proposed engagement will not conflict with the employee's professional obligations to VSU. VSU employees owe their primary professional allegiance to the University, and their primary commitment of time and intellectual energies should be to the education, research and scholarship programs of the institution. VSU's name, facilities, equipment and/or other resources are to be used solely for the furtherance of VSU goals and not for the benefit of, or to imply VSU's support of, non-VSU activities. All employees requesting to participate in outside employment must read Board of Regents Policy 8.2.18.2 Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Commitment. (https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C224/#p8.2.18_personnel_conduct) The Request Form to Request to Engage in Outside Employment/Activity is available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/outside-activities.php>

3.5.2 Political Activities

There are no restrictions placed upon the faculty as individuals in matters of political activity. At all times, however, faculty members are expected to be keenly conscious of the fact that they are employed by the State of Georgia and that, in a sense, they represent the State. They are expected to use forethought in their statements, decisions, and actions since these of necessity reflect on the University.

Any members of the faculty who decide to enter a political race should immediately inform the President of their intention to do so. Regents' policy requires that candidates for state and national offices request a leave of absence without pay before qualifying as a candidate and, if elected, that they resign prior to assuming office.

VSU faculty should comply with the Political Activities statement in the Board of Regents' Handbook:

USG employees are encouraged to fulfill their civic obligations and engage in the normal political processes of society. Nevertheless, it is inappropriate for USG employees to manage or enter political campaigns while on duty to perform services for the USG or to hold elective political office at the state or federal level while employed by the USG.

The following policies governing political activities apply to all USG employees:

1. A USG employee may not manage or take an active part in a political campaign that interferes with the performance of duties or services for which he or she receives compensation from the USG.
2. A USG employee may not hold elective political office at the state or federal level.
3. A USG employee seeking elective political office at the state or federal level must first request a leave of absence without pay beginning prior to qualification as a candidate in a primary or general election and ending after the general or final election. If elected to state or federal office, a USG employee must resign prior to assuming office.
4. Employees may seek and hold elective office at other than the state or federal level, or appointive office, when it does not conflict or interfere with the employee's duties and responsibilities to the employee's USG institution or the USG.

https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C224/#p8.2.18_personnel_conduct

3.5.3 Commencement

Attendance at commencement exercises at the end of fall and spring semester is strongly encouraged. At commencement, faculty members are expected to wear appropriate academic regalia. Full information about commencement ceremonies for each term is available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/advancement/event-services/commencement/>

3.5.4 Acceptable Use of University Resources

As an employee of the State of Georgia, VSU faculty should utilize university resources, such as facilities, personnel, vehicles, budget, supplies, and information technology, only for the direct performance of their official duties. IT policies on email, web, portal, acceptable use, and information security are located at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/it/about/policies.php>. Additional university policies are located in the Policy Library, linked at the University Policies homepage (<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/>).

3.5.5 Membership in Professional Organizations

A budget manager (i.e., department head, dean), in exceptional circumstances, may authorize university funds to pay for faculty memberships in a professional organization or society, but only when such membership serves the direct needs of the department or administrative unit through informative and supportive services of the organization. Information about Professional Membership, Subscriptions, and Licenses is posted on the Procurement website (<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/financial-services/procurement/>).

3.6 Faculty Resources

3.6.1 Faculty Scholarship Grants

Faculty Scholarship funding is available to full-time faculty in order to present papers at regional, national, and/or international academic conferences, to attend meetings and workshops that focus on curriculum development and instructional improvement activities. Faculty may be awarded up to \$2,000 in one fiscal year (either two \$1,000 grants or one for \$2,000). Complete information is available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/faculty-scholarship/>.

3.6.2 Faculty Research Seed Grants (FRSG)

The Faculty Research Seed Grant (FRSG) Program is a competitive, internal funding program for Valdosta State University faculty. It is financially supported by the Division of Academic Affairs, managed by the Faculty Research and Scholarship Committee of the Faculty Senate, and administered by OSPRA (Office of Sponsored Programs and Research).

The goal of the FRSG Program is to support faculty research and creative activity in the furtherance of the scholarly mission of the university. Complete information about the program is available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/research/office-of-sponsored-programs-research-administration/faculty-research-seed-grants.php>

3.6.3 VSU Internationalization Fund

The Faculty Internationalization Fund (FIF) is a specifically designed VSU instrument to promote faculty exposure to and participation in international education and research. Funding for individual projects is provided on a competitive base for activities aligned with academic units' and university's strategic plans in the international dimension. Coordinated through the Center for International Programs (CIP) and overseen by a university committee, FIF supports faculty travel abroad for academic exchanges, program development, professional enrichment activities, and other international activities. FIF funding can be used to augment funding from external and institutional grants, contracts, faculty development funding, etc. Information and application materials are available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/international-programs/dept/vsu-global/vsu-internationalization-fund.php>

3.6.4 CELT (Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching)

The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) supports faculty at Valdosta State University by providing professional development opportunities related to their roles as teachers, scholars, practitioners, and leaders throughout their career stages through Faculty Learning Communities, Peer Mentoring, Instructional Consultations, and a variety of other programs. For complete information, visit <https://www.valdosta.edu/celt/>. eLearning is also part of CELT, and is available help faculty through the creative application of technology, instructional design consultations, and professional development opportunities focusing on online instruction and technology application in the classroom. Information about eLearning is available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/elearning/>.

3.6.5 Employee and Organizational Development

This Department provides ongoing programs to orient, train and develop employees, thereby improving skill levels, promoting personal career growth, and optimizing employee performance. Faculty may register for a variety of courses on multiple topics at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/employee-development/>

[In addition to face-to-face offerings, the Office of Employee and Organizational Development provides free access to Skillport Percipio, a leading provider of e-learning and performance support solutions to include courses, books, simulations, exams, and videos. See https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/employee-development/skillport/](https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/employee-development/skillport/)

3.6.6 Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Administration (OSPRA)

The purpose / role of the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Administration (OSPRA) is to support faculty, staff, and students in the acquisition and administration of externally funded projects and programs, the ethical conduct of research, and the development of internal and external research collaborations to advance the mission of Valdosta State University.

The Office assists faculty in locating and applying for funding and research compliance. For information about all the programs and services, consult

<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/research/office-of-sponsored-programs-research-administration/>

3.6.7 Center for International Programs (CIP)

Among its many activities, the Center for International Programs administers an International Studies Minor program, coordinates study abroad and exchange opportunities for faculty and students, oversees support services for international students, maintains a user-friendly home page, and organizes cultural and community events and lecture series on international themes. For more information, visit the website at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/international-programs/>

3.6.8 Infobase

Infobase (formerly Hoonuit) offers educational institutions access to a complete training library of over 50,000 short, show-and-tell video training tutorials on over 205 of the most common applications. Infobase tutorials are available to faculty, staff and students 24/7, 365 days a year. For further information, visit <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/elearning/infobase.php>

3.6.9 Qualtrics

Qualtrics is VSU's survey tool available to administrators, faculty, staff and students. Qualtrics is a powerful product which facilitates survey creation, distribution, and data monitoring/collection. For more information, consult <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/elearning/qualtrics.php>

3.6.10 Faculty Resources Webpage

In addition to weblinks mentioned in this handbook, the Office of Academic Affairs maintains a Faculty Resources webpage at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/faculty-resources.php>

which links to VSU policies and procedures concerning:

- academic forms
- academic policies and procedures
- accreditation
- advising
- appointment, promotion, tenure, and evaluation
- assessment
- budget and purchasing
- calendars
- curriculum
- employment and benefits
- facilities
- faculty development, research, and scholarship
- news, conferences, and events

- teaching and course materials
- technology and portals
- travel

4.0 Employment and Evaluation of Faculty

4.1 Appointment to Faculty

Hiring new faculty is one of the most important responsibilities of an academic program. These decisions can affect a department for years to come. At VSU, the hiring process should begin with a discussion within an academic program about positions needed for the future growth and development of that program, not just about replacing a person with someone in the same field. When an academic program wishes to search for a position, it should take all steps to ensure that the search is carried out by a fair and equitable process that will attract a strong and diverse pool of candidates to VSU. More detailed guidelines are available from the Office of Academic Affairs.

4.2 Faculty Ranks

Appointments to the faculty with academic rank and administrative faculty appointments with rank and/or tenure status are made through the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, typically upon the recommendation of a department head and dean.

Tenure and Tenure Track Appointments

Tenure and tenure track appointments are restricted to regular full-time teaching faculty employed on a continuing basis and to academic administrative faculty with professorial rank (i.e., Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor).

Non-Tenure Track Appointments

- Lecturers and Senior Lecturers
- Limited term, full-time faculty
- Part-time and adjunct faculty
- Full-time instructional or administrative faculty with rank who are explicitly employed in a non-tenure track status.

4.3 Faculty Contracts

All tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenured full-time faculty receive a contract electronically through One USG for each year, generally in late May. This contract specifies the faculty rank, tenure status, salary, and conditions of employment. These contracts must be electronically signed within a specified time period. According to the Board of Regent's Policy Manual 8.3.11: "Failure to sign and return such contracts within the time period specified therein may be construed as an abandonment of employment rights. Any other provision in these policies to the contrary notwithstanding, faculty members who fail to verify or maintain the credentials, degree, certification or license required to meet the terms and conditions of their contract shall be subject to immediate dismissal for breach of their employment contract"

(<https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C245>).

If faculty members anticipate a delay in their ability to sign a contract, they should contact the Academic Affairs office.

Compensation

4.4.1 Academic Year Pay Procedures

Ten-month academic faculty will receive a paycheck for the months August through May equal to one-tenth of their academic year salary. Fringe benefit deductions such as for annual health insurance coverage are deducted from the ten monthly paychecks.

Administrative officers of the University, and certain of their associates and assistants, as well as department heads, are appointed for the full fiscal year. Faculty members whose work requires continuous service may also be employed on this basis. Individuals on fiscal contracts receive his or her compensation in twelve equal installments commencing in July.

Employee payroll calendars are posted at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/payroll/>

4.4.2 Summer Employment and Compensation

All faculty members employed under academic year contracts are eligible for employment during the summer term. This extra compensation cannot exceed 33 1/3% of their salary for the immediately preceding academic year contract (BOR Policy 8.3.12.3). This maximum compensation percentage includes any funding source including grant funds or employment at another USG institution.

VSU makes no guarantee of the availability of summer employment. Any employment opportunities are dependent on enrollment and the best interests of the university. Summer employment opportunities may include instructional or non-instructional assignments.

Compensation for instructional assignments is generally at the rate of 10% of the faculty member's salary for a three semester hour course meeting established enrollment minimums; some rates may vary according to class size as calculated in the summer model (see <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/documents/summer-model-19.pdf>). Compensation for non-instructional assignments will vary with the assignment. Payment in the summer will be based on terms completed before July 1st and those completed after July 1st.

4.4.3. Stipend and Overload Compensation Guidelines

4.4.3.1 Stipends

Stipends are a fixed amount of additional money for performing a specific non-teaching task; paid regularly; a stipend is a payment in addition to the base pay for an assignment which is not part of the employee's ongoing faculty appointment, but which is part of the normal workload, i.e. within the assigned percent of full time. A stipend is used to separate the portion of compensation paid to an employee for the effort and responsibility related to a special assignment. If the special assignment ends, the stipend is removed and the salary will revert to the salary for the ongoing teaching faculty appointment.

A) Administrative Stipend – Faculty administrators who receive a Faculty Ranked

Administrator contract is defined as “administrative”; these faculty will receive 9- or 12- month Faculty Ranked Administrator contracts/administrative stipends serving in the role as an administrator. Given when a faculty member is asked to perform administrative duties that are outside the scope of the faculty member's faculty position. PTR clock may be stopped for the duration of the assignment; faculty receiving administrative stipends are not eligible for teaching faculty awards nor may they serve on university/college/department committees as teaching faculty.

The BoR Academic & Student Affairs Handbook 4.3.5 states: “When a faculty member on an academic year contract is given a fiscal year administrative appointment, institutions should pay the faculty member an administrative stipend based on the job description and responsibilities related to their administrative role. The administrative stipend should be identified separately from the base salary amount in the faculty member's contract and the contract should specify that the stipend will no longer be available when the administrative appointment ends.”

Positions in which faculty are eligible to receive administrative contracts and an

administrative stipend include: Provost; Assistant/Associate/Vice Presidents;

Assistant/Associate/Vice/Senior Provosts; Deans; Assistant/Associate Deans;

Department/School Chairs/Directors; Assistant/Associate/Directors of Academic Units; Special Assistant to President/Provost; Others per President/Provost.

B) Non-Administrative Stipend - For non-administrators who receive a teaching contract; assignment is non-teaching and is expected to continue; these faculty will not receive administrative contracts but will remain on a 9- or 12-month teaching faculty contract. PTR clock does not stop. Faculty receiving non-administrative stipends are eligible for teaching faculty awards and may serve on University/college/department committees as teaching faculty.

Positions in which faculty may be eligible to receive non-administrative stipends include but are not limited to: Assistant/Associate Department Chairs; Program coordinators and others as determined by the Dean and/or Department Chair/School Director.

Stipends for 9-month faculty can be paid in the summer by putting the stipend amount on the summer payroll. Stipends count towards the 33.33% earning maximum for summer pay.

4.4.3.2 Overloads

Overloads are a temporary amendment to contract for additional teaching, research or service responsibilities; defined as those activities in excess of activities expected as part of the defined workload formula. Full-time faculty at Valdosta State University may be requested to perform service in excess of full-time effort for institutional-funded activities. Per BoR Policy (Academic & Student Affairs Handbook 4.10): “Under certain circumstances, qualified teaching faculty and administrative faculty may be called upon to take on additional teaching, research, or service responsibilities at the home institution. Whenever possible in this situation, the

institution should consider adjusting the individual's primary duties to incorporate the extra duties associated with the overload(s). If it is determined that a workload adjustment cannot be made, the faculty member's contract should be amended to reflect a temporary change in compensation warranted by the additional responsibilities. A contract modification should also be done when faculty are involved in joint staffing agreements that warrant additional compensation at another USG institution (see Business Procedures Manual 5.3.3 in the Business

Procedures Manual).”

Contract modifications should be done using the USG Contract Addendum for Temporary Overload Compensation. Because overloads involve a modification to a faculty member's VSU original contract, section 5.3.2 of the BoR Business Procedures Manual on Extra compensation does not apply to faculty overloads.

Conditions of an Overload Assignment

Faculty who assume overload assignments for overload pay must meet expectations in all of their normal in-load work assignments. In-load work assignments typically include the expected fulltime commitment of the faculty member to teaching, supervision and mentoring duties, professional service (including administration), scholarship and creative activity, and academic achievement and professional development. Overload pay is not appropriate for an individual if the work can be readily assigned on an in-load basis to another qualified person or if the individual's existing assignments can accommodate the work or can be readily reduced, rearranged, or reassigned in order to accommodate the work on an in-load basis.

Since VSU is in full or partial operation seven days a week in the mornings, afternoons and evenings, many faculty do not share the same daily or weekly work schedules. A “normal full load” must take flexible scheduling into account, regardless of when and where an individual's faculty-related work is done during the week.

Avoiding Conflicts with Regular Duties

Because faculty are salaried professional employees, overload assignments are most acceptable when the nature of the work in the overload assignment is significantly different from the nature of an individual's work assignments in the normal full load. When the nature of the work is similar for in-load and overload pay, the potential for an appearance of a conflict of interest or conflict of obligation exists and should be avoided or thoroughly justified. Faculty members who write themselves into grants or contracts for services that involve overload pay create the potential for a perceived conflict of interest or obligation.

When an apparent conflict of interest exists within a department, college, or division, an administrator at another level of authority beyond that unit must confirm that the overload compensation is appropriate and does not constitute a conflict of interest or obligation.

Avoiding Conflicts with Grants

Faculty can perform work as additional pay from a grant provided that it is allowable by the grant. It is strongly encouraged that a dialogue should exist between the Dean/Department Head and faculty as to what their agreed time distribution should be at the beginning of each academic year (split between scholarship, service and teaching), and that no faculty member should need to regularly seek additional pay for work on a grant, rather, it should be a part of their expected duties outlined by the department head and dean. In short, use of the Contract Addendum (additional pay) for work on grants should not be an ongoing and predictable form of increasing total compensation. It would be most preferable for faculty that work on grants (and the grant pays for that time), that this be part of the faculty member's expected workload, and the off-set savings from the portion of salary paid by the grant be used by the dean or department head to offset loss in teaching or service capacity by the college or department by, for example, employing limited term professors.

Furthermore, it is important to note that federal grants explicitly do not allow for overload while working on a federal grant regardless of funding source for the overload. Some non-federal grants may also explicitly state such a restriction. Any non-federal grant supported by federal funds is also subject to federal grant restrictions. In short, there can be no additional pay for grant work unless the grant is a) non-federal, b) not supported by federal dollars, and c) does not explicitly restrict additional pay. For additional information, contact OSPRA.

4.4.4 Teaching for eCore

Full-time faculty members are expected to make their principal time commitment to achieving their VSU duties and responsibilities. If an instructor desires to teach through eCore, a collaborative program of the University System of Georgia (USG) established with the goal to make higher education more accessible within our state, in addition to his/her full-time workload, he/she must secure the approval from their department head, dean, and provost. The eCore faculty application is located at <https://ecore.usg.edu/>

4.5 Evaluation of Faculty

<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/faculty-evaluation-model.php>

Valdosta State University helps faculty members develop successful, productive careers by regularly evaluating their performance, providing constructive feedback, and facilitating their professional growth. Consisting of a structured, flexible process of continuous planning, communication, and

feedback, faculty evaluation begins at the point of initial employment, it guides the promotion and tenure process, and it informs the years of post-tenure service.

Faculty members at Valdosta State University are evaluated both by themselves and others numerous times over the course of their careers:

- (1) Every semester, students are given the opportunity to express their opinions about classroom instruction through the **Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI)**. (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/sois/>)
- (2) Each year, faculty members evaluate themselves through an **Annual Faculty Activity Report and Action Plan** to which their department/unit head adds an **Annual Evaluation**. (Documents available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/faculty-resources.php>). Faculty may complete these activities through APL NextEd (complete instructions available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/sacs/faculty-credentials.php>).
- (3) When funding is available, faculty members are evaluated according to individual departmental standards for the award of **merit pay**.
- (4) During their third year of full-time service at VSU, tenure-track faculty members and non-tenured lecturers are also evaluated by departmental committees as well as their department/unit heads when they participate in a **Pre-Tenure Review**. Non-tenured lecturers are also reviewed during the third year.
- (5) Beginning in their fourth year of full-time university service (if hired as an Assistant Professor or the fifth year if hired as an Associate Professor), tenure track faculty members or lecturers are eligible to apply for Promotion, and tenure-track faculty are eligible to apply for Tenure in their fifth year. In both these processes, faculty must show the results of their earlier evaluation processes to departmental colleagues, department/unit head, the appropriate dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. (The University policy as well as the different college policies are available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/tenure-and-promotion-procedures.php>). According to the Board of Regents, the maximum time individuals in a tenure-track position may serve without the award of tenure is as follows:
Except for the approved suspension of the probationary period due to a leave of absence, the maximum time that may be served at the rank of assistant professor or above without the award of tenure shall be seven years, but a terminal contract for an eighth year may be proffered if a recommendation for tenure is not approved by the President.

The maximum time that may be served in combination of full-time instructional appointments (instructor or professorial ranks) without the award of tenure shall be ten years, but a terminal contract for the eleventh year may be proffered if a recommendation for tenure is not approved by the President.

Except for the approved suspension of the probationary period due to a leave of absence, the maximum period of time that may be served at the rank of full-time instructor shall be seven years. (BOR Policy Manual 8.3.7.6 <https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C245>).

- (6) Every five years after the award of tenure (unless interrupted by another personnel action such as promotion), faculty members participate in a **Post-Tenure Review**. During this review, they are evaluated by their departmental colleagues and their department/unit head.

4.6 Graduate Faculty Status

The Graduate School's mission is in keeping with the University's mission to provide support for graduate education and associated scholarly activities for both faculty and students. Quality of graduate instruction is an important concern with graduate coursework being taught by faculty members serving on the Graduate Faculty. Hence the criteria for membership on the Graduate Faculty are directly related to VSU and the Graduate School's mission statements. The criteria also address the latest version of the VSU Statutes which necessitates a process for appointing faculty members to the Graduate Faculty. Additionally, VSU's regional accrediting association (SACSCOC) suggests that Graduate Faculty be differentiated from the General Faculty in some fashion. Therefore, any faculty, including adjunct faculty, teaching graduate level classes and/or serving on dissertation or thesis committees are required to have either full or temporary membership on the Graduate Faculty. Process and forms are available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/graduate-faculty.php>.

4.7 Termination of Employment

4.7.1 Retirement

Faculty members having a minimum of 10 years of creditable service may elect to retire at age 60. Early retirement with penalty is allowable for those faculty members having attained age 55 and who have 25 years of creditable service. Faculty members having 30 years of creditable service may retire at any age without penalty. Creditable service includes active military duty, non-state teaching in a public system, study leave and current service in the University System.

4.7.2 Resignation

All tenured faculty members employed under written contract for the fiscal or academic year shall give at least 60 days written notice of their intention to resign to the President of the institution or his or her designee (BOR Policy Manual 8.3.4.1)

4.7.3 Non-renewal of Contract

All non-tenured faculty who have been awarded academic rank (instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor), are employed under written contract, and who served full-time for the entire previous year have the presumption of renewal of the next academic year unless notified in writing, by the President of the institution or his or her designee, of the intent not to renew. Written notice of intent not to renew shall be delivered by hand or by certified mail, to be delivered to the addressee only, with receipt to show to whom and when delivered and the address where delivered. Timelines and other information is available in the Board of Regents Policy Manual 8.3.4.2 (https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C245/#p8.3.4_notice_of_employment_and_resignation).

Lecturers, senior lecturers, and principal lecturers who have served full-time for the entire previous academic year have the presumption of reappointment for the subsequent academic year unless notified in writing to the contrary. Stipulations are found in the V as follows:

1. For lecturers, senior lecturers, or principal lecturers with less than three years of full-time continuous service in that position at the current institution, institutions are encouraged to provide non-reappointment notice as early as possible, but no specific notice is required.
2. For lecturers, senior lecturers, or principal lecturers with three or more years but less than six years of full-time continuous service in that position at the current institution, institutions must provide non-reappointment notice at least 30 calendar days prior to the institution's first day of classes in the semester.
3. For lecturers, senior lecturers, or principal lecturers with six years or more of full-time continuous service in those positions at the current institution, institutions must provide non-reappointment notice at least 180 calendar days prior to the institution's first day of classes in the semester.

Lecturers, senior lecturers, or principal lecturers who have served for six or more years of fulltime continuous service in those positions at the current institution and who have received timely notice of non-reappointment shall be entitled to a review of the decision in accordance with published procedures developed by the institution. The procedures must be approved by the Chancellor or his or her designee prior to implementation. Additional appeal procedures are contained in the Board Policy Manual 8.3.4.3. Timelines and other information is available in the Board of Regents Policy Manual 8.3.4.2

https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C245/#p8.3.4_notice_of_employment_and_resignation

4.7.4 Termination or Layoff of Tenured Personnel Due to Program Modification

The Board of Regents may exercise its authority to modify programs at various USG institutions. Such modification may result from a significant change of institutional mission or academic priorities that may be influenced by long-term declines in degree program productivity or financial exigency.

These changes may result in permanent termination of academic programs or permanent and significant reduction in size thereof. A program modification of such magnitude that requires the termination of tenured faculty members will be implemented only after completion of a study by the Chancellor's staff with institutional administrative and faculty participation. The Chancellor will report the results of that study to the Board along with recommended guidelines under which program modification will be effected. The USG Chief Academic Officer shall issue procedures on program modification. (BOR Policy Manual 8.3.7.9)

4.7.5 Discipline and Removal of Faculty Members

The President of a University System of Georgia (USG) institution or his or her designee may at any time remove any faculty member or other employee of an institution for cause. Cause shall include willful or intentional violation of the Board of Regents' policies or the approved statutes or bylaws of an institution or as otherwise set forth in the Board of Regents' policies and the approved statutes or bylaws of an institution.

A tenured or non-tenured faculty member may be dismissed before the end of his or her contract term for any of the following reasons, provided that the institution has complied with procedural due process requirements:

1. Conviction or admission of guilt of a felony or of a crime involving moral turpitude during the period of employment or prior thereto if the conviction or admission of guilt was willfully concealed;
 2. Professional incompetency, neglect of duty, or default of academic integrity in teaching, research, or scholarship;
 3. Unlawful manufacture, distribution, sale, use, or possession of marijuana, a controlled substance, or other drugs as defined by applicable laws; teaching or working under the influence of alcohol or illegal or dangerous drugs, which interferes with the faculty member's performance of duties or responsibilities to the institution or his or her profession;
 4. Conviction or admission of guilt in a court proceeding of any criminal drug offense;
 5. Physical or mental incompetency as determined by law or by a medical board of three or more licensed physicians and reviewed by a committee of the faculty;
 6. False swearing with respect to official documents or statements filed with or given to the institution;
 7. Disruption of any teaching, research, administrative, disciplinary, public service, or other authorized activity;
 8. Violation of Board of Regents' policies; and,
 9. Other grounds for dismissal as may be specified in the institution statutes of the institution, which may supplement the Board of Regents' policies governing causes and procedures for dismissal.
- Each institution should provide for standards governing faculty conduct, including sanctions short of dismissal and procedures for implementing such sanctions. In imposing sanctions, the burden of proof lies with the institution.

Procedures for dismissal are outlined in the BOR Policy Manual 8.3.9.2.

4.8 Process and Recommendation for Emeritus/a Status

According to the Board of Regents' Policy Manual (2.11), the President of an institution may at his or her discretion, confer the title of emeritus or emerita on any retired faculty member or administrative officer who, at the time of retirement, had ten or more years of honorable and distinguished USG service." The VSU process and paperwork are available at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/emeritus-status.php>.

4.9 Faculty Recognition

Valdosta State University has a tradition of honoring faculty excellence with five awards recognizing the diverse talents and contributions of our innovative and active faculty. Awards categories include excellence in teaching, research, service, online teaching, and scholarship of teaching and learning. See <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/presidential-excellence-awards.php> for information on eligibility, criteria, and application deadlines.

VSU also recognizes employees various career service milestones such as the 5-year, 10-year, 15-year, 20-year, 25-year, 30-year, and retirement.

5.0 Personnel Policies

Personnel policies for all employees of Valdosta State University, including faculty, are enumerated in Valdosta State University's Classified Employee Handbook, available at

<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/human-resources/documents/employee-handbook.pdf>.

This handbook lists employee policies, leave policies, benefits, and other information. Please consult this handbook for full information on a variety of policies.

5.1 Leave (BOR Policy Manual 8.2.7)

5.1.1 Vacation/Annual Leave

A faculty member employed on an academic year (9- to 10-month) basis does not earn vacation/annual leave. An academic year contracted faculty member who teaches during Maymester and/or summer semester will not be eligible to accrue vacation/annual leave for such service.

A full-time faculty member employed on a 12-month or fiscal year basis shall be entitled to vacation/annual leave earned at the rate of one and three-fourths working days (14 hours) per month. All working days during the fiscal year shall be counted. Absences during academic calendar breaks shall be recorded as vacation. All vacation days shall be recorded on institutional leave records.

5.1.2 Sick Leave with Pay (BOR Policy Manual 8.2.7.2)

For all regular full-time USG employees as defined in Section 8.1 of the Policy Manual, sick leave shall be accumulated at the rate of one working day per calendar month of service.

Sick leave may be granted at the discretion of the institution and upon approval by the supervisor for an employee's absence for any of the following reasons:

1. Illness or injury of the employee
2. Medical and dental treatment or consultation
3. Quarantine due to a contagious illness in the employee's household
4. Illness, injury, or death in the employee's immediate family requiring the employee's presence

If sick leave is claimed for a continuous period in excess of one week, a physician's statement is required to permit further claim of sick leave rights by the employee-patient.

VSU faculty members who must miss class, office hours, or other scheduled activities for the reasons above should report the absence to their departmental office and take the leave time in One USG.

5.1.3 Sick Leave Without Pay (BOR Policy Manual 8.2.7.3)

Any employee unable to return to work after exhausting all accumulated sick leave and accrued vacation leave may be granted sick leave without pay for a period not to exceed one (1) year. Furthermore, such approved sick leave shall allow the employee the right to elect to continue his or her group insurance benefits, and the institution will continue its share of the cost for such period. All other benefits are prohibited which otherwise would accrue to the employee.

5.1.4 Academic Leave

BOR AND VSU POLICY

In accordance with policy of the Board of Regents, academic leave (referred to as Educational and Professional Leave in Board policy) of one year or less, with or without pay may be granted by the president and reported to the Chancellor.

The policy of the Board is that the leave is granted for only “the purposes of promoting scholarly work and encouraging professional development” (Board of Regents Policy Manual §8.2.7.4).

Academic leave at Valdosta State University will be awarded in accordance with board practice of awarding one semester of leave with full pay and two semesters of leave with half pay. An additional year without pay may be granted with justification endorsed by the department chair, dean, and provost with the approval of the President; additionally, academic leaves of more than one year require the approval of the Chancellor of the USG or her/his designee.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to apply for the academic leave with pay for one semester, a faculty member must have completed at least 3 years as a full-time, tenure-track / tenured faculty member at VSU. However, preference for leaves will be given to full-time, tenured faculty members with six or more years of full-time service to the university. The faculty member will provide a minimum of two years of full-time service to the university upon completion of the academic leave. Additionally, the faculty member can hold no employment elsewhere during leaves with full pay. Failure to meet the agreed upon timeline for production of the approved tangible product means the applicant is ineligible for consideration of further approved leaves, reassigned time release for scholarly activity, and from summer teaching assignments for a period of two years, or until the product is submitted as agreed.

Each academic College may award academic leave each year in proportion to the ratio of full-time, tenured/tenure track faculty members, number of majors and hours. That ratio will currently result in 4 awards per year for the College of Arts and Sciences, 1 for the College of Arts, 3 for the College of Education and Human Services, 1 for the College of Business Administration, 1 in alternate years for the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Review of the enrollment basis for this distribution will be annual. An additional 2 “at large” leaves will be considered for exceptional proposals from any College and vetted through the Deans’ Council. No more than one academic leave with pay per seven-year period may be awarded to any individual faculty member. Resources to accommodate the leave will be garnered at the Department/College level through existing avenues available. For example, lecture type classes may allow consolidation of two sections of a course as one; external funds may be applied to support part-time faculty members to instruct courses; funds for reassigned time for scholarship may also be used to support a part-time faculty member. However, the faculty member who is

approved for the leave will continue to be paid in full for the semester of the approved academic leave.

PROCESS

Application for academic leave must be completed and submitted to the faculty member's department head by the first day of classes, one academic year (fall, spring) before the requested period. For example, a faculty member requesting a leave for fall semester must have the application completed and to the department head for consideration at the beginning of the previous fall semester. This is necessary to account for course scheduling. Any application approved by the department head must be forwarded to the dean before the end of the semester in which approval by the department head occurred. Unit allocations of leaves will be sent forward from each dean to the Deans' Council. Final recommendations for leave will be sent forward from the Deans' Council to the Provost.

Primary criteria for approval will be the unique product that elevates the stature of Valdosta State University and of the faculty member. All leaves must result in a tangible professional product related to the professional discipline of the faculty member. A description of the product and a timeline for production will be required in the application for the educational leave.

(Approved by Faculty Senate on 4/21/2011)

<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/academic-leave.php>

[Application for Academic Leave](#)

[Submission and Review Timeline for Leave Applications](#)

5.1.5 Military Leave With Pay

Regular employees shall be entitled to leave with pay while engaged in the performance of any ordered military duty, to include schools conducted by the Armed Forces of the United States, and while going to and from such duty. To be considered, such duty must be in the service of the State or of the United States and must not exceed a total of thirty days in any one calendar year. Maximum pay shall be limited to eighteen days per calendar year and shall not exceed eighteen work days in any one continuous period unless the Governor declares an emergency and orders an employee to

active duty as a member of the National Guard. A copy of military order(s) to active duty service shall be required in such cases.

Without Pay

Military leave without pay shall be granted when a regular employee enlists, or is ordered to active duty service with any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States for the initial period of such service. Upon completion of active service, such employee shall be restored to his or her former position upon request, or, at the discretion of the institution in which he or she is employed, to one of similar status with all privileges of accumulated seniority, salary increases, etc., provided:

1. His or her discharge is under conditions other than dishonorable.
2. He or she requests reinstatement within ninety (90) days after his or her discharge or

separation from active duty.

If, as a result of military service, a person is not physically or mentally qualified to perform the duties of his or her former position or one of like status, his or her institution shall offer him or her employment in a position at a level which his or her physical or mental condition will permit him or her to perform at the established rate of compensation for that position

5.1.6 Parental Leave

1) **Employee Eligibility.** An eligible employee is defined as a full-time regular employee, part time regular employee, or temporary employee who has been employed with the USG for at least 6 months of continuous service and has worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six (6) months immediately preceding the parental leave qualifying event.

2) **Qualifying Life Event.** The following are eligible qualifying life events:

- a. The birth of a child of an eligible employee.
- b. The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; and
- c. The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee.

Key Provisions of the Parental Leave Policy

- Eligible leave amount: Up to a maximum of 120 hours of paid leave.
- The maximum of 120 hours is the same, regardless of the number of qualifying events within the year and across USG institutions.
- Leave may be used on a continuous or intermittent basis.
- Unused leave does not carryover for future use.
- Parental leave has no cash value upon separation.

Requests for Paid Parental Leave

- Employees must provide their supervisor and the office of human resources with notice of the request for leave at least 30 days prior to the proposed leave date (or if the leave was not foreseeable, as soon as possible). The employee must complete the necessary HR forms and provide all documentation as required by the HR department to substantiate the request.

5.1.7 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

Consistent with the provisions of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993, an eligible employee may be entitled to up to twelve work weeks of leave during any 12-month period, for one or more of the following reasons:

- The employee's own serious health condition, including an on-the-job injury or occupational disease covered by Worker's Compensation, which causes the employee to be unable to perform the functions of his or her job.
- The care of an immediate family member with a serious health condition

- The birth and care of a newborn child
- The legal placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care
- A spouse, son, daughter, or parent being on active duty or having been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces. Leave may be used for any “qualifying exigency” arising out of the service member’s current tour of active duty or because the service member is notified of an impending call to duty in support of a contingency operation.

Consistent with the provisions of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 and the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, an eligible employee may be entitled to up to twenty-six work weeks of leave during any 12-month period, for the following reason:

A spouse, son, daughter, parent, or nearest blood relative caring for a recovering service member. A recovering service member is defined as a member of the Armed Forces who suffered an injury or illness while on active-duty that may render the person unable to perform the duties of the member’s office, grade, rank or rating.

For more information about FMLA, including FMLA and Health Insurance, Leave, Employee Responsibilities, and Military Notification, see the VSU Employees Handbook at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/human-resources/documents/employee-handbook.pdf>

5.1.8 Furloughs

The Board of Regents has delegated to each President the authority to implement a mandatory furlough program. In the event it becomes necessary for the President to exercise this authority, employee furloughs would be conducted in accordance with the guidelines promulgated by the Office of the Chancellor.

5.2 Compliance

During the initial weeks of employment, all VSU employees are required to complete a mandatory ethics compliance training program. Other compliance information will also be completed based on the employee’s position and job duties. All employees are also required to participate in mandatory annual compliance training. Instructions on how to complete these programs will be posted via the university listserv.

5.3. Equal Opportunity Employer

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, status as a disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam era, or handicap be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia or any of its several institutions now in existence or hereafter established. Incidents of harassment and discrimination will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the USG (BoR Minutes, 1969-70, p. 154; 1979-80, p. 15; October 2008).

5.4 Americans with Disabilities Act

Valdosta State University is governed by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, which specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Valdosta State University is committed to complying with the goals and objectives of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Persons needing accommodations should contact the Director of Social Equity or the Director of Human Resources & Employee Development.

5.5 Employment of Relatives

No individual shall be employed in a department or unit, which will result in the existence of a subordinate-superior relationship between such individual and any relative of such individual through any line of authority. A marital or familial relationship shall constitute neither an advantage nor a disadvantage for any employee. For the purpose of this policy, relatives are defined as husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers, sisters, and any in-laws of any of the foregoing (BoR Minutes, February 14, 1973, p. 312). The basic criteria for the appointment and promotion of USG employees shall be appropriate qualifications and performance as set forth in the policies of the Board of Regents. Relationship by a family or marriage shall constitute neither an advantage nor a disadvantage. No individual shall be employed in a department or unit that will result in the existence of a subordinate-superior relationship between such individual and any relative of such individual through any line of authority. As used herein, "line of authority" shall mean authority extending vertically through one or more organizational levels of supervision or management (BoR Minutes, 1989-90, p. 250). This standard does not apply to the temporary or part-time employment of children under age 25, nor to any individual employed as of February 14, 1990, at any institution where a relative of such individual then holds a superior position at least one level of supervision removed from such individual in any line of authority. Exceptions may be approved by the Board of Regents upon recommendation of the Chancellor as being clearly in the best interest of the institution and the USG.

5.6 Amorous Relationships

A USG faculty or staff member, including a graduate teaching assistant, is prohibited from having an amorous relationship with any student who the faculty or staff member supervises, teaches, or evaluates in any way. A USG employee is prohibited from having an amorous relationship with any other employee if either employee supervises, evaluates, or in any other way directly affects the terms or conditions of the other's employment. Any individual who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action commensurate with the offense, up to and including termination.

5.7 Sexual Harassment Policy

Federal law provides that it shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for any employer, because of the sex of any person, to discharge without cause, to refuse to hire, or otherwise discriminate against any person with respect to any matter directly or indirectly related to employment or academic standing. Harassment of an employee on the basis of sex violates federal law. Sexual harassment of employees or students in the University System is prohibited and shall subject the offender to dismissal or other sanctions after compliance with procedural due process requirements. Unwelcome sexual advancements, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting an individual
3. Such unreasonable conduct interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment

All charges of sexual harassment will be investigated. The Title IX Coordinator located in the Office of Social Equity shall investigate the complaint of sexual harassment.

5.8 Discrimination Policy

The University System of Georgia is an affirmative action/equal opportunity/equal access employer that prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, or status as

a Vietnam War Era veteran. Allegations of discrimination will be handled by the Office of Social Equity.

5.9 Ethics Policy

All employees must complete an annual Ethics Compliance Training program as per the Board policy on Ethics BOR 8.2.20. In the event an actively employed employee fails to complete USG Ethics training and certification or other required training the employee shall be subject to disciplinary action consistent with Board Policy up to and including termination. Every member of the VSU community is required to adhere to the University System of Georgia Statement of Core Values – Integrity, Excellence, Accountability, and Respect – that form and guide the daily work of the organization and to abide by the code of conduct.

5.10 Gratuities Policy

An employee of the University shall not directly or indirectly solicit, receive, accept, or agree to receive a thing of value by inducing the reasonable belief that the giving of the thing will influence his/her performance or failure to perform any official action. The acceptance of a benefit, reward, or consideration where the purpose of the gift is to influence an employee in the performance of his/her official functions is a felony under O.C.G.A. § 16-10-2.

An employee of the University or any other person on his/her behalf, is prohibited from knowingly accepting, directly or indirectly, a gift from any vendor or lobbyist as those terms are defined in Georgia statutes O.C.G.A. 21-5-70(6) and 45-1-6(a)(5)b. If a gift has been accepted, it must be either returned to the donor or transferred to a charitable organization. A gift may be accepted by the employee on behalf of the institution subject to reporting requirements of the Board of Regents. If the employee gift is accepted, the person receiving the gift shall not maintain custody of the gift for any period of time beyond that reasonably necessary to arrange for the transfer of custody and ownership of the gift. For purposes of this policy a gift is defined as lodging, transportation, personal services, a gratuity, subscription, membership, trip, loan, extension of credit, forgiveness of debt, advance or deposit of money, or anything of value. A gift shall not include:

1. Food or beverage consumed at an occasional meal or event, provided the value is reasonable under the circumstances but in no event exceeds \$100 per person;
2. Food, beverages, and registration at group events to which substantial numbers of employees of an institution and/or the University are invited;
3. Food, beverage, or expenses afforded employees, relatives or others that are associated with normal and customary business or social functions or activities;
4. Actual and reasonable expenses for food, beverages, travel, lodging, and registration provided to permit participation in a meeting, demonstration, or training related to official or professional duties if participation has been approved in writing by the President, or his/her designee;
5. Promotional items generally distributed to the general public;
6. Textbooks, software, and instructional materials to be reviewed;
7. An award, plaque, certificate, memento, or similar item given in recognition of the recipient's civic, charitable, political, professional, private or public service or achievement;
8. Legitimate salary, honoraria, benefit, fees, commissions, or expenses associated with the recipient's non-public business, employment, trade, or profession;
9. Gifts from a person or entity who is neither a lobbyist nor a vendor as those terms are defined in State Statutes, nor a student or patient at an institution;
10. Consulting fees, honoraria, or financial benefits from sponsors or foundations, received as part of a negotiated contractual agreement and in conformance with University and campus policies;
11. Gifts to or from University foundations or other separately incorporated, charitable entities.

5.11 Ownership of Intellectual Property Rights

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia recognizes that research and scholarship should be encouraged and carried out without regard to financial gain from licensing fees, royalties, or

other such income. However, the Board of Regents also recognizes that patentable inventions, discoveries, software programs, and other intellectual property often arise from University System of Georgia-related staff or faculty efforts. The policies governing the administration of inventions are included in the Board of Regents Policy Manual. Other board policies govern other forms of intellectual property including computer software. Those policies also provide recognition and incentive to inventors and at the same time ensure that University System of Georgia shares in the rights pertaining to inventions in which it has an investment. Any income accruing to the USG is used in furtherance of its academic mission.

At VSU, the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Administration (OSPRA) oversees the intellectual property process for faculty. For full information, visit

<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/research/office-of-sponsored-programs-research-administration/intellectual-property-.php>

5.12 Drug Free Work Place

Valdosta State University, as a recipient of federal funds, supports and complies with the provisions of the Drug Free Work Place Act of 1988. As an employer, Valdosta State University will aggressively promote and strive to maintain a drug free work place for its faculty and staff. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of illegal drugs by VSU employees is prohibited. Violations of this policy, to include misdemeanor and/or felony drug convictions during the course of one's employment will result in appropriate disciplinary actions being imposed by the institution. Said penalties may include suspension or termination of employment. Employees who feel they have a potential substance abuse problem are encouraged to seek professional assistance. The Valdosta State University Counseling Center staff may perform an initial referral to community resources. Random Drug Testing Employees of the University serving in "safety sensitive" positions are subject to random drug testing. Such positions include public safety, health care, heavy equipment operators, and positions requiring the Commercial Driver's License. When an employee is advised to report for a random drug test, such must be accomplished as defined by policy. Failure to report or testing positive for illegal drug use may lead to termination of employment in accordance with University procedures.

5.13 Tobacco and Smoke Free Campus

In accordance with the Georgia Smoke Free Air Act of 2005, Title 31 Chapter 12A, this policy reinforces the USG commitment to provide a safe and amicable workplace for all employees. The goal of the policy is to preserve and improve the health, comfort and environment of students, employees and any persons occupying our campuses. The use of all forms of tobacco products on property owned, leased, rented, in the possession of, or in any way used by the USG or its affiliates is expressly prohibited. "Tobacco Products" is defined as cigarettes, cigars, pipes, all forms of smokeless 15 tobacco, clove cigarettes and any other smoking devices that use tobacco such as hookahs or simulate the use of tobacco such as electronic cigarettes. (see <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/human-resources/Tobacco-Free-Campus/>)

5.14 Campus Wellness Committee

Campus Wellness provides programs and resources to assist you in a healthy lifestyle. Programs include Weight Watchers, Walk Georgia, fitness classes, and the annual health and wellness fair. See their webpage for a calendar of events <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/campus-wellness/>

5.15 Personal Property

The University is not responsible for the damage, destruction, loss, or theft of any faculty member's or administrative professional's personal property. Personally-owned items brought to campus may include automobiles, clothing, personal papers, books, musical instruments, scientific instruments, money, cameras, technology, or any other movable objects of value.

5.16 Campus Carry

The safety of the university's students, employees, and visitors is paramount. The presence of firearms and weapons of any kind is forbidden. However, anyone with a valid Georgia Weapons Carry License to carry a handgun in a concealed manner on property owned or leased by public colleges and universities, with some exceptions, is allowed. It will not allow any other type of gun to be carried around campus, nor will it allow handguns to be carried openly. For more information, see

<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/police/campuscarry/>

5.17 Grievance Procedures and Dispute Resolution

Valdosta State University recognizes the value of constructive dispute resolution. VSU faculty are encouraged to seek resolution of any conflict through informal discussion with those persons involved. If such informal efforts do not resolve the dispute, the parties may choose to utilize the services of VSU's [Conflict Management and Restorative Practices Program](#) and/or pursue resolution through the Faculty Senate's Grievance Committee.

5.18 Holidays

VSU's holiday policy and schedule are posted on the Human Resources website at

<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/human-resources/current-employees/holiday-schedule.php>