



**Blazer**

**FALL 2023**

**CON**

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

**Faculty & Staff Convocation  
Mini-Conference**

AUGUST 7, 2023



# SCHEDULE: BlazerCon 2023 • MONDAY, AUGUST 7, 2023 • 8:00AM – 11:30AM

TIME	SESSION	PRESENTER	LOCATION	
8:00 – 8:30AM	<b>Coffee with Cabinet</b> Coffee, snacks, and networking. <i>The first 200 attendees will receive VSU Swag Bags!</i>		Student Union, 3rd Floor Pre-Function Space (outside ballrooms)	
8:30 – 9:00AM	<b>Welcome - Faculty &amp; Staff Excellence Awards</b>	<b>President Richard Carvajal</b>	Student Union Ballrooms	
9:00 – 9:10AM	<b>BREAK – 10 minutes</b>			
9:10 – 9:40AM	<b>BREAKOUT SESSION A</b> *by session number indicates session repeats	<b>PRESENTER</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b># of SEATS</b>
<b>A1*</b> C5*	<b>Transformational Experiences: Radically Re-Envisioning the University for the Future</b> Attendees will be prepared to think in unconventional ways about the purpose and structure of the university, by hearing an overview of David Staley's Alternative Universities (2019) and how experiential learning at VSU is evolving to serve our students.	<b>Dr. Anne Price,</b> Professor, Sociology	Student Union Theater	300
<b>A2</b>	<b>Challenging Thoughts on Resiliency: A New Tool for Working Together</b> If you think of being resilient as taking a long weekend to recharge so you can come back and do more, or pushing through a difficult task and wearing yourself out then being able to bounce-back and check more things off your to-do list, we have a whole new idea for you to consider! Adapted from Cy Wakeman's ground-breaking research on reality-based leadership, join us as we share the resiliency board tool.	<b>Wendy Byrd,</b> Manager, HR & Employee and Organizational Development , TAP Coordinator <b>Dr. Christy Beth Yates,</b> Deputy Chief HR Officer	Student Union, Meeting Room 3	24
<b>A3</b>	<b>Morning Yoga (Beginner Yoga) Session</b> Accessible to anyone whether you practice daily or have never tried yoga before. We will draw attention to our breath before pairing breath to movement to connect the mind and body. Loose or comfortable clothes are recommended, as well as removing your socks, but your comfort is most important.	<b>Meredith Crosby,</b> Certified Yoga Instructor <b>Dr. Deborah Paine,</b> Associate Professor, Teacher Education	Student Union Rotunda	30
<b>A4*</b> C6*	<b>Stayin' Alive: Improving your CPR &amp; AED Skills</b> This session will give participants the opportunity to practice and review their CPR & AED Skills. These skills could be used to save the lives of a loved one, student, friend, colleague, or even a stranger.	<b>David Shaw,</b> Assistant Director, Campus Recreation	Student Union, Meeting Room 4	24
<b>A5</b>	<b>Setting the Stage: First Impressions in an Online Class</b> Learn how to set the stage for student success by improving the first impression of their online course. We will learn quick tips for a well-designed course homepage by using different course layouts, the visual table of contents, and the course banner feature in BlazeVIEW.	<b>Bryan FitzGerald</b> CELT-eLearning, Training Specialist	Odum Library 2633	43
<b>A6*</b> C9*	<b>Avoiding Back Pain in the Workplace</b> An overview of strategies to avoid back pain in our everyday activities. Participants will also learn how to treat back pain and how to prevent reinjury.	<b>Paul Higgs,</b> Lecturer, Health Sciences	Nevins 2075	50
<b>A7*</b> C7*	<b>Get the Word Out: Easily Promote Your Department, Office, and Events</b> Tired of sending the same email over and over? This session will take you back to the basics of communications and marketing with effective and free ways to promote your department, office, or event. Did we mention free?	<b>Robbyn DeSpain,</b> Director of Strategic Communications <b>Graham Nguyen,</b> Marketing Videographer <b>Jessica Pope,</b> Communications	Student Union, Meeting Room 2	20
<b>A8</b>	<b>Is Your Team Thriving? A Leader's Impact on Workplace Well-being</b> In this post-pandemic world, workplace well-being has taken on a new importance. Researchers have identified that the traditional wellness model is not enough to achieve a thriving workforce. Learn about the latest workplace wellness data with simple strategies leaders can implement within their teams.	<b>Rebecca Murphy,</b> Wellness Specialist	Student Union, Meeting Room 1 A&B	45
<b>A9*</b> C8*	<b>Past the PowerPoint: Group Projects; Field Trips and Peer Review; Learning with Passion and Engagement</b> This interactive presentation will draw attendees into engagement exercises that are used to not only expose students to the material they are covering but make them active participants in the class. From GPS tours of campus and competitive group projects to meeting peer review and writing a book, we move past PowerPoint to engage students and lower DFW rates.	<b>Dr. Thomas Manning,</b> Professor, Chemistry	Student Union, Heritage Room	25
<b>A10*</b> B10* C10*	<b>Planetarium Show: Explore the Skies</b> <i>Repeats all 3 sessions</i> Enjoy a preview of the August skies, stars, meteor showers, and planets at the VSU Planetarium. Look ahead to events like the annular eclipse October 14 (partial in Valdosta), sample-return mission from asteroid Bennu, and news about the "cosmic zoo" around us.	<b>Dr. Martha Leake</b> Professor, Astronomy	Nevins Hall, Planetarium, 3rd Floor	47



9:40 - 9:50AM		BREAK - 10 minutes			
9:50 - 10:20AM		BREAKOUT SESSION B * by session number indicates session repeats	PRESENTER	LOCATION	# of SEATS
B1	<p><b>Experiential Learning (EL): Designing EL Activities within VSU Courses</b></p> <p>Exploring the benefits of experiential learning and the four parts of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle with examples of each part. Participants will pair to brainstorm ideas for each part of Kolb's process related to the course content they teach. This session will conclude with information on submitting applications for EL-endorsed course activities and EL funding.</p>	Dr. Jennifer Beal, Professor, Teacher Education	Student Union, Meeting Room 1 A&B	45	
B2	<p><b>The Future of the Online College for Career Advancement (OCCA)</b></p> <p>A brief summary of OCCA future projections through FY28. This will include enrollment projections, marketing efforts, historical achievements, and operational enhancements.</p>	Kevin Overlaur, Interim Director Online College for Career Advancement	Student Union, Heritage Room	25	
B3	<p><b>Healthy Habits: Book Lover Edition</b></p> <p>Research has shown reading has many benefits including reducing stress, improving communication and vocabulary, and encouraging better sleep habits. Discover library resources for university employees, from popular books to sewing machines, cookbooks, children's books, and more.</p>	Dr. Laura Wright, Professor and Reference and Lending Services Director	Odum Library 1470	28	
B4	<p><b>Teaching: Active-Learning on the First Day of Class</b></p> <p>Share active-learning strategies for teaching the first day of class. Rather than a rote reading of the syllabus or a cliché ice breaker, faculty will apply best practices that include building community and rapport between the instructor, students, and their peers, establishing course expectations, and motivating students to engage in the course long-term.</p>	Dr. Jamie Landau, Director of the Center for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT)	Odum Library 1480	30	
B5	<p><b>Improving Inter-Departmental Communication with Technology</b></p> <p>We will discuss and demonstrate technological options (ex. Teams, Instant Messaging) available to help faculty &amp; staff communicate with greater efficiency.</p>	Sheila Hall, IT Communications & Support Coordinator Katrina Crumpton, Assistant Director of Admissions	Odum Library 2633	43	
B6	<p><b>Rituals and End-of-Life (EOL)</b></p> <p>A sustaining theme from reports of dying patients and their surviving family members is the extreme importance of various rituals at End-of-Life (EOL). These rituals involve sequenced activities that help the living to cope with the multiple stresses associated with suffering, death, dying, and living across the lifespan. Such rituals assist the dying in a more peaceful transition, contribute to the strength, capacity, and health of professional providers who cope with multiple death events and help the living to create continuing bonds with those dying.</p>	Dr. James Pace, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences	Student Union, Meeting Room 2	20	
B7	<p><b>The Power of Customer Service and its Impact on Retention</b></p> <p>As higher education strives to retain students, they are faced with having to bolster enrollment, provide value in their course offerings, and engage students in the face of financial challenges. Institutions are increasingly recognizing the pivotal role of customer service in fostering student retention and success. Explore the critical role of customer service in shaping student experiences and fostering their long-term engagement.</p>	Career Opportunities & Volunteer Services Staff	Odum Library 1160	81	
B8	<p><b>Reality Bites - And It's Delicious: How to Manage Energy Instead of People</b></p> <p>Reality appears differently from person-to-person and this often leads to drama in the workplace. Ground-breaking theorist Cy Wakeman suggests we start to manage energy instead of people as a way to have better communication, healthier teams, and happy personal lives. Join us to learn how to "edit your story" and reduce the drama by embracing reality. Leave with a set of immediately implementable tools that will help you manage your energy and others.</p>	Wendy Byrd, Manager, HR & Employee and Organizational Development , TAP Coordinator Dr. Christy Beth Yates, Deputy Chief HR Officer	Student Union, Meeting Room 3	24	
B9	<p><b>(REACH) Retention, Early Alerts, Connections, Help: Post Pandemic Learning Environments</b></p> <p>Our current student population is comprised largely of students who were in high school during the pandemic. As a result, their approach to engaging in the learning environment is different than past generations. Learn about the Academic Intervention Team, part of the newly formed Office of Student Success and Retention and how we can support our students and foster a culture of success, inclusivity and progress.</p>	Karen Higgs, Director of Student Success and Retention	Student Union Theater	300	
A10* B10* C10*	<p><b>Planetarium Show: Explore the Skies Repeats all 3 sessions</b></p> <p>Enjoy a preview of the August skies, stars, meteor showers, and planets at the VSU Planetarium. Look ahead to events like the annular eclipse October 14 (partial in Valdosta), sample-return mission from asteroid Bennu, and news about the "cosmic zoo" around us.</p>	Dr. Martha Leake Professor, Astronomy	Nevins Hall, Planetarium, 3rd Floor	47	
10:20 - 10:30AM		BREAK - 10 minutes			

10:30 - 11:00AM		<b>BREAKOUT SESSION C</b> *by session number indicates session repeats		PRESENTER	LOCATION	# of SEATS
<b>C1</b>	<b>Long-term Financial Discipline and Retirement Planning</b> Inflation is scary and painful. Learn how to reduce the pain with budgeting discipline, consumption timing, and effective purchasing strategies. All of these, however, require a collective effort and effective communication. Let's discuss how to turn periods with high volatility and decreasing asset values into great opportunities for your retirement portfolio.			<b>Dr. Elvan Aktas,</b> Professor of Finance; Director, Southeastern Credit Union Financial Trading Center; Advisor, Valdosta State Investment Group	Student Union, Meeting Room 3	24
<b>C2</b>	<b>"This Presentation Was Generated by AI" and Other Encounters with AI in Education</b> Explore the multifaceted role of AI in the realm of higher education. We'll cover key topics such as student use of AI, AI as a disruptive influence on higher education, AI's advancement of pedagogy, and AI as a tool for instructors and staff. The presentation highlights the benefits of AI in personalized learning, virtual tutoring, and adaptive assessment, while also addressing challenges and ethical considerations. It showcases real-life case studies and discusses the future prospects of AI in higher education, emphasizing the need for continued research and innovation in this transformative field.			<b>Andrew Wells,</b> Systems Services Technician, Identity and Enterprise Services, Department of Information Technology	Student Union Theater	300
<b>C3</b>	<b>Quick &amp; Easy: A Delicious Meal for a Busy Day</b> In this session, Aramark Sous Chef will demonstrate how to prepare a quick, easy, and nutritious meal for the working individual with a busy schedule.			<b>Brittany Jones,</b> Aramark Sous Chef	Nevins Hall 1061	78
<b>C4</b>	<b>Are you Thriving? Learn how to stay on the good side of stress!</b> Based on the current literature in the wellness field, four key elements have been shown to have a positive influence on reducing stress and burnout. These elements along with essential elements for overall well-being will be shared. The session will conclude with a Vitality Wheel exercise designed to create a personal plan for increasing one's own vitality.			<b>Rebecca Murphy,</b> Wellness Specialist	Student Union, Meeting Room 1 A&B	45
<b>A1*</b> <b>C5*</b>	<b>Transformational Experiences: Radically Re-envisioning the University for the Future</b> Attendees will be prepared to think in unconventional ways about the purpose and structure of the university, by hearing an overview of David Staley's Alternative Universities (2019) and how experiential learning at VSU is evolving to serve our students.			<b>Dr. Anne Price,</b> Professor, Sociology	Odum Library 1160	81
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<b>11:00 - 11:10AM</b>		<b>BREAK - 10 minutes</b>				
<b>11:10 AM - 11:30PM</b>		<b>The Future of VSU</b>		<b>President Richard Carvajal</b>	Student Union Ballrooms	
<b>11:30PM - 1:30PM</b>		<b>Lunch at Palms</b> (no charge)		<b>President Richard Carvajal</b>	Palms Dining Center	



# 2023 Faculty & Staff Convocation Mini-Conference Schedule AT-A-GLANCE

TIME	SESSION	PRESENTER	LOCATION
8:00 – 8:30AM	<b>Coffee with Cabinet</b> Coffee, snacks, and networking. <i>The first 200 attendees will receive VSU Swag Bags!</i>		Student Union, 3rd Floor, Pre-Function Space (outside ballrooms)
8:30 – 9:00AM	<b>Welcome</b> Faculty & Staff Excellence Awards	<b>President Richard Carvajal</b>	Student Union Ballrooms
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10:20 – 10:30AM	<b>BREAK – 10 minutes</b>		
10:30 – 11:00AM	<b>BREAKOUT SESSION C</b>		See page 4 for locations
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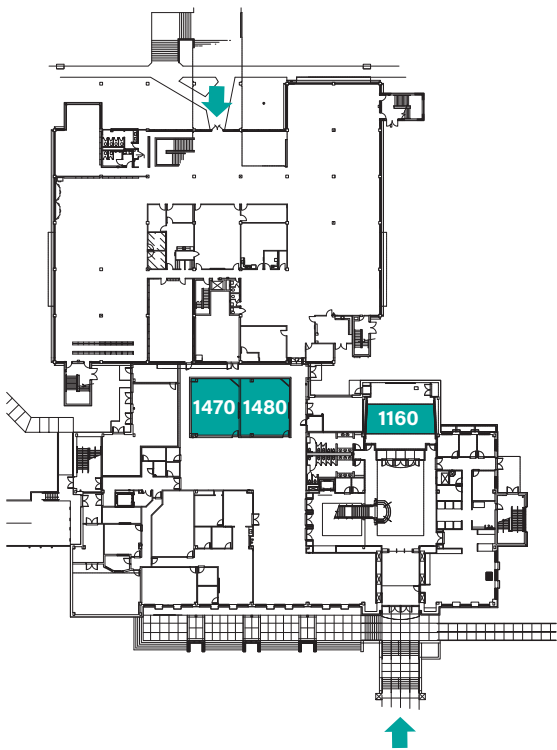
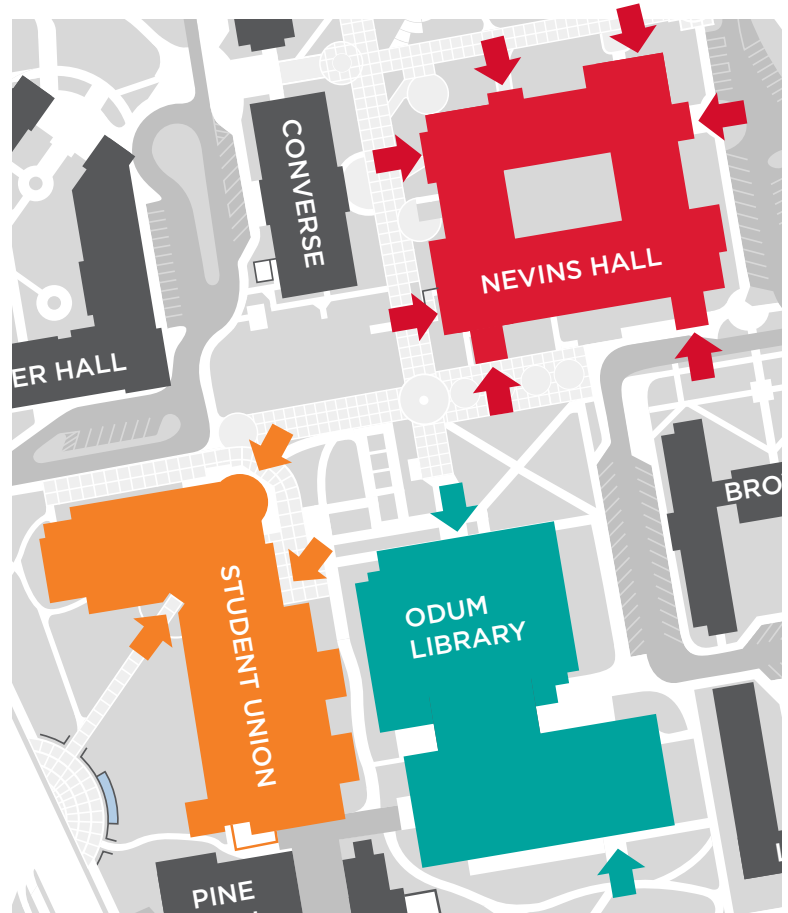
# MAPS

VSU

Convocation  
Mini-Conference

MONDAY, AUGUST 7, 2023

8:00 - 11:30AM

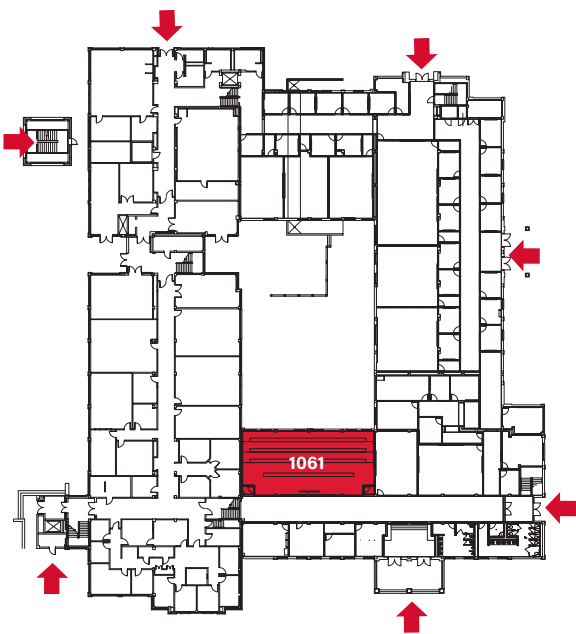


**Odum Library**  
*1st Floor*

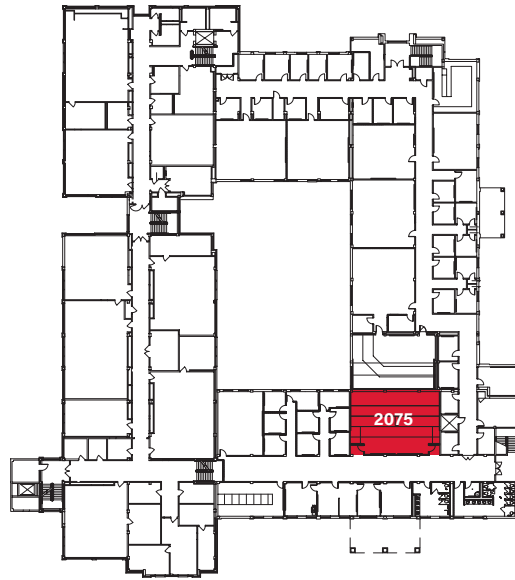


**Odum Library**  
*2nd Floor*

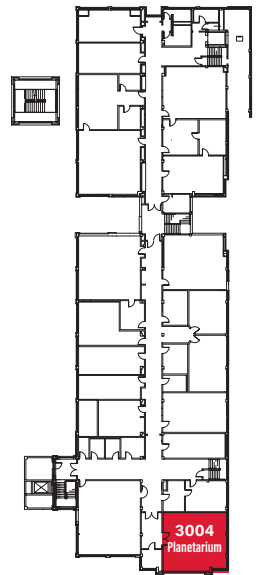




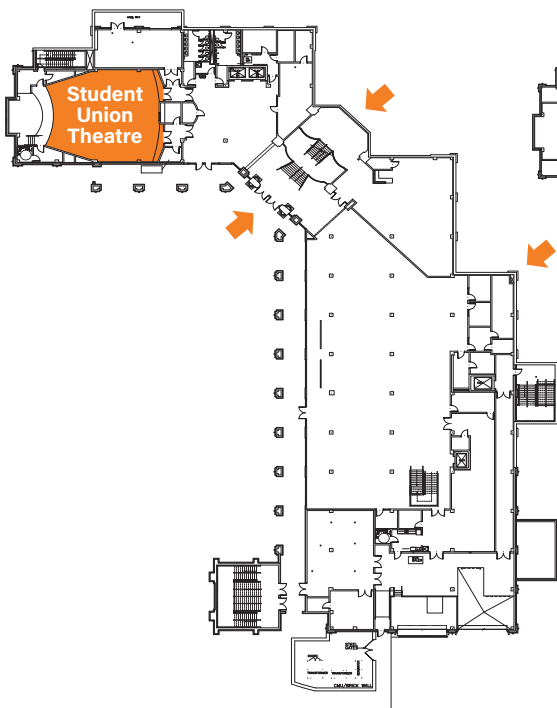
**Nevins Hall**  
*1st Floor*



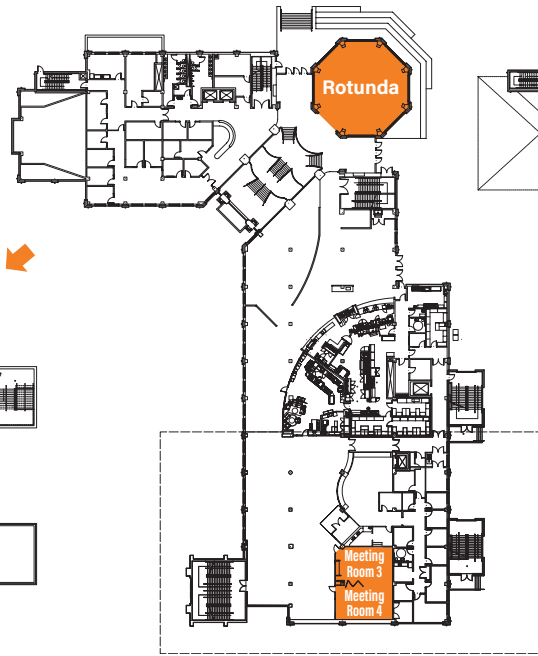
**Nevins Hall**  
*2nd Floor*



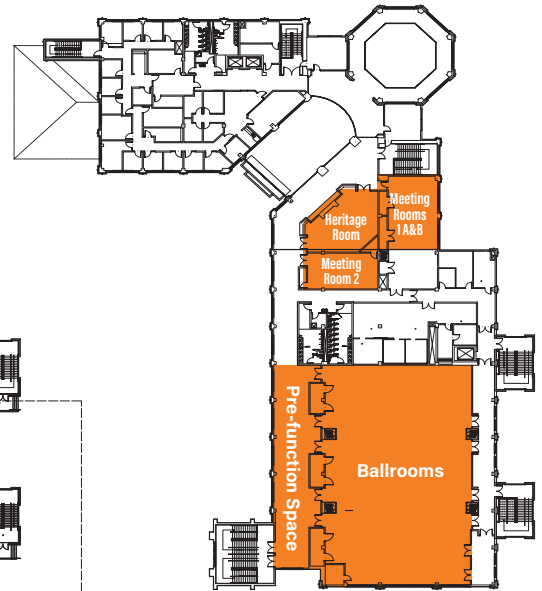
**Nevins Hall**  
*3rd Floor*



**Student Union**  
*1st Floor*



**Student Union**  
*2nd Floor*



**Student Union**  
*3rd Floor*