

My Beloved Blazer Nation:

This is William Jimerson, the 2013-2014 Student Government Association President of Valdosta State University.

We started this semester way back in August at our Senator Orientation in the University Center, where I revealed the organizational strategic plan that aligned with VP Oshodi's platform "Working for you from the inside out" and my platform "Student Involvement: Retention, Graduation, and Progression." We all acknowledged one of my favorite quotes was very relevant for the current state of SGA – "The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide that you are not going to stay where you are." We unleashed our potential and desire to grow into all that we were destined and designed to be through our mission statement. The strategic plan outlined 6 objectives and detailed strategies for SGA to achieve this academic year:

- 1: Bridge the gap between SGA, the student body, and the administration.
- 2: Increase SGA visibility to seek and voice student concerns.
- 3: Improve the clarity of all student groups on the internal and external workings of SGA.
- 4: Recognition of the unsung heroes at VSU.
- 5: Establish more SGA sponsored events to benefit students with a genuine effort to generate tradition, pride, and diversity efforts among all VSU students and support for student organizations.
- 6: Improve the quality of student life.

As we bring close to this amazing journey of a school year, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge some of the accomplishments we have achieved:

- Rebuilding and reconstructing
 - Website reconstruction and consistent updates
 - Developed Co-sponsorship Application process for student organization funding
 - Redeveloped Constitution and Bylaws
 - Redeveloped Elections Code
 - Established a 24 hour concern hotline that went right to my cell phone...one call, that's all, right? And a complaint form on our website
 - Each executive member had at least six open office hours (unlimited for me, right?)
 - Restructured our SGA Committees restructuring to better tailor to the needs and concerns of our students we represent
 - Established an executive cabinet to develop future SGA leaders
- Tackled some controversial issues and surveyed our campus such as concealed weapons carry, tobacco and smoke free policy, and future academic scheduling
- Hosted various open discussion forums such as Town Hall Meetings with President McKinney, Concealed Weapons Carry on Campus, and many more
- Approved resolutions with recommendations to our university:
 - Bus Stop Covering at Patterson/Brown/Front Lawn
 - Mandatory Student Fee Evaluations
 - Additional signage, hazard lights, and crosswalks for pedestrian safety around campus
 - Need for more diversity at VSU and suggested an established Center for Multicultural Affairs to promote diverse student interaction and support
 - Moving of the ATM
 - Ending the vast array of emails sent to the student distribution list
 - Future academic scheduling proposals especially to keep our spring break in mid March rather than April with the local and city schools as proposed
 - Support of a Blazer Creed that instills the principles and values of what it truly means to be a VSU Blazer
- Led a comprehensive university wide customer service six week initiative evaluating all departments and student services to ensure that our students were receiving quality customer service

- Over \$100,000 in campus lighting upgrades approved by our campus safety walk thru
- Established a Student Philanthropy Board to get our students in the habit of contributing to VSU now rather than later
- Advocated plethora of student voices to the Homecoming & Commencement Changes Task Force
- Involvement in the community--NEDA Walk, Relay for Life, carwashes, etc.
- Established and fundraised for the SGA Emergency Loan Fund for students who need financial assistance in order to continue at VSU
- Increased our visibility to our campus community through our bi-weekly energizer booths in the union with free giveaways and social media presence—thanks PR team!
- Advocated to bring three celebrities on campus this year: Hill Harper to celebrate 50 years of integration, Damien Lemon from Guy Code, and Sevyn Streeter for the CAB Concert
- Provided student opinion on GPS tracking on VSU shuttle buses demonstration—which we are hoping is coming soon
- Ensured strong student representation on pivotal university committees including but not limited to: campus safety, dining services advisory, enrollment management council, faculty senate, environmental issues, university council,
- Present to the BOR on behalf of all the SGA Presidents in the state next month
- VState Experience Student Instagram account
- Served on two important position search committees for Provost & VPAA and Assoc Dean of Students
- Granted co-sponsorship to nine student organizations that did not receive funding and support from student activity fees to sponsor student programming and events
- Obtained a maximum capacity in our senate at 50 members!

I would be remised if I did not acknowledge several individuals who have made this successful journey possible:

- From way back to my campaign team—who painted this campus red and black with my name last year in order to obtain the victory—Cameron Griffin, Taylor Ratliff, Kimmi Cantrell, DeAndre Jones, and Ryan Brown—just to name a few, who not only supported me, but saw the potential in me and my abilities before I could even realize it within myself, and all of the supporters and organizations who aligned with my vision for SGA and this campus.
- To my ladies—Hassanat, Kara, and Erica—who make up my executive board, I would not have made it without the drive, passion, and commitment of the dream team. I realize that I am not the easiest person to work with; however, now we can look back and say our hard work is not in vain and we have accomplished all that we wanted and more to progress our student population, SGA, and this campus forward. Without you three, I would be nothing. Thanks for making me look good in all the hundreds of pictures and the cherished personal conversations we have. You all have been more than co-workers or colleagues, but true friends.
- To members of my executive cabinet—Chief of Staff Isaiah Smart, Senior Advisor Nick Buford, President Pro Tempore Tamelia Hall, Parliamentarian Breionna Henry, and Sergeant at Arms Mike Charity—there is no way the dream team would have made it without you all and your support to simply get errr done! You all are the future of SGA and leaders of this campus and I know you all will not let the students of this campus down. Remember, teamwork makes the dream work.
- To my team—the student senate of SGA—wow. You all are amazing. Whether serving the campus with giveaways, listening to my long weekly reports, getting on the pedestrian mall to obtain surveys and student concern forms, voting and discussing controversial campus issues, volunteering to serve our community, and showing true dedication to the workings of

SGA—I humbly say thank you. Without you all there would not be an SGA.

- To the judicial council of SGA—you all have one of the toughest jobs and high prestige to uphold integrity on this campus. Continue to uphold a standard of integrity, trust, and responsibility to the student body.
- To President McKinney and our First Lady Dr. Charlesworth—thank you for taking me in, inviting me to all of the functions, and treating me just your son. My collegiate experience from serving on the inaugural committee to having those tough conversations to being a part of the Engaged Innovation “change agents,” and building a working and personal relationship. Thank you Mom and Dad and I will truly miss the family matters!
- To the Vice Presidents—VP Crawford, VP Clark, VP Mast, and VP Martin, and Department Chairs—thank you for always allowing me to voice my honest opinion and feel comfortable as the only student on almost alllllllll the meetings on this campus. Also, I have to thank you for your promptness and due diligence in responding to the vast array of student concern forms I would flood your inbox with to respond to the concerns of our students. Together, we made a difference, and together you all will continue to make positive changes to progress VSU forward.
- Dean Turley and VP Mast—thank you for support to re-ignite SGA and advocate on the voices of the students of this campus.
- Brothers of Mu Omicron—thank you for always having my back and being my backbone.
- And ultimately to the student body of VSU thank you entrusting me to serve as your leader this year and allowing me to get your voices heard through SGA.
- To the employees of Valdosta State University—the faculty and staff from all across Event Services, President’s Office, Housing, Alumni Relations, Career Opportunities, Web Services, Communications, Testing, Faculty Senate, COSA, Admissions,

Plant Operations, custodians—I cannot thank you enough for your support. Whether it was treating me to lunch to converse about campus issues, sitting in committee meetings to conduct business, or a simple tap on the back to say “Will you are doing a great job”—you all have been the epitome of a dynamic support system. Although we may not always agree at what is the best solution in the best interest of our university, we all know that without students we are not successful. I charge each of you to always ensure that the best interest of the customers of Valdosta State University, who are the students, is always the number one priority with service and commitment to their personal development and academic environment.

- To my good ole friends at The Spectator—Joe Adgie, Jennifer Gleason, Will Lewis—thank you for aligning the unfiltered, uncensored voice of the students with the official voice of the students, SGA, to keep our campus aware of the hot topics facing our community.
- To my mentees—Juwan Andrews, Taylor Ratliff, David Burdette, just to name a few—you all often thank me and tell me that I’m your inspiration when honestly you all are mine. Continue pushing and achieving knowing that big bruh always has your back. I am so proud of you and all that you all are becoming.
- Last but not least, to my four favorite women in the world—my grandma, my mom, my best friend Jazz Williams and my oh so beautiful girlfriend, Kelsey Garner—and my family—you all are the reason I have made this far. You’ve been there for me through the good, bad, achievements, accomplishments, and challenges of this journey and have encouraged me to survive and keep pushing. At times when I thought I could not make it, you uplifted me. At times when I pulled all nighters, you encouraged me. During the mood swings of being over extended and stressed out, you understood me. You all prayed for me. I could never say thank you enough for keeping me grounded and focused on the

mission, goal, and dreams ...and of course, not always saying what I think and to remain tactful in all that I do. I love you Gaga, momma, my love Cabbage, behhhfriend, and family!

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! I HUMBLY THANK YOU ALL.

As I reminisced and pondered over what to say for my final remarks, I could not help but be reminded of my very first speech here at VSU as SGA President—Faculty and Staff Convocation. This was one of my simplest yet impactful speeches of all of the speaking engagements I have been fortunate to be blessed with this year from organizations, university, and even community events. The root of the message is still relevant today, I believe:

Great things are happening at Valdosta State University!! We must recognize and acknowledge that these great things that are happening come with a great responsibility and commitment to doing the important work that will benefit VSU and ensure our lasting value in society. I am not suggesting that this formula is easy or without effort, but given the privileges and opportunities we all enjoy at Valdosta, we owe that level of commitment to each other and to the legacy of this University. I encourage each of us to dig down deep inside of ourselves to become the difference we seek in this great institution. "To accomplish great things we must not only act, but also dream, not only plan, but also believe."

As I close this journey, I am at peace and confident in the abilities, leadership, and the vision in your 2014-2015 Student Government Association President, Mr. Tyler Barker, to continue to achieve great things at VSU by "empowering VSU by empowering you through pride, tradition, and unity." To be quite honest, I am not sure where life will lead me from here; however, I humbly grateful for this opportunity. Remember that even though I may or may not be here physically at Valdosta State, Where there is a WILL – a willing, involved, loyal,

leader, that is—there is a way! And together in the past twelve months of my term, we have made a way, one step at a time. Oh, what a journey! Lastly, please be sure to connect with me via social media on Facebook at “Will Cameron Jimerson” and on Twitter and Instagram @wcjimerson. For more information regarding Valdosta State Student Government Association, please visit our website at www.valdosta.edu/sga or follow us on twitter for updates @valdostasga.

And for the last time, signing off as your SGA President, may God bless you and may God bless Valdosta State University, and may His light shine upon you, until we meet again. It has truly been a pleasure to serve this community.

Go Blazers!