# VSU 2030
## *Strategic Plan*

# GOAL 1

*Create Career-Ready Graduates*

# GOAL 2

*Build on Our Foundation*

# GOAL 3

*Maximize Growth*

# GOAL 4

*Invest in Our Future*

# A *Student-First* Campus Culture

American higher education is changing rapidly. Fewer traditional-aged students, increased competition, changing public perceptions, a swift move to online learning, and higher numbers of adults returning to complete bachelors and graduate degrees challenge the status quo. VSU is not exempt from these changes or the hurdles they create, but they also present real opportunities for future growth.

In response, **VSU2030** challenges our faculty and staff to *reignite our student-first campus culture* by requiring that we offer the right mix of in-demand academic programs and a highly engaging traditional undergraduate experience, while also aggressively pursuing emerging markets. It also asks students, alumni, and friends of the university to support our work by investing in the plan's critical aspects. The transformational change **VSU2030** envisions is both necessary and possible, but it will take the commitment of every member of Blazer Nation to make it happen.

# A *Plan for Growth*

After stabilizing enrollment at VSU, detailed demographic and enrollment data now suggests that the university can set its sights on overall growth. With a clear desire to strengthen our position as South Georgia's flagship institution, *the university aspires to surpass a total enrollment of 13,000 students*, and the following **VSU2030 Goals & Strategies** aimed at creating career ready graduates, building on our foundation of traditional undergraduate education, maximizing growth opportunities, and increasing private support will enable us to do just that.

# GOAL 1

## Create Career-Ready Graduates

Align VSU's degree program mix with student and employer demand and ensure that all programs ready their graduates to succeed in their careers, in life, and as citizens.

### STEP ONE:
Align the university's degree portfolio with student and employer demand.

#### Strategies
- **Strategy 1.1a** – Partner with University System Office staff and Ruffalo Noel Levitz to review the feasibility of all degree programs based on current and future employer and prospective student demand and create and implement a rubric for ongoing evaluation of degree program viability and relevancy.
- **Strategy 1.1b** – Guided by the outcome of Strategy 1.1a, Academic Affairs will create and implement a plan to increase faculty in programs with unmet demand; launch, consolidate, or reactivate programs where it is strategic and/or appeals to new markets; and deactivate programs where decreased student enrollment and/or dwindling employer demand warrant it.

### STEP TWO:
Market and infuse career readiness throughout the student experience.

#### Strategies
- **Strategy 1.2a** – Prioritize career readiness in VSU's branding and make it a focal point in marketing to prospective students and their parents.
- **Strategy 1.2b** – Implement the new USG core curriculum to enhance the extent to which students find career and life value in their core curriculum.
- **Strategy 1.2c** – Complete and implement a model for regular review of curriculum in every program of study that is led by faculty and informed by external content experts to ensure ongoing alignment with current job needs.
- **Strategy 1.2d** – Ensure that academic department websites identify experiential learning opportunities and expectations in the degree maps, outline potential career options, and highlight examples of successful alumni for every undergraduate degree program.
- **Strategy 1.2e** – Charge Enrollment & Student Affairs and Academic Affairs with creating & implementing a comprehensive plan – to include universal participation with Blazer Ready – that ensures that every undergraduate student benefits from experiential learning opportunities in- and out-of-the classroom throughout their program of study.

### STEP THREE:
Finalize and/or improve the systems necessary to maximize institutional success toward this goal.

#### Strategies
- **Strategy 1.3a** – Launch a robust Mary Virginia Terry Center for Experiential Learning that supports the Blazer Summer Research Institute, the Undergraduate Research Symposium, a new Experiential Learning Exposition, study away opportunities in our region, and other experiential learning initiatives supported by VSU's 2027 Quality Enhancement Plan.
- **Strategy 1.3b** – Support ongoing completion of those community-based projects which are coordinated through the Center for South Georgia Regional Impact by creating an annual calendar for faculty project review that aligns with course preparation timelines as well as a compensation model for faculty who complete projects &/or who coordinate the participation of students in project completion.
- **Strategy 1.3c** – Partner with the National Institute for Student Success and Ruffalo Noel Levitz to complete and implement an updated Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.
- **Strategy 1.3d** – Transform the VSU website and the MyVSU portal into model promotional tools to effectively capitalize on prospective and current student interest.
- **Strategy 1.3e** – Charge Academic Affairs with producing a plan, to be vetted by the Cabinet, that assesses, creates, and maintains innovative lab, studio, and teaching spaces that promote increased student engagement in the learning process.
- **Strategy 1.3f** – Charge the VSU Facility Planning Group with proactively addressing underutilized property and space on campus, vetted by Deans Council and Cabinet.

# GOAL 2

## Build on Our Foundation

Make VSU's traditional undergraduate opportunity a first-choice option of prospective learners who desire an on-campus learning experience that is dynamic, engaging, distinct from fully online programs of study, and supported by services that build community and aid completion.

### STEP ONE:
**Promote student success through teaching innovation and excellence.**

#### Strategies
- **Strategy 2.1a** – Charge a Presidential Task Force of academic and student leaders with identifying best practices in the facilitation of face-to-face and hybrid learning and offer relevant pedagogical training regarding those best practices via the Center for Excellence in Learning & Teaching.
- **Strategy 2.1b** – Charge the Faculty Success Council with creating and implementing a model for Core Faculty Status to recognize excellence in teaching the core curriculum.
- **Strategy 2.1c** – Improve student retention and persistence among traditional undergraduates by creating and implementing a culture of community that supports student success through learning communities, a first-year inquiry course, targeted academic interventions, experiential learning, and career opportunities.
- **Strategy 2.1d** – Building on lessons learned from an in-depth review of success data, each semester enroll every first- and second-year traditional undergraduate student in an academic schedule made up by a majority of fully face to face classes.

### STEP TWO:
**Create and sustain a thriving community outside of the classroom.**

#### Strategies
- **Strategy 2.2a** – Improve students' on-campus residential experience by expanding, especially in first-year residence halls, programming aimed at building community, and by improving maintenance service delivery levels in all residential facilities.
- **Strategy 2.2b** – Support the University System of Georgia's efforts to update the Mandatory Fee Model to grow available support for fee-funded budgets; increase support for out-of-class student life offerings generally; and create, implement and fund a phased-in plan to grow specific activities such as Greek life, intercollegiate and club sports, eSports, the Blazin' Brigade Marching Band, and other student clubs and organizations which have a proven record of attracting students, increasing retention, and enhancing alumni engagement.

### STEP THREE:
**Reawaken in-person engagement in the on-campus learning environment.**

#### Strategies
- **Strategy 2.3a** – Unveil and administer a new university-wide minimum expectation of 60% of seat time devoted to in-person learning in all traditional undergraduate hybrid courses.
- **Strategy 2.3b** – Renew, embrace, and reward a student-first work culture where all faculty and staff who teach in or support traditional undergraduate programs are regularly on campus engaging with their students in and out of the classroom, proving daily that we care about every student's success, and then charge all Cabinet-level units with ensuring consistent observance of these expectations.

### STEP FOUR:
**Retain our standing as Georgia's most beautiful university campus.**

#### Strategies
- **Strategy 2.4a** – Increase annual funding in support of general grounds maintenance, and prepare, share broadly, and fund as the institution is able a prioritized list of needed one-time deferred maintenance or campus beautification expenditures.
- **Strategy 2.4b** – Create a comprehensive 2040 University Housing Plan to address aging facilities and improve residential living options in a fiscally responsible way over the next 15+ years.

# GOAL 3
## *Maximize Growth*

Fully capitalize on the Online College for Career Advancement, Graduate School, and international student recruitment by removing roadblocks and making timely strategic investments.

### STEP ONE:
Maximize Online College for Career Advancement (OCCA) growth.

#### *Strategies*
- **Strategy 3.1a** – Invest in recruiters, advisors, eLearning professionals, and other staff as needed to fully capitalize on the leads which are created by extensive marketing; adopt a plan to expedite transfer credit acceptance in all OCCA degree programs; offer the courses students desire (including SmartPath Core courses) when they want them; incorporate experiential learning opportunities in every OCCA program; seek University System of Georgia (USG) approval for additional OCCA undergraduate degree programs or concentrations in high demand areas; cultivate new partnerships with large employers looking to promote degree completion among their employees; invest in faculty lines as needed to support documented unmet demand; and seek philanthropic gifts in support of recruitment and completion scholarships.
- **Strategy 3.1b** – Enroll an ever-increasing share of the 170,000 Georgians who are expected to pursue online learning to support career progression each year over the next decade, meet established enrollment goals laid out in the university's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, and position OCCA as the preeminent program of its kind in the Southeast.

### STEP TWO:
Maximize Graduate School growth.

#### *Strategies*
- **Strategy 3.2a** – Implement a comprehensive marketing and recruitment plan, to include program-specific advertising, dedicated graduate-level recruiters, consistent timely admission decisions in all graduate programs, and an increased number and dollar amount of stipends for graduate assistantships; support the addition of faculty lines in programs with documented unmet demand; seek USG approval to add new graduate degree programs in high demand areas; and seek philanthropic gifts in support of recruitment and completion scholarships.
- **Strategy 3.2b** – Meet established Graduate School enrollment goals laid out in the university's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

### STEP THREE:
Maximize international student enrollment.

#### *Strategies*
- **Strategy 3.3** – Contract with recruiting agents in countries that are deemed to have high numbers of potential international students who can afford a U.S. education; restore an appropriate level of staffing to process required federal paperwork and support students while they are in-country; provide additional transportation options to and from international airports and to in-town home stay, grocery, and entertainment venues as appropriate; and seek philanthropic gifts in support of recruitment and completion scholarships.

### STEP FOUR:
Support students where they are.

#### *Strategies*
- **Strategy 3.4a** – Ensure virtual access to all student services regularly used by Online College for Career Advancement, Graduate School, and international students.
- **Strategy 3.4b** – Renew, embrace, and reward a student-first work culture where all faculty and staff who teach in or support online learning are regularly engaging with their students, proving daily our desire to impact their success, and then charge all Cabinet-level units with ensuring consistent observance of these expectations.

# GOAL 4

## *Invest in Our Future*

The VSU family will advance the success of this plan through a capital campaign that provides the targeted investments needed to maximize growth.

### *Strategies*

- **Strategy 4.1a** – Partner with the VSU Foundation Board of Trustees to conduct a feasibility study for the university's next capital campaign in support of the goals of this plan; launch the campaign's silent and public phases; and successfully secure pledges which meet or exceed the announced transformative fundraising goal.
- **Strategy 4.2b** – Increase the number and value of scholarship awards to support student recruitment and success as part of the next capital campaign.