

Blazer Housing News

A Newsletter for Residence Hall Students & their Families

Fall 2015

Director's Note

WELCOME!

The Housing and Residence Life Office sends out a newsletter each semester to establish a clear path of communication with Blazer parents. "Blazer Housing News" contains information about hall openings and closings and general office updates that could affect your son or daughter and their living arrangements. I encourage you to contact us via phone, e-mail, or standard mail if you have any questions or concerns. Our website is constantly being updated, so be sure to keep www.valdosta.edu/housing bookmarked on your Web browser.

We have dedicated undergraduate student leaders, graduate professionals, and full-time professionals in each residence hall to make sure your student's stay is as personally enriching as possible. Now that midterms are past, it is time for every student to study hard and do well on their final exams. The in-hall staff can help to make this a reality. Feel free to ask your son or daughter if they are consulting their Resident Assistant (RA) regularly. The professional staff is available to assist students with their social and intellectual development and to direct them to the proper campus resources for additional help.

Resources for you to be aware of are the Parent Resource Center located at <http://www.valdosta.edu/prc/> and the Parent and Family Programs Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/VstateParents/>. Both are part of VSU's ongoing effort to remain connected to the best partners we have, our students' "home team."

I hope your student has a good experience living with us this semester, and I look forward to continuing dialogue in the spring semester.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas W. Hardy
Director, Housing & Residence Life



Room Selection for the 2016 - 2017 School Year

Room selection is the process during which current residence hall students sign up for a space to live on campus for the next academic year. Housing values upperclassmen and is holding suite and apartment spaces for upperclassmen for the 2016 - 2017 school year. There's no need to move off campus when you can stay on campus and not worry about parking, collecting rent from roommates, etc. You may choose your roommate during room selection and they are guaranteed to be a student in good standing at VSU. Living off campus where roommates are assigned does not always mean students are assigned with other students.

Spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis, with students in a higher class standing and/or those with higher GPA's being accommodated first. The details of the process will be explained in a letter mailed to your home in December. Please pay particular attention to this so you don't miss your first opportunity for 2016 - 2017 campus housing. Remember every year in campus housing is a separate contract. **Note: Housing is not guaranteed all four years.**

Meet the Staff...

The Housing and Residence Life Office is excited to introduce you to the hall-level members of the team. This year, there are **14 graduate assistants and 3 area coordinators** working in the office and the residence halls. Their full contact and biographical information is available on the Housing & Residence Life website.

Here is a quick look at some of the people on staff:

Area Coordinators



Haley Lyman
Area Coordinator for
Brown, Lowndes, and
Patterson Halls

Haley Lyman has recently joined the VSU housing team this year. Haley is from Orlando, FL and received her Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership from the University of Central

Florida. She has been involved with different facets of Housing and Residence Life at the University of West Florida and University of Central Florida. In her spare time, Haley enjoys exploring Valdosta restaurants and playing with her rescue dog, Pickles.



Seth Sterlin
Area Coordinator for
Georgia, Langdale, and
Reade Halls

Seth Sterlin comes to Valdosta State University from southwest Virginia, where he attended Virginia Tech and received his Bachelor's in chemistry in the spring of 2012.

He recently received his Master's degrees in Higher Education Leadership program from VSU.

In his spare time, Seth enjoys sitting back and catching up

on TV shows, especially if it can be a Netflix marathon, going to the movies, and if he has enough time cooking. Some of his interests include hanging out with friends, and spending time with his dog, Bailey (named after his favorite character from Grey's Anatomy). He looks forward to the upcoming year, and cannot wait to work with everyone on the Housing and Residence Life staff.



Lenora Willis
Area Coordinator for
Centennial, Converse,
and Hopper Halls

Lenora Willis, a Philadelphia, PA native, received her Bachelor's degree at Drew University in Madison, NJ in mathematics in 2011. After 3 years as an involved student leader, serving as Orientation

Leader, Student Government Association president, RHA Vice President, and paraprofessional in Residence life, Lenora decided to pursue a Master's degree and a career in Higher Education and Student Affairs. She has worked in higher education professionally, since 2011, at various institutions including Bloomfield College, Salem State University, and University of Oregon. Lenora brings various experiences in professional and student staff training and hiring, anti-oppression and social justice work, career development, and assessment and strategic planning with her as she begins work at VSU.

Lenora joins VSU as a full time professional overseeing Centennial, Converse, and Hopper halls. She is very excited to work with students transitioning out of the university setting and apply her passion areas to her everyday student interactions. Lenora enjoys anywhere there is water, music, her new pup, and most importantly cooking delicious food. Although, she may be far from home in NJ, she is excited to be back in the same time zone as her family and friends, and not to mention Disney World.

GRADUATE *Staff*



HOUSE CALLS

After the students get settled into their residence halls and routine of going to class, some of the campus faculty and administrators make “house calls” to see how everyone is adjusting. House calls are a great way to show students that we are there to make their experience at VSU an enjoyable one. House calls provide face time and interaction between the residents and the staff who are here to support them. It is also a great way for the residents to ask any questions or express any concerns.

Hall Directors

Mackenzie Sirmans Centennial Residence Hall Director

Mackenzie Sirmans was born and raised in Douglas, GA. She joined Valdosta State University after obtaining her Bachelor of Science in Social and Community Development and her Associate of Arts in Psychology from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. Throughout her time at ABAC, she was very involved in campus and housing life. She served in numerous positions, including Head Community Assistant, Stallion Society Orientation Team, and ABAC Ambassadors. Mackenzie is furthering her education at VSU in the Higher Education Leadership graduate program. She hopes to one day become a Dean of Students at a college or university.

In her spare time, Mackenzie enjoys singing, listening to music, crafting, cooking, reading a good book, and spending time with family and friends. She loves life and feels that every moment should be lived to the fullest. Mackenzie is passionate about college students and is extremely excited for the opportunity to impact students' lives at Valdosta State University.



Abbey Friesen Centennial Residence Hall Director

Abbey Friesen loves breakfast. She was born and raised in the Midwest, but was an undergrad in Southern California at Azusa Pacific University studying Practical

Theology. As an undergrad she served as a Resident Advisor for freshmen women, had two internships, and held the title of “President” for the social work club for one year. This fall she is starting her Masters in Social Work. She loves music, photography, meaningful conversations, cooking, reading, and flowers (loves flowers). Her husband is the MAN and they are both so excited to be here with all of you. She wants you to find her and chat because she really loves that kind of thing.



Amanda Allison Reade Residence Hall Director



Amanda Allison recently graduated from Azusa Pacific University in California. During her time at APU she was a Resident Advisor for two years. In this position she dealt with

conflict management, leadership development, and oversaw over fifty students at a time. She also worked in orientation as an undergrad and loves the chance to make new students feel welcomed and at home.

Amanda received her Bachelors in Communication and Leadership and is the new Residence Hall Director of Reade Hall at VSU. She has a heart for leadership development and empowering students to find their purpose in life. She is a California girl but a southerner at heart! Amanda loves country music, Mexican food, and Zumba!

Lauren Mingo
Patterson Residence
Hall Director

Lauren Mingo was born in Hartford, Connecticut and raised in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Lauren is entering her first year in the Higher Education and Student Affairs graduate program at Valdosta State. She graduated from Oakland University with her Bachelor's degree in Integrative Studies with concentrations in Biology and Chemistry. As an undergrad, she developed a passion for student affairs fueled by her involvement in residence life. Lauren plans to carry this enthusiasm with her into her role as the Residence Hall Director for Patterson Hall.



Out of the office, Lauren enjoys binge-watching shows on Netflix, experimenting with different forms of art, pinteresting, and inventing new ways to organize.

Team, Toast Masters Int'l, Housing & Residential Life Village Council, President of the Students of African American Brotherhood (S.A.A.B.), and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Pi Epsilon Chapter.

During his downtime, he likes to meet new people, read new books (that aren't school related), explore new music, work out at the gym, and gain new experiences.

Alyson Stewart
Brown Residence Hall
Director

Alyson Stewart is a first year Marriage and Family Therapy Graduate Student from Woodbridge, Virginia. Previously she studied public relations and communications studies at the University of



Alabama. After graduation she worked as a government contractor and then worked for a non-profit association. Her hobbies include writing, blogging, reading, listening to old school R&B and gospel, hanging out with friends, and watching chick flicks! She is a huge people person that enjoys being surrounded by her peers. The company of others is comforting, she is quite the conversationalist. As a former military brat, she had to quickly learn how to be an extrovert and jump out of her shell. She's often described as energetic, bubbly and friendly. Her smile's huge, you can't miss it.



Angel Maxwell
Converse & Hopper
Residence Hall
Director

Angel Maxwell was born and raised in Southern California where he graduated from California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) with his Bachelor of

Arts in Business Administration with an emphasis on Entrepreneurial Management and a Minor in Psychology. While pursuing his degree at CSUSB, he worked for the Office of Housing & Residential Life where he spent two years as a Residential Assistant only to later be promoted to the position of Hall Coordinator for the next two years. In addition to him serving in these two positions, Angel also held a membership service staff position at the Student Recreation & Fitness Center.

Angel's involvement was not limited to the job positions he held on campus, but included active involvement in many campus organizations such as: Black Student Union (B.S.U.), Enrichment Through Action (E.T.A.), Alpha All-Star Step

Tim Frederick
Langdale
Residence Hall Director

Tim Frederick is a transplant from Garden City, Michigan where he attended Eastern Michigan University. While at EMU, he obtained his bachelor's in psychology. Currently, Tim is a Residence Hall Director in Langdale Hall at Valdosta State pursuing a master of education degree in higher education leadership - student affairs. In the future he hopes to be involved in Student Conduct. Outside of education he enjoys playing music, working out, woodburning, reading, and hanging out with his friends.



Office Graduate Assistants



Miguel Olivera
Lowndes Residence
Hall Director

Miguel Olivera finds himself traveling all the way from Dearborn Heights, Michigan to the lovely city of Valdosta. He graduated from Central Michigan University in May 2015 with a bachelor's degree

in English, with a concentration in creative writing. Miguel is working toward a master's degree in higher education and this is his first year at Valdosta State. He looks forward to spending this year working with the students of Lowndes Hall. At Central, Miguel was a Resident Assistant, the Risk Manager of his fraternity (Phi Kappa Tau), and a senator in the Student Government Association.

When not at work or studying, Miguel can be caught reading, writing, playing a card, board, or video game, or listening to his stand-up comedy channel on Pandora. He hopes to write the next great American novel, or at least a pretty decent one.

Stephanie Pocsi
Georgia Residence
Hall Director

Stephanie Pocsi joins the VSU team after graduating from Central Michigan University with a bachelor's degree in early childhood development and learning. After realizing that college students have a lot in common with preschoolers she decided that working with college students was her passion. She is pursuing her master's in higher education student affairs.



Stephanie is an avid reader, currently trying to digest the *Song of Fire and Ice* series. She is also a painter but doesn't claim to have much talent. You may find her doing a variety of activities as long as she is surrounded by people who love to laugh, have a bit of fun, and are passionate about creating social change.

Taylor Prain
Contracts &
Assignments

Taylor Prain is a graduate student with his undergraduate degree in sociology. Taylor is a local student from Valdosta, Ga. He enjoys playing music in bands around Valdosta, playing soccer, and also backpacking whenever the opportunities arise.



Ethan Gray
Residential Facilities

Ethan Gray started at Valdosta State as a freshman in 2010 and received his bachelor's degree in criminal justice in May 2014. Ethan was born and raised in Peachtree City, Georgia. He is currently working toward his master's in public administration.



This is Ethan's fifth year working in Housing and Residence Life, first as a Student Facility Assistant and now the Graduate Assistant of Facilities. In his spare time he likes watching Netflix marathons, playing with his two dogs, Bear and Petey, hanging with friends, cleaning, and playing on social media sites. He is looking forward to the year ahead and the amazing opportunity that has been giving to him to make a difference to the students here at Valdosta State.

Community Phone Numbers Housing & Residence Life Office 333.5920

Brown	FD 333.5918	HD 249.4985
Centennial	FD 333.5269	HD 245.3792
		HD 333.7165
Converse	FD 333.5916	HD 333.5313
Georgia	FD 333.5917	HD 333.5924
Hopper	FD 333.5916	HD 333.5313
Langdale	FD 333.5915	HD 333.2194
Lowndes	FD 333.5914	HD 249.4984
Patterson	FD 333.5913	HD 245.3736
Reade	FD 333.5912	HD 333.5405

FD = Front Desk HD = Hall Director Office

Holli Dawkins

Marketing & Public Relations

Holli Dawkins was born in Nassau, Bahamas and raised in Kosciusko, MS. She obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology from Mississippi State University in May



2014. While at Mississippi State, Holli was very involved in campus and housing life. She served in numerous capacities, including Resident Adviser, Orientation Leader, member of the Dean's Student Advisory Council, member of the MSU chapter of Psi Chi (social media chair on the executive board) and an undergraduate research assistant for the Psychology Department. Holli plans to graduate in Spring 2016 with her master's degree in VSU's industrial/organizational psychology program.

In her spare time, Holli enjoys traveling, listening to music, watching Netflix and spending time with family and friends. She is excited to continue in her position with VSU's Housing Department team and is looking forward to what the future holds after graduation.

Erica Velazquez

Residential Education

Erica Velazquez is a first year graduate student in the Marriage and Family Therapy department at VSU. However, VSU's campus is nothing new to her - she spent four years here as an undergraduate psychology major/



spanish minor and recently graduated magna cum laude. She was born in San Bernardino, CA and raised in Middle Georgia with four other siblings and two step siblings. During most of her undergrad years (sophomore to senior year), Erica was a Resident Assistant, having served one semester in Langdale Hall and two full years in Hopper Hall. Erica is passionate about growing as a person and helping others to do the same, but specifically couples

and families that struggle with dysfunctional relationships, helping them to get to the root of their problems so they can work through them together.

When she is not studying, working, or sleeping, she enjoys cooking and looking for new recipes, catching up on seasons of her favorite shows and movies on Netflix, traveling, reading, spending time with friends and family, shopping, listening to music, singing, cleaning and searching for ideas/buying interior decorations for her apartment. Erica works with Mark McNalley, helping to supervise Residence Hall Association (RHA), National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH), and she assists with the planning and development of programs for residents across campus through the residential curriculum. She is very excited to start this new chapter of her life and continue working with new and previous staff and residents.

Lynsei Love

Programming & Assessment

Lynsei Love is originally from Stone Mountain, Georgia. Lynsei initially enrolled at Valdosta State University in 2008 where she obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology in 2012



and decided to begin her search for a career. While working in the field of education, Lynsei discovered a talent for working with middle and high school students and decided to build on it by seeking a master's degree in school counseling. She is very excited about returning to Valdosta State University as the Graduate Assistant for Programming and Assessment.

When Lynsei is not at work, she enjoys reading, trying different recipes, and discovering do-it-yourself solutions for everyday problems. She is passionate about making simple lifestyle tweaks in order to achieve one's best level of health, externally and internally, and looks forward to continued individual and professional growth.

Frequently Asked Questions...

What if my student cannot come home during breaks?

Centennial and Converse Halls are the only buildings that will remain open during the Thanksgiving, winter, and spring breaks. If your student cannot go home, they will need to make other arrangements.

During semester breaks, may my student leave his/her belongings in his/her room?

Yes, however, the Housing and Residence Life Office is not responsible for loss or damage to these possessions. Please encourage your student to take home valuables if there is a concern.

What if my student wants to change rooms or move to another residence hall?

The fall room change process took place the last week in August and the first week in September. Students may continue to request moves for both in- and out-of-hall changes by meeting with their Residence Hall Director or Area Coordinator.

Can my student break his/her housing contract to move off-campus?

First-year students are subject to the Freshman Residence Policy. Specific details are available at the Housing and Residence Life website. All other students are bound by the terms of their contract and are not permitted to do a contract buy out.

Who is responsible for my student's property?

Your student is responsible for his/her own property. Although precautions are taken to maintain adequate security, the university cannot assume the responsibility for the loss or damage to student possessions. We encourage you to carry appropriate insurance to cover such losses.

Is it possible for my student to work part-time in the residence halls?

Yes. The Housing and Residence Life Office employs students as resident assistants, student assistants, facilities assistants, and front desk workers. Please refer to the Housing website for more information and available postings.

If I send my student money in the form of a check, will the university cash the check?

Yes. The Bursary will cash checks for a maximum of \$50 with a VSU ID and a driver's license present. Personal checks to be cashed should be made payable to "VSU-CASH".

Where can my student go for medical attention if he/she gets sick?

Valdosta State has a state-of-the-art Student Health Center for students that need medical attention. At the Student Health Center, there is a full staff of physicians, nurse practitioners, a physician assistant, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, medical technologists, a pharmacist, and clerical staff. Students have already paid a fee at the beginning of the semester, and many times, the visit and medications are free. Please encourage your students to take advantage of this service, especially during the cold/flu season. To ensure that all students can be seen in a timely and orderly fashion, students will need to call ahead to make an appointment with a provider at (229) 219-3200. Appointments can also be made or cancelled through our online appointment system (<https://health.valdosta.edu/PyramedPortal/Account/Logon?ReturnUrl=%2fpyramedportal%2f>). Find out more on the Web at <http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/auxiliary-services/student-health/> or by calling (229) 333-5886.

How can my student keep up with his/her grades?

Students will be able to view in-progress grades by logging into their Banner account, selecting "Student and Financial Aid," then "Student Records," and finally "In-Progress Grades."

When can my student register for Spring classes?

Early registration for Spring 2016 will begin Nov. 2 for graduate students and seniors, Nov. 3 for juniors, Nov. 4 for sophomores, and Nov. 5 for freshmen. Early registration will continue through Jan. 4 at 12:00 noon.



MOVE-IN DAY 2015



Office of Housing & Residence Life
 Valdosta State University
 1500 N Patterson St
 Valdosta GA 31698-0400

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 Valdosta, GA

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Fall 2015

Important Dates

- November 9 - 14** VSU Homecoming Week
- November 15** **Contract Release Deadline For Spring**
(freshmen cannot be released unless they qualify for inclusion in the Freshmen Residency Policy)
- November 24** **Traditional Residence Halls Close For Thanksgiving Break, 4 PM**
- November 25 - 27** **Thanksgiving Break - No Classes**
- November 29**.... **Traditional Residence Halls Re-Open, 4 PM**
- Nov. 30 - Dec. 3**..... **Mandatory Resident Assistant Floor Closing Meeting**
- December 4**..... **Resident Assistant Application Due Date**
- December 12** **Residence Halls Close for Winter Break, 9 AM** *(Centennial Hall and Converse Hall will remain open)*
- December 12 - January 9** **Winter Break**
- January 9**..... **Residence Halls Re-Open for Spring, 4 PM**
- January 11** **First Day of Class for Spring Semester**
- January 19** **Room Change Phase I**
- January 25**..... **Room Change Phase II**

MOVE-IN DAY 2015

First-year students arrived on campus Aug. 11-12 to begin their college experience as a VSU Blazer. For many, moving into the residence halls for the first time can be tough. This is why VSU Housing recruits over 300 volunteers, including a number of students, faculty, administrators, and community members. Each year, Housing and Residence Life meets with a number of campus partners to organize and plan for the smoothest and best move-in experience possible. These plans include a variety of issues concerning parking, traffic flow, assisting students in moving items, removal of trash, and offering of ice water.

Thanks to the many hours of planning and volunteering, this year proved to be a huge success. We recognize that everyone may not feel the same way about Move-In Day; therefore, we welcome any positive and negative feedback, as well as ideas for the future. You may send your ideas via email to housing@valdosta.edu or call (229) 333-5920.