



## A Unified Advancement Front *Crawford Plans to Collaborate and Lobby*

Don't expect John Crawford's announcement as Valdosta State's vice president for University Advancement to be the last you will hear of him. The Alabaman's first order of business is to collaborate with faculty, campus leaders, staff, students and alumni to establish unified opportunities for university growth.

"I think that improved communications between all areas of the campus and the university advancement staff will lead to a more united approach to fundraising," Crawford said. "I also think it is very important to communicate regularly with the staff and with the broader campus community to ensure that all viewpoints are heard."

The 37-year-old father of three has a palpable passion for promoting higher education — an attribute Crawford said he inherited from his auto mechanic father, who placed a value on education that far exceeded the formal instruction he received.

"I love working in advancement because I believe strongly in what it is that takes place on college campuses," said Crawford, who received a bachelor of science in history from the University of West Alabama (UWA) in 1996. "My college experience changed my life, and I have seen first hand what a college education does for people. I can think of few callings that are more noble."

Crawford is presently the associate vice president for Institutional Advancement and Development at his alma mater in Livingston, Ala. The avid reader said he strives to lead with the same patience and focus as his professional role model,

Bob McChesney, the former president at Montevallo University in Montevallo, Ala., where Crawford spent four years as a special assistant to the president and legislative liaison.

"Bob was a great leader who believed very deeply in communicating and collaborating with the entire university community," Crawford said of his former boss, who retired in August 2006. "Bob was also a very patient leader who cared about his staff, and I try very hard to emulate his style."

Crawford's governmental affairs experience developing Montevallo's annual state and federal relations strategies and lobbying on local, state and federal levels will prove a tremendous

asset to VSU during a political atmosphere of increased assessment on public institutions of higher education. Universities throughout the country are focusing more resources on educating policy makers about the contributions and needs of their campuses.

"There is no question that our nation's colleges and universities are receiving more attention than ever from our elected leaders," said Crawford, who served for two years as the chair of Alabama's public university lobbyists' group. "Late last year college and university lobbyists worked together to stop a measure being advanced by the U.S. Department of Education that would have removed the authority to define academic achievement from the hands of the individual institutions and placed that authority

with the regional accrediting bodies."

While Crawford emphasizes the importance of state and federal lobbying, he places equal importance on strengthening and developing relationships in the community. VSU is a vital economic engine for the state of Georgia, and Crawford said he plans to collaborate with state and local governmental agencies to produce economic and community development initiatives.

Crawford is eager to put his ideas to practice when he officially starts the position on May 1. His excitement about the university's potential is infectious.

"I was already aware of the Blazers' remarkable athletic success. As I began to examine the position and the university more closely, I was pleased to learn of the university's commitment to academic excellence and to learn of the numerous national accreditations and recognitions enjoyed by VSU," Crawford said. "Valdosta State is very clearly a university on the move with a vibrant building plan and an exploding enrollment. All of these factors are very favorable for a successful university advancement effort."

As a member of the President's Cabinet, Crawford is directly responsible for supervising all units within University Advancement including development, alumni relations, annual giving, planned giving, corporate and foundation relations, advancement/foundation accounting, scholarships, database management, publication and design services, and marketing. ■



BOBBY LACEY

## Saving Lives on Company Time



KATE HEINE

American Red Cross Blood Services Collection Technician, Shannon Troutman, checks the blood pressure cuff on the arm of VSU Horticulturalist Bobby Flowers as he begins the hourlong platelet donation process. Flowers participates in the VSU H.E.R.O.s program, which allows employees to take off from work to donate blood and platelets without using leave time.

For the past six years, VSU Horticulturalist Bobby Flowers has taken personal leave to donate platelets; but since October 2007, Flowers has been able to save lives without draining his leave time.

The university enrolled in the American Red Cross Blood Services program, Helping Employees Rescue Others (H.E.R.O.), which allows employees to use working hours instead of personal time to donate blood and platelets.

VSU's Council on Staff Affairs (COSA) encouraged the Department of Human Resources to develop a policy for employees to save an estimated three lives by giving blood without penalty of lost leave time.

The Red Cross presented VSU with a plaque for being the largest contributor to the local incentive program. H.E.R.O. Program Director, Lynn Loftus, said she hopes the university's enthusiastic involvement will encourage other area businesses and organizations to participate.

"We are in constant need of donations, particularly platelets," Loftus said. "Whole blood has a shelf life of 42 days, but platelets last five days. Only one percent of the U.S. population donates platelets. Trauma and cancer patients, in particular, need the clotting factor to survive."

Faculty and staff interested in donating must negotiate a time with their supervisor to schedule an appointment at the American Red Cross Blood Donor Center, 2517 Bemiss Rd, by calling (229) 241-1141. The Center is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and from noon to 5 p.m. the first and third Sunday of each month.

Call Lynn Loftus at (229) 241-1141 ext. 240 or e-mail her at [loftusl@usa.redcross.org](mailto:loftusl@usa.redcross.org) for more information. ■

## Director Wins National Excellence Award

The College & University Professional Association for Human Resources — Georgia Chapter recognized Dr. Denise Bogart, director of Human Resources for Valdosta State University, with the 2008 Excellence in Human Resources Award.

The award honors individuals who exhibit leadership excellence and professionalism in the field of human resources. Those honored must also demonstrate significant contributions to the their institution's overall effectiveness through the development of progressive human resource practices.

An active member of the Society for Human Resource Management and a Certified Professional in Human Resources, Bogart began her position at VSU in 2006. She has been credited

with increasing departmental efficiency through reorganization, streamlining human resource practices by implementing cutting-edge technology and connecting with all VSU units through targeted campaigns.

Rosezella Ward, assistant director for employee administration, and other colleagues who nominated Bogart for the award, said the director has also improved human resources at VSU by providing opportunities for her staff to expand their knowledge and expertise. ■



COURTESY PHOTO

## VSU Walkers Stride for a Cruise

Valdosta State University's Centennial Walking Club invites faculty, staff and students to lace up their tennis shoes and walk for a chance to win a three-day cruise for two.

This year's "Walk To Your Summer Vacation" contest requires participants to walk 231 miles — the distance from Valdosta to Port Canaveral, Fla. — which is where the prize-winning cruise will depart. To participate in the contest, interested faculty, staff and students must bring an \$8 entry fee to the Employee and Organizational Development Office, University Center room 3103. Participants must also join the Centennial Walking Club, a free program designed to facilitate group or solo walking, and log their miles walked on the program's Web site, [www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/wellness/info](http://www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/wellness/info). Only miles logged between March 1 and April 25 will count toward contest totals.

"We're really excited about the contest. A three-day cruise for two is such a big prize," said contest coordinator, Vincent Spezzo, who is pursuing his Educational Specialist degree in Instructional Technology. "This is a great opportunity to get people active in the walking club and reward one lucky walker for all their effort."

VSU's walking club partnered with Executive Travel of Valdosta, Curves, Weight Watchers, VSU Dining Services and Campus Recreation to offer the contest, which Spezzo said the walking club hopes will be an annual event.

For more information, registration details and official rules, visit the contest Web site at, [www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/wellness/walkingcontest](http://www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/wellness/walkingcontest). ■

### VSUConnection

Editor/Designer | Kate Heine

The *VSU Connection* is a semimonthly newsletter designed to inform VSU personnel and students about the latest campus-wide news. Check out the *Connection* online at [www.valdosta.edu/news/](http://www.valdosta.edu/news/).

For more information about the *Connection* or to submit a story idea, email Kate Heine, Communications Specialist, Communications Unit, at [kaheine@valdosta.edu](mailto:kaheine@valdosta.edu).