



# VSU Connection

For the Faculty, Staff and Members of the Valdosta State University Community

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## ● Audit Results Empower Change

**VSU** embarked on a three-month organizational diversity audit in October 2007 to collect and analyze campus opinions and data, laying the foundation to build a more culturally inclusive and scholastically diverse academic community.

After assessing outcomes from one-on-one phone interviews, focus groups and hundreds of campus-wide questionnaires, Washington D.C.-based National Multicultural Institute established objectives for VSU to diversify its student body, personnel and curriculum — one of five University Strategic Planning Goals.

“Now begins the heavy lifting,” said Maggie Viverette, director of Equal Opportunity and Multicultural Affairs. Assumptions will be challenged, established procedures will be restructured and grievances will be addressed; but from the discomfort of progress comes personal and systemic change that results in an inclusive environment strengthened and empowered by its diversity.

“Now we can get our hands dirty and dig deeper to get to the specifics of change,” Viverette said.

*“The diversity audit indicates VSU is committed to inclusion, but it is by no means the end of the effort; rather, it is the beginning.”*

— Maggie Viverette, director of Equal Opportunity & Multicultural Affairs

### ● Faculty/Staff Perceptions

- 29 percent or those surveyed agree with the statement, “I do not feel safe expressing a viewpoint different from a VSU norm.”
- 72 percent agree it is, “important to address cultural diversity as a means of improving employee relations.”
- Top three diversity issues: Work to address perceived differences in power and authority, diversity management, and diversify faculty.
- 84 percent are satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs.
- 30 percent feel a responsibility to intervene when they observe incidents of bias and injustice.
- 69 percent believe that diversity in faculty and staff makes significant contributions to quality education, and 60 percent said that VSU is taking strides to build an inclusive community.
- 64 percent desire more opportunity to express ideas and concerns to managers/supervisors.
- Focus groups revealed that many faculty/staff believe that promotions are not based on merit.

14 percent of faculty and 32 percent of staff responded to the survey.

### ● Student Perceptions

- 83 percent of students who responded believe that, “VSU provides an inclusive atmosphere for all students, regardless of race/ethnic background.”
- 62 percent said “faculty do not integrate culturally diverse points of view into coursework and class discussions.”
- 56 percent of students have heard other students make racially or culturally insensitive remarks about students, faculty and/or staff.
- 70 percent said students separate themselves based on differences.
- Students living on campus and younger students observe more harassment than other undergraduate or graduate students.
- 53 percent of VSU students surveyed said VSU students should be required to take a course about multicultural issues.

14 percent response rate for students.

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is who we are

### ● Recommendations

National Multicultural Institute consultants analyzed survey data and interpreted sentiments gathered during focus groups to develop suggestions for VSU to broaden its understanding of diversity and shape a more inclusive campus community.

#### Strategic diversity and inclusiveness initiative

Transform assessment results into a systematic, long-term series of planned steps to enhance the capacity of VSU to work with culturally diverse staff, faculty and students.

#### Academics

Develop approaches that support instructors in their efforts to provide learning

experiences that are culturally competent and inclusive of a range of viewpoints and course materials. Also, offer communication assistance to international instructors who experience difficulty when interacting with students or their colleagues.

#### Diversity training

Provide cultural competence training and offer programming to explore issues of power and authority as well as how to appropriately respond to culturally or racially insensitive behavior.

Implement management and leadership training that focuses on communication, staff development, power sharing, as well as equitable decision-making and promotion selection.

#### Hiring and retention strategies

Review hiring and retention strategies and offer training/coaching for human resources personnel to ensure every hiring process is inclusive and culturally competent.

#### Grievances

Appoint a diverse team of employees to establish a safe and effective process to address reports of harassment and insensitivity on campus.

#### Events

Campus associations, clubs and independent organizations should collaborate to develop programs for VSU employees, students and the public to celebrate diversity. ■



**VSU Diversity Audit facts at:**  
[www.valdosta.edu/eopma/diversity/DiversityAudit2007](http://www.valdosta.edu/eopma/diversity/DiversityAudit2007)

## Experience

spirited theatrics and dynamic harmonies at the 10th annual VSU Theater and Dance Scholarship Cabaret at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 22, and Sunday, Nov. 23, in the fellowship hall of St. John's Catholic Church, 800 Gornto Rd. Doors open at 6 p.m., during which time guests will enjoy appetizers and assorted wines and tea. A dinner, including stuffed chicken breast, garlic cheddar biscuits and sautéed vegetables, will be served at 6:30 p.m. Proceeds from the hour-long performance of musical theater classics and contemporary favorites, which will begin at 7:30 p.m., has provided scholarships for hundreds of talented theater and dance students.

VSU Theater and Dance professor, Jacque Wheeler, who has been involved with the cabaret since its inception, said money raised during the event enables the department to provide passionate student artists with scholarships so they can focus on their demanding craft instead of working to pay for classes.

Assistant Professor of Musical Theater Voice Michael Elliott is musical director for the program, "By the Numbers," which features a range of standards from the Beatles' "When I'm 64" to popular love song, "Come Rain or Come Shine." Students will also perform musical theater favorites, like the toe-tapping "Tea for Two" from the musical comedy "No, No, Nanette" and "Three Coins in the Fountain" from Stuart Ross' "Forever Plaid."

Tickets, which include the dinner, cabaret performance and a donation to the scholarship fund, cost \$40 per person. Call Associate Professor Duke Guthrie, area head of VSU Theater and Dance, at (229) 333-5307, to make reservations. ■



## Staff Appreciation Week

**November 17-21**

VSU and various community partners have planned a variety of recognition activities for staff members during each day of Staff Appreciation Week. Don't miss out on these congratulatory events.

### Discount Days at Palms

**November 17-21**

Come enjoy a discounted lunch at Palms Dining Hall every day during Staff Appreciation Week. Pay only \$4.50 plus tax instead of paying the full price of \$7 plus tax, at the all-you-care-to-eat facility. By popular demand, roasted and fried chicken is back on the menu. For a list of other staff discount days, go to [www.services.valdosta.edu/dining/events.aspx](http://www.services.valdosta.edu/dining/events.aspx).

### Donuts for Departments

**November 17**

Start your work week off right with a hot doughnut or two provided by the Student Government Association and Greek Affairs.

### Thank Your Peers Day

**November 18**

Supervisors will recognize staff members' dedication to the people and ideals of VSU, and COSA is planning a "sweet surprise" for all staff.

### Community Day to Appreciate Staff

**November 19**

Let the community pamper you for your dedication to VSU, Valdosta's largest employer. Kentucky Fried Chicken will provide a 10 percent discount all day for VSU staff members who present a valid staff identification card at their food purchase. Check your e-mail during Staff Appreciation Week to learn about other businesses offering discounts.

### Cook-out on Front Lawn

**November 20**

From 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., the president, vice presidents and deans will be grilling hamburgers and hotdogs on the front lawn for staff members. Come out and enjoy picnic cuisine during this congratulatory cook-out.

### Win an iPod

**November 21**

Staff members who eat at Palms on Friday will be entered into a contest to win an iPod and other prizes donated by the VSU Tech Shop. And remember, entrance to the all-you-care-to-eat facility is only \$4.50 plus tax. ■



### Board of Regents Approves New Ethics Policy: Integrity, Excellence, Accountability and Respect

The Board of Regents approved a revision to its policy manual that establishes for the first time a unified Ethics Policy for the University System of Georgia.

"There are a multitude of documents in existence throughout the University System that govern personal conduct in various ways," said Ron Stark, the USG's chief audit officer and associate vice chancellor for internal audit. "But the new Ethics Policy provides a comprehensive, overarching framework for improving our overall risk management of all the varied resources entrusted to our care."

The new Ethics Policy — available online at [www.usg.edu/compliance/ethics/](http://www.usg.edu/compliance/ethics/) — is part of a three-pronged approach the University System is taking to enhance compliance with state and federal regulations and minimize misconduct.

The policy summarizes in one location the various rules, policies and procedures governing the Board of Regents and its employees, who will receive training as part of the implementation plan.

Read full press release at: [www.usg.edu/news/2008/111008](http://www.usg.edu/news/2008/111008). ■

# The Numbers are in

*VSU celebrates the largest increase in online graduate program enrollment in VSU's history.*

**D**uring fall 2008, more than 350 new students chose the convenience and flexibility of online graduate programs at VSU — accounting for a 50 percent increase in online graduate program enrollment. Of the 875 online graduate students, more than 200 students are enrolled in the new collaborative Master of Education programs, and 44 are in VSU's new Doctor of Public Administration program, which launched last fall.

A total of 1,680 graduate and undergraduate students are enrolled in online classes, and a growing number of VSU professors are incorporating the university's online course management system, WebCT, into traditional course work.

## 19:1 Student-Instruction Ratio

VSU's 610 faculty members, who average classroom settings with a 19:1 student-instructor ratio, have touched the lives of 11,490 students during fall 2008,

a 30.69 percent increase from 2000. Included in the official enrollment figures from the University System of Georgia are 1,782 graduate students and 9,708 undergraduates, with 2,143 joining the student body as new freshmen.

## Global Impact

Students enrolled for fall semester 2008 represent 156 Georgia counties, 46 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and 68 countries. A strong supporter of international studies, VSU welcomed 270 international students to campus this fall.

Call the Office of Strategic Research and Analysis at (229) 245-6517 or visit [www.valdosta.edu/sra/](http://www.valdosta.edu/sra/) for more information regarding enrollment and facts about VSU. Visit [www.valdosta.edu/more](http://www.valdosta.edu/more) to see why Valdosta State has more!

To read the full enrollment press release, go to [www.valdosta.edu/news/releases/enrollment.111208/](http://www.valdosta.edu/news/releases/enrollment.111208/) ■

## Observe World AIDS Day at VSU

**T**he world has seen significant progress in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS since the inception of World AIDS Day two decades ago, but December 1 remains a day to reflect about those whose have lost the fight against AIDS and to consider what more needs to be done to prevent the spread of AIDS. Join your colleagues in recognition and remembrance during a World AIDS Day luncheon from noon-1:30 p.m. in the University Center Cypress Room. The first 75 registrants will receive free box lunches. Dr. W. Saurina, an area physician who specializes in infectious diseases, will be the featured speaker during the luncheon presentation — "AIDS Awareness: The Impact on Families and Communities." Employees from area correctional institutions will speak about HIV/AIDS in incarceration, and local family members and individuals affected by the disease will tell their stories. Register to attend the AIDS awareness lunch at [www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/wellness/index.shtml](http://www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/wellness/index.shtml) or call Employee Development at (229) 259-5015.



**FREE HIV/AIDS TESTING will be available to the public from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the UC Lobby (near the Food Court), and consultations will be held in the UC Rose Room. The Southern Health District, Student Health, and Campus Wellness joined forces to sponsor the World AIDS Day activities.** ■

## Campus Dining Opens a Can of Giving

Campus Dining Services collected more than 1,200 pounds of food during a three-hour period on Wednesday, Nov. 12, as part of Sodexo Foundation's attempt to set the Guinness Book of World as the "largest food drive by a non-charitable organization."

The collection was part of a week long canned food drive to fight hunger in Lowndes County. Campus Dining donated thousands of cans to America's Second Harvest of South Georgia.

"Last year we collected 808 pounds in one week to try to break the world record, but this year it was 1,275 in three hours," said Jenna Gilbert, Dining Services marketing manager. "I am excited to find out how many pounds of food we collect throughout the week so that those in the community who are struggling can enjoy a hot meal."

During the season of giving, Campus Dining's management team has also paired with the freshman in the Emerging Leader Program to serve meals at the Lee Street Valdosta Soup Kitchen on Thursday, Nov. 20, and Friday, Nov. 21, from 11 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

Learn more about Sodexo Foundation's donation and volunteer opportunities at [www.sodexofoundation.org/](http://www.sodexofoundation.org/). Not one cent of your donation to the foundation is put toward administrative costs. ■

**Got some news to share?**  
Send it our way — [news@valdosta.edu](mailto:news@valdosta.edu)

### VSUConnection

**Editor** | Kate Heine • **Photographer** | Bobby Lacey  
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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, e-mail Kate Heine, Publications Editor, Communications Unit, at [kaheine@valdosta.edu](mailto:kaheine@valdosta.edu).

# Candlelight Rotunda Concert

*Don't miss the Valdosta State Chamber Singers performance by candlelight Sunday, Dec. 7, in the West Hall rotunda.*



The Valdosta State Chamber Singers, an elite choral ensemble of 24 singers, will perform holiday programs by candlelight at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7, in the grand acoustical stage of West Hall's rotunda.

The joyous occasion will feature Renaissance motets, new compositions, and familiar favorites such as "Joy to the World," "Angels We Have Heard on High," and "Silent Night."

Director of Choral Studies Dr. Paul Neal, who arranged the concert, said the Chamber Singers will also present the southern premiere of "In the Bleak MidWinter," a new Christmas carol written by Dr. Jim Shrader, chair of the Department of Music.

Proceeds from the hour-long performance, which costs \$10 for adults and \$5 for students, will support the Chamber Singers' spring tour to Nashville, Tenn., in March 2009.

For tickets, please call the (229) 333-5812. Tickets will not be sold at the door the night of the performance, so please reserve tickets TODAY! ■



## Dial 5555, Not 911

Responding to an emergency in a timely manner is critical to providing the highest quality safety for our campus. If you encounter a situation on campus that requires police, fire and/or medical attention, please dial 259-5555 from your cell phone or 5555 from a campus phone. Dialing 911 will direct you to the Lowndes 911 center, which then informs VSU Police. The identification system at Lowndes 911 identifies all calls from VSU as 1500 N. Patterson Street instead of the actual building; therefore, calling VSU Police directly will expedite a response.

The VSU Emergency Quick Reference Guide, which was distributed on campus last year, outlines the proper procedures for handling various emergencies. If you do not have a copy of the reference guide, you may download it at [www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/safety/EmergencyQuickReferenceGuide.shtml](http://www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/safety/EmergencyQuickReferenceGuide.shtml). ■



## "Cooking it up Healthy" Lunch-n-Learn

Experience a cooking demonstration that explores healthy holiday dishes that don't skimp on flavor during "Cooking it up Light" from 12-30-1:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 21, in the UC Cypress Room.

The menu during the presentation includes bowled winter green salad, pomegranate glazed turkey with roasted fennel, roasted garlic mashed potatoes, holiday brussels spouts and unsweetened tea or water. The cost of the meal is \$7.49 or a meal plan swipe.



## Free YOGA Classes

Connect your mind, body and spirit during a free yoga class from 6-7 p.m. each Tuesday in the University Center's Dance Studio, room 2108.

Participants should bring yoga sticky mats, as well as blocks and straps if they have them. Yoga kits are available at Wal-Mart, Target, and a few other stores in town.

Catherine Schaeffer, a certified "Land to Water" Somatics Yoga instructor and Samantha Lee, Dance Club vice president, will be sharing the teaching of this class.

For more information about the class, e-mail Schaeffer at [caschaef@valdosta.edu](mailto:caschaef@valdosta.edu).

## Find out about other campus activities at ...



### November Events at a Glance:

[www.valdosta.edu/news/releases/november.110408/](http://www.valdosta.edu/news/releases/november.110408/)