



# VSU Connection

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

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## Manage Your Employee Information Online

**Faculty and staff required to log into Employee Self Service by Dec. 31**

VSU faculty and staff are required to register and log into the Employee Self Service information system by Dec. 31.

The Web-based tool enables VSU employees to manage and view benefits, payroll and personal information online from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Sunday. Employees may view benefits but not change them. Faculty and staff must wait until the University System of Georgia Open Enrollment Period each year to augment benefits.

Employee Self Service does permit VSU personnel to update and alter payroll and personal information without stepping foot in the human resources office. Employees may access the

system through a work or home computer to update tax withholdings, change direct deposit or bank information and alter mailing addresses. VSU's Division of Human Resources and Employee Development requires employees who change their legal name or marital status to provide the office with proof of the change, such as a social security card displaying the name change or a marriage license.

Rosezella Ward, assistant director for Employment Administration, said employees will soon be required to submit all travel and other reimbursable

expenses through the Employee Self Service system.

Self service, which became available to employees in February, was initially an optional service. The University System of Georgia made enrollment mandatory in October to streamline employee information databases.

"The system empowers employees because they now have access to their benefit and personal information without having to set up an appointment with HR," Ward said. "Once people log in and familiarize themselves with self service, I think they will really appreciate it." ■

**Take the self service tutorial & log onto the system at:**  
[www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/human\\_resources/SelfService](http://www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/human_resources/SelfService)

## VSU's New Choral Director Conducts in England

Valdosta State University's Director of Choral Studies Dr. Paul Neal conducted a 60-year-old choir in Western England on Oct. 6.

The 150-member Ceramic City Choir, North Staffordshire's largest choral society, invited the Louisiana native to direct the group in singing sacred American choral music, including works from Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland and Mortin Lauridsen.

"When the British think about sacred music, they tend to envision the grandeur of Anglican churches, choir robes and organs," said Neal, who also serves as Assistant Conductor for the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra. "We performed classics, but I wanted them to experience a broader sense of American sacred music, such as shape-note hymns, African-American spirituals and the recent works of living conductors."

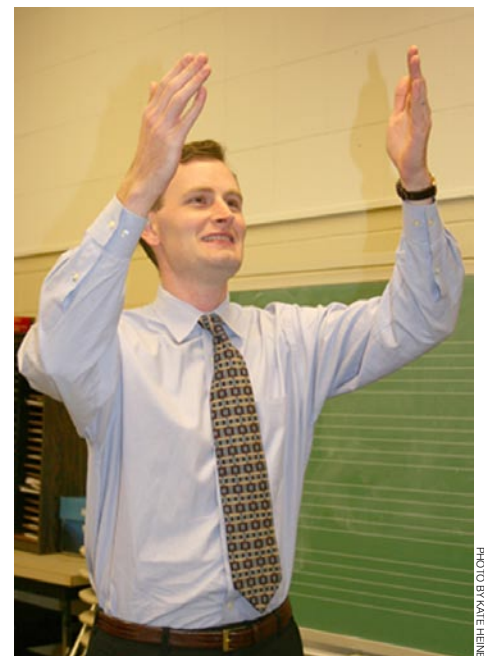
Neal has conducted larger groups, including the 250-member Lauridsen Weekend choir; but "An American in England," held at St. George's Church

in Newcastle, was his overseas debut as guest conductor. Neal said he was flattered by the invitation to work with such an accomplished group, which has performed with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and sung under the direction of distinguished conductors, such as Sir Charles Groves, Owain Arwel Hughes and Sir David Willcocks.

Before heading to England, Neal acknowledged his nerves about meshing with the group. The choir had practiced the songs for months but scheduled only three rehearsals with Neal prior to the concert.

"I have chosen a challenging, varied repertoire for the performance, so the challenge will be moving them beyond their traditional singing mindset," Neal said one week before the performance. "The success of the performance will depend on how pliable they are and how willing they are to trying a new sound."

Upon his return, Neal said the choir dedicated themselves to transforming his vision into music. Neal's wife, Amy, who



Paul Neal, who served as a chorister for the soundtrack of Warner Brothers film, "The Lady in the Water," conducts a VSU Concert Choir rehearsal in the Fine Arts Building.

PHOTO BY KATE HEINE

**Paul Neal Continued on Back**

## Paul Neal Continued —

served as a rehearsal accompanist for the choir, said the church, which seats up to 750 people, was full of responsive audience members.

Neal brought his passion for choral conducting to VSU in the fall of 2007. He said he chose VSU because the choirs were stronger than those of the other programs he was considering.

"Coming into VSU, the choral tradition is strong already," said Neal, who was the only American singer accepted in Baroque Voices, a 2004 master class sponsored by the International Federation of Choral Musicians near Milan, Italy. "But I plan to help the choirs gain more regional and national prominence."

Neal will conduct his first concert at VSU on Saturday, Nov. 17, at 8 p.m. in Whitehead Auditorium. He will be



COURTESY PHOTO

conducting the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra with the VSU Concert Choir and VSO Chorus in a program titled "Choral Classics."

For concert details, go to [www.valdostasymphony.org/](http://www.valdostasymphony.org/). ■

*The Ceramic City Choir (above) was founded in 1942 because of encouragement from conductor Sir Harold Malcolm Watts Sargent, who is widely regarded as Great Britain's leading conductor of choral works. VSU Choral Director Paul Neal, who since 2004 has also served as assistant conductor for one of the largest community choruses in Los Angeles, Calif., conducted the choir in a church that was built in 1828.*

## More From Human Resources

### Open Enrollment: October 8 – November 2

The University System of Georgia Open Enrollment Period is the only time employees may adjust their benefits each year. For the first time in several years, employees who previously refused dental coverage will be able to enroll in an indemnity dental plan during open enrollment.

"We're excited to offer employees the option to add dental coverage for the first time in years," Human Resource Specialist Brenda Kelley said. "Previously, when employees declined dental coverage when they set up their benefits, they were unable to add dental, even during open enrollment."

A summary of the dental plan is accessible on the USG Web site at [www.usg.edu/employment/benefits/dental/](http://www.usg.edu/employment/benefits/dental/).

Learn more about open enrollment at the HR Web site, [www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/human\\_resources/aboutus](http://www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/human_resources/aboutus).

### Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

Full-time employees who have worked for the university for at least six months in a benefits-eligible position and meet enrollment criteria are able to enroll in up to eight academic semester credit hours for each of three semester periods — fall, spring and summer. The application deadline for the spring semester is Nov. 15. Click on the Employee Information tab on the HR Web site to access TAP eligibility requirements, application materials and overall information.

### Shared Sick Leave Pool Program

University employees may sign up during open enrollment to voluntarily contribute sick leave to a leave pool that administers leave to fellow employees who have exhausted all leave because of a life-threatening condition or medical emergency.

To become a member of the leave pool, employees must contribute between eight and 40 hours of sick leave each year, while retaining 40 hours of combined sick and annual leave in their personal leave accounts. Only members of the leave pool are eligible to receive leave from the pool in case of an emergency.

For more information about the program and to fill out application documents, go to [www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/human\\_resources/SickLeavePool](http://www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/human_resources/SickLeavePool).

For more information about any of the above programs, call The Division of Human Resources and Employee Development at 333-5709 or go to the division's Web site at [www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/human\\_resources/](http://www.valdosta.edu/finadmin/human_resources/). ■



## Attention Tailgaters!

### 2007 VSU Chili Cook-Off Chillin' with the Champs

### Saturday, October 27

Prior to the VSU vs. North Alabama Football Game  
Judging Starts at 11AM • Winners Announced at 12PM

### Chili Cook-Off Prizes! Grand Prize — Anyone \$300

| Business        |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | \$200 |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | \$100 |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | \$50  |

| Individual      |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | \$200 |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | \$100 |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | \$50  |

A gift basket will be given to the team with the best overall tent presentation.

**Business Team Fee: \$50 • Individual Team Fee: \$25**

To register, call the Office of Special Events at 333-7446, fillout a registration form available on the Web at [www.valdosta.edu/specialevents/](http://www.valdosta.edu/specialevents/) or email: [specialevents@valdosta.edu](mailto:specialevents@valdosta.edu)

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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, email Kate Heine, Communication Specialist for the Office of the President, Communication Unit, at [kaheine@valdosta.edu](mailto:kaheine@valdosta.edu).