

# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

## **ANNUAL SECURITY AND FIRE SAFETY REPORT**

**2024**

Dear Student, Faculty and Staff member:

Valdosta State University (VSU) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. One way in which we can achieve a safe and secure environment is through transparency. As such, the Department of Public Safety has prepared the Annual Security and Fire Safety Report.

This report will provide you with information on the safety and security of the VSU Campus. Inside you will find information on the Department of Public Safety, our policies and procedures for reporting crime, crime prevention programs, victim assistance services, fire safety, and other material to assist you. This report is provided in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act) and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA).

Valdosta State takes campus safety very seriously and is committed to our efforts to maintain a safe, secure environment for our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. You are encouraged to read this report and use the report to assist in providing for your continual safety. Your personal safety is a priority at VSU. Maintaining a safe campus requires a dedicated partnership between the members of the University community and the Department of Public Safety.

Safety is everyone's responsibility. We need your partnership and assistance to keep VSU a safe place to live, work, and learn.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryant Leverett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bryant Leverett  
Interim Director of Public Safety  
Chief of University Police

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of the institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the sex, race, religion, color, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation of the individual. It is the intent of the institution to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent Executive Orders as well as Title IX, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## **REPORTING CRIMES AND OTHER EMERGENCIES**

Valdosta State University (VSU) encourages the prompt and accurate reporting of crimes to law enforcement when the victim elects to. Individuals should report to the VSU Police Department (University Police) or the local law enforcement agency for where the offense occurred. If a victim is unable to make a report, including due to incapacitation, VSU encourages community members to seek emergency assistance including making a report to law enforcement.

University Police can be contacted by calling 229-259-5555 or by dialing 911. You can also report in person twenty-four hours a day at the Oak Street Parking Deck, 2nd floor, 1410 North Oak Street, Valdosta, GA. The University Police's Silent Witness reporting program can be found and accessed through the Department's website:

<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/police/forms/anonymous-tip-reporting.php>

Students may also report to the Vice President of Enrollment and Student Affairs (229-333-5941), Director of Student Conduct and Title IX (229- 333-5409), or any of the named Campus Security Authorities (CSA) on campus. Employees may also report to Human Resources (229-333-5709) or to local law enforcement by calling 911. Reports made to the Title IX Coordinator will not initiate a law enforcement investigation, but they can provide assistance to victims of sexual misconduct including help with reporting to law enforcement and in accessing the disciplinary proceedings detailed in the "Response to Sexual and Gender Violence" section of this report.

VSU does not have a policy for the voluntary, confidential reporting of crime for the purposes of inclusion in annual crime statistics nor a policy for encouraging counselors to refer those they are counseling to such a program. Under the Clery Act crimes reported to counselors are exempt from reporting.

### Reporting to Other Campus Security Authorities

While the college prefers that community members promptly report all crimes and other emergencies directly to the VSU Police Department or 911, we also recognize that some may prefer to report to other individuals or college offices. The Clery Act recognizes certain college officials and offices as "Campus Security Authorities (CSA)." The Act defines these individuals as "official of an institution who has significant responsibility for student and campus activities, including, but not limited to, student housing, student discipline and campus judicial proceedings. An official is defined as any person who has the authority and the duty to take action or respond to particular issues on behalf of the institution."

While VSU has identified many CSAs, we officially designate the following offices as places where campus community members should report crimes:

<b>Official</b>	<b>Campus Address</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>
University Police Department	1410 North Oak Street 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Parking Deck	229-259-5555 229-333-7816
Vice President for Enrollment and Student Affairs	Student Union Suite 3106	229-333-5941
Chief Human Resources Officer	University Center Entrance 5	229-333-5709
Director of Student Conduct and Title IX	Student Health Center, Second Floor	229-333-5409
Chief Legal Affairs Officer	West Hall, Executive Suite	229-333-5351
Office of Housing & Residence Life	1226 Hopper Hall	229-333-5920

## **Preparing Annual Crime Statistics**

The University Police prepares the annual crime statistics found within this report. Statistics are reported for homicide, sex offenses, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, arson, liquor law violations, drug law violations, illegal weapons, hate crimes, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. These statistics are collected for the VSU campus, adjacent public property, and non-campus property.

Clery Act crime statistics are compiled from reports made to personnel who are considered a Campus Security Authority (CSA) and local law enforcement. Personnel who are a CSA include members of the University Police, other campus security, individuals that we designate crimes be reported to, and any official with significant responsibility for student and campus activities. The University Police classifies and counts these reports using federally prescribed standards.

## **Recordkeeping**

VSU retains records related to compliance with federal campus safety requirements, including the Clery Act and Higher Education Act fire safety provisions, for a period of at least seven (7) years. These records include police reports, reports made by CSAs, educational programming, the public crime and fire log, timely warnings, emergency notifications, and responses to reports of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.

## **ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

The VSU Police Department protects and serves the Valdosta State community 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Department is responsible for a number of campus safety and security programs including Emergency Management, community Safety and Security education, physical security, behavioral/physical threat assessment, special event management and security technology. The mission of the Valdosta State University Police Department is to preserve a safe and secure campus environment where diverse social, cultural, and academic values are allowed to develop and prosper through a combination of reactive, proactive, and educational law enforcement services.

The VSU Police Department employs sworn police officers. Georgia Code § 20-3-72 provides that our sworn officers “have the power to make arrests for offenses committed upon any property under the jurisdiction of the board of regents and for offenses committed upon any public or private property within 500 yards of any property under the jurisdiction of the board.”

The VSU Police Department maintains a cooperative relationship with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, the Valdosta Police Department, the Lowndes County Sheriff’s Office, and all other surrounding police agencies. This includes inter-operative radio capability, training programs, special events coordination, and investigation of serious incidents.

The Valdosta State University Police Department participates in multiagency cooperation with all local law enforcement and first responder agencies. These local agencies include the Valdosta City Police and Fire Departments, Lowndes County Sheriff’s Office, Remerton Police Department, Hahira Police Department, and South Georgia Medical Center EMS. This cooperation includes joint multi-agency training and cooperation on other matters, such as pre-planned large-scale special events, amongst the participating agencies.

University Police are fully qualified to investigate crimes on campus and do not have a written agreement with any local agency for the purposes of investigating specific crimes. In the event of a homicide investigation, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation may be requested to conduct it.

University Police request crime report information for the non-campus locations of officially recognized student organizations from local law enforcement.

## **TIMELY WARNING REPORTS**

Valdosta State University is committed to ensuring that the campus community has timely information to protect themselves. When a Clery Act crime is reported it is assessed by the Chief of Police or their designee to determine if it presents an ongoing threat to students and employees. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and when there is a threat, alerts are disseminated as soon as the pertinent information is available.

The VSU Police will post these Crime Alerts through a variety of ways, including but not limited to posters, e-mails, and media. These warnings will not contain information that could potentially disclose the identity of the victim. The University also has the ability to send text message alerts to those who register their cell phone and/or home numbers through the University's Banner system. Text messaging, Blazer Guardian application alerts, and network rolling computer banner may also be utilized for these alerts to the campus community.



## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

The University Police Department is responsible for the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This plan is designed to be an all-hazards disaster response and emergency management plan that complies with FEMA guidelines for Higher Education that includes planning, mitigation, response, and recovery actions.

Our priorities are:

- Life safety, infrastructure integrity, and environmental protection during an emergency
- Coordination with the university departments to write, maintain, test, and exercise the EOP
- Cooperation, Integration, and Mutual Aid with local, state, and federal planning, response and public safety agencies and their EOP.

### **Drills, Exercises and Training**

Annually, the University conducts an emergency management exercise (tabletop, functional, or full scale) to test emergency procedures. The scenarios for these exercises change from year-to-year and include several departments from across the campus.

To ensure the University's emergency management plans remain current and actionable, the University will conduct an emergency management exercise, at least once a year. These exercises may include tabletop drills, emergency operations center exercises, or full-scale emergency response exercises. The University conducts after-action reviews of all emergency management exercises.

In conjunction with at least one emergency management exercise each year, the University will notify the community of the exercise and remind the community of the information included in the University's publicly available information regarding emergency response procedures at:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/police/safety/welcome.php>.

### **Emergency Notification**

Valdosta State University is committed to ensuring that the campus community receives timely, accurate, and useful information in the event of a significant emergency or dangerous situation on campus or in the local area that poses an immediate threat to the health and safety of campus community members. Valdosta State University uses the emergency notification known as RAVE. RAVE is an emergency notification service available to students, staff, and anyone in the University community who wants to subscribe. RAVE can be used to send emergency

messages within minutes of the occurrence of an incident. These messages may go out as text messages, emails, University computer workstation screen messages, RSS feeds (banner) across the home page on the University's network or via recorded messages.

## **Procedure to Notify the Campus Community**

In the event of a situation that poses an immediate threat to members of the campus community, the University has various systems in place for communicating information quickly. Some or all of these methods of communication may be activated in the event of emergency notification to all or a segment of the campus community. These methods of communication include the mass notification system, RAVE, the University's e-mail system, and verbal announcement within a building and public address system on police cars. The University will establish a telephone call-in center to communicate with the University community during an emergency situation. Once the Director of Public Safety, or designee, determines the need for an emergency alert, the Police Communications Center operator will be directed to facilitate its dissemination.

## **Confirming the Existence of a Significant Emergency or Dangerous Situation and Initiating the Emergency Notification System**

The Department of Public Safety and/or other campus first responders may become aware of a critical incident or other emergency situation that potentially affects the health and/or safety of the campus community. Generally, campus first responders become aware of these situations when they are reported to the Police Dispatch Center or upon discovery during patrol or other assignments.

Once first responders confirm that there is, in fact, an emergency or dangerous situation that poses an immediate threat to the health or safety of some or all members of the campus community, first responders will notify supervisors in the University Police Department.

The University's primary authorized representative, the Director of Public Safety or designee, will immediately initiate all or some portions of the University's emergency notification system. If, in the professional judgment of first responders, issuing a notification potentially compromises efforts to assist a victim or to contain, respond to, or otherwise mitigate the emergency, the University may elect to delay issuing an emergency notification. As soon as the condition that may compromise efforts is no longer present, the University will issue the emergency notification to the campus community.

## **Determining the Appropriate Segment or Segments of the Campus Community to Receive an Emergency Notification**

University and/or local first responders on the scene of a critical incident or dangerous situation will assist the Director of Public Safety or designee preparing the emergency notification with determining what segment or segments of the University community should receive the notification. Generally, the entire campus community will receive the emergency notification.

In addition to the emergency notification that may be used via the University mass notification system, the University will also post applicable messages about the dangerous condition on the University homepage to ensure the rest of the campus is aware of the situation and the steps they should take to maintain personal and campus safety. If the emergency affects a significant portion of the entire campus, University officials will distribute the notification to the entire

campus community.

### **Determining the Contents of the Emergency Notification**

The Director of Public Safety or designee will, in concert with the University and local first responders, determine the contents of the notification. The University has developed a variety of template messages addressing several different emergency situations. The individual authorizing the alert will select the most succinct message to convey the appropriate information to the community.

### **Procedures for Disseminating Emergency Information to the Greater Community**

In a situation where information needs to be disseminated outside of the campus, the Director of Public Safety, in consultation with the Office of Strategic Communications, will determine what information needs to be sent to other law enforcement agencies, radio, television and social media outlets. This function will be performed by the Director of Strategic Communications, in conjunction with the University Police.

### **Enrolling in the University's Emergency Notification System**

We encourage members of the campus community to enroll in the RAVE system by visiting <http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/police/alert/>. We encourage University community members to regularly update their information through the same site.

## **SECURITY OF AND ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY FACILITIES**

At Valdosta State University, administrative buildings are open from 8:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on Fridays. Academic buildings are scheduled to be open through a campus system based on the needs of the individual school. Access to individual classrooms and laboratories is limited to those enrolled in the courses meeting there and by the authority of the faculty person teaching the individual classes. Access to closed buildings after hours is limited by the faculty approval process.

VSU police officers are responsible for checking university buildings and other properties daily. Campus buildings are controlled by access card reader restricted access. Plant Operations schedules the opening and closing of buildings (via electronic locking systems) based on the needs of the faculty and special events. Many campus facilities, buildings and parking areas are under 24-hour video surveillance. Key issuance is based on employment status and the rules and regulations of the University Key Shop.

The main campus is not a gated community and during business hours many areas are open to the public. Cultural and athletic events are held in the University facilities which are open to the public along with other facilities such as the bookstore and library.

### **Special Considerations for Residence Hall Access**

At Valdosta State University, all residence halls operate under a computerized Access Control and Security Monitoring System. Identification cards are coded so that only students who are residents in a particular hall are authorized electronic access entry to that hall; the system denies entry to all unauthorized persons. When any exterior emergency exit door is left ajar, an audible alarm is activated. Residence hall staff is responsible for checking and securing doors, when needed. When a door is malfunctioning, personnel are summoned for immediate repair. Remember to lock your doors and windows. All residence hall and apartment exterior doors are equipped with locks and with crash bars to ensure a quick emergency exit.

Only residents and their invited guests are permitted in the living areas of the residence halls. It is the resident's responsibility to ensure that his/her guest is aware of the University and residence hall policies. Guests are not provided with room keys or door access cards. Guests must be escorted by a resident of the building at all times. All exterior doors are locked 24 hours a day. It is the responsibility of residents and staff members to challenge or report individuals who cannot be identified as residents or the guests of residents. When University Police receive a report of an unescorted person in a residence hall, a police officer is dispatched to identify that person.

Officers spend much of their time patrolling in and around the residence hall complexes. During the summer when groups who are not regularly associated with Valdosta State University are using the University residence halls for camps or other events, exterior doors are locked 24 hours a day. Each guest is issued an identification card that allows them access to gain entry into their assigned building. Housing and Residence Life has developed a program called HEART, Housing Engagement Action Response Team, which assist all residents with situations that may

arise. These could include student lockout services, emergency maintenance issues, or conflicts that could arise. The University Police and HEART personnel are tasked with making periodic checks of the interior residence hall areas as well.

### **Security Considerations for the Maintenance of Campus Facilities**

Valdosta State University is committed to campus safety and security. At the University, locks, landscaping, and outdoor lighting are designed for safety and security. Sidewalks are designed to provide well-traveled, lighted routes from parking areas to buildings and from building to building. Sidewalks and building entrances are illuminated to provide for safety and security.

Environmental and Occupational Safety, in conjunction with representatives from the Police Department, Student Government Association, Plant Operations, and Faculty Senate conduct surveys of university property each year to evaluate campus lighting. We encourage community members to promptly report any security concerns, including concerns about locking mechanisms, lighting, or landscaping to the University Police.

## **CAMPUS SECURITY POLICIES, CRIME PREVENTION & SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAMS**

In addition to the many programs offered by the University Police and other University offices, the University has established a number of policies and procedures related to ensuring a reasonably safe campus community. These policies include:

### **Student Conduct**

Valdosta State University is obligated to provide all students with the University regulations, policies, and procedures governing student conduct. Valdosta State University policies and procedures are included in the Student Code of Conduct for Students which is published on the Student Conduct Website at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/student-handbook.php>

### **Behavioral Intervention Team (B.I.T.)**

In order to extend our efforts on emergency preparedness and prevention, Valdosta State University has established a Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). The objective of the BIT is to put in place a structured process for evaluating potentially threatening situations that occur at the University. This multi-disciplinary team is comprised of members from around the University community (Residence Life, Dean of Students, Counseling Center, Academic Affairs, University Police, and Student Conduct) and focus on areas of student concern. If you would like further information about the BIT, please visit their website at: <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/bit.php>

### **Weapons Policy**

Valdosta State University complies with all local, state and federal laws applied to firearms and weapons on campus. The possession, carrying and use of weapons, ammunition, or explosives is prohibited on University owned or controlled property. Failure to comply with the University weapons policy may result in arrest, disciplinary action from the institution, or both. Georgia law (O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1) also prohibits carrying weapons within a school safety zone, at school functions, or on a bus or other transportation furnished by a school. (See Exemptions)

Georgia law defines a weapon as meaning and including: any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, or any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, knuckles, whether made from metal, thermoplastic, wood or other similar material, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of the like or kind.

## **Exemptions:**

House Bill 280 was signed by Governor Deal and went into effect on July 1, 2017. It allows for anyone with a valid Georgia Weapons Carry License to carry a handgun in a concealed manner on property owned or leased by public colleges and universities, with some exceptions. Details pertaining to this bill and a video to explain the changes in the law can be located at the following website:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/police/campuscarry/>

**House Bill 792** was signed by Governor Deal which added the following to O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1, to become effective July 1, 2016. This bill permitted possession of certain electroshock devices:

“(19) Any person who is 18 years of age or older or currently enrolled in classes on the campus in question and carrying, possessing, or having under such person’s control an electroshock weapon while in or on any building or real property owned by or leased to such public technical school, vocational school, college or university or other public institution of postsecondary education; provided, however, that, if such person makes use of such electroshock weapon, such use shall be in defense of self or others. The exemption under this paragraph shall apply only to such person in regard to such electroshock weapon. As used in this paragraph, the term “electroshock weapon” means any commercially available device that is powered by electrical charging units and designed exclusively to be capable of incapacitating a person by electrical charge, including, but not limited to, a stun gun or Taser as defined in subsection (a) of Code 26 Section 16-11-106.”

This applies to commercially available devices designed exclusively to incapacitate a person by electrical charge.

## **Crime Prevention and Safety Awareness Programs**

Valdosta State University Police Department maintains a strong working relationship with the community. This relationship includes offering a variety of safety and security programs, services and crime prevention programming to include sexual assault prevention. If you or your organization would like to request a specific program, please contact the VSU Police Department at 229-333-7816. Please contact the Police Department, Student Affairs, Title IX Coordinator, Counseling Center, and the Student Conduct office for full information of the programs available.

## VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY'S RESPONSE TO SEXUAL AND GENDER VIOLENCE

Valdosta State University is committed to a learning and working environment for all campus community members that is free from sex-based discrimination. The campus community includes students, faculty, and staff, as well as contractors, vendors, visitors, and guests.

If you or someone close to you are the victim of sex-based discrimination, know that you are not alone. The information in this report will help you navigate some of what you may be experiencing. No matter what you have experienced or how you are feeling now, it is important to prioritize your safety.

You do not have to go through this alone, and this information is intended to help you navigate the process. The Institution will provide a student or employee who reports they have been the victim of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, whether the offense occurred on or off campus, with a written explanation of their rights and options as described in this report.

**Victims have the option to: Notify proper law enforcement authorities, including on-campus and local police; Be assisted by campus authorities in notifying law enforcement authorities if the victim so chooses; and Decline to notify such authorities.**

If you are a victim of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, it can be helpful to preserve evidence that may be useful in documenting the criminal activity. To preserve evidence refrain from:

- bathing,
- douching,
- smoking,
- changing clothes, and
- cleaning the linens or area where an assault occurred.

If you have changed clothes or linens, do not wash them until you have met with a law enforcement agency and/or health care provider. Seeking medical care does not mean you must report to law enforcement, so be sure to prioritize your health and safety when making decisions. Local hospitals can complete a forensic examination for collecting evidence that helps preserve your options should you choose to notify law enforcement. Photos, text messages, social media posts, instant messages, and any other communications or documents may provide information useful for Institution hearings or investigations, so save those, too.



## **ASSISTANCE**

Upon request, Valdosta State University will make any reasonably available change to a victim's academic, living, transportation, and or working situation regardless of whether the victim chooses to report the crime to campus police or local law enforcement. Students and employees may contact the Title IX Coordinator for assistance. Valdosta State University will maintain as confidential any accommodations or protective measures provided to the victim, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of VSU to provide the accommodations or protective measures.

If a victim reports to law enforcement, they may assist them in obtaining a temporary protection order from a criminal court. Valdosta State University is committed to ensuring that any such order is fully upheld on all institutionally owned and controlled property.

Employees can also contact the Director of Human Resources at 229-333-5709. Accommodations or supportive measures provided to a victim will remain confidential to the extent that maintaining confidentiality would not impair the ability of the institution to provide the accommodation or protective measures. Immigration and Visa assistance can be obtained by contacting VSU's Admissions Office 229-333-5791.

Valdosta State University recognizes the sensitive nature of sexual violence and is committed to protecting the privacy of any individual who reports an incident of sexual violence. The Clery Act prohibits the disclosure of a victim's personally identifying information in crime statistics, the crime log, and timely warnings. Different officials on campus are, however, able to offer varying levels of privacy protection to victims. Reports made to law enforcement, including if criminal prosecution is pursued, may be made public and shared with the accused.

Reports made to Valdosta State University officials will be kept confidential, and identifying information about the victim shall not be made public. Information about reports will only be shared with institutional personnel as needed to investigate and effectively respond to the report. Reports made to medical professionals or licensed mental health counselors will not be shared with any third parties except in cases of imminent danger to the victim or a third party.

## **Resources**

Valdosta State University, the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County all offer other important resources to the survivors of sexual violence including medical treatment, counseling, and advocacy that they may wish to utilize. The VSU Counseling Center is available to assist any student or employee free of charge and will help them consider their options and navigate through any resources or recourse they may elect to pursue. VSU employees should seek necessary services from the Georgia Employee Assistance Program (EAP). A victim need not make a formal report to law enforcement or Valdosta State University to access these resources that include the following:

- VSU 24/7 Counseling Support Line (students only), 833-910-3365
- VSU Counseling Center (students only, daytime only), 229-333-5940

- Acentra Health (employees only), 1-844-243-4440
- The Georgia Crisis and Access Line, 1-800-715-4225 / 404-5247-6595
- Valdosta Police Department, 229-242-2606
- Remerton Police Department, 229-247-2320
- Lowndes County Sheriff, 229-671-2900
- Georgia State Patrol, 229-333-5215
- Greenleaf Counseling Center, 229-247-4357
- South Georgia Medical Center, 229-333-1000
- Haven Rape Crisis Center, 229-242-1544
- Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault, 866-354-3672
- Victim Witness Services, District Attorney's Office, 229-671-3250
- Georgia Office of Victim Assistance, 404-559-4949
- Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, 800-547-0060
- Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) Hotline, 800-656-HOPE
- Georgia Victim Witness Helpline, 800-338-6745
- Georgia Legal Services, 800-498-9469
- Tapestri (a refugee and immigrant coalition against domestic violence), 404-299-2185
- National Domestic Violence Hotline, 800-799-SAFE (7233).

### **Prevention Programming**

- One Love Escalation Workshops conducted by the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) committee
- Bystander Intervention Training (conducted by RSVP)
- Title IX training for employees conducted by the Office of Student Conduct and Title IX
- Vector training for students directed by the Office of Student Conduct and Title IX
- What Were You Wearing informational session conducted by Health Promotions and Wellness
- Take Back the Night with RSVP and The Haven
- Wellness Wednesdays with Health Promotions and Wellness and Student Conduct and Title IX

### **State Definitions**

#### **Georgia Code § 16-6-1. Rape**

(a) A person commits the offense of rape when he has carnal knowledge of:

- (1) A female forcibly and against her will; or
- (2) A female who is less than ten years of age.

Carnal knowledge in rape occurs when there is any penetration of the female sex organ by the male sex organ. The fact that the person allegedly raped is the wife of the defendant shall not be a defense to a charge of rape.

(b) A person convicted of the offense of rape shall be punished by death, by imprisonment for life without parole, by imprisonment for life, or by a split sentence that is a term of imprisonment for not less than 25 years and not exceeding life imprisonment, followed by probation for life. Any person convicted under this Code section shall, in addition, be subject to the sentencing and punishment provisions of Code Sections 17-10-6.1 and 17-10-7.

(c) When evidence relating to an allegation of rape is collected in the course of a medical examination of the person who is the victim of the alleged crime, the Georgia Crime Victims Emergency Fund, as provided for in Chapter 15 of Title 17, shall be responsible for the cost of the medical examination to the extent that expense is incurred for the limited purpose of collecting evidence.

(d)(1) As used in this subsection, the term “sexual felony” shall have the same meaning as set forth in paragraph (2) of subsection (j) of Code Section 16-5-21.

(2) Any person having been previously convicted of a sexual felony who is convicted of the offense of rape shall be punished by imprisonment for life or a split sentence that is a term of imprisonment followed by probation for life. As a condition of probation, the court shall impose the requirement of electronic monitoring as set forth in paragraph (14) of subsection (a) of Code Section 42-8-35.

#### **Georgia Code § 16-6-22.1. Sexual battery (Fondling)**

(a) For the purposes of this Code section, the term “intimate parts” means the primary genital area, anus, groin, inner thighs, or buttocks of a male or female and the breasts of a female.

(b) A person commits the offense of sexual battery when he or she intentionally makes physical contact with the intimate parts of the body of another person without the consent of that person.

(c) Except as otherwise provided in this Code section, a person convicted of the offense of sexual battery shall be punished as for a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.

(d) A person convicted of the offense of sexual battery against any child under the age of 16 years shall be guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years.

(e) Upon a second or subsequent conviction under subsection (b) of this Code section, a person shall be guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned for not less than one nor more than five years and, in addition, shall be subject to the sentencing and punishment provisions of Code Section 17-10-6.2.

(f) When the alleged victim is under the age of 16 years and the conduct is for the purpose of sexual arousal on the part of the alleged offender or alleged victim, consent of the alleged victim shall not be a defense to a prosecution under this Code section; provided, however, that if at the time of the offense the alleged victim is at least 13 but less than 16 years of age and the accused

is 18 years of age or younger and no more than 48 months older than the alleged victim, this subsection shall not be applicable.

### **Georgia Code § 16-6-3. Statutory rape**

(a) A person commits the offense of statutory rape when he or she engages in sexual intercourse with any person under the age of 16 years and not his or her spouse, provided that no conviction shall be had for this offense on the unsupported testimony of the victim.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this Code section, a person convicted of the offense of statutory rape shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than 20 years; provided, however, that if the person so convicted is 21 years of age or older, such person shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than ten nor more than 20 years. Any person convicted under this subsection of the offense of statutory rape shall, in addition, be subject to the sentencing and punishment provisions of Code Section 17-10-6.2.

(c) If the victim is at least 14 but less than 16 years of age and the person convicted of statutory rape is 18 years of age or younger and is no more than four years older than the victim, such person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

(d)(1) As used in this subsection, the term “sexual felony” shall have the same meaning as set forth in paragraph (2) of subsection (j) of Code Section 16-5-21.

(2) Any person having been previously convicted of a sexual felony who is convicted of the felony offense of statutory rape when the individual convicted was 21 years of age or older, shall be punished by imprisonment for life or a split sentence that is a term of imprisonment followed by probation for life. As a condition of probation, the court shall impose the requirement of electronic monitoring as set forth in paragraph (14) of subsection (a) of Code Section 42-8-35.

### **Georgia Code § 16-6-22. Incest**

(a) A person commits the offense of incest when such person engages in sexual intercourse or sodomy, as such term is defined in Code Section 16-6-2, with a person whom he or she knows he or she is related to either by blood or by marriage as follows:

- (1) Father and child or stepchild;
- (2) Mother and child or stepchild;
- (3) Siblings of the whole blood or of the half blood;
- (4) Grandparent and grandchild of the whole blood or of the half blood;
- (5) Aunt and niece or nephew of the whole blood or of the half blood; or
- (6) Uncle and niece or nephew of the whole blood or of the half blood.

(b) A person convicted of the offense of incest shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than ten nor more than 30 years; provided, however, that any person convicted of the offense of incest under this subsection with a child under the age of 14 years shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than 25 nor more than 50 years. Any person convicted under this Code

section of the offense of incest shall, in addition, be subject to the sentencing and punishment provisions of Code Section 17-10-6.2.

(c)(1) As used in this subsection, the term “sexual felony” shall have the same meaning as set forth in paragraph (2) of subsection (j) of Code Section 16-5-21.

(2) Any person having been previously convicted of a sexual felony who is convicted of the offense of incest shall be punished by imprisonment for life or a split sentence that is a term of imprisonment followed by probation for life. As a condition of probation, the court shall impose the requirement of electronic monitoring as set forth in paragraph (14) of subsection (a) of Code Section 42-8-35.

### **Georgia Code § 19-13A-1. (Dating Violence)**

As used in this chapter, the term:

(1) “Dating relationship” means a committed romantic relationship characterized by a level of intimacy that is not associated with mere friendship or between persons in an ordinary business, social, or educational context; provided, however, that such term shall not require sexual involvement.

(2) “Dating violence” means the occurrence of one or more of the following acts between persons through whom a current pregnancy has developed or who are currently, or within the last 12 months were, in a dating relationship:

(A) Any felony; or

(B) Commission of the offenses of simple battery, battery, simple assault, or stalking.

### **Georgia Code § 19-13-1. “Family violence” defined (Domestic Violence)**

As used in this article, the term “family violence” means the occurrence of one or more of the following acts between past or present spouses, persons who are parents of the same child, parents and children, stepparents and stepchildren, foster parents and foster children, or other persons living or formerly living in the same household:

(1) Any felony; or

(2) Commission of offenses of battery, simple battery, simple assault, assault, stalking, criminal damage to property, unlawful restraint, or criminal trespass.

The term “family violence” shall not be deemed to include reasonable discipline administered by a parent to a child in the form of corporal punishment, restraint, or detention.

### **Georgia Code § 16-5-90. Stalking**

(a)(1) A person commits the offense of stalking when he or she follows, places under surveillance, or contacts another person at or about a place or places without the consent of the

other person for the purpose of harassing and intimidating the other person. For the purpose of this article, the terms “computer” and “computer network” shall have the same meanings as set out in Code Section 16-9-92; the term “contact” shall mean any communication including without being limited to communication in person, by telephone, by mail, by broadcast, by computer, by computer network, or by any other electronic device; and the place or places that contact by telephone, mail, broadcast, computer, computer network, or any other electronic device is deemed to occur shall be the place or places where such communication is received. For the purpose of this article, the term “place or places” shall include any public or private property occupied by the victim other than the residence of the defendant. For the purposes of this article, the term “harassing and intimidating” means a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific person which causes emotional distress by placing such person in reasonable fear for such person's safety or the safety of a member of his or her immediate family, by establishing a pattern of harassing and intimidating behavior, and which serves no legitimate purpose. This Code section shall not be construed to require that an overt threat of death or bodily injury has been made.

(2) A person commits the offense of stalking when such person, in violation of a bond to keep the peace posted pursuant to Code Section 17-6-110, standing order issued under Code Section 19-1-1, temporary restraining order, temporary protective order, permanent restraining order, permanent protective order, preliminary injunction, or permanent injunction or condition of pretrial release, condition of probation, or condition of parole in effect prohibiting the harassment or intimidation of another person, broadcasts or publishes, including electronic publication, the picture, name, address, or phone number of a person for whose benefit the bond, order, or condition was made and without such person's consent in such a manner that causes other persons to harass or intimidate such person and the person making the broadcast or publication knew or had reason to believe that such broadcast or publication would cause such person to be harassed or intimidated by others.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this Code section, a person who commits the offense of stalking is guilty of a misdemeanor.

(c) Upon the second conviction, and all subsequent convictions, for stalking, the defendant shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one year nor more than ten years.

(d) Before sentencing a defendant for any conviction of stalking under this Code section or aggravated stalking under Code Section 16-5-91, the sentencing judge may require psychological evaluation of the offender and shall consider the entire criminal record of the offender. At the time of sentencing, the judge is authorized to issue a permanent restraining order against the offender to protect the person stalked and the members of such person's immediate family, and the judge is authorized to require psychological treatment of the offender as a part of the sentence, or as a condition for suspension or stay of sentence, or for probation.

### **Georgia Code § 16-1-3. (Consent)**

“Without his consent” means that a person whose concurrence is required has not, with knowledge of the essential facts, voluntarily yielded to the proposal of the accused or of another.

## Disciplinary Proceedings

Valdosta State University prohibits the crimes of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (collectively known as the Violence Against Women Act or VAWA Offenses). Complaints are processed consistent with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act), the University System of Georgia (USG) Sexual Misconduct Policy, and the Valdosta State University Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Disciplinary complaints may be made by any campus community member and should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator at The Student Health Center, 200 Georgia, Avenue; 229-333-5409.

Disciplinary proceedings for accused students will be handled by the Office of Student Conduct. Disciplinary proceedings for accused staff will be handled by the Deputy Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO) pursuant to the Sexual Misconduct Policy. Disciplinary proceedings for accused faculty will also be handled by the Human Resources Director. In all proceedings, both the Complainant and Respondent are entitled to the same opportunities to have others present including the right to be accompanied by an advisor of their choice.

In our proceedings any individual who is alleged to have experienced conduct that violates this Policy is considered a Complainant, and any individual who is alleged to have engaged in conduct that violates this Policy is considered a Respondent. A third-party individual who reports an allegation of conduct that may violate this Policy but who is not a party to the complaint is considered a Reporter.

### What to Expect

Upon notice of the alleged misconduct, the institution will assess whether a formal investigation, informal resolution, or dismissal would be appropriate. In making this determination, the institution will assess whether the allegation(s), if true, would rise to the level of prohibited conduct, whether an investigation is appropriate in light of the circumstances, whether the parties prefer an informal resolution, and whether any safety concerns exist for the campus community. The need to issue a broader warning to the community in compliance with the Clery Act shall be assessed in compliance with federal law.

The USG uses different types of proceedings when a student is accused, when an employee is accused, and when a faculty member is accused. Additionally, federal regulations implementing Title IX require us to use certain procedures in “Title IX Sexual Misconduct” cases that aren’t required in “Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct” cases. Both types of sexual misconduct include the VAWA Offenses as well as other forms of sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

**“Title IX Sexual Misconduct”** matters are when the alleged misconduct occurs against a person in the United States on institution property, or at institution-sponsored or affiliated events where the institution exercises substantial control over both the Respondent and the context, or in buildings owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by the

institution.

**“Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct”** matters are when the alleged misconduct occurs off-campus and or when the Complainant is not participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the institution occurring within the United States at the time of the filing.

In Title IX Sexual Misconduct matters a Formal Complaint is required. A Formal Complaint is a written document filed by the Complainant or signed by the Coordinator alleging sexual harassment, as defined by Title IX and its implementing regulations, against a Respondent and requesting that the institution open an investigation. In order to file a Formal Complaint, the Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the institution occurring within the United States at the time of the filing.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for determining which type of proceeding will be used or if a complaint is to be dismissed and will provide simultaneous written notice of their determination to the parties at their institutional e-mails. If the Title IX Coordinator dismisses a complaint the notice provided to the parties will include the reason and a right to appeal. If a complaint moves forward an investigator will be assigned and the notice will include their identity.

### **Prompt, Fair, and Impartial Proceedings**

In all cases proceedings will afford a prompt, fair, and impartial process from the initial investigation to the final result for all parties. Proceedings will be conducted in a manner consistent with the institution’s policies, and be transparent to the Complainant and Respondent.

The institution is responsible for proving cases by the preponderance of the evidence standard in student, staff, and faculty cases. This means that it is more likely than not that the accused committed a violation of policy.

Officials responsible for the resolution process receive annual training on issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking; how to conduct an investigation; and how to conduct a hearing that protects the safety of victims and promotes accountability.

### **Timeframes and Notice**

Efforts will be made to complete the investigation and resolution within 120 business days (days on which the campus is open). Temporary delays and limited extensions may be granted for good cause throughout the investigation and resolution process. The parties will be simultaneously informed in writing of any extension or delay and the applicable reason. The institution shall keep the parties informed of the status of the investigation. The Title IX Coordinator will provide parties with timely notice of meetings. Parties have the right to have an advisor of their choice present during all meetings.

The institution provides simultaneous notification, in writing, to both the Complainant and



Respondent of: The result of any institutional disciplinary proceeding that arises from an allegation of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; The institution's procedures for the Complainant and Respondent to appeal the result of the institutional disciplinary proceeding; Any change to the result; and when such results become final. Notice will be provided via Maxient to the party's institution email.

### **Amnesty**

Information reported by a student during the Sexual Misconduct process concerning the consumption of drugs or alcohol will not be used against the student in a disciplinary proceeding or voluntarily reported to law enforcement; however, students may be provided with resources on drug and alcohol counseling and/or education, as appropriate.

### **Advisor of Choice**

Both the Complainant and the Respondent, as parties to the matter, shall have the opportunity to use an advisor (who may or may not be an attorney) of the party's choosing at the party's own expense.

In Title IX Sexual Misconduct cases the advisor may accompany the party to all meetings and may provide advice and counsel to their respective party throughout the Sexual Misconduct process, including providing questions, suggestions and guidance to the party, but may not actively participate in the process except to conduct cross-examination at the hearing. If a party chooses not to use an advisor during the investigation, the institution will provide an advisor for the purpose of conducting cross-examination on behalf of the relevant party.

In Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct cases the advisor may accompany the party to all meetings and may provide advice and counsel to their respective party throughout the Sexual Misconduct process but may not actively participate in the process.

All communication during the Sexual Misconduct process will be between the institution and the party and not the advisor. The institution will copy the party's advisor prior to the finalization of the investigation report when the institution provides the parties the right to inspect and review directly related information gathered during the investigation. With the party's permission, the advisor may be copied on all communications.

### **Interim Measures**

Interim measures may be implemented at any point after the institution becomes aware of an allegation of Sexual Misconduct and should be designed to protect any student or other individual in the USG community.

Interim measures may include, but are not limited to: Change of housing assignment; issuance of a "no contact" directive; Restrictions or bars to entering certain institution property; Changes to academic or employment arrangements, schedules, or supervision; Interim suspension; and Other measures designed to promote the safety and well-being of the parties and the institution's

community.

### **Informal Resolution**

The Respondent and the Complainant, as parties to the matter, may have the option of selecting informal resolution as a possible resolution in certain cases where the parties agree, and it is deemed appropriate by the institution. Where a matter is not resolved through informal resolution a hearing shall be set. All Sexual Misconduct cases shall be heard by a panel of faculty and/or staff. Student allegations of Title IX Sexual Misconduct against an employee (staff or faculty) may not be resolved informally.

The Complainant, the Respondent, and the institution must agree to engage in the informal resolution process and to the terms of the informal resolution. The Complainant(s) and the Respondent(s) have the option to end informal resolution discussions and request a formal process at any time before the terms of an informal resolution are reached. However, matters resolved informally shall not be appealable.

### **Unbiased Proceedings**

In all proceedings a conflict of interest or bias by the Title IX Coordinator, Conduct Officer, investigator(s), and or decision makers(s) is grounds for an appeal. In proceedings involving a student Respondent any party may challenge the participation of any institution official or panel member in the process on the grounds of personal bias by submitting a written statement to the institution's designee setting forth the basis for the challenge.

### **Investigation**

The parties shall be provided with a written notice containing the allegations, possible charges and sanctions as well as available support and interim measures. Upon receipt of the notice parties have at least 3 business days to respond in writing. The Respondent may admit or deny allegations and set forth a defense. The Complainant may respond and supplement their written notice. Throughout both parties may present witnesses and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.

An investigator shall conduct a thorough investigation and should retain written notes and/or obtain written or recorded statements from each interview.

The initial investigation report shall be provided to the Complainant, the Respondent, and a party's advisor (if applicable). This report should fairly summarize the relevant evidence gathered during the investigation.

The Complainant and the Respondent shall have at least 10 open campus days to review and respond in writing to the initial investigation report and directly related information gathered during the investigation. The investigator will review the Complainant's and the Respondent's written responses, if any, to determine whether further investigation or changes to the

investigation report are necessary.

The final investigation report should be provided to the Complainant, the Respondent, and a party's advisor, if applicable, at least 10 open campus days prior to the Hearing. The final investigation report should also be provided to all Hearing Panel members for consideration during the adjudication process.

### **Hearing – Student Respondent**

Where a matter is not resolved through informal resolution a hearing shall be set. All Sexual Misconduct cases shall be heard by a panel of faculty and/or staff. In no case shall a hearing to resolve a Sexual Misconduct allegation take place before the investigation report has been finalized. All directly related evidence shall be available at the hearing for the parties and their advisors to reference during the hearing. The institution will determine how the facts or evidence will be introduced.

Notice of the date, time, and location of the hearing as well as the selected hearing panel members shall be provided to the Complainant and the Respondent at least 10 open campus days prior to the hearing. Hearings shall be conducted in-person or via video conferencing technology. Formal judicial rules of evidence do not apply to the resolution process and the standard of evidence shall be a preponderance of the evidence.

Each institution shall maintain documentation of the investigation and resolution process, which may include written findings of fact, transcripts, audio recordings, and/or video recordings. Any documentation shall be maintained for seven years.

In Title IX Hearings the parties shall have the right to confront any witness, including the other party, by having their advisor ask relevant questions directly to the witness. The Hearing Officer shall limit questions raised by the advisor when they are irrelevant to determining the veracity of the allegations against the Respondent(s). In any such event, the Hearing Officer shall err on the side of permitting all the raised questions and must document the reason for not permitting any particular questions to be raised.

In Non-Title IX Hearings the parties shall have the right to confront any witnesses, including the other party, by submitting written questions to the Hearing Officer for consideration. Advisors may actively assist in drafting questions. The Hearing Officer shall ask the questions as written and will limit questions only if they are irrelevant to determining the veracity of the allegations against the Respondent(s). In any such event, the Hearing Officer shall err on the side of asking all submitted questions and must document the reason for not asking any particular questions.

Following a hearing, the parties shall be simultaneously provided a written decision via institution email of the hearing outcome and any resulting sanctions or administrative actions. The decision must include the allegations, procedural steps taken through the investigation and resolution process, findings of facts supporting the determination(s), determination(s) regarding responsibility, and the evidence relied upon and rationale for any sanction or other administrative action. The institution shall also notify the parties of their right to appeal, as outlined below.

### **Hearing – Staff Respondent**

Matters involving alleged Title IX Sexual Misconduct must be heard at a live hearing. All Sexual Misconduct cases shall be heard by a panel of faculty and/or staff. Formal civil rules of evidence do not apply to the resolution process and the standard of evidence shall be a preponderance of the evidence. The institution will determine how the facts or evidence will be introduced.

Notice of the date, time, and location of the hearing as well as the designated Hearing Officer shall be provided via email at least 10 open campus days prior to the hearing. Hearings shall be conducted in-person or via video conferencing technology. Each institution shall maintain documentation of the investigation and resolution process, which may include written findings of fact, transcripts, audio recordings, and/or video recordings. Any documentation shall be maintained for seven years.

The parties shall have the right to confront any witness, including the other party, by having their advisor ask relevant questions directly to the witness. The Hearing Officer shall limit questions raised by the advisor when they are irrelevant to determining the veracity of the allegations against the Respondent(s). In any such event, the Hearing Officer shall err on the side of permitting all the raised questions and must document the reason for not permitting any particular questions to be raised.

Following a hearing, the parties shall be simultaneously provided with a written decision via email of the hearing outcome and any resulting disciplinary or administrative actions. The decision must include the allegations, procedural steps taken through the investigation and resolution process, findings of facts supporting the determination(s), determination(s) regarding responsibility, and the rationale for any disciplinary or other administrative action.

### **Hearing – Faculty Respondent**

All Sexual Misconduct involving faculty Respondents where dismissal is a possible sanction shall, consistent with Board of Regents policy, be heard by a live-hearing panel of three to five faculty members appointed by the Faculty Senate. Notice of the panel members shall be provided to parties in writing at least 20 days prior to the hearing, and parties have at least two challenges for bias which must be made in writing at least five days in advance of the hearing. A faculty member may also waive a hearing in which case the panel shall evaluate the record.

Additional procedures for faculty Respondent matters:

An oath or affirmation shall be administered to all witnesses. The parties shall have the right to confront any witness, including the other party, by having their advisor ask relevant questions directly to the witness.

The Title IX Coordinator shall notify the President and parties simultaneously in writing of the decision and recommendation, if any, of the panel. If dismissal is recommended the President shall either approve the recommendation or if not shall advise the panel in writing of the basis

prior to rendering their final decision. The panel may also recommend a lesser sanction. The President may or may not follow the recommendations of the panel.

The President shall notify the parties simultaneously in writing of their decision. Such notice shall include information about appealing to the Board of Regents for discretionary review. Upon dismissal, pending possible discretionary review, the faculty member shall be suspended without pay. The Board may reinstate the faculty member with compensation from the date of suspension.

### **Possible Sanctions – Student Respondent**

Sanctions for student respondents include expulsion; suspension for an identified time frame or until satisfaction of certain conditions or both; temporary or permanent separation of the parties- changes in classes, reassignment of residence hall, no-contact orders, limiting geography of where parties can go on campus- with additional sanctions for violating no-contact orders; required participation in sensitivity training/awareness education programs; required participation in alcohol or other drug awareness and abuse prevention programs; counseling or mentoring; volunteering/community service; loss of institutional privileges; delays in obtaining administrative services and benefits from the university, delay registration/graduation/diplomas; additional academic requirements relating to scholarly work or research; financial restitution; or any other discretionary sanctions directly relating to the violation or conduct.

### **Possible Sanctions – Faculty and Staff Respondent**

Sanctions for employee respondents of Valdosta State University include verbal warnings; coaching; counseling; documentation of warning; unpaid suspension; demotion; and/or termination.

### **Appeals**

Appeals may be made in any student and staff cases where sanctions are issued for students, even when such sanctions are held “in abeyance,” such as probationary or expulsion, or recommended for staff. Where the sanction imposed includes a suspension or expulsion (even for one held in abeyance), the following appellate procedures will be provided.

The Respondent or the Complainant shall have the right to appeal the outcome on any of the following grounds: (1) to consider new information, sufficient to alter the decision, or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing (or appeal), because such information was not known or knowable to the person appealing during the time of the hearing (or appeal); (2) to allege a procedural error within the hearing process that may have substantially impacted the fairness of the hearing (or appeal), including but not limited to whether any hearing questions were improperly excluded or whether the decision was tainted by a conflict of interest or bias by the Title IX Coordinator or designee, Conduct Officer, investigator(s), decision makers(s); or (3) to allege that the finding was inconsistent with the weight of the information.

The appeal must be made in writing and must set forth one or more of the bases outlined above and must be submitted within five open campus days of the date of the final written decision. The appeal should be made to the Vice President of Enrollment or Student Affairs in cases involving a student or Chief Human Resources Officer in cases involving employees. If an appeal is submitted, the other Party shall receive notice of the appeal, including a copy of the submission. That Party may submit, in writing and within five (5) business days from the date of notification, a response to the appeal submission.

The appeal shall be a review of the record only, and no new meeting with the Respondent or any Complainant is required. The appellate officer may affirm the original finding and sanction, affirm the original finding but issue a new sanction of greater or lesser severity, remand the case back to the decision-maker to correct a procedural or factual defect, or reverse or dismiss the case if there was a procedural or factual defect that cannot be remedied by remand.

The appellate officer's decision shall be simultaneously issued in writing to the parties within a reasonable time period. The appellate officer's decision shall be the final decision of the institution. The Complainant or Respondent may request review of the appellate officer's decision as provided in the Board of Regents Policy Manual 6.26 Application for Discretionary Review.

### **Retaliation**

Anyone who has made a report or complaint, provided information, assisted, participated, or refused to participate in any manner in the Sexual Misconduct process, shall not be subjected to retaliation. Anyone who believes that they have been subjected to retaliation should immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator or their designee. Any person found to have engaged in retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Additional Information**

For additional information about disciplinary proceedings please contact the Title IX Coordinator. **Any party to a sexual misconduct proceeding and their Advisor of Choice should review all applicable USG and Valdosta State University policies.** USG and Valdosta State University policies are available at these links:

[Valdosta State University Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/sexual-misconduct-and-title-ix.pdf>

[6.7 Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

<https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section6/C2655>

[4.6.5 Standards for Institutional Student Conduct Investigation and Disciplinary Proceedings](#)

[https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section4/C332/#p4.6.5\\_standards\\_for\\_institutional\\_student\\_c](https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section4/C332/#p4.6.5_standards_for_institutional_student_c)

[conduct\\_investigation](#)

Human Resources Administrative Practice Manual, Prohibit Discrimination & Harassment

[https://www.usg.edu/hr/assets/hr/hrap\\_manual/HRAP\\_Prohibit\\_Discrimination\\_Harassment\\_Employee\\_Relations.pdf](https://www.usg.edu/hr/assets/hr/hrap_manual/HRAP_Prohibit_Discrimination_Harassment_Employee_Relations.pdf)

8.3.9 Discipline and Removal of Faculty Members

[https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C245/#p8.3.9\\_discipline\\_and\\_removal\\_of\\_faculty\\_members](https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C245/#p8.3.9_discipline_and_removal_of_faculty_members)

### **Federal VAWA Offense Definitions for Disciplinary Proceedings**

**Sexual Assault: Rape** – The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.

**Sexual Assault: Fondling** – The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental incapacity.

**Sexual Assault: Incest** – Sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.

**Sexual Assault: Statutory Rape** – Sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent.

**Dating violence.** Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim.

(i) The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the reporting party's statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

(ii) For the purposes of this definition—

(A) Dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse.

(B) Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

(iii) For the purposes of complying with the requirements of this section and § 668.41, any incident meeting this definition is considered a crime for the purposes of Clery Act reporting.

**Domestic violence.** (i) A felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed—

(A) By a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim;

(B) By a person with whom the victim shares a child in common;

(C) By a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;

(D) By a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred, or

(E) By any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred.

(ii) For the purposes of complying with the requirements of this section and § 668.41, any incident meeting this definition is considered a crime for the purposes of Clery Act reporting.

**Stalking.** (i) Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to—

(A) Fear for the person's safety or the safety of others; or

(B) Suffer substantial emotional distress.

(ii) For the purposes of this definition—

(A) Course of conduct means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person's property.

(B) Reasonable person means a reasonable person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the victim.

(C) Substantial emotional distress means significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

(iii) For the purposes of complying with the requirements of this section and section 668.41, any incident meeting this definition is considered a crime for the purposes of Clery Act reporting.

### **Definition of Consent**

Words or actions that show a knowing and voluntary willingness to engage in mutually agreed-



upon sexual activity. Consent cannot be gained by force, intimidation or coercion; by ignoring or acting in spite of objections of another; or by taking advantage of the incapacitation of another where the respondent knows or reasonably should have known of such incapacitation. Minors under the age of 16 cannot legally consent under Georgia law.

Consent is also absent when the activity in question exceeds the scope of consent previously given. Past consent does not imply present or future consent. Silence or an absence of resistance does not imply consent.

Consent can be withdrawn at any time by a party by using clear words or actions.

### **SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION**

Information about registered sex offenders carrying on a vocation and/or enrolled at Valdosta State University may be found at:

<https://gbi.georgia.gov/services/georgia-sex-offender-registry>

## **MISSING STUDENT NOTIFICATION POLICY**

When a student who resides in on-campus student housing has been missing for 24 hours students, employees, and others should make a report to the Valdosta State University Police Department at 229-333-7816. (Reports may also be made to VSU Housing and Residence Life at 229-333-5920). Any report of a missing student not made to the Valdosta State University Police Department must be referred to them immediately for the purposes of conducting an investigation.

All students who reside in on-campus student housing can identify a “confidential missing persons contact” (“confidential contact”) to be notified by the Valdosta State University Police Department within 24 hours in the event they are determined by a law enforcement investigation to be missing and have not returned to the campus. This person may or may not be the same as their emergency contact.

Residential students may register their confidential contact when they initially register with VSU Housing within Blazeview. This contact information will be registered confidentially and will only be accessible to authorized campus officials and may not be disclosed except to law enforcement for the purpose of a missing person investigation.

In addition to the confidential contact, if a student is under 18 years of age and not emancipated, the Valdosta State University Police Department will notify their custodial parent or guardian within 24 hours of the determination that they are missing. Institutional officials including Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice President for Finance and Administration will also be notified.

The Valdosta State University Police Department will notify local law enforcement agencies with primary jurisdiction for the surrounding community (Valdosta Police Department and Lowndes County Sheriff’s Office) within 24 hours of when a residential student is determined to be missing unless that agency made the determination.

## **DAILY CRIME LOG**

The Valdosta State University Police Department maintains a public crime log of all crimes reported to the Department. The log is available for public inspection at the Oak Street Parking Deck, 2nd floor, 1410 North Oak Street, Valdosta, GA during regular business hours.

Entries are recorded in the order received, and include the type of offense, date, time, general location, and disposition of the report. Reports are included on the log within two (2) business days of being reported, are maintained for a period of sixty (60) days, archived entries are kept for at least seven (7) years and are made available for public inspection online or within two (2) business days of a request.

## **POLICY GOVERNING ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS**

Federal law requires Valdosta State University to notify all faculty, staff, and students annually of the following:

Valdosta State University prohibits the unlawful possession, use, manufacture or distribution of alcohol or controlled substances by students, faculty, staff, and guests in buildings, facilities, grounds or property controlled by the University or used as part of University activities. For students, this includes prohibiting the possession and consumption of any beverage containing alcohol in a residence hall room except by individuals who are twenty-one years or older. This also includes prohibiting the presences of students under the age of twenty-one in residence hall rooms where alcohol is present unless one of the roommates is 21 years of age or older. In addition, the smoking of any material is prohibited on the campus of Valdosta State University at all locations.

### **Alcohol Policy**

Valdosta State University fully complies with the alcohol laws for the State of Georgia. All state laws apply to VSU students, faculty, staff and visitors while on the campus of VSU. The use of alcoholic beverages, subject to the laws of the State of Georgia may be permitted at Valdosta State University sponsored activities in areas designated and with prior approval.

The written VSU Alcohol policy, as noted in the Student Code of Conduct specifically states:

1. Possession, consumption, or transporting of alcoholic beverages by persons under the age of 21 is prohibited.
2. If a student is under the age of 21 and determined to be under the influence of alcohol, he/she will be referred to the appropriate authorities.
3. A student in a publicly intoxicated state will be referred to the appropriate authorities for disposition.
4. The consumption or possession of alcoholic beverage(s) or possession of an open container of an alcoholic beverage on University property is prohibited in public areas. A public area is defined as any area outside of an individual's living quarters.
5. No student shall furnish or cause to be furnished any alcoholic beverage to any person under the legal drinking age of 21.
6. The serving of alcohol to someone visibly intoxicated and/or the facilitating of drinking games involving the consumption of alcohol is prohibited.
7. Common source containers of alcoholic beverages e.g., beer kegs, hunch-punch, etc., may not be present at any registered University organization event.
8. No alcohol may be purchased with student activity fee funds.

Specific Georgia laws concerning above noted prohibitions include:

- Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages by persons under the age of 21 (OCGA 3-3- 23)
- Driving under the influence of alcohol (40-6-391)
- Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages in public locations on campus,

including residence halls common spaces; Common spaces in residence halls refer to any public space that exists outside of a specific residential unit. Examples include, but are not limited to group study/lounge spaces, laundry rooms, elevator lobbies, computer rooms etc. Common spaces also include the public spaces located on the outside grounds of a residence hall

- The sale, distribution, or furnishing of alcoholic beverages to persons under the age of 21 (OCGA 3-3-23)
- The use of alcohol in an irresponsible manner (games, contests, forced or ritualized consumption of alcohol, behaviors requiring the response of a University official or law enforcement officer, etc.)
- Providing alcoholic beverages to a person who is intoxicated
- Any activity or conduct involving the use of alcohol that is in violation of law.
- Alcohol is not for sale on Valdosta State University property and all functions which serve alcohol require VSU Police Officers to be present
- Any other abuse of alcohol or drugs is subject to enforcement by VSU Police through federal and state laws pertaining to such violations
- Students 21 years of age and older living on campus are allowed to have alcohol in their residence hall room only for personal consumption.
- Carrying a False I.D. is prohibited under OCGA 16-9-4
- Open Container of Alcohol OCGA 40-6-253
- Public Drunkenness OCGA 16-11-41
- Refusal to take a Chemical Test or other Test as indicated within OCGA 40-6-391 MAY result in the suspension of a driver's license for one year upon first offense.
- Penalties for Alcohol possession and selling violations for Under 21 receive up to 6 months in confinement, \$300 fine, probations and/or Community Service. Providing alcohol to persons Under 21 can result in up to 12 months confinement, \$1000 fine and probation/and or Community Service.

**The University Policy for Alcohol Events pertains to events limited to on-campus events and/or public venue events. General guidelines include:**

- The department/organization (Event Sponsor) seeking to sponsor an event wherein alcohol will be served and consumed must assume direct responsibility for ensuring compliance with Valdosta State University's Alcohol Policy. The event Coordinator is responsible for purchasing alcohol in advance of the event from the campus food service provider or other provider. If the campus food supplier does not supply the alcohol, the Event Coordinator will be responsible for the transportation of the alcohol to the event site.
- The event Coordinator shall be present throughout the event and shall be responsible for the removal of all unopened alcohol from the event site immediately following the event. All opened alcohol will be disposed of immediately following the event by the event caterer.
- Valdosta State University adheres to Georgia's liquor laws and alcohol will be permitted at Valdosta State University only in instances which comply with state and federal law, local ordinances and this policy.
- Alcohol cannot be sold by the campus food service provider or Valdosta State University.

Ticket sales for alcohol by the Event Sponsor is allowed upon coordination with the campus food service provider. The service of alcohol is prohibited without the approval of the Vice President to whom the space is assigned.

- No State funds may be used to purchase alcoholic beverages.
- Alcoholic beverages may not be served at any event which is primarily a student event.
- It is the sole responsibility of the Event Coordinator to obtain necessary signatures from the Director of Event Services, the Chief of University Police, and the Event Caterer.
- Event Caterer must have necessary alcohol licenses, supply a certified or licensed bartender and provide beverage set ups. Under no circumstance will self-service be allowed. Access to alcoholic beverages must be through a licensed certified bartender. Under no circumstance will server consume alcoholic beverages.
- Alcoholic beverages are not served to persons under the legal drinking age or to persons who appear intoxicated.
- Non-alcoholic beverages must be available and featured as prominently as the alcoholic beverages.
- A sufficient amount of food that is equal or greater in quantities to that of the alcohol served must be continuously available throughout the event.
- Police officers must be present for any event at which minors and/or 50 guests or more will be in attendance.
- All alcoholic beverages must remain inside the reserved or designated event space during the event.
- On-campus event sites must be reserved through the Office of Event Services or through the Union Reservations Office with a VSU Event Contract.
- The service of alcohol at an event will be limited to two (2) hours unless a special allowance is granted for extended service by the University President. Under no circumstances will alcohol service exceed 4 hours. Alcohol service will end forty-five (45) minutes before the scheduled end of the event unless the event itself is only two hours or less in length.

The Office of Student Affairs and the Counseling Center promote healthy decisions and provide services to students concerned about their alcohol/other drug use and students needing to satisfy judicial or student conduct sanctions. This includes planning, implementing, and evaluating prevention programming aimed at decreasing the negative impact that alcohol and other drugs have on our University community.

### **Controlled Substances**

Valdosta State University fully complies with the State of Georgia Controlled Substances Act and all other local, state, and federal laws governing controlled substances. The University strictly prohibits the illegal use or possession of any controlled substance:

- The possession, use, manufacture, cultivation, distribution, sale, and/or misuse of any controlled or illegal substance, designer drug, or synthetic cannabinoid. Common names: Spice, K2, Demon, wicked, Black Magic, Voodoo Spice, and Ninja Aroma. Individuals found responsible for manufacturing, possessing, importing/exporting, or distributing these substances will face criminal and civil penalties. University students engaging in

these activities will also be held responsible under the University's illegal substances policies (OCGA 16-13-32.5).

- The possession and/or use of any drug paraphernalia, i.e. bowls, hookah pipes, bongs, "homemade" smoking devices, any other smoking device or smoking paraphernalia (OCGA 16- 13-32.3);
- Any activity or conduct involving drugs that is in violation of local, state, or federal law. (Violation of Georgia Controlled Substances Act)
- Possession of Marijuana (OCGA 16-13-30)

**Georgia's 9-1-1 Medical Amnesty Law** provides that any person who in good faith seeks medical assistance for a person experiencing or believed to be experiencing a drug overdose shall not be arrested, charged, or prosecuted for a drug violation if the evidence for the arrest, charge, or prosecution of such drug violation resulted solely from seeking such medical assistance. Any person who is experiencing a drug overdose and, in good faith, seeks medical assistance for himself or herself or is the subject of such a request shall not be arrested, charged, or prosecuted for a drug violation if the evidence for the arrest, charge, or prosecution of such drug violation resulted solely from seeking such medical assistance. Any such person shall also not be subject to, if related to the seeking of such medical assistance: (1) Penalties for a violation of a permanent or temporary protective order or restraining order; or (2) Sanctions for a violation of a condition of pretrial release, condition of probation, or condition of parole based on a drug violation.

Know the signs:

- Person is passed out or is difficult to awaken
- Person is cold, clammy, pale, or bluish skin
- Person has slowed breathing
- Vomiting (asleep or awake).

Know how to help:

- Turn a vomiting person on his/her side to prevent choking
- Clear vomit from the mouth
- Keep the person awake
- NEVER leave the person unattended
- Call 911 or 259-5555 / 7816 for medical assistance.

For more information on the risks and consequences of drug and alcohol abuse visit:

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/> .

Employees wishing information on drug or alcohol abuse education programs may contact Employee Development (229) 259-5105 or Alcohol and Other Drug Education (229) 259-5111. For more comprehensive details, please refer to the University's policy on controlled substances at:

<https://www.valdosta.edu/admissions/financial-aid/documents/drug-free-policy1.pdf>

Students wishing the same information may contact the Alcohol and Other Drug Department (229) 259-5111, Health Services (229) 333-5886, or the Counseling Center (229)333-5940. The Crime Prevention Unit for University also has material on these subjects.

## ANNUAL DISCLOSURE OF CRIME STATISTICS

Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (20 US 1092(f)) requires colleges and universities across the United States to disclose information about crime on and around their campuses. The University Police maintains a close relationship with all police departments where Valdosta State University owns or controls property to ensure that crimes reported directly to these departments which involve the University are brought to the attention of the University Police.

The University Police collects the crime statistics disclosed in the charts through a number of methods. Police communications officers and police officers enter all reports of criminal incidents made directly to the department through an integrated computer aided dispatch system/records management system. After an incident report has been reviewed and approved by a supervisor the report is entered into the system where the appropriate classification is entered into the correct crime category. The Department periodically examines the data to ensure that all reported crimes are recorded in accordance with the crime definitions outlined in the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook and the FBI National Incident-based Reporting System Handbook (sex offenses only). In addition to the crime data that the University Police maintains, the statistics below also include crimes that are reported to various campus security authorities, as defined in this report. The statistics reported here reflect the number of criminal incidents reported to the various authorities. The statistics reported for the subcategories on liquor laws, drug laws and weapons offenses represented the number of people arrested or referred to campus judicial authorities for respective violations, not the number of offenses documented.

### Disclosure of Reportable Crimes

#### Primary Crimes:

**Murder/ Non-negligent Manslaughter** – defined as the willful killing of one human being by another.

**Manslaughter by Negligence** – is defined as the killing of another person through gross negligence.

Sex offenses – Any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent.

- A. **Rape** — the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim. This offense includes the rape of both males and females.
- B. **Fondling** — The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental incapacity.
- C. **Incest** — Non-forcible sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other



within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.

D. **Statutory Rape** — Non-forcible sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent.

**Robbery** – is defined as taking or attempting to take anything of value from the car, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

**Aggravated Assault** – is defined as an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault usually is accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm.

**Burglary** – is the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or a theft.

**Motor Vehicle Theft** – is the theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle.

**Arson** – any willful or malicious burning or attempt to burn, with or without intent to defraud, a dwelling house, public building, motor vehicle or aircraft, personal property of another, etc.

**Unfounded** – This category pertains to cases which have been fully and completely investigated by sworn or commissioned law enforcement personnel who make a formal determination that the report is false or baseless.

## **Hate Crimes**

**Hate Crimes** – includes all of the crimes listed above that manifest evidence that the victim was chosen based on one of the categories of prejudice listed below, plus the following crimes. Hate crimes are defined as criminal offenses that manifest evidence that the victim was intentionally selected because of the perpetrator's bias against the victim.

**Larceny/Theft**—includes, pocket picking, purse snatching, shoplifting, theft from building, theft from motor vehicle, theft of motor vehicle parts or accessories, and all other larceny.

**Simple Assault**—an unlawful physical attack by one person upon another where neither the offender displays a weapon, nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration or loss of consciousness.

**Intimidation**—to unlawfully place another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words and/or other conduct but without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.

**Destruction/Damage/Vandalism or Property (except Arson)**—to willfully or maliciously destroy, damage, deface or otherwise injure real or personal property without the consent of the owner or the person having custody or control of it.

## **Categories of Prejudice:**

**Race** – A preformed negative attitude toward a group of persons who possess common physical characteristics genetically transmitted by descent and heredity which distinguish them as a distinct division of humankind.

**Gender** – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a person or group of persons based on their actual or perceived gender.

**Religion** – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of persons who share the same religious beliefs regarding the origin and purpose of the universe and the existence or nonexistence of a supreme being.

**Sexual Orientation** – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of persons based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

**Ethnicity**- A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of people whose members identify with each other, through a common heritage, often consisting of a common language, common culture (often including a shared religion) and/or ideology that stresses common ancestry.

**National origin** – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of persons based on their actual or perceived country of birth.

**Disability** – A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of persons based on their physical or mental impairments/ challenges, whether such disability is temporary or permanent, congenital, or acquired by heredity, accident, injury, advanced age or illness.

**Gender Identity**- A preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a person or group of persons based on their actual or perceived gender identity.

## **Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and Stalking (VAWA)**

**Dating Violence** – Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the reporting party’s statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of the relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. It is not limited to sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse.

**Domestic Violence** – A felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed:

- By a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim;
- By a person with whom the victim shares a child in common;

- By a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;
- By a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred, or,
- By any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred.

**Stalking** – Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to:

- (i) Fear for the person's safety or the safety of others; or
- (ii) Suffer substantial emotional distress.

*Course of conduct means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person's property.*

**The following is a report of the actual crime statistics reported in accordance with the Uniform Crime Reporting procedures and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2023:**

Criminal Offenses	Year	Campus - Clery Geography				
		On Campus			Noncampus Building or Property	Public Property
		Student Housing Facilities	Other	On Campus Total		
Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter	2021	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	0	0	0	0	0
Negligent Manslaughter	2021	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	0	0	0	0	0
Rape	2021	1	0	1	0	0
	2022	4	0	4	0	0
	2023	2	0	2	0	0
Fondling	2021	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	0	1	1	0	0
Incest	2021	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	0	0	0	0	0
Statutory Rape	2021	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery	2021	0	1	1	0	1
	2022	0	1	1	0	0
	2023	0	0	0	0	0
Aggravated Assault	2021	0	1	1	0	0
	2022	2	1	3	0	0
	2023	0	0	0	0	0
Burglary	2021	1	0	1	0	0
	2022	1	2	3	0	0
	2023	0	0	0	0	0
Motor Vehicle Theft	2021	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	0	0	3	0	0
	2023	0	0	0	0	0
Arson	2021	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	0	0	0	0	0

VAWA Offenses	Year	Campus - Clery Geography				
		On Campus			Noncampus Building or Property	Public Property
		Student Housing Facilities	Other	On Campus Total		
Domestic Violence	2021	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	1	0	1	0	0
	2023	0	1	1	0	0
Dating Violence	2021	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	3	0	3	0	0
Stalking	2021	0	0	0	0	0
	2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	0	1	1	0	0

Arrests	Year	Campus - Clery Geography				
		On Campus			Noncampus Building or Property	Public Property
		Student Housing Facilities	Other	On Campus Total		
Weapons: Carrying, Possessing, etc.	2021	1	0	1	0	1
	2022	1	2	3	0	1
	2023	2	0	2	0	1
Drug Abuse Violations	2021	11	0	11	0	0
	2022	4	11	15	0	5
	2023	9	28	37	0	2
Liquor Law Violations	2021	0	3	3	0	0
	2022	1	2	3	0	0
	2023	4	0	4	0	0

Disciplinary Actions	Year	Campus - Clery Geography				
		On Campus			Noncampus Building or Property	Public Property
		Student Housing Facilities	Other	On Campus Total		
Weapons: Carrying, Possessing, etc.	2021	0	1	1	0	1
	2022	1	0	1	0	0
	2023	0	0	0	0	0
Drug Abuse Violations	2021	15	3	18	0	0
	2022	7	1	8	0	0
	2023	1	2	3	0	0
Liquor Law Violations	2021	1	16	17	0	0
	2022	0	0	0	0	0
	2023	0	0	0	0	0

	2021	2022	2023
Total Unfounded Crimes	1	1	3

**Hate Crimes**

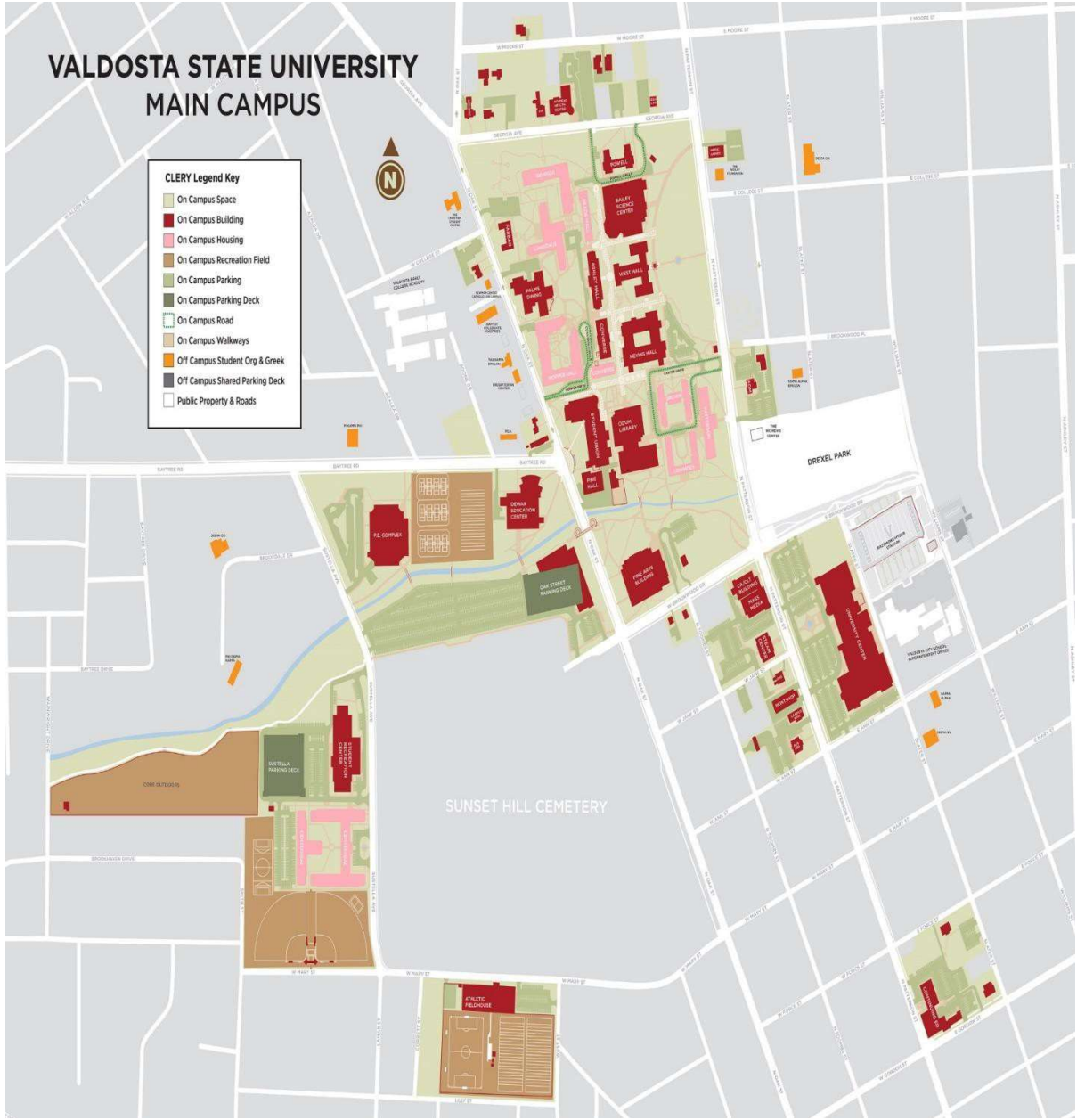
*There were no hate crimes reported for campus in 2021 – 2022 – 2023.*

**Local Off-Campus Crime Statistics from Outside Agencies**

Valdosta State University requests the crime statistics from the law enforcement agencies that are responsible for property that coincides with the jurisdictional borders of the University. There were no reports received in response to those requests.

# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY MAIN CAMPUS

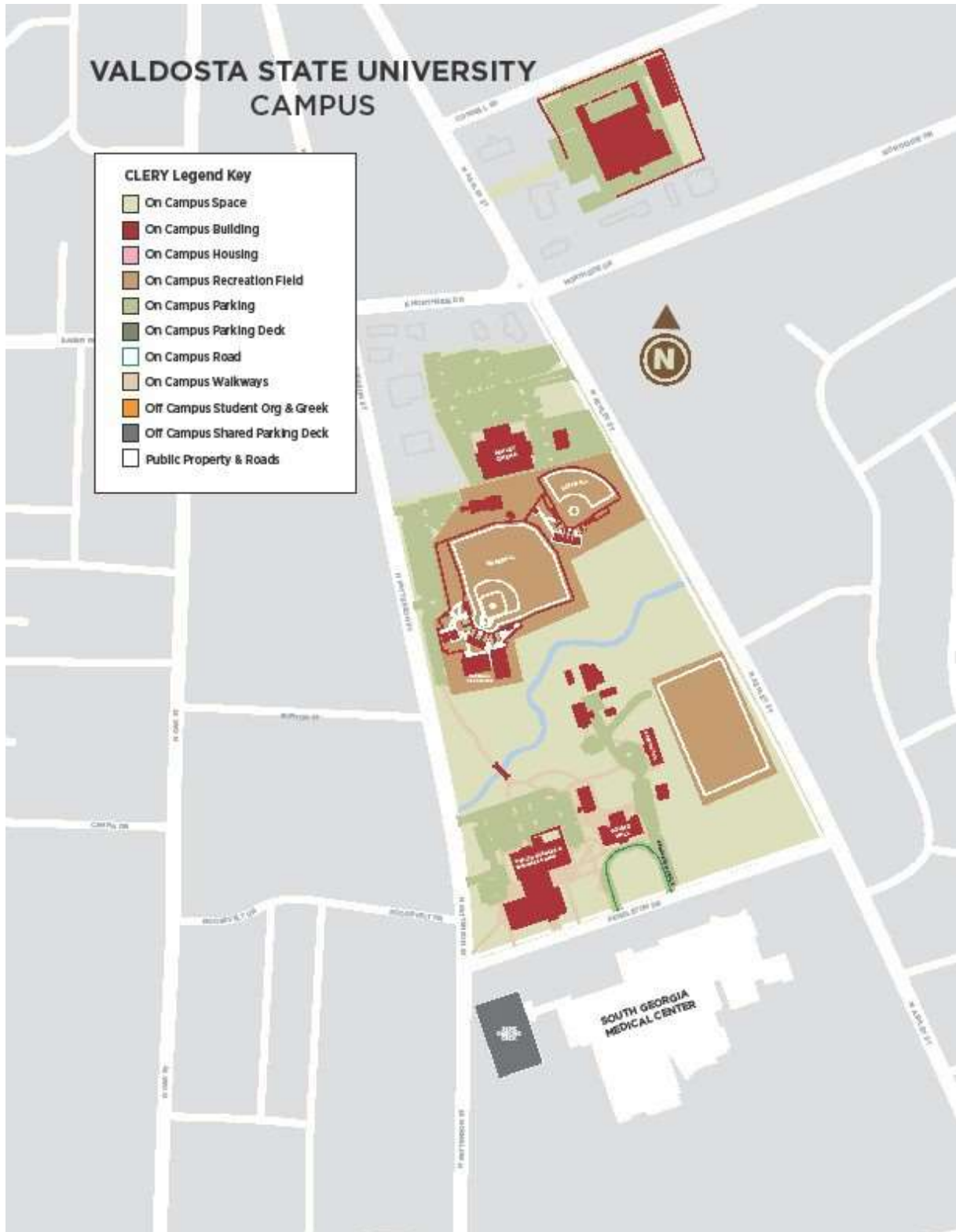
- CLERY Legend Key**
- On Campus Space
  - On Campus Building
  - On Campus Housing
  - On Campus Recreation Field
  - On Campus Parking
  - On Campus Parking Deck
  - On Campus Road
  - On Campus Walkways
  - Off Campus Student Org & Greek
  - Off Campus Shared Parking Deck
  - Public Property & Roads



# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

## CLERY Legend Key

- On Campus Space
- On Campus Building
- On Campus Housing
- On Campus Recreation Field
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- On Campus Parking Deck
- On Campus Road
- On Campus Walkways
- Off Campus Student Org & Greek
- Off Campus Shared Parking Deck
- Public Property & Roads





## ANNUAL CAMPUS FIRE SAFETY REPORT

The Higher Education Opportunity Act enacted on August 14, 2008, requires institutions that maintain on-campus student housing facilities to publish an annual fire safety report that contains information about campus fire safety practices and standards of the institution. This report details all information required by this act for Valdosta State University.

### General Statement of College Owned/Controlled Student Housing

At Valdosta State University, fire safety is of paramount importance. The Environmental and Occupational Safety Department manages the campus fire safety program in coordination with other departments, such as University Police, Plant Operations, and Housing and Residence Life. Fire alarm systems report to Plant Operations and the University Police Communications Center and are monitored 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Any fire, smoke or suspicious odor condition should be immediately reported by calling 229-259-5555. Never hesitate to report these conditions, even if you are not sure there is a fire. If a fire condition existed but was extinguished, you must still notify University Police. If the emergency number 911 is called directly, make a follow-up call to University Police so they can meet and facilitate the Valdosta Fire Department response.

A fire log for residence hall facilities is maintained in the University Police Department located at 1410 N. Oak Street in the Oak Street Parking Deck. This log can be viewed during normal business hours, from 8:00 am – 5:30 pm Monday through Thursday and 8:00 am – 3:00 pm on Friday. The log records information concerning fires occurring inside a campus residence hall.

### Definitions

The following terms are used within this report. Definitions were obtained from the Higher Education Opportunity Act.

**On-Campus Student Housing:** A student housing facility that is owned or controlled by the institution or is located on property that is owned or controlled by the institution, and is within a reasonable contiguous area that makes up the campus.

**Fire:** Any instance of open flame or other burning in a place not intended to contain the burning or in an uncontrolled manner.

**Fire drill:** Is a supervised practice of an evacuation of a building for a fire.

**Fire-related injury:** Any instance in which a person is injured as a result of a fire, including an injury sustained from a natural or accidental cause while involved in fire control, attempting rescue, or escaping from the dangers of the fire. The term person may include students, faculty, staff, visitors, firefighters, or any other individuals.

**Fire-related death:** Any instance in which a person is killed as a result of a fire; including death resulting from a natural or accidental cause while involved in fire control; attempting rescue; or

escaping from the dangers of a fire; or deaths that occur within 1 year of injuries sustained as a result of the fire.

**Fire safety system:** Any mechanism or system related to the detection of a fire, the warning resulting from a fire, or the control of a fire including: sprinkler or other fire extinguishing systems, fire detection devices, standalone smoke alarms, devices that alert one to the presence of a fire (such as horns, bells, or strobe lights), smoke-control and reduction mechanisms, and fire doors and walls that reduce the spread of a fire.

**Value of Property Damage:** The estimated value of the loss of the structure and contents, in terms of the cost of replacement in like kind and quantity, including contents damaged by fire, related damages caused by smoke, water, and overhaul. However, it does not include indirect loss, such as business interruption.

### **Residence Hall Fire Drills**

Fire drills are conducted in all on-campus residence halls. Each fire drill is a supervised practice of a mandatory evaluation of a building for a fire.

### **University Housing**

Valdosta State University takes fire safety very seriously and continues to enhance its programs to the university community through education, engineering, and enforcement. Education programs are presented throughout the year, so the university community is aware of the rules and safe practices. Housing and Residence Life communicates information regarding fire safety systems, fire drills, evacuations, and other emergency procedures annually to all students during formal hall meetings after move-in.

### **Fire Safety Systems**

Each unit is equipped with smoke and fire alarms for safety to warn residents of smoke or fire. The alarm must be unobstructed at all times for safety purposes. If the smoke detector is so sensitive that it frequently alarms or malfunctions in other ways, contact your RA or a Housing staff member for assistance so that it can be inspected and repaired if needed. Never tape over, cover, or disconnect the smoke alarm or hang anything from a sprinkler head. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action.

Your smoke detector is wired to the electrical system. Be sure that the red signal light is blinking upon self-inspection. This lets you know the alarm is working properly and is active. Fire protection systems are tested annually under the supervision of Plant Operations.

Improvements, upgrades, or repairs to fire safety systems are made when tests or evaluations indicate a problem exists. Fire extinguishers are checked monthly and inspected annually by a contractor.

When a fire alarm is activated, the alarm simultaneously sounds at the location of origin and at the University Police Dispatch office, which is staffed 24/7. Officers respond immediately on such an alarm to determine the cause and notify the fire department.

### **Building Evacuation and Training Procedure**

An evacuation of a building is used to move persons out of a building by a pre-designated route (if usable), to avoid a potentially threatening situation. An evacuation renders the entire building unusable until further notice. Evacuate the building every time a fire alarm sounds. Generally, University Police will announce building evacuation instructions.

Any Valdosta State University staff or faculty member may issue an evacuation notification for a classroom or office area. Before a classroom or office can properly evacuate, a safe designated location (assembly area) must be communicated to all students, faculty, and staff.

Prior to emergencies, occupants should identify the location of the nearest exits and fire alarm pull stations, so they are able to initiate an alarm if necessary. To activate the alarm, the handle is pulled until you hear the alarm sound. It may be necessary to break a pane of glass to reach the handle.

Students with disabilities receive individual training with Housing staff within their first day of arrival to ensure they are familiar with evacuation routes and assistance they can expect in the event of an emergency within their personal space.

Mandatory, supervised fire drills, both announced and unannounced, are conducted for each residence hall at the beginning of fall and spring semesters by campus safety officers. Whether an alarm is planned or actual, occupants must exit through the nearest exterior door and walk quickly away from the building. Because a fire can happen at any time, drills are conducted at various times, night and day. Failure to evacuate a building during any fire alarm (planned or actual) will result in judicial action and/or possible arrest. Tampering with any of the fire systems (pull stations, smoke detectors, extinguishers, etc.) will result in judicial action and possible removal from the residence hall and the University.

### **WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF A FIRE OR BUILDING EVACUATION:**

1. Remain calm during any emergency.
2. Locate the nearest fire alarm box and activate the alarm if you discover fire.
3. Immediately contact University Police at 229-259-5555 to report information about the location, type, and extent of the fire or other emergency.
4. Direct persons to go immediately, in a calm and orderly manner, to the assembly area.
5. Consider persons with disabilities that may need assistance evacuating.
6. Individuals with disabilities should exit to the next building or outside by horizontal exit (when available) or otherwise to an enclosed stairway landing (considered an area of refuge). University Police or other emergency personnel will conduct the rescue.
7. Do not take personal items or return to your area for personal belongings.
8. The last person should close doors behind them while exiting to prevent spread of smoke and fire.

9. You may walk briskly, but do not run.
10. Do not go to restrooms.
11. Use stairway or horizontal exit to evacuate.
12. **DO NOT USE ELEVATORS!**
13. If smoke is present, stay low. The best quality air is near the floor.
14. From inside a room, feel the door or knob with the back of your hand. If hot, do not open.
15. Exit the building and go to your designated assembly area.
16. Provide emergency responders with any information you may have about the fire alarm condition, injured persons, or those needing assistance. Report any missing person to University Police along with the location where last seen.
17. Do not return to the building from your assembly area until told to do so by University Police.

### **If Trapped:**

1. Wedge wet towels or cloth materials along the bottom of the door to keep out smoke.
2. Try to close as many doors between you and the fire as possible.
3. Use the telephone to notify University Police (229-259-5555) of your problem and location.
4. Be prepared to signal your location through the window.
5. Do not open or break windows unless necessary to alert emergency personnel to your location or to escape.

### **Assembly Areas**

Assembly areas for each building must be a minimum of 100 feet from the building (200 feet is preferred) and must not obstruct emergency access to buildings. Work or class groups should remain together to allow for head counts.

### **Campus Evacuation**

Students who do not have the means to evacuate or who cannot safely evacuate will be directed to community shelters. If a total campus evacuation is needed, assistance will be provided under the Memorandums of Understanding with Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta.

### **Evacuees from Other Locations**

Evacuees from other locations may be provided with shelter at the President's discretion.

### **Fire or Explosion**

If you discover Fire or Smoke remember: R.A.C.E.

**R** Remove/Rescue anyone from immediate danger.

**A** Activate the nearest fire alarm pull station.

**C** Close all doors to confine smoke and fire.

**E** Extinguish/Evacuate.

If the fire is small and you have been trained in fire extinguisher use, you can attempt to extinguish a fire. Never allow the fire to come between you and the exit. Otherwise follow your Evacuation Plan and proceed to the nearest exit and then to the assembly area for the building.

### **If You Catch Fire, Do Not Run!**

**STOP** where you are, **DROP** to the ground **AND ROLL** over and over to smother flames.

### **Evacuation Procedure for Persons with Disabilities**

Persons with disabilities who may have difficulty evacuating are individually responsible for informing their supervisors, Housing staff as applicable, and University Police (229-333-7816) of their name, location and the nature of their disability. This information will be given to emergency responders during an emergency situation. The rescue of disabled persons who are unable to evacuate themselves will be an initial priority for responding fire units.

Co-workers may assist in evacuating disabled persons only if this places them in no personal danger but should always ask someone with a disability how they can help before attempting any rescue technique. They should also ask the individual if there are any special considerations or items that need to stay with the person for their health and safety. Mobility- impaired persons in wheelchairs on non-ground-level floors should proceed to the nearest enclosed stairwell and wait for responders to arrive. Someone should stay with the disabled person if it does not place them in additional danger, and someone should meet responding firefighters to report the location of persons still in the building. Visually impaired persons should have a sighted individual guide them to safety. Hearing- impaired persons should be informed of the nature of the emergency by co-workers, other students, faculty, or staff. It should not be assumed that they know what is happening by watching others.

### **Fire Safety Violations and Prohibitions**

Fire safety violations will result in fines, sanctions and possible revocation of the privilege of living in campus housing. Repeat or egregious offenses will result in heavier fines or sanctions and possible suspension or expulsion from the University.

- Covering or tampering with smoke detectors and/or sprinkler heads creates life safety hazards and is strictly prohibited.
- Residents may not have or use candles, incense, Stern, potpourri burners, hookahs or other items that function by burning. Candles may not be present in the room, even for decorative purposes. No flammable liquids such as lighter fluid, kerosene, gasoline, etc., may be stored in rooms.
- Flammable items such as sheets, cloth, fish net, etc., may not be hung or draped from the walls or ceiling. Light fixtures may not be covered with flammable items such as cloth, paper or cellophane.
- No live Christmas trees or live greenery may be used in any building. All decorating materials used on floors where students live must be fireproof.

- Residents and their guests and visitors shall not tamper with the fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, fire hoses, fire doors, residence hall room door closures, red phones, smoke detectors or other fire equipment.
- Residents and their guests and visitors must evacuate the building immediately when a fire alarm sounds. Residents should always take a fire alarm seriously, never assuming that an alarm merely signifies a drill.
- Stairway and hallway fire doors shall be kept closed at all times unless the door uses a hold-open device tied into the fire alarm system that automatically disengages when the alarm is activated. Mandated by the state fire marshal, these closed doors can contain a fire long enough to allow the occupants to escape.
- Residents may not leave items in the hallways.
- Residents shall not use the elevator in the event of a fire or fire drill.
- Residents may not leave an outside door propped open and unattended at any time; this endangers the safety and security of every resident of the building. Under no circumstances may fireplaces be used.

### **Cooking, Appliances, and Kitchens**

Residents should make sure they are aware of all guidelines and restrictions as outlined in the University Housing community guides, which can be found on the Housing website:

<https://www.valdosta.edu/housing/policies-and-procedures/>

All residents are urged to exercise extreme caution when cooking and should never leave anything cooking unattended.

### **Approved Appliances and other items for Traditional University Housing and Suites:**

- Coffee pot with automatic shut-off
- Holiday decorations (Only 2 strands of lights may be strung together)
- Hot pot
- Iron with automatic shut-off
- Power strip – one per resident (Not allowed in the bathrooms or kitchens)
- Toasters

### **Non-Approved Appliances and Other Items for Housing Suites**

- Air conditioning units
- Live (cut) trees (holiday decorations)
- Candles/candle wax burners/open flames
- NuWave ovens

- Charcoal, gas, or open flame grills
- Parachutes
- Deep fryers (gas or electric)
- Personal freezers
- Electric frying pans
- Electrical equipment with exposed wiring
- Personal washer/dryer
- George Foreman-type grills/appliances
- Plug-in air fresheners
- Halogen lamps
- Portable space heaters
- Hookahs
- Potpourri burners
- Incense
- Rope lighting
- Large Flags/Banners
- Slow cookers
- Lava lamps Toaster ovens

#### **Approved Appliances and other items for University Housing Apartment**

- Coffee pot with automatic shut-off
- Electric griddle
- George Foreman- type grills/appliances
- Holiday decorations (Only 2 strands of lights may be strung together)
- Hot pot
- Iron with automatic shut-off
- Panini press
- Power strip – one per resident – bedroom only (not allowed in the bathrooms or kitchens)
- Power strip – one per living room (not allowed in the bathrooms or kitchens)
- Quesadilla maker
- Rice cooker
- Toasters/toaster ovens
- Waffle Iron

#### **Non-Approved Appliances and other items for University Housing Apartments**

- Air conditioning units
- Candles/candle wax burners
- Charcoal, gas, or open flame grills
- Deep fryers (gas or electric)
- Electric frying pans
- Electrical equipment with exposed wiring
- Halogen lamps
- Hookahs
- Incense

- Large flags/banners
- Lava lamps
- Live (cut) trees (holiday decorations)

Violation of this policy will result in sanctions as well as possible criminal charges. The violator will then have 2 days to remove the unapproved appliance or item and provide Housing with verification of compliance.

### **Tobacco and Smoke Free Campus**

Effective October 1, 2014, the use of all forms of tobacco products on property owned, leased, rented, in the possession of, or in any way used by the USG or its affiliates is expressly prohibited. "Tobacco Products" are defined as cigarettes, cigars, pipes, all forms of smokeless tobacco, clove cigarettes, and any other smoking devices that use tobacco such as hookahs or simulate the use of tobacco such as electronic cigarettes.

### **Fire Safety Education and Training Programs**

All residence life staff receive fire safety training and are responsible for providing fire safety guidance to students. Prior to the first fire drill of the year, Housing staff members conduct a mandatory hall meeting for students during which evacuation procedures and fire safety rules are reviewed with new and returning residents. Fire safety education/training including fire drills, fire extinguisher use, and general fire safety are available through Environmental & Occupational Safety (229-293-6171).

### **Incident Reporting**

All fire alarms, fires, fire drills and related incidents are documented on Incident Reports. Copies are maintained in our fire safety logbook for easy public access and inspection in the University Police Department office located at 1410 N. Oak Street inside the Oak Street Parking Deck.

### **General Information**

Emergency lighting systems are placed throughout hallways and stairwells of all residence halls and are tested quarterly.

Exterior lighting checks are conducted nightly and exterior doors are checked nightly to ensure they are not propped open. There are emergency phones located around the residence halls.

Each residence hall has a contact point for all emergency responders to report to when alarms are activated. The senior staff member in the residence hall serves as the point person during all emergencies.

Fire extinguishers are located in each building and inside units that have a kitchen. All fire extinguishers are inspected annually. Occupants should become familiar with locations and how



they work. Before use, occupants should check the fire extinguisher to assure it is properly charged (arrow in the green area). To utilize the fire extinguisher for emergency reasons, use the following guidelines:

- P** Pull the pin.
- A** Aim the extinguisher nozzle at the base of the flames.
- S** Squeeze the trigger while holding the extinguisher upright.
- S** Sweep the extinguisher from side to side, covering the fire with extinguishing agent.

Extinguishers must be replaced after use, even if not completely empty. Work orders for replacement or other fire safety issues can be submitted using the “Work Order” link on the Housing website or by calling CGL/Entrata at 229-509-2340. For after-hours non-emergency service, call University Police at 229-333-7816 (Emergencies should be reported to University Police at 229-259-5555).

### **Fire Safety Inspections and Improvements**

Fire protection systems are tested annually under the supervision of CGL in concert with Housing and Residence Life. Improvements, upgrades, or repairs to fire safety systems are made when tests or evaluations indicate a problem exists. Notify Environmental and Occupational Safety whenever you notice damage or a possible problem with fire protection equipment. Each month, Environmental and Occupational Safety staff performs monthly general building fire safety inspections. In addition, Residence Life staff performs resident room inspections twice per semester and once over the summer. Any fire safety violations will be cited and referred for immediate correction. Violators may be judicially referred.

Future plans for fire safety improvements include:

1. Increase the number of training sessions offered for Resident Directors, Community Leaders and student residents.
2. Recognize staff and students who display heroism and exceptional response efforts when responding to emergency situations.
3. Provide education for students and Housing staff regarding violations noted during inspections or fire drills. It is important for staff and students to not only know what needs correction, but to understand why the violation is a problem.

### **Emergency Quick Reference Guides**

Printed copies of the University’s Emergency Quick Reference Guide are available in the office of Environmental & Occupational Safety during normal business hours of Monday – Thursday from 8:00 am – 5:30 pm and Friday from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm. The guide is also available online at: <https://www.valdosta.edu/student/emergency/>

## Fire Alarm System Overview

Main Campus Residential Facilities:

Bldg. #	Name	Fire Control System	Sprinkler System Wet/Dry	Smoke Detector	Fire Extinguisher
3	Brown Hall	Yes	None	Yes	Yes
4	Patterson Hall	Yes	Wet	Yes	Yes
5	Lowndes Hall	Yes	Both	Yes	Yes
9	Reade Hall	Yes	Wet	Yes	Yes
11	Georgia Hall	Yes	Both	Yes	Yes
15	Hopper Hall	Yes	Wet	Yes	Yes
22	Centennial East	Yes	Wet	Yes	Yes
23	Centennial West	Yes	Wet	Yes	Yes

## Fire Statistics 2021

Valdosta State Residential Facilities	Total Fires In each Building	Date	Time	Cause Of Fire	No. of Injuries that required treatment at a medical facility	No. of Deaths Related to Fire	Value of Property Damage Caused by Fire	Fire Drills
Georgia Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Reade Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Langdale Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Hopper Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Converse Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Brown Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Patterson Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Centennial Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Lowndes Hall	0				0	0	0	2

## Fire Statistics 2022

Valdosta State Residential Facilities	Total Fires In each Building	Date	Time	Cause Of Fire	No. of Injuries that required treatment at a medical facility	No. of Deaths Related to Fire	Value of Property Damage Caused by Fire	Fire Drills
Georgia Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Reade Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Langdale Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Hopper Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Converse Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Brown Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Patterson Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Centennial Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Lowndes Hall	0				0	0	0	2

### Fire Statistics 2023

Valdosta State Residential Facilities	Total Fires In each Building	Date	Time	Cause Of Fire	No. of Injuries that required treatment at a medical facility	No. of Deaths Related to Fire	Value of Property Damage Caused by Fire	Fire Drills
Georgia Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Reade Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Langdale Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Hopper Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Converse Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Brown Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Patterson Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Centennial Hall	0				0	0	0	2
Lowndes Hall	0				0	0	0	2