

# Student Affairs

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*Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students*

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The Division of Student Affairs is charged with responsibility for student life outside the classroom and includes the following departmental areas: Campus Recreation (Student Recreation Center, Ropes Challenge Course, IM Fields, and Outdoor Rental Center), Career Opportunities, Counseling Center (Alcohol and Other Drug Education), Health Services (Health Promotions), Housing and Residence Life, Student Conduct, Student Leadership and Volunteer Services, Student Life (Student Union, Greek Life, Homecoming, Parents' Weekend, and Student Organizations), and Student Diversity and Inclusion. It is the division's philosophy that students' non-academic experiences are important to both their formal education and personal development. The Vice President for Student Affairs coordinates the activities within the Division of Student Affairs. The Vice President's office is available to serve the needs of students as well as parents, alumni, and faculty and staff with student concerns. The Vice President for Student Affairs Office can be reached at 229-333-5941 and is located on the third floor of the Student Union. Valdosta State University is committed to the idea that total education involves more than academic pursuit. For more information, click here (<http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs>).

## Student Life

The Office of Student Life is located on the third floor of the Student Union. Student Life offers opportunities to enhance our students' collegiate experience with co-curricular activities that include Greek Life, Campus Activities Board, Volunteer Services, and over 175 various clubs and organizations. This office is also responsible for annual events such as Parents' Weekend, Homecoming, Fall Explosion, and the Happening. Student involvement on campus can enhance students' academic and personal development. For more information on what is going on around campus and how to join or create a new organization, please visit Campus Connect and log in with your BlazeVIEW password or visit the Office of Student Life.

## Student Leadership and Volunteer Services

The Office of Student Leadership and Volunteer Services provides a variety of programs and services to assist students in developing their leadership potential and prepares students for lives of active community engagement within a complex and changing world. Prior leadership or volunteer experience is not required to participate in the programs. The Office of Student Leadership and Volunteer Services develops students into leaders prepared to make a difference in their professions and their communities. The programs and volunteer opportunities offered help each student discover their passion and talents, while developing their skills and understanding of leadership and active citizenship.

## Clubs and Organizations

There is a diversity of clubs and student organizations at the University, including 10 national sororities, 13 national fraternities, various service organizations, honor societies, and department clubs. All students are members of the Student Government Association (SGA). The purpose of this organization is to work for the best interests of the students; cooperate with the VSU administration, faculty, and staff in all matters of common interest to the University; and provide a means of communication between the students and all areas of their University. Representatives are elected in annual campus elections and meet weekly.

## Campus Ministry Organizations

The following registered campus organizations form the core of VSU's campus ministry community: Baptist Collegiate Ministries, Campus Outreach, Episcopal College Fellowship, Catholic Student Center, Christian Student Center, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Hillel, Latter Day Saint Student Association, Presbyterian Student Center, VSU Blazer Victory Ministry, VSU Mass Choir, Wesley Foundation (Methodist), and Xchange Ministries.

## Student Publications

The University also provides opportunities for experience in journalism through *The Spectator*, the campus newspaper, and other student publications, which provide a forum for presenting current issues and also generate spirit within the student body.

## Campus Recreation

The Department of Campus Recreation offers a variety of services, such as: aquatics, intramural sports, club sports, informal recreational outdoor programs, fitness consulting, and group fitness classes. All are based in the Student Recreation Center (SRC), located at 1300 Sustella Avenue. These activities are open to all students who register for four or more academic hours or who have a least one hour and have paid the student fees. The SRC is a state-of-the-art facility that includes three multipurpose basketball courts, an indoor jogging and walking track, a 9,000-square-foot weight room featuring free weights and cardiovascular equipment, an indoor pool, three racquetball courts, a large multipurpose aerobics room, and a 27-foot custom-built climbing wall.

The Intramural Sports program is designed to provide all students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to participate in organized recreational competitions. Structured leagues and tournaments are offered in a diverse array of sporting activities, such as flag football, softball, basketball, soccer, volleyball, tennis, racquetball, and ultimate frisbee. The Intramural Sports program offers over 40 different activities during the academic year.

Constantly growing to meet the needs of a diverse campus population, the Club Sports Program is designed to promote and develop the interests and skills of individuals in different sports and recreational activities. VSU currently has men's and women's soccer, ultimate frisbee, outdoor adventure, paintball, tennis, and triathlon club teams. Several other clubs will be organized in the near future. If there is any activity that we don't offer and you have the interest in starting, please come by and let's work on it.

The mission of Outdoor Programs is to provide access to outdoor activities that will foster the development of friendships in the campus community, to educate, and to promote outdoor recreation. There are four different areas in Outdoor Programs: ropes course, climbing wall, outdoor trips, and outdoor rental center. Outdoor programs provides a venue for VSU groups to work on their team development skills. It also offers another way for students to experience the outdoors while still being on campus. The 27-foot climbing wall is located inside the student recreation center and makes you feel as if you were climbing a real mountain. We offer belay certification and beginning and advanced climbing classes. The Outdoor Trip Program, working in partnership with the Outdoor Adventure Club, travels to places close to VSU. Trips have included rock climbing, whitewater rafting, canoeing, mountain biking, Nordic skiing, bouldering, back packing, and skydiving. The Outdoor Rental Center provides students with outdoor equipment for personal use.

The mission of the Department of Campus Recreation is to provide students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to enjoy lifelong activities while enhancing their well-being by promoting fitness and wellness as a positive outlet to relieve stress. For more information, click here (<http://www.valdosta.edu/student/rec-wellness/campus-recreation/welcome.php>) or call 229-333-5898.

## **Career Opportunities**

The Career Opportunities office offers a "one stop shop" to assist students as they navigate the career exploration and decision making process while enrolled at VSU. Students are encouraged to develop personalized career plans and utilize office services to assist them in choosing majors, identifying career goals, obtaining practical work experience, and seeking relevant employment upon graduation.

Individual career counseling is available for students who wish to explore how their abilities, values, and interests match particular career fields. Students may utilize the varied resources in the office including printed career materials, career informational videos, and computer-assisted career exploration programs.

The office offers internships, cooperative education opportunities, and part-time jobs to assist students with gaining practical experience related to their career goals. Students who intend to graduate from VSU or who participate in a recognized transfer program are eligible to participate in the cooperative education program.

Seniors are encouraged to start their job search at the beginning of their senior year. The career coordinator for their major will assist them with their job search needs including resume review, interview preparation, and job search strategies. All students are encouraged to take advantage of Blazer Briefcase which is a free career development and job listing website offered by Career Opportunities.

For more information about services or to schedule an appointment, students may call or drop by in person. Career Opportunities, University Center, Entrance 5, (229) 333-5942, [www.valdosta.edu/career](http://www.valdosta.edu/career).

## **Cooperative Education**

Valdosta State University offers students the opportunity to integrate their classroom instruction with practical work experience as part of their academic program. The Cooperative Education Office works with local, state, and national agencies and employers to give students an opportunity to complement their academic and vocational interests and to gain valuable experience in their chosen fields prior to graduation while also earning an income for their educational expenses. Students also develop professional work habits and can make valuable career contacts.

The co-op program is offered as an option for students. In order to be eligible, students must have completed a minimum of 30 semester hours and be in good academic standing. A minimum GPA of 2.0 is required. Students may work on a full-time basis during alternate semesters, a part-time continuous basis, or during a one- or two-semester internship. Opportunities exist to earn academic credit as part of the co-op program. Interested students are encouraged to apply as early as possible in their university career to enhance the prospects of placement in the best possible position. The Co-op Office is located in Powell Hall-West, 1st floor; telephone 229-333-7172; click here (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/services/cooperative-education>) to visit the web site; e-mail [coop@valdosta.edu](mailto:coop@valdosta.edu).

## **Counseling Center**

The Counseling Center provides a broad range of mental health services to the university community aimed at maximizing the personal growth and development of its members. These services are free of charge.

Individual counseling is available for students who wish to discuss and explore their thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and lifestyles. In addition, group counseling provides an opportunity for students to grow in their communication, social, and interpersonal skills with others who have similar goals and interests. Counselors are available to conduct workshops or make presentations on specific topics for classes, residence halls, campus organizations, fraternities and sororities, or other student groups. The Center also provides consultation to students, staff, and faculty regarding issues of human functioning and development.

The Counseling Center is accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services, Inc. It is located in Powell Hall-East, 2nd floor. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 229-333-5940. When necessary, referrals will be made on campus or in the community so that all available resources are utilized.

## Health Services

The Student Health Center, located on Georgia Avenue at the end of the Pedestrian Mall, provides routine health care, along with some emergency care, for all students who have satisfied the health fee requirement. Health care is provided by physicians, nurse practitioners, registered and licensed practical nurses, a pharmacist, a medical technologist, and office staff. All students living in campus housing are required to pay the health fee, regardless of the number of hours in which they are enrolled. There is also a new facility fee that is paid by all students.

All new students are required to provide evidence of inoculation for the following:

- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) - 2 doses
- Tetanus (within last 10 years)
- Hepatitis B (required for students under 19 years of age at time of enrollment)
- Varicella (Chickenpox or history of disease)

Various health screenings are provided throughout the year.

## Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Education

The Office of Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Education is dedicated to taking a pro-active approach in addressing the issue of substance use/abuse among the VSU community and its potential impact on academic, professional, and social development.

We provide assessments and accurate, up-to-date information in the areas of prevention, education, and referral. We encourage student involvement through Peer Education (KARMA, a for-credit class) and substance-free social programming (Natural High). Educational opportunities include presentations to classes and organizations as well as individual awareness via "Alcohol 101 Plus," "Training for Intervention Procedures" (TIPS), and "Prime for Life: On Campus Talking about Alcohol." Feedback regarding one's personal use of alcohol is available through "Alcohol Check-UpToGo" and may be accessed through the AOD website. Videos and print resources are also available through our office.

AOD sponsors and participates in several campus awareness campaigns, including the National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week and Safe Spring Break Fair.

Our services are available free to students. We are located in Powell Hall-East, 1st floor, and may be contacted by phone at 229-259-5111 or e-mail at [mfwillia@valdosta.edu](mailto:mfwillia@valdosta.edu). Click here (<http://www.valdosta.edu/student/student-services/counseling-center/aode/welcome.php>) to visit our web site.

## Veterans Affairs

The Veterans Affairs Office is part of the Office of Financial Aid. A full-time counselor assists all veterans in completing applications for benefits, making adjustments in payments, providing tutorial assistance, updating enrollment certifications, and with other services to assist veterans with their education. Veterans enrolled in physical education courses can be certified to the Veterans Administration for VA benefits when the courses will be credited toward the completion of their approved educational program. It must be documented that credit cannot be granted for the courses based upon prior military training or experience. Veterans should refer any problems to the Veterans Office for assistance. Telephone 229-333-5935 or visit our web site (<http://www.valdosta.edu/admissions/financial-aid/veterans-affairs>).

## Housing & Residence Life

The mission of the Office of Housing & Residence Life is to provide affordable, quality housing in a safe and secure environment. Our caring and competent staff members are committed to serving students by creating a holistic living and learning community that fosters education, diversity, civic engagement, recreation, and personal growth through programming and leadership opportunities.

Valdosta State University houses approximately 2,850 students on campus in five traditional residence halls, two suite-style halls, and two apartment communities. Traditional residence halls offer double-occupancy rooms and community bathrooms opening onto conventional hallways. Brown, Langdale, Lowndes, Patterson, and Reade are the traditional residence halls. Georgia and Hopper Halls are suite-style facilities that offer both private single occupancy bedrooms and semi-private, double occupancy, rooms with shared restroom facilities in each suite. Converse Hall, an apartment-style facility, offers efficiency units with a bathroom and a kitchenette or one-bedroom (2-person) units with a bathroom and a full kitchen. Centennial Hall, an apartment-style facility that opened in 2005, features individual bedrooms, a full kitchen shared by no more than four residents, one to two bathrooms, and a dining/living room area.

National research shows that students who live in on-campus for their first and second year of college are more engaged, experience greater academic achievement, and personal success during their college career. Our experience at VSU has been consistent with these findings. For this reason, VSU has a program for all incoming first-year students to live in the residence halls. After their first year, students may choose to live in Centennial Hall, Converse Hall, or Hopper Hall, if space is available.

Through our roommate matching system in the Housing portal, our Housing staff strives to pair students together, according to their preferences marked on the housing applications. Students also have the option of rooming with a friend who will also be attending VSU. All students have to do is to mutually request each other by placing their requested roommate's VSU e-mail address on their housing application. The Housing & Residence Life office does its best to accommodate all requests.

Where you choose to live during your college years is important in defining your college experience. Housing & Residence Life provides a distinctive and dynamic living and learning environment in the heart of campus to assist with that process. Campus living is convenient, with all residence halls being just a short walk from classes, labs, the library, entertainment, and dining. But living on campus is about so much more than just proximity. It is about lifelong friendships, opportunities for involvement and employment, 24-hour staff support, and leadership development. We encourage you to explore all the benefits of campus living.

## **The Role of the Residence Hall Staff**

The Area Coordinator, Residence Hall Director, and Resident Assistants in your residence hall have been chosen for their ability to facilitate community development, co-curricular learning, and growth. Their primary duties are to encourage and stimulate meaningful activity; to assist residents in working out the problems that occur in group living; to provide information about campus services, activities, and residence hall and university procedures; to perform certain managerial tasks such as check-in, check-out, and property inventory; and to serve as an interested person when someone wishes to discuss matters of personal concern. The Area Coordinator and Residence Hall Director supervise the Resident Assistants and oversee the activities within the residence hall to ensure the safety and security of the building as well as the functionality of the communities within. All our live-in staff members are present and trained to assist you with your overall residential experience.

## **Housing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Specially equipped facilities for students with disabilities are available. Students requesting modified housing accommodation may register with the Access Office in Farbar Hall, telephone 229-245-2498. The Access Office will notify Housing & Residence Life of any reasonable accommodations required to meet a resident's housing needs.

## **Residence Hall or Apartment Contract**

The application and contract contain items and conditions of occupancy for which you are legally responsible. Please see those documents for further details. Students are given a key to their room for their own personal security and access to their space. There is a \$50 replacement charge for a lost key. The University recommends that all students keep their rooms locked. Residence halls are locked 24 hours a day, and guests must be admitted by and responsible to the resident they are visiting.

Housing applications cannot be initiated until a student has been formally accepted by Valdosta State University. Prospective residents will need a VSU ID number, username, and password to access the Housing portal. An application fee is required of all students at the time they apply for campus housing. All students are also required to pay a deposit of \$300 by the deadlines established in the Housing Contract to reserve a room in the residence halls. The housing contract outlines conditions under which refunds may be made. All students applying for campus housing will be required to contract for housing for the academic year.

Apartments are available on a limited basis to students who meet the specific requirements. Two- and four-bedroom apartments are available. All utilities are provided. VSU maintains a list of available off-campus housing in the Office of Housing & Residence Life, located in Hopper Hall, telephone 229-333-5920. For additional information on Housing & Residence Life at Valdosta State, see the web page (<http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/auxiliary-services/housing/welcome.php>).

## **Student Conduct Office**

The primary responsibility of the Student Conduct Office (SCO) is to oversee and conduct the student disciplinary process on campus. The SCO deals mostly with individual violators but is also called on to assist with groups that violate the Code of Conduct. The SCO is located on the third floor of the Student Union in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students. The SCO assists students, staff, and faculty in the determination of the appropriate response to alleged violations of the Student Handbook's Student Code of Conduct. The SCO's primary mission is to get students back on track regarding the completion of their degree program. For more in-depth SCO information, please call 229-333-5941 or visit SCO's web page (<http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/welcome.php>).

## **Regulations**

### **General Expectations**

Inasmuch as Valdosta State University is an institution committed to the quest for knowledge, truth, and wisdom, all students are expected:

- to examine critically and otherwise to evaluate themselves, their knowledge, and their society;
- to commit themselves to genuine enlightenment rather than to inflexible adherence to limited knowledge;
- to respect the regulation and order of the university community, which must exist for real learning to take place;
- to respect and obey the laws of the State of Georgia and the United States;
- to respect and obey the Code of Conduct as set forth by the Student Government Association in the University Handbook;
- to assume full responsibility for their individual and collective actions;

- to participate seriously and purposefully in campus life as both student and person;
- to make mistakes because they are “students,” but to profit from these mistakes by maturing eventually into fully participating, responsible, educated leaders in whatever careers they select.

## Drugs

Valdosta State University, as a comprehensive university within the University System of Georgia and recipient of federal funds, supports and complies with the Drug Free Work Place Act of 1988, the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989, and the Drug Free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990.

Faculty, staff, and students of Valdosta State University are advised that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of illicit drugs and alcohol is prohibited, and violations of this policy will result in appropriate disciplinary action, to include suspension or termination.

Faculty, staff, and students are expected to adhere to the policies of the institution, observe the basic rules of good conduct, and observe all local, state, and federal regulations relative to illegal drugs and alcohol. Violations of such regulations, including misdemeanor or felony convictions during the course of one’s employment or enrollment, will result in appropriate disciplinary action. This policy is subject to modifications, and said changes will be publicized. Questions regarding this matter may be directed to the Office of Personnel or the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

## Student Dissent

Valdosta State University will not permit any demonstrations or protests that would disrupt any academic or regularly scheduled non-academic pursuits. Dissent which is voiced in a constructive way and is manifested in an orderly and peaceful manner is acceptable. Threats, demands, and coercion are not acceptable. All students affiliated with Valdosta State University are expected to abide by the Student Code of Conduct.

## Board of Regents Statement on Disruptive Behavior

The following is the policy of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia regarding disruptive behavior in any institution of the University System:

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia reaffirms its policies to support fully freedom of expression by each member of the academic community and to preserve and protect the rights and freedom of its faculty members and students to engage in debate, discussion, peaceful and nondisruptive protest and dissent. The following statement relates specifically to the problem described below. It does not change or in any way infringe upon the Board’s existing policies and practices in support of freedom of expression and action. Rather, it is considered necessary to combat the ultimate effect of irresponsible disruptive and obstructive actions by students and faculty which tend to destroy academic freedom and the institutional structures through which it operates.

In recent years, a new and serious problem has appeared on many college and university campuses in the nation. Some students, faculty members, and others have on occasion engaged in demonstrations, sit-ins, and other activities that have clearly and deliberately interfered with the regular and orderly operation of the institution concerned. Typically, these actions have been the physical occupation of a building or campus area for a protracted period of time or the use or display of verbal or written obscenities involving indecent or disorderly conduct.

These actions have gone beyond all heretofore recognized bounds of meetings for discussion, persuasion, or even protest, in that: (1) acquiescence to demands of the demonstrators is the condition for dispersal, and (2) the reasonable and written directions of institutional officials to disperse have been ignored. Such activities thus have become clearly recognizable as an action of force, operating outside all established channels on the campus, including that of intellectual debate and persuasion which are at the very heart of education.

The Board reaffirms its belief that all segments of the academic community are under a strong obligation and have a mutual responsibility to protect the campus community from disorderly, disruptive, or obstructive actions which interfere with academic pursuits of teaching, learning and other campus activities.

The Board of Regents understands that this policy is consistent with resolutions adopted by the American Association of University Professors in April, 1968, by the Association of American Colleges in January, 1968, and by the Executive Committee of the Association for Higher Education in March, 1968, condemning actions taken to disrupt the operations of institutions of higher education.

The Board of Regents is deeply concerned by this new problem. Under the Constitution of the State of Georgia, under all applicable court rulings, and in keeping with the tradition of higher education in the United States, the Board is ultimately responsible for the orderly operation of the several institutions of the University System and the preservation of academic freedom in these institutions. The Board cannot and will not divest itself of this responsibility. Of equal or greater importance, such action of force as has been described above destroys the very essence of higher education. This essence is found in the unhampered freedom to study, investigate, write, speak, and debate on any aspect or issue of life. This freedom, which reaches its full flowering on college and university campuses, is an essential part of American democracy, comparable to the jury system or the electoral process.

For these reasons and in order to respond directly and specifically to this new problem, the Board of Regents stipulates that any student, faculty member, administrator, or employee, acting individually or in concert with others, who clearly obstructs or disrupts, or attempts to obstruct or disrupt any teaching, research, administrative, disciplinary or public service activity, or any other activity authorized to be discharged or held on any campus of the University System of Georgia is considered by the Board to have committed an act of gross irresponsibility and shall be subject to disciplinary procedures, possibly resulting in dismissal or termination of employment.

### **Notification of Rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) for Post-Secondary Institutions Dealing with Student Educational Records**

In accordance with the policy of the Board of Regents of the State of Georgia and under the provisions of The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), Valdosta State University maintains various educational records for each matriculating student. VSU affords students certain rights with respect to these educational records, and these rights include:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the day the University receives a request for access. Students should submit to the registrar, the dean of the appropriate college, the head of the appropriate academic department, or other appropriate official, written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The University official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the University official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed. VSU's official contact person for such record requests is the Custodian of Official Records in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. There will be a nominal fee for the retrieval and reproduction of any record requests.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's educational records that the student believes are inaccurate. Students may ask the University to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the University official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the university decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the University will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the University has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the University may disclose education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

Directory information: Valdosta State University publishes student information in the form of directories, programs, etc. Students who desire that directory information not be released without consent should notify the Office of the Registrar. The following is considered directory information unless notification is received to the contrary:

Student's name, address (local and home), telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, class schedule, photograph, full- or part-time status, e-mail address, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student. Educational records may be furnished to a requesting party in compliance with a judicial order or pursuant to any lawfully issued subpoena.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failure by Valdosta State University to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605, 202-260-3887.

#### **The following are exceptions within FERPA, and students should take note of them:**

1. Students do NOT have access to the financial records of parents of students.
2. Students do NOT have access to letters of recommendation placed in records prior to January 1, 1975.
3. Personal records of instructional, supervisory, and administrative personnel are NOT open for review and inspection by students.
4. The professional records of the institution's medical staff are not open for review and inspection by students. However, physicians or other appropriate professionals of the student's choice can review these records.