VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Complete College Georgia (CCG) Plan

This plan addresses how Valdosta State University (VSU) will use data to create reports and to develop major strategies which address quality completion for Georgia's citizens. The VSU Complete College Georgia (CCG) Team has shared information regarding the CCG initiative with the President's Cabinet, Deans' Council, Department Heads' Council, Planning and Budget Council, and various other campus groups. We believe that we are successfully positioned to implement the CCG institutional plan over the coming years and that the plan aligns with Valdosta State University's mission:

> *Valdosta State University is a dynamic community of scholars focused on teaching, research, creative endeavors, and service. The living/learning environment is student-centered, preparing a diverse student body to contribute to an evolving technological and global society. Our university promotes the highest educational and ethical standards while advancing economic and cultural development. The quality of our engagement transforms students' lives, for which we aspire to be a national model.*

Part I: Goals and Data Analysis

In 2011, in order to be more systematic about growth of our institution, VSU hired an Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management to guide analysis and planning for enrollment and recruitment. This new position has enabled VSU to work on better utilizing currently available data, to improve our ability to collect data, to enhance the accessibility of that data, and to use data critical to student success more efficiently. At the University level, the Planning and Budget Council approved funds to implement an enhanced data warehouse. This enhanced data warehouse included the purchase of hardware and software as well as the hiring of a director and database administrator. While the data analysis system currently in place provides some data access to campus administrators, it does not provide the desired depth and breadth. The next step will be to provide ready access to data through the creation of dashboards containing Complete College America (CCA) and CCG metrics. The Complete College America progress metrics identified in the USG campus data report are interpreted below.

- *Progress Metric 1: Enrollment in Remedial Education AND Progress Metric 2: Success in Remedial Education*. The campus data report suppressed most of the data making it non-interpretable. Therefore, VSU retrieved institutional data on the success in remedial education (Table 1). Because VSU is a traditional, undergraduate institution, only 0.9% of undergraduate students require remedial English or Mathematics courses. About 48.5% of these students successfully completed the English courses while 65.8% successfully completed the Mathematics courses. VSU's leadership recognizes that the success rates in remedial courses can hinder academic progress.

Table 1: Enrollment and Success in Remedial Education

Courses	Fall 2009/Grade	Fall 2010/Grade	Fall 2011/Grade	Average/Grade
ENGL 0097 & 0099	11 students 45.5% S 54.5% U	16 students 68.7% S 31.3% U	16 students 31.3% S 68.7% U	14 students/year 48.5% S 51.5% U
MATH 0097 & 0099	93 students 61.3% S 38.7% U	104 students 71.2% S 28.8% U	100 students 65.0% S 35.0% U	99 students/year 65.8% S 34.2% U

- *Progress Metric 3: Success in Gateway (First-Year) Courses*. The campus data report concludes that 78.8% of VSU's first time students in Fall 2007 completed a college-level math and English course within two academic years of entry. Our Hispanic (80.9%), Black (79.8%), and Asian (92.8%) students have a higher success rate in gateway courses than White (78.2%) students. VSU provides academic and student support structures for all students and data shows that our minority students perform slightly better after receiving these services.
- *Progress Metric 4: Credit Accumulation*. A student who completes at least 24 credit hours during his/her first year in college has a greater likelihood of being retained and graduating from college. The campus data report

concludes that 63.6% of first-time full-time students in Fall 2007 completed 24 credit hours within their first academic year. Institutional data presented in Table 2 demonstrates that on average 60.2% of our first-time full-time freshman cohort (FTFT) students completed 24+ credits by the end of their first year in college. VSU has worked with faculty advisors to encourage students to register for 15 credits per term, as opposed to 12 credits.

Table 2: First-Time Full-Time Freshman Cohort Hours Earned after Second Semester

Earned Hours at End of Spring Term	Fall 2008 Cohort (n=2106)[1]	Fall 2009 Cohort (n=2422)	Fall 2010 Cohort (n=2486)	Average
0-23 Credits	32.5%	33.7%	30.6%	32.3%
24+ Credits	60.3%	59.2%	61.2%	60.2%

- *Progress Metric 5: Retention Rates*. We recognize that retention rates are not at the desired level for this institution. The campus data report stated of the 1,756 students in the Fall 2003 cohort, 69.9% were retained to the second year. Of note is that of the 1,756 students in the cohort, only a small percentage (1.7%) required any remedial coursework. See Table 4 for more detail on retention rates.
- *Progress Metric 6: Course Completion*. Our full-time students completed 85.5% of the credit hours attempted in 2008-09. Students who do not complete their full course load impact the institution, particularly in that they are enrolled in seats which could be utilized by other students thereby helping them stay on track to graduation. See Table 6 for more detail on course completion.

The USG metrics are divided into three categories: (1) increased efficiencies, (2) increased numbers, and (3) quality. Institutional data and a brief narrative are provided in subsequent tables. Graduation rate data for four-years, six-years, and eight-years are provided in Table 3. Our six-year graduation rate has remained in the low 40th percentile for the past seven cohorts. Although the six-year graduation rate at VSU was 43.0%; the System-wide rate for our students was 55.4%.

Table 3: Graduation Rates (Baccalaureate Degree)

Cohort Rate	Type of Student	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Three year Average
4 Year Rate	Full-time	15.3%	15.3%	16.7%	17.2%	15.3%	16.0%	16.2%
	Part-time	9.8%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.8%
	Learning Support	N/A	N/A	9.4%	2.8%	8.0%	2.2%	4.3%
	Federal Financial Aid	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Cohort Rate	Type of Student	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Three year Average
6 Year Rate	Full-time	42.2%	41.1%	39.6%	42.8%	40.4%	43.0%	42.1%
	Part-time	9.1%	12.2%	14.8%	14.3%	6.3%	2.9%	7.8%
	Learning Support	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	21.9%	11.1%	16.5%
	Federal Financial Aid	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Cohort Rate	Type of Student	Fall 1998	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Three year Average
8 Year Rate	Full-time	41.5%	44.7%	45.0%	44.8%	42.9%	46.1%	44.6%
	Part-time	24.0%	10.3%	9.1%	15.9%	14.8%	21.4%	17.3%
	Learning Support	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Federal Financial Aid	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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[1] 147 did not return in Spring 2009; 169 did not return in Spring 2010; and 205 did not return in Spring 2011.

The one-year retention rate for the past three years is provided in Table 4. When examining the traditional freshman retention rate, VSU has declined 4.9% in the past three years; however, many of these students are retained throughout the University System as a whole (nearly 80%).

Table 4: One-Year Retention Rate

Attribute	Fall 2008 Cohort (VSU)	Fall 2008 Cohort (System)	Fall 2009 Cohort (VSU)	Fall 2009 Cohort (System)	Fall 2010 Cohort (VSU)	Fall 2010 Cohort (System)	Three-Year Average (VSU)	Three-Year Average (System)
Full-time	71.8%	82.2%	68.1%	80.9%	66.9%	79.5%	69.0%	80.9%
Part-time	41.7%	44.4%	39.6%	43.8%	41.7%	47.2%	41.0%	45.1%
Learning Support	71.4%	N/A	56.9%	N/A	45.8%	N/A	58.0%	N/A
Federal Financial Aid	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 5 contains the average student credit hours earned at the conferring of a baccalaureate degree at VSU. The average undergraduate finishes with 136 credit hours while those in a FTFT freshman cohort perform slightly better with 132 hours. Not shown in Table 5 is the actual hours attempted: for all students the average is 148; for FTFT freshman the average is 144. This means that students registered for 24-28 more hours than they need to satisfy typical degree requirements.

Table 5: Average Student Credit Hours Earned at Awarding of a Baccalaureate Degree

Attribute	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	Three-Year Average
All Students	135	136	137	136
Native Freshman Students (FTFT Cohort)	131	132	132	132

Another method to measure success is the course completion ratio. Table 6 compares five fiscal years (summer, fall, spring) and data concludes that students satisfactorily completed an average of 79.4% of hours attempted.

Table 6: Course Completion Ratio (Undergraduate Courses)

Category	FY2008	FY2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	Three-Year Average
Hours Attempted	273,313	277,499	293,695	302,292	297,449	297,812
Hours Earned (completed with grades of A, B, C, P, S)	216,716	223,570	231,439	240,934	236,861	236,411
Completion Percent	79.3%	80.6%	78.8%	79.7%	79.6%	79.4%

According to USG and institutional data, VSU has remained flat in the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded from FY2009 to FY2011 with a slight decrease in associates degrees awarded (Table 7). VSU experienced a 15.0% enrollment increase in the Fall 2009 freshman class, so we anticipate these students will reach the four to six year completion point between 2013 and 2015, at which time degrees conferred should increase. Conversely, we experienced a decrease of 12.5% in the Fall 2011 freshman class which could lead to a decline in future degrees conferred. Although not shown in Table 7, VSU experienced a 48.1% increase in master's degrees awarded from FY2009 to FY2011.

Table 7: Undergraduate Degrees Conferred Annually

Degree Level	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	Three-Year Average
Associate	53	56	41	50
Bachelor	1,588	1,594	1,599	1,594

Table 8 contains information about underserved populations. Currently, the institution does not track students who are considered first generation college students. Students receiving Pell awards have increased 55.8% in three years

principally due to changes in the EFC formula, making additional students eligible. Military students, veterans, and dependents receiving financial aid and attending VSU have increased 60.8% during the past three years. The number of adult learners has increased 16.3% over three years; however, adult learners as a percentage of the undergraduate student body have remained flat, averaging 13.3%. Lastly, minority students at VSU have increased 7.0% over the past three years. Once at VSU, students can self-identify as disabled to receive access services; this number has remained constant over the past three years.

Table 8: Increasing Access to Underserved Populations

Attribute	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Three-Year Average
First Generation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pell	3,346 awards $3,259 avg. (FY 2009)	4,215 awards $4,186 avg. (FY 2010)	5,214 awards $4,185 avg. (FY 2011)	4,258 awards $3,876 avg.
Military/Veteran[2]	350	457	563	456
Adult Learners/ % of Undergraduates	1,261 12.2%	1,544 14.3%	1,467 13.6%	1,424 13.3%
Minority	35.0%	40.7%	42.0%	39.2%
Students with Disabilities	50	51	52	51

VSU strives to provide the best quality education to our students, as evidenced by the following:

- The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC), in 2010, reaffirmed VSU's accreditation with no recommendations.
- In addition to regional accreditation, various other accrediting bodies, such as NCATE and AACSB, periodically review individual programs. In total, VSU programs are accredited or recognized by 25 professional agencies.
- Under the leadership of the General Education Council, VSU assesses learning outcomes in core courses. A calendar is currently being revised so that all general education courses will be regularly assessed on a rotation.
- VSU has a structured, functional process to review and approve new and existing curriculum at the department and institutional levels (including USG level as required). VSU participates fully in the Comprehensive Academic Program Review process, including participation by faculty members, administrators, and outside evaluators.
- Department chairs and faculty committees regularly review evaluations of all instructors and course content.

Part II: Strategies and Objectives and Part III: Planning and Implementation

Strategy 1: Partnerships with K-12

Early College and Joint/Dual Enrollment-

USG Strategic Goal 4

VSU Strategic Goals 1,6

- o **Objectives.** Complete full implementation of the Valdosta Early College Academy (VECA) and thereby increase the number of dual enrolled students attending VSU. Since its origination in 2008 with a sixth grade class, VECA has been expanding one grade level each year. In 2012-2013, VECA will expand to include a tenth grade, so a twelfth grade will be in place by 2014-2015.
- o **Current Status**. The Valdosta Early College Academy is a school within the Valdosta City School System in partnership with and located at Valdosta State University which began in August 2008.[3] Students are nominated for admission based on standardized test results, attendance, and teacher/principal recommendations. By the end of twelfth grade, students can earn both a high school diploma and up to

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[2] The institution and System are investigating procedures to increase the accuracy of reporting this number.
[3] http://www.valdosta.edu/news/releases/black.082908/

60 semester hours of college credit. Students will also complete a minimum of 20 hours of community service each year. VECA has enrolled about 150 students in grades 6-9.

- In 2010, the CRCT test scores for VECA students exceeded non-VECA students by 8.0% in reading, 7.9% in English, 7.2% in mathematics, 12% in science, and 27.4% in social studies. VECA students are academically prepared to enter VSU as dual enrolled students.

- o **1-Year Goal.** Students will begin taking dual enrollment courses in eleventh grade. The first class will be in tenth grade next year (2012-13) and in that year, VECA and VSU staff will assist students with application paperwork necessary for dual enrollment. Students will also apply for HOPE Accel funding.

- o **2-3 Year Goals.** In three years, VECA will be fully implemented for grades 6-12 totaling 250 students. While VECA accepted smaller entering classes initially, the success of the program encouraged the Valdosta City Schools to accept larger classes (moving the total number of students involved to 350).

  - Within the Dewar College of Education, the Early Childhood Education Program--the teacher preparation program with the largest enrollment--is in the initial stages of restructuring its admissions process. These changes will allow faculty members more time with teachers in training in public school settings and more opportunities to conduct scholarly activities aligned with USG's "Enhancing Teaching and Learning in Schools and Universities." Some of VSU's faculty will also spend more time in VECA.

- o **Planning and Implementation.** VSU faculty in the Dewar College of Education will work closely with the VECA principal and VECA faculty to ensure that early college students remain on track and VECA achieves full implementation of grades 6-12.

STEM Partnerships-

- o **Objectives.** Increase the number of students majoring in and retained in STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Strengthen STEM instruction in area K-12 schools.

- o **Current Status.** For the Fall 2007 cohort majoring in STEM disciplines, only 15% were still STEM majors by Fall 2010. Recognizing the need to improve STEM partnerships internally and externally, VSU has several initiatives:

  - **First Annual University-Wide Symposium on Undergraduate Research**.[4] VSU hosted this symposium on April 4-6, 2012, during which undergraduate students showcased their research, scholarship, and creative performances to the VSU community. The program featured over 100 student participants and was well-received by the VSU community. This symposium will continue as an annual event.

- o **Goals and Implementation.**

  - **Initiative 1:** The Center for Applied Research and STEM faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences will embark on a two-year project titled Retention and Recruitment for STEM. It will identify issues preventing students from completing degrees in STEM programs at VSU; work with STEM departments and the Student Success Center to develop freshman learning communities (FLC); improve curriculum and instructional methods in core courses that address those issues; investigate implementing a summer bridge program; and implement new teaching strategies and evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Year 1 (2012-2013) will consist of research on student achievement, curriculum and instructional methods, and possible modifications to core courses. The faculty group will also work on expanding FLCs for other STEM disciplines and on investigating a summer bridge program for STEM majors. Year 2-3 goals will be to implement the new FLCs and deploy the adjusted curriculum and teaching strategies to achieve a 20% increase in STEM retention.

USG Strategic Goals 3,4

VSU Strategic Goals 1,3,6

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[4] http://www.valdosta.edu/urc/documents/2012SymposiumProgram-mm.pdf

- **Initiative 2:** The Department of Mathematics and Computer Science is implementing the Student Learning Enhancement System to improve retention and increase the graduation rate of Computer Science majors. The Student Learning Enhancement System is an online system designed to adapt to student progress and will include automated and personalized feedback from peer helpers. In Year 1 (2012-2013), the lead faculty member will coordinate with other faculty, update the course collection of questions and class materials, and supervise student helpers. The three-year goal is to reach the third stage of program implementation and to retain an additional 27 students in the Computer Science major.
- **Initiative 3:** The Department of Chemistry is creating a community advisory board made up of chemists from the South Georgia region. These individuals will inform department faculty about the skills and knowledge needed in the workplace. The community advisory board is a component of a proposed Professional Science Master's degree in Chemistry. In year 1 (2012-2013), the Department of Chemistry will finalize curriculum and submit required applications to the USG. If the program is approved, years 2-3 will consist of the implementation of the master's degree and employment of graduate assistants to provide direct instruction and tutoring to undergraduate Chemistry majors.
- **Initiative 4:** The VSU Dewar College of Education faculty and a team of master teachers started a two-week workshop on June 11, 2012 for 100 area math teachers of grades 8-12. It is a Math-Science Partnership project funded through the Georgia Department of Education. They will work on content, strategies, and resources for math instruction for each teacher's grade. Last year, the project was funded at $219,000; VSU received funding of $322,000 for this year through September 30, 2013 to continue working with the teachers.

Strategy 2: Improving access and completion for students traditionally underserved

Expanded online offerings-

USG Strategic Goal 2

VSU Strategic Goal 1

- o **Objectives**. Expand online learning opportunities. This will improve completion of non-traditional students by providing flexible, timely course offerings so that they can achieve their educational goal(s) on time.
- o **Current Status**.
  - VSU offers completely online graduate degrees in education, available through GeorgiaOnMyLine (GOML), which enhance opportunities for continuing professional development of P-12 partners. Since initially starting GOML in 2008, VSU has graduated almost 400 students with approximately 1,000 admitted.
  - To enhance delivery options for degree completion, we are involved in GOML with 8 degrees (or endorsements). Additionally, we offer a collaborative WebMBA, an online Master of Library and Information Science, and online masters and doctoral level degrees in Public Administration. In Fall 2012, we will begin offering an online M.A. in English Studies for Language Arts Teachers. At the undergraduate level, in 2011, we established three online bachelor's degree completion programs in Criminal Justice, Office Administration and Technology, and Organizational Leadership. Currently, other online completion options are in development. To ensure maintenance of quality, courses developed with university funding are evaluated using Quality Matters standards. We will continue working on completion strategies for online programs.
- o **1-Year Goal.** Submit a proposal to the University System of Georgia to become the lead institution for the e-major project. E-major would begin in Fall 2012 with seven online bachelors programs offered collaboratively through institutions that are members of the USG Adult Learning Consortium. Year 1

student enrollment is expected to be between 300 and 500 students, contingent upon launching all seven programs.

- o **2-3 Year Goal.** Increase the number of online degree offerings through e-major by 10 programs, making the total 17 programs.
- o **Planning and Implementation**. VSU's Division of Academic Affairs, in conjunction with our Deans' Council, will be responsible for working with faculty to increase online learning opportunities.

Student Employment Opportunities-

- o **Objectives**. Increase the number of on-campus student employment opportunities and use a gap metric of unmet need as part of the hiring process.
- o **Current Status.** The VSU Student Employment Office works to increase engagement of students through on-campus work opportunities; however, demand for on-campus positions exceeds availability. From Fall 2010 to Fall 2011, internal data indicated that the average GPA for undergraduates in Fall 2010 with an on-campus job was 2.96, compared to 2.75 for students without on-campus employment. VSU will implement better tracking of student employees who are members of FTFT cohorts. This tracking will allow for increased monitoring and justification of on-campus employment as a retention factor. There were 851[5] undergraduate students employed by VSU during Spring 2012.
- o **1-Year Goal.** During the 2012-13 year, the data warehouse will have an unmet need indicator built in so that employers can review and consider unmet need as students apply for student employment.
- o **2-3 Year Goals**. Increase the number of student worker positions by 2% and increase the number of hires with unmet need.
- o **Planning and Implementation**. The Enrollment Management Unit will work with the Student Employment Office to help prospective on-campus employers identify students with unmet need.

Adult learners and/or military-

- o **Objectives.** To increase the number of enrolled non-traditional, adult, and military students.
- o **Current Status.** In 2010, VSU established the Office of Adult and Military Programs which serves adult and military/veteran learners. This office also works with part-time and working students and has been responsible for enrolling over 60 students to VSU. They have also initiated partnerships with six technical colleges and three different military bases. VSU is a member of the USG Adult Learning Consortium.
- o **1-Year Goal**. VSU has 1,360 adult learners (Spring 2012) and plans to increase that number by 3%. The department will increase marketing efforts for the new online BS in Organizational Leadership, a program designed specifically for adult learners. To better service our adult learners, we will hire a new position, Coordinator for Off-Campus and Partner Programs.
- o **2-3 Year Goals**. Increase the number of enrolled adult learners by 5-7%.
- o **Planning and Implementation.** The Office of Adult and Military Programs will pursue an aggressive campaign of increasing enrollment and services to adult learners.

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[5] Student Assistants: 851; Work Study Students: 105

Technical college transfers-

- o **Objectives.** Increase the number of transfer students from technical colleges to VSU while making the process as seamless as possible.
- o **Current Status.** We are increasing the number of technical college agreements to help AAS students complete baccalaureate degrees, specifically BAS degrees. In Fall 2011, we had 41 transfer students from 13 technical institutions. VSU has signed agreements with Wiregrass Georgia Technical College and Okefenokee Technical College. In 2012, the University System of Georgia increased the number of courses which will transfer to a USG institution. This policy change will also help VSU to increase technical college transfer students.
- o **1-Year Goal.** Identify at least one VSU academic department and technical college which could develop a BAS transfer program and increase the number of BAS tracks by 3. Increase the number of technical college transfers by 60 students.
- o **2-3 Year Goals**. Double the number of BAS track opportunities for AAS students. Increase the number of technical college transfers by 60 (to 120).
- o **Planning and Implementation**. The Enrollment Management Unit, Admissions Office, Adult and Military Programs Office, and Academic Deans will work to identify BAS eligible programs and network/recruit at technical colleges throughout the state.

International students-

- o **Objectives**. Continue to diversify the Valdosta State University student body by increasing the number of international students.
- o **Current Status**. VSU currently has active exchange agreements with institutions in China, Korea, Japan, and Germany. We are adding advisors for international students to accommodate this growth.
- o **1-Year Goal**. Currently, VSU has a 2.1% international student body with plans to increase to 3.5%. VSU is creating an international admissions specialist position that will be housed in the Office of Admissions to facilitate international applications. VSU will also begin work to identify institutions in Brazil for future exchange agreements.
- o **2-3 Year Goals**. Increase the number of international students to 6% of the student body.
- o **Planning and Implementation**. The Offices of Admissions and International Programs will work jointly to expand international student presence and facilitate their enrollment and retention.

Freshmen retention rate-

- o **Objective**. Increase the retention rate of first-time freshmen.
- o **Current Status.** Table 4 displays VSU's first-year retention rate. The rate has decreased the past several years and is now at 66.9%. During the 2011-12 academic year, VSU researched and vetted the prospect of elevating the minimum admission standards. VSU has not changed its admission standards since 2002, and this change will be in line with peer institutions within the state. VSU faculty and administrators approved the change from an 850 combined SAT math/verbal score to a 900 combined math/verbal score. To mitigate an anticipated decrease in freshmen enrollment, VSU will instigate more targeted recruitment initiatives, particularly for students living in the Metro Atlanta region.
- o **1-Year Goal.**
  - ▪ **Targeted recruitment**. In Fall 2011, 41% of VSU's freshman class members were from the Metro Atlanta region. In January 2012, VSU identified 6,400 prospective high school juniors and seniors living in Metro Atlanta with a minimum 1000 combined SAT score and invited them and their parents to VSU's first large-scale admissions fair at the Cobb Galleria in Atlanta. VSU is preparing for a second Metro Atlanta recruitment fair at the Cobb Galleria on October 7, 2012.
  - ▪ **Data warehouse**. During 2012-13, the university's data warehouse will be in place and able to provide department heads with actionable data so they and faculty advisors can help with the

retention rate. They will be able to identify incoming students as at-risk so they can tailor intervention strategies to increase student success.

- **Freshman Learning Communities**. VSU will also expand student participation in Freshman Learning Communities by 2% of the total freshman class.

o **2-3 Year Goals.** Continue to improve and expand data provided to departments and advisors. The three-year goal is to increase the retention rate by 5%.

o **Planning and Implementation**. The Enrollment Management Unit will provide student data and test dashboards for data delivery. The data warehouse will help identify students in populations who are more likely not to be retained. This information can then be provided to faculty members and academic advisors so they can work on appropriate intervention strategies.

Graduation rate-

o **Objectives.** Increase the four-year and six-year graduation rate of VSU students.

o **Current Status**. Table 3 contains the institutional graduation rate; the most recent six-year rate is 43.0%; USG is 55.4%; and NCES reports 57% is the national average.

o **1-Year Goal.** Currently, the institution tracks students who are part of first-time freshman cohorts. VSU will expand tracking using the data warehouse so that we can provide information to advisors about students who are part of a cohort. Advisors will be better instructed to utilize DegreeWorks to aid students in progression and timely completion. VSU will use National Student Clearinghouse data to show a fuller picture of graduation rates of VSU students who transfer to other institutions. We will work to develop further strategies to identify, target, enroll, and graduate students who may be traditionally underserved.

o **2-3 Year Goals**. The goal is to increase graduation rates by 3%. This will in large part be due to the efforts described above under the *Freshman Retention Rate* strategy.

o **Planning and Implementation**. Increases in graduation rates will be a direct result of intervention by numerous individuals, including faculty, advisors, and administrators. Several strategies within our Complete College Georgia plan (such as academic advising, retention rates, and freshman learning communities) will directly impact the institution's graduation rate.

Strategy 3: Shorten Time to Degree

Better academic advising-

o **Objectives**. To improve the academic advising system and process for all students, especially those in a FTFT cohort.

o **Current Status**.

- In Fall 2009, VSU adopted DegreeWorks. This system provides real-time academic advice and counsel to students and, when used correctly, speeds time to graduation. Using this system, advisors and advisees can fully plan a student's academic career. To assist faculty members, VSU will make a programming change to add an indicator so that advisors can recognize which students are members of a FTFT cohort. This change will allow advisors to increase their focus toward FTFT cohort students.

- Currently VSU requires faculty members to enter mid-term grades for students in 1000- and 2000-level courses through the Banner Student Information System. Additionally, University Athletics implemented the GradesFirst student advising and retention system in 2010-11. The system emails instructors at specified intervals and requests them to enter grades, absences, and comments about a student's classroom performance. VSU is currently expanding the use of GradesFirst for all students, not solely athletes. In FY2013, the Dewar College of Education will

implement the program as a first step to expand the program across the university.

- In Fall 2010, VSU instituted a Five Course Withdrawal Policy. This proactive step ensures the successful progress of undergraduates by limiting their number of course withdrawals during their academic career at VSU. Since Fall 2009, fall withdrawals are down 1.63% and spring withdrawals down 1.45%.
- After early registration in the fall, if a student has not registered for the subsequent spring term, he or she is at risk of not returning that spring and is less likely to return the following fall. In December, the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management will identify those students who have not registered for the subsequent term and provide a list to the respective academic deans. From there, the deans, department heads, and faculty advisors will be required to contact those students personally and to encourage them to register.

o **1-Year Goal.** VSU recognizes that our current FTFT retention rate is not at its desired level; therefore, we plan to target specific areas and student populations to impact this rate directly, utilizing faculty and advisors. To this end, we will add data elements to DegreeWorks to enhance advising. We will also develop a data portal for department heads as well as a portal for faculty and administrators involved in Freshman Learning Communities. We will also review pre-requisite courses to identify any impediments in gateway courses. In Fall 2012, VSU will offer large section lab sciences to ensure access to required lab courses.

- In Fall 2012, the OASIS Center for Advising will offer the *Master Advisor Series*. This series of five courses will utilize advising best practices and follow standards recommended by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). Course titles include: Advising 101, Identifying and Working with Students with Disabilities, Working with Transfer Students, and Advising the Adult Learner. Additional courses will be offered in Spring 2013. These courses will be particularly useful to train advisors to work effectively with the traditionally underserved students addressed in Strategy 2 above.

o **2-3 Year Goals**. Examine curricular aspects of degree programs to identify programs which can be shortened in credit hours. Investigate the need for a consolidated freshman advising center (for students in the first 30 hours). Investigate the need for a Student Ombudsman Office.

o **Planning and Implementation**. Academic Deans and the Enrollment Management Unit are actively working with faculty and professional advisors to enhance the academic advising process.

Prior Learning Assessment-

o **Objectives.** Increase the number of students participating in Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).

o **Current Status.** We have 27 course assessments established and have awarded credit to approximately 100 adult learners.

o **1-Year Goal**. Develop a coding system to track PLA students in Banner. We plan to increase the number of students pursuing PLA by 10 and increase the number of PLA course opportunities by 3 during the 2012-13 year.

o **2-3 Year Goals**. Over the next 2-3 years, we will identify areas of student demand and work with academic departments to develop a departmental exam for students to receive course credit by exam. We will double the number of PLA students (increase by 10) and increase the number of PLA course opportunities by 3 (to 33).

o **Planning and Implementation**. The Office of Adult and Military Programs currently coordinates the PLA program and will work in conjunction with academic departments and the Registrar's Office to expand these PLA opportunities.

USG
Strategic
Goals 2,5

VSU
Strategic
Goal 1

Scheduling for Freshman Learning Communities and others-

- o **Objectives**. To increase the number of students participating in Freshman Learning Communities (FLC).
- o **Current Status.**
  - ▪ **Block scheduling for new freshman and required relation to a Freshman Learning Community**. Freshman Learning Communities (FLCs) were first offered in Fall 2010 on the VSU campus. They consisted of 34 communities of 6-8 hours of coursework grouped by theme or major. Each student registered for an FLC has a cohort code attached to his/her academic record to allow tracking of participants. Table 9 contains retention information for students who do or do not participate in an FLC.

Table 9: Freshman Learning Community Results

Academic Support Program	Fall 2010 Returned Fall 2011		
	Participants	% Retained	Average GPA
Freshman Learning Communities (FLC)	782	71.9%	2.56
VSU FTFT Freshman Cohort	2,486	66.9%	2.48

  - ▪ **Data Utilization for Course Planning**. Two years ago, VSU developed a Sections and Seats Available Planning Tool to assist department heads in predictions for needed courses. Department heads can utilize the tool to avoid course backlogs and to ensure that departments offer major courses in timely rotations so that students can progress and graduate within four to six years. VSU continues to add more variables to the planning portal, including enrollment, retention rates, and degrees awarded.
- o **1-Year Goal.** In Fall 2011, 836 students participated in 47 FLCs, an increase of 5.8% from Fall 2010. The goal for Fall 2012 is to restructure FLCs to increase participation by 2% of the total freshman class.
- o **2-3 Year Goals.**
  - ▪ The next several years will include expansion of freshman learning communities by approximately 10%. Using predictive modeling, students with at-risk characteristics at admission will be advised and strongly encouraged to enroll in an FLC.
  - ▪ National data and data from other USG institutes indicate a summer bridge program for at-risk students increases the likelihood of retention and success for students. Over the next few years, VSU plans to implement a summer bridge program (piloting in Summer 2013).
- o **Planning and Implementation**. The Student Success Center, which operates Freshman Learning Communities, along with Academic Deans, Enrollment Management Unit, and Registrar will collaborate to ensure FLCs are scheduled and available to new students, especially those who may be considered at-risk.

Strategy 4: Restructuring Instructional Delivery

Alternative Delivery Methods-

- o **Objectives**. Increase the number of online, hybrid, and distance course offerings. Also, reevaluate the length of current term offerings (i.e., 8-week sessions or 5-week sessions). The increasing of online, hybrid, and distance course offerings is being suggested so that VSU can serve students in locations who are currently underserved and who cannot commute to Valdosta. These programs will be successful as those students will be able to achieve their educational goals through this more flexible means of delivery.

- o **Current Status**. In Fall 2011, VSU offered 97 compressed or mini-course sections (5 or 8 weeks) in which 1,183 seats were filled. These sections are principally offered at two off-campus sites, Moody AFB and Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base.
- o **1-Year Goals.** A traditional 15-week semester creates a barrier for many non-traditional and military students. VSU will investigate a non-traditional college model (i.e., offering 7-week terms).
- o Implement an institutional focus on online and distance education. Investigate shorter parts of term and multiple points of entry. eCore is experimenting with shorter parts of term in Summer 2012 (8-week format) and will implement additional parts of term options in Fall 2012.
- o **2-3 Year Goals.** Increase the number of compressed or mini-term course sections by 10%.
- o **Planning and Implementation.** Academic Deans, Enrollment Management Unit, Registrar, and Admissions will all be involved in the study of course scheduling.

Increase Degree Completion-

USG Strategic Goal 2

VSU Strategic Goal 1

- o **Objectives**. Increase degree completions for students by automating and awarding the associate credential upon completion of Areas A-F (60 hours) in our bachelor programs.
- o **Current Status**. Preliminary discussions on campus and with USG have indicated the A.S. or A.A. degree could be awarded to students who satisfy core Areas A-F (60 hours) with a specific science or arts curriculum. Based upon discussion with U.S. Military personnel, the military is encouraging its personnel to pursue credentials which can be completed in short time frames (often between deployments or transfers).
- o **1-Year Goal.** Acquire authorization from the Board of Regents to award the A.S. degree.
- o **2-3 Year Goals**. Retroactively award an A.S. or A.A. degree to all currently enrolled and active students who have not yet completed the bachelor's degree but who have completed Areas A-F. This could create 4,000 completions at the associate level by Year 2.
- o **Planning and Implementation.** Academic Deans, Enrollment Management Unit, and Registrar will be involved in the USG request process and degree audit process.

Enhance Course Support-

USG Strategic Goals 1,2

VSU Strategic Goal 1

- o **Objectives**. Increase the number of student support opportunities (i.e., tutoring, supplemental instructors).
- o **Current Status.** VSU instituted a pilot program consisting of a limited number of supplemental instructors (SI) in 2011-12. The purpose of supplemental instruction is to increase and enhance mastery of concepts or applications of a specific course of study. The SI facilitates learning as a guide and coach to assist the student to become a successful, independent learner.
- o **1-Year Goals**.
  - In 2012-13, 10 supplemental instructor positions (newly funded for FY13) are being offered to support several of the Freshman Learning Communities (FLCs) at the University. Supplemental Instruction leaders will be placed in historically difficult courses such as Chemistry, Economics, Biology, and Mathematics. VSU will measure its success by comparing the student pass rate of SI courses to non-SI courses.
  - VSU will identify entering students who exhibit academic characteristics which suggest they are at-risk and flag the student record so that advisors and Student Success Center staff can provide intervention and support.
  - The Division of Athletics began an academic mentoring program with 22 students in Spring 2012. The average GPA of these students increased from 1.40 to 2.29; two of these students achieved a 3.0 GPA. This program will continue in 2012-13.
  - To better service our distance learners, we will hire a new position, Coordinator for eLearning, and refill the vacant Director for eLearning position.

- o **2-3 Year Goals.** In upcoming years, if data supports it, the Student Success Center will continue offering Supplemental Instructors and, if possible, expand that number of instructors and expand to service courses outside the Freshman Learning Community structure.
- o **Planning and Implementation.** The staff members of the VSU Student Success Center currently track tutoring appointments and will also implement and track the supplemental instructors program. Data Warehouse unit staff will mark the student record of those students considered at-risk.

Strategy 5: Transforming Remediation

MyFoundationsLab-

USG Strategic Goal 1

VSU Strategic Goal 1

- o **Objectives**. Provide online software preparation for students prior to taking the COMPASS test to decrease the number of remedial courses needed by non-traditional students.
- o **Current Status**. In Spring 2012, VSU piloted the MyFoundationsLab for 9 adult learners who needed remedial assistance in math and reading. The software has the potential to reduce students' remedial courses by one or two semesters and helps them find immediate placement in college courses.
- o **1-Year Goal.** Several USG institutions successfully use the MyFoundationsLab product. The Year 1 goal will be to negotiate a contract with Pearson and begin offering the product.
- o **2-3 Year Goals.** Subsequent year goals will be to study the success rate of students using the MyFoundationsLab product. Based upon reported data, VSU will decide whether to continue the product or pursue other options.
- o **Planning and Implementation.** The Admissions Office and Adult and Military Programs Office will identify prospective students prior to enrollment and recommend they pay the nominal fee to use the MyFoundationsLab software.

Strengthen Partnership with South Georgia College Entry Program-

USG Strategic Goals 4,6

VSU Strategic Goal 6

- o **Objectives**. Increase transfer students from the South Georgia College Entry Program which is located on the VSU campus.
- o **Current Status**. The Office of Admissions is strengthening the partnership between VSU and the South Georgia College Entry Program, located on the VSU campus. Fall 2011 applicants who were denied admission to VSU received a letter recommending that they enroll in the SGC Entry Program. To streamline this process, VSU Admissions directly forwarded the student's application materials to the Entry Program. This process resulted in an enrollment increase of over 100 students to the Entry Program in Fall 2011. Students who begin in the SGC College Entry Program and transfer to VSU are retained and graduate at higher levels than our traditional full-time freshman cohorts.
- o **1-Year Goal**. Evaluate the MOU for the services VSU provides to South Georgia College Entry Students.
- o **2-3 Year Goals**. Work with South Georgia College staff to determine space requirements for the growing program.
- o **Planning and Implementation**. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President Student Affairs will work with South Georgia College Entry Program director to identify growth needs.

Summer Bridge Program-

USG
Strategic
Goal 1

VSU
Strategic
Goal 1

- o **Objectives**. Develop a summer bridge program for at-risk freshman students.
- o **Current Status.** Preliminary discussion occurred during 2011-12. Other USG institutions use bridge programs, and results indicate that students who successfully complete these programs are retained at higher levels.
- o **1-Year Goal**. The Enrollment Management Unit plans to identify students who have shown the potential for success but fail to meet institutional minimum entrance requirements and encourage them to enroll in a summer academic preparation program. This summer program will require that they enroll in 6-8 hours and participate in a student success seminar. If students are successful in the bridge program, they will also be required to participate in a fall Freshman Learning Community. VSU plans its first summer program for Summer 2013 which will consist of approximately 75 students.
- o **2-3 Year Goals.** The goals are to increase the size of the program to 125 students and to provide students with a summer experience which immediately engages and provides them skills to be successful in college.
- o **Planning and Implementation.** The Enrollment Management unit will work with Academic Deans and the Student Success Center to offer summer coursework tailored to summer bridge scheduling.

Part IV: Ongoing Feedback and Evaluation

VSU's Offices of Enrollment Management, Strategic Research and Analysis, and Information Technology are working together to populate a data warehouse. Through this process, VSU will create various dashboards so that deans and department heads can have immediate access to important data, including data for Complete College America and USG Working Group Metrics. In addition to these new dashboards, numerous data portals currently exist which are applicable to various programs (i.e., Freshman Learning Communities portal).

The core members of VSU's Complete College Georgia team will serve as monitors of the plan and provide feedback to the USG on a frequent basis. We will also increase programming so that reports and email triggers can be automated to alert university personnel that student intervention is needed. Data and results will be shared often with institutional bodies (President's Cabinet, Deans' Council, Department Heads' Council, Planning and Budget Council) and at other opportunities such as fall and spring convocations and new faculty orientation and workshops.

Appendix A

Many stakeholders contributed to Valdosta State University's Complete College Georgia plan including:

- Dr. Karla M. Hull, Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Mr. Russell F. Mast, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
- Dr. Sharon L. Gravett, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of English
- Mr. Andy T. Clark, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management
- Dr. Michael M. Black, Interim Director, Strategic Research and Analysis
- Dr. Connie L. Richards, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
- Dr. Anita G. Hufft, Dean, College of Nursing
- Dr. L. Wayne Plumly, Dean, Langdale College of Business Administration
- Dr. John C. Gaston, Dean, College of the Arts
- Dr. Brian L. Gerber, Interim Dean, Dewar College of Education and Liaison for the Valdosta Early College Academy
- Dr. Alfred F. Fuciarelli, Dean of Graduate Studies, Assistant Vice President for Research, and QEP Coordinator
- Mr. Brian A. Haugabrook, Director of the Data Warehouse
- Mr. Joseph A. Newton, Director, Information Technology Division
- Dr. Gerald A. Merwin, Director of Adult and Military Programs and Associate Professor of Public Administration
- Dr. James T. Baxter, Professor of Chemistry
- Dr. Said Fares, Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science
- Dr. Gary Lynn Wood, Director, Center for Applied Research and Associate Professor of Chemistry
- Mr. Stanley Jones, Registrar
- Mr. Walter H. Peacock, Director of Undergraduate Admissions
- Mrs. Melinda B. Cutchens, Administrative Coordinator, Office of the President
- Dr. Chere L. Peguesse, Director of the Student Success Center, and Professor of English
- Ms. Ashley A. Myers, Director of the Freshman Learning Communities Program
- Mr. Terence A. Sullivan, Academic Advisor and Coordinator of the Supplemental Instructors Programs
- Dr. Ivan Nikolov, Director, Center for International Programs
- Mr. David L. Starling, Director, English Language Institute
- Dr. Shani P. Wilfred, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice
- Additional members of the Planning and Budget Council, Deans' Council, Department Heads' Council, President's Cabinet, General Education Council, and University Assessment Committee.