

THE SPECTATOR

August 27, 2015

Cut to the core

VSU reacts to faculty, staff layoffs

"The claim by our interim president that these cuts will not affect students' educational experiences is illogical; it is akin to telling someone that if they have five apples, and you take two, they will still have five apples."
-Professor

"These decisions are not regret having to take however, the responsibility to protect the health and to prepare for
-Cecil Staton, Int

Photo Illustration by

SUDOKU

THE SAMURAI OF PUZZLES By The Mepham Group

The sudoku grid consists of eighty-one squares in a nine by nine grid. To solve the sudoku, each square in the grid must contain a number between one and nine, with the following conditions:

- Each row of nine cells must contain each of the numbers from 1 to 9 once and only once.
- Each column of nine cells must contain each of the numbers from 1 to 9 once and only once.
- Each of the nine 3 by 3 boxes of nine cells must contain each of the numbers from 1 to 9

ANSWER ON PAGE 6

	7			6	3	9		
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OPINIONS

Our point of view...

Is our VSU degree worth the money?

Is our degree at VSU worth it now? We have had this question rumbling through our minds for a while now. This question first arose after the flag controversy. VSU was front and center of the media spotlight.

The bulb shining bright on that controversy eventually burned out, only to be replaced with a fresh bulb. This time, the drop in enrollment was center stage. With this drop in enrollment, 31 faculty and staff members have been laid off. Faculty and staff that have planted their roots in this southern college town; faculty and staff that have achieved scholastic accolade, grants for research, and even the biggest award—respect from the students.

Will all of these "stigmas" follow our degree when we walk across that stage? With everything happening at VSU, will our degree be stigmatized so badly that when we're being interviewed for CNN or The New York Times (we can dream), will the interviewer look at our education, snarl and not hire us?

No. Given everything that has happened, VSU is still a quality place

to earn an education. All of these issues may be at the forefront, but will surely not follow us across that stage.

But how are students supposed to believe this with a university on the verge?

Simple, the Blazer spirit needs to be reignited. Students need to

"Will all of these 'stigmas' follow my degree when I walk across that stage?"

know that they are valued here at VSU.

Administration is on the right track. They are claiming that students are at the core of their revamped approach to the future of VSU.

We, as an editorial staff and as students, want to see the results. We want to see that we are being taken into consideration. We want to see us, as students, at the forefront.

Ignite the fire that was burning bright with Blazer pride; and with that, we ran out of fire and Blazer analogies to write about.

This editorial was written by a member of the editorial staff and expresses the general opinion of The Spectator.

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Media bombarding citizens for good reason The overload of campaign information in media creates educated voters

Julia Rodriguez
STAFF WRITER
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The media has been frantic lately over the Presidential campaigns; however, the election date is over a year away. Some find this bombardment of information unnecessary, because it is so early. But, the coverage is important when preparing to have well informed voters.

Even if a voter is not following the campaign, they will still get pieces of information by hearing others talk about it, seeing commercials, etc. This is why putting the information out early is beneficial. The more time a voter has to hear what is going on, the more information they will have collected. A voter with proper knowledge of the candidates and their campaigns is likely to vote in the election. "To be honest, I would feel uncomfortable voting



Capitol Hill in Washington D.C., MCT Campus without

being uninformed," said Samuel Hoffman, a 21-year-old voter. "The American people should be up to speed on the policies and views of the candidates."

Knowing the candidates is especially important for U.S. citizens between the ages of 18 to 29. This age group is not well represented, because many of them don't vote. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, those 18 to 29 make up 20 percent of the U.S. population, however, only

45 percent of them vote. For comparison, those 65 and older make up only 13.4 percent of the population, yet, 72 percent of them vote.

Many U.S. citizens complain that the government is not giving attention to the issues that concern them. However, many of those same citizens are never putting in their say by voting. According to the American Presidency Project, in 2012 only 54.87 percent of the American population voted.

Early campaign coverage leads to more informed citizens which leads to more voters. The more voters there are the more people and groups that are represented.

All of the information that the media is putting out now may be a nuisance to some, but it is necessary to all. Even those who do not or cannot vote should be aware of what is going on in the country. A nation that makes its own decisions, should know what it is deciding on.

Bland another victim of police brutality

Tyra Mills
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Sandra Bland was 28, living in Chicago, and on her way to her new, dream job in Waller County.

She was pulled over for changing lanes without using a signal. The traffic stop was all caught on camera, and you can see tensions clearly rising between Bland and the officer.

He was upset that she gave him attitude and in the video, he asked her a lot of irrelevant questions about why she is irritated. His rude, sarcastic attitude mixed with her rising frustration created a less than ideal situation.

The officer proceeded to ask her to put out her cigarette. When she questioned he proceeded to open her car door and pull her out. Since when is that protocol? An angry Bland ends up being put

on the ground as she screams in agony. There was a struggle between the two, and she was taken into custody for "assault against a public servant."

The Houston Chronicle reported that Sheriff Glenn Smith was fired from his job as police chief in Hempstead, Texas, after allegations of racism were made against him and four of his officers. After he was fired in 2008, Smith was elected as sheriff of Waller County.

So, if there was excessive force used on Bland because she was black, I wouldn't be surprised. If a police officer has been fired over allegations of racism before, he shouldn't be allowed to work in the police force anywhere ever again.

On July 13, 2015, Bland was found hanging in her jail cell. Bland used a trash bag in her cell to hang herself from a partition, according to the sheriff, Glenn

Smith. The police say it was suicide while others find that very hard to believe. Why would she take her own life over a traffic violation? Bland's family and friends say there is no way she would do this.

Frankly, it hardly matters if she killed herself or not. The way she was treated during her traffic stop was ridiculous and unjustifiable. The last time I checked, it wasn't illegal to sass an officer.

Racial profiling is constantly happening between police officers and blacks in America. There are countless videos of Caucasian people being rude and completely out of line with officers, but it's almost rare that anything bad happens to them. There is clearly a difference between the way law enforcement treats minorities and the way they treat other people, and it needs to be put to an end immediately.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editors,
I know you're just getting started for the semester, and I hate to complain right as the new school year is beginning, but I couldn't help but notice that your first edition of the semester omitted the largest story in the university's last two decades: the summary firing of thirty-three university employees, thirty-one of them teachers and seven of them tenure-track teach-

ers, an act that is going to severely hurt your education and the reputation of the degree you ultimately receive from Valdosta State.
It seems like a strange omission. Along with those stories, you also included an interview with new interim university president Cecil Staton, author of the aforementioned firings, talking about his eagerness to hire new administration officials.

I realize that higher education is a strange minefield, and that there is a real disconnect in understanding between the students, the faculty, and the administration, but the students need to realize that when the administration grows at the expense of the faculty, the students are the ones who ultimately lose. This is a huge story. We are the victims of what seems to many to be a Draconian

right-wing hit job, and the only publication that hasn't reported it is the Spectator. There are, to be fair, reasonable arguments against that claim, and I think Dr. Staton has done a decent job of making his case (even though I disagree with it), but even those can't be presented if our university paper is being scooped by everyone else about something happening in its own backyard.

Reporting on the new president's desire to hire more admins without any critical commentary about the firing of faculty isn't a demonstration of independence. That being the case, I would either suggest that future changes to the paper's formatting eliminate claims of being the independent journalistic voice of the campus or that the Spectator use its independence to question officials

about the direction the university has taken, the lives that have been decimated because of that direction, and the consequences that will ultimately redound to the students who read your paper.
Sincerely,
Dr. Thomas Aiello
Department of History
and African American
Studies

See page 2 for all the ways to contact us and submit your letters to the Editor....

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August 17, 2015

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Layoffs really bite:

Debate rages over administration's cuts to faculty, staff



John Proer, Jordan Barola
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Two weeks into the 2015 fall semester, the VSU community is still adjusting to the announcement of the reduction in the size of the university's faculty and staff.

Prior to the start of the school year, 31 university employees were informed that their contracts would not be renewed as of July 1, 2016. The affected employees will serve out the rest of the current fiscal year before they will have to find work elsewhere.

These staff reductions come after an exhaustive slew of events that contributed to a significant decline in enrollment. A high-profile student protest which received national attention, along with a number of campus crime incidents, coupled with the influence from competing colleges and universities has led to a nearly 10 percent drop in incoming freshmen for the current school year.

The VSU administration is attributing the cuts to this decline.

"These decisions were taken because VSU's enrollment has declined from 13,000 to approximately 11,250 this fall," said Interim President Cecil P. Staton, who replaced former president William McKinney in July. "When the university has fewer students, we need fewer faculty and staff. It is that simple. We cannot afford the same sized faculty and staff without running deficits and we are not allowed to do that by state law."

Although a drop in enrollment could justify the staff cuts, the timing and manner in which the reductions were handed down has left many in the VSU community doubtful and suspicious of the administration's motive.

"The administration touts the oversimplified motto, 'we have fewer students, we need fewer professors, it's a[s] simple as that.' But it isn't as simple as that. These were blanket cuts made regardless of student to teacher ratios, and with a free pass to all professional staff (aka bureaucrats), administrators (and sports)," said Assistant Professor of Biology Dr. Joshua Reese.

"The claim by our interim president that these cuts will not affect students' educational experiences is illogical; it is akin to telling someone that if they have five apples, and you take two, they will still have five apples."

Dr. Cy Mott
Assistant Professor of
Biology

Dr. Reese is one of the 31 faculty and staff members whose contract will not be renewed next summer.

The question of whether layoffs were the only solution has also been raised. Dr. Stephanie Hinnershitz, an assistant professor in the history department, was another of the faculty members to receive bad news.

"I do think there could have been some more investigation into other areas to cut," said Hinnershitz. "A lot of schools and universities do furloughs so that lay-offs like these are a last resort. Other members of the campus community suggested that cuts in administrative pay could have saved at least a few jobs, while others argue that perhaps some cuts in the athletics budget could have helped, as well."

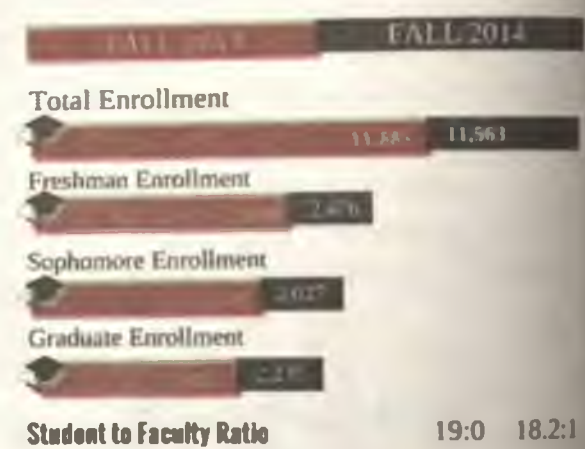
Although there were cuts across departments, the College of Arts and Sciences saw the most reductions.

"It is true that the College of Arts and Sciences experienced the largest number of position reductions, but this is because approximately 43,000 of the total credit hours lost (48,651), were from within that college," said Dr. Staton.

On Wednesday, Dr. Staton responded to what he referred to as "misinformation" regarding the administration's actions.

"It is incorrect to say that these decisions were taken

CHANGE IN ENROLLMENT FROM FALL 13' & 14'



Graphic by Kayla Stroud/THE SPECTATOR

without the input of department heads, deans, or department chairs," he said. "All were asked to look carefully at their areas, their missions, and then follow the law and University System of Georgia and VSU policies and procedures before making recommendations. That process was followed and honored at every point."

How this will affect the university moving forward is up for debate. Some of the downsized faculty are concerned that students will be adversely affected by the cuts, while Dr. Staton states that this will not be the case.

"Given that these reductions are based on reduced enrollment no hardships or reductions in service to students is anticipated," said Dr. Staton.

While this reassurance could be seen as a sign of relief, some members of the VSU community beg to differ.

"The claim by our interim president that these cuts will not affect students' educational experiences is illogical; it is akin to telling someone that if they have five apples, and you take two, they will still have five apples," said Dr. Cy Mott, Assistant Professor of Biology.

Dr. Staton will make an appearance today at the Faculty Senate meeting at 3:30 in the University Center where the reductions will be on the agenda.

LaShawn Oglesby
COLLEGE LIFE EDITOR
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Virtual lines are now part of VSU's financial aid office. This was made possible by a program called QLess. QLess allows you to get a place in line without waiting in line physically. To get a number, users can go through their cell phones—as long as they receive texts—computers, or a desk set up in the office. With the exception of the number, users can be anywhere when they call a number. Afterwards,

Spanish
now a
online

Zenobia Harris
COPY EDITOR
znharris@valdosta.edu

VSU students can now earn their Bachelor of Arts degree in French or Spanish online through the University System of Georgia's eMajor program.

The program is supported by the Georgia Department of Education in line with Georgia's "Move Ahead" initiative that targets adults with a high school diploma but no college credits to go back to school and earn a degree. Whether online or on campus, students can complete their degree.

"This program links to open access to VSU programs and the online availability of courses," said Dr. Ana Victoria Soady, department head of Modern and Classical Languages.

For traditional students, the program gives you 24-hour access to study when it is best for you. Military personnel and veterans cannot come to a campus for a semester, it means that you can complete a language requirement without the input of department heads, deans, or department chairs," he said. "All were asked to look carefully at their areas, their missions, and then follow the law and University System of Georgia and VSU policies and procedures before making recommendations. That process was followed and honored at every point."

Besides the Bachelor of Arts degrees, there are several other eMajor programs offered to students including Spanish or French, and Professional Certificate programs.

Dr. Soady says that the program is a great opportunity and signing bonuses are one of the reasons why professional students are choosing to complete any major—Head

Visit the
at T

SPECTECH

No more waiting in line for financial aid

LaShawn Oglesby
COLLEGE LIFE EDITOR
lsoglesby@valdosta.edu

Virtual lines are now part of VSU's financial aid office. This was made possible by a program called QLess. QLess allows users to get a place in line without waiting in line physically. To obtain a number, users can go through their cell phones—as long as it receives texts—computers, or the kiosk set up in the office.

With the exception of the kiosk, users can be anywhere when taking a number. Afterwards, users

can wait to be called anywhere and won't lose their place as long as they are in the office at the time they are called. Students are free to leave the financial aid office and the building while waiting on their numbers to be called.

Julian Vickers, operations manager for processing in the Office of Financial Aid, was tasked with helping students and staff in making the waiting process more effective for time management and reducing stress. With this program, users can receive real-time information like updates and wait time predictions from the financial aid office.

This means that users can go to other parts of the campus and off campus to do other things like attend class or grab some lunch. They have to be back in the office when their number is called. The updates and predictions are sent to users via text, so users can manage their wait time more productively than before.

"The system has proven to be very effective so far at streamlining the lines into our main lobby. As we continue to tweak and develop the queuing structure, that efficiency will only increase," Vickers said.

No profile or fee is required in

order to use QLess, and it was paid for with existing university operating funds. The cost per user will only be pennies if the system becomes expanded throughout the VSU campus. The kiosk at the financial aid office uses English only, but can support additional languages if needed.

"One of the great benefits of the system is that the more widespread its use, the more cost effective it becomes. So we are hoping that it performs well and that it is a hit with the students, so we can expand its use," Vickers said.

There are many other benefits to this system according to the

QLess website. Reducing contagion is one of those benefits. With less crowding, students and staff are less likely to spread or catch a cold and other illness with the use of this system.

"There has been some interest expressed from other departments regarding QLess, but I can't speak for them at this time," Vickers said. "I will say that if the test in Financial Aid goes well, then it would be a very cost-effective solution to helping end one of the most aggravating problems facing the students here on campus."

Spanish, French now available as online degree

Zenobia Harris
COPY EDITOR
znharris@valdosta.edu

VSU students can now earn their Bachelor of Arts degree in French or Spanish online through the University System of Georgia's eMajor program.

The program is supposed to be all in line with Georgia's "Go Back. Move Ahead" initiative that targets adults with a desire to go back to school and encourages them to enroll in college—whether online or on campus—to complete their degree.

"This program links the familiar open access to VSU professors to online availability of language study," said Dr. Ana Victoria Soady, department head for Modern and Classical Languages. "For traditional students it truly does give you 24-hour access to study when it is best for you. For military personnel and those who cannot come to a campus for any reason, it means that you can complete a language requirement, or add foreign languages to your major with great convenience."

Besides the Bachelor of Arts degrees, there are several French and Spanish eMajor programs offered to students including minors in Spanish or French, Spanish for Professionals Certificate among others.

Dr. Soady says that the hiring edge and signing bonuses are two reasons why professionals from any major—Health, Busi-

ness, Psychology, etc.—could benefit from knowing a foreign language, and it's beneficial to job candidates who "can read the new multilingual and multicultural world and be a part of it."

A study by the Department of Labor shows that about 25,000 jobs have been opening up for interpreters and translators starting in 2010 and continuing through 2020. According to CNN, there are also opportunities for people who speak more than one language to earn high salaries with different intelligence communities such as the military and CIA in the Middle East and Africa.

With constant advances being made in social media and interactive programming, students now have the tools to complete almost any course from the comfort of their home with the familiarity of an actual classroom which makes it possible for students to earn online degrees in subjects such as foreign language.

Dr. Soady says that students can expect to use a variety of interactive speaking software while completing an eMajor program in Spanish or French including one-on-one live discussion, Talk Abroad with native speakers, Skype, and collaborate sessions with other students and professors.

In addition to Spanish and French, VSU offers several eMajor programs including Legal Assistant Studies, Office Administration and Technology, and Organizational Leadership.



VSU introduced a new homepage that includes more video and easier navigation.

VSU unveils new homepage

Tatyana Phelps
MANAGING EDITOR
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Students who visit the VSU homepage may have noticed that things look a bit different than they did when the Spring 2015 semester ended.

"This is an exciting improvement to our university's first impression," Keith Warburg, assistant director of creative services, announced in an email to VSU students when the new webpage was going live.

There have been several changes made to the homepage. One of the first things visitors will notice on the webpage is the large video slideshow. The new slideshow displays what is happening at VSU for admissions, news and announcements.

"(Creative services) work in the same division as the vice president and all the folks at admissions, advising and in the registrars office to try to coordinate everything we're doing in a marketing and communications perspective for the university with our enrollment folks," Warburg said. "We just try to make sure we're doing everything we can to get new students here and to keep the students that we currently have.

"On the other side of the coin, we really wanted to look at who our audience was," Warburg said. "We realized that the homepage that we were using was trying to show all things to all people. So, to have all the links to faculty and staff, all the way to a current student all the way to a future student. What it ended up being was sort of overwhelming for everyone."

Other more subtle changes include quick links that take visitors to the pages most often visited; larger links that are easier to read and more mobile-friendly; an improved footer containing links to VSU social media pages, contact information, and popular resources; fewer external links; an updated navigation and much more.

This has been the first major redesign the homepage has gone through in three years. The first start was updating the myVSU page six months ago.

"We last redesigned our homepage in 2012, with a mild color update last year in 2014, and we decided that it was just about that time to kind of take it another look at it to see what works with it," Warburg said. "Our main thing to look at was to make sure that the website works on mobile, on your tablet, your phone—any

"This is an exciting improvement to our university's first impression."

Keith Warburg
Assistant Director
of Creative Services

different sized monitor that you're using."

Although several things are different about the VSU homepage, some aspects are not affected by the redesign.

"While these changes will not affect bookmarks or internal pages, we encourage you to continue using MyVSU as your homepage if you are faculty, staff, or a current student," Warburg said. "If you are a Cascade user, don't worry; your pages will not be affected."

The new homepage design was all the work of VSU Creative Services, including Keith Warburg; Ashley Williams, web designer; Bobby Lacey, web designer; and Gary Kuhlmann, webmaster.

"We're excited about it," Warburg said. "We've gotten good reviews, so people are interacting with it. I think it's a huge success."

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by Stroud/THE SPECTATOR reads, deans, or department heads to look carefully at the law and then follow the law and VSU policies and procedures. That process was not.

University moving forward is up to the faculty and are concerned about the cuts, while it will be the case.

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be seen as a sign of relief. Community beg to differ. It is evident that these cuts will be experienced as illogical; it is not five apples, and it is not five apples," said Dr. Cyndy.

conference today at the Faculty Center where the

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Unscramble the words below to reveal answers for each word search.

HINT: Each answer is a U.S. state.

1. MALABAA _____
2. HUTA _____
3. RALEWADE _____
4. LARIDOF _____
5. KAMAHOLO _____
6. SANKARAS _____
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Sudoku Answers

1	7	5	8	2	6	3	9
6	9	2	4	3	1	8	5
3	4	8	9	7	5	6	2
4	6	9	7	1	8	2	3
7	5	3	2	6	9	1	4
2	8	1	3	5	4	7	6
9	1	6	5	8	2	4	7
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8	3	4	6	9	7	5	1

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 all at once.

If you find you...
 keep KARMA in mind...

Run Bl

Stuart Price
 Staff Writer
stprice@valdosta.edu

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Build KARMA, aid others

Kenzie Kesselring

Opinions Editor

kkesselring@valdosta.edu

Want to create some good karma for yourself? Consider taking VSU's two credit course, KARMA. KARMA is a course offered every fall and spring on campus that grants students the opportunity to become a peer mentor.

KARMA, which stands for knowledge, awareness, respect, maturity and achievement, teaches students how to effectively help their fellow students deal with difficult situations such as eating disorders, substance abuse issues, mental health issues, HIV/AIDS and much more.

The KARMA class is a long standing tradition on VSU's campus. The class has been offered for the last 18 years and contributes so much to the VSU community.

Through grants given to the program, previous KARMA students were able to attend a seminar on how to affectively reduce drunk drivers around the Valdosta community. They have also participated in Sexual Assault Awareness Month by having an information booth for students. These students also help with VSU's annual Safe Spring Break and the VSU Health Fair put on by the Health Center every year.

The KARMA students are also given the opportunity to teach their classmates about a subject that is important to them, or they can teach something that they just learned about through the end of the semester project. These projects are an amazing way to educate fellow students outside of the classroom through seminars, informational flyers, or forums.

KARMA is a great class for Resident's Assistants, organization leaders, or anyone looking to learn how to help a student in need. Becoming a peer mentor while also receiving two credit hours is a great way to give back to yourself, your friends, and your VSU community all at once.

If you find yourself looking for an extra class in the spring, keep KARMA in mind.

Run Blazers! Run!

Stuart Price

Staff Writer

stprice@valdosta.edu

VSU Campus Wellness and the city of Valdosta will host the 10th annual 5K Blazer Dash and 2nd annual Youth Splash this Saturday, August 29th at 7 a.m. The participants will meet in front of the VSU Recreational Center and follow a course through the nearby streets. The event is open to all VSU students, staff, and faculty as well as the community of Valdosta.

Registration for the race is \$20 any time before the event, but it is \$25 the day of the event. This price includes a t-shirt. However, if you want to claim the title of a "ghost runner," you can buy the shirts without participating in the event for \$15. There are also group discounts available.

If you register with ten or more people, registration is just \$15 each. Students can register for the 5K Blazer Dash in the University Center or online.

"We're really hoping to open up and connect the VSU community and the community of Valdosta, and we think this will be a great way to do that," Grace Delacruz, board member of the Blazer Dash said.

VSU has collaborated with local companies such as Blanton Commons, Chick-fil-A, and Barberito's to host the 10th annual 5K Blazer Dash. Awards will be given to the overall male and female winners and the top three male and female finishers. Youth Splash participants will receive ribbons, and an award will be given to the overall male and female winners.

Food delivery; A college student's lifeline

Aldean Starr

STAFF WRITER

astarr@valdosta.edu

Jimmy John's: Jimmy John's is a sandwich restaurant that has a reputation for great delivery.

Jimmy John's sandwiches are plain slims, 8-inch subs, giant clubs and its premiere sandwich is the "J.J. Gargantuan". Jimmy John's offers the best delivery fee at 25 cents and has no minimum price amount for delivery.

Domino's: Domino's is a pizza joint that is known for its taste and prices. Domino's has a delivery fee of \$1.99, and the minimum amount for them to deliver is at least \$9.50. Domino's is popular

on campus for its student prices and late business hours.

Papa John's: Papa John's is a pizza joint that specializes in flavor and great deals. It has a delivery fee of \$2.25 and requires a customer to buy a minimum amount of \$10.00.

Marco's: Marco's is a pizza joint that is known for its tasty pizza, but the prices are known to be high. The delivery fee is \$2.50 and a customer must spend a minimum of \$9.00.

Garden Cafe: Garden Cafe is a Chinese cafeteria that offers a large portion of food, and it has great flavor. It has a delivery fee of \$2.00 and requires customers to spend a minimum of \$10.00 for

delivery.

Hunan House: Hunan House is a Chinese cafeteria that offers great prices and fast delivery which makes it a popular choice. It has a delivery fee of \$3.00 and requires a customer to spend \$12.00 in order for them to deliver.

Blazin' Wingz: Blazin' Wingz is a restaurant that specializes in wings but it also has tenders and chicken sandwiches. Blazin' Wingz is very popular for students at VSU, because it has great wings. The delivery fee is \$1.50, and customers must spend a minimum amount of \$10.00 for delivery.



Photo taken by Aldean Starr, Photo Illustration by Stella Henderson

If there is one thing that college kids appreciate, it is pizza. In college, pizza is considered to be one of the five food groups.

10th Annual BlazerDash

Saturday, August 29 • 7:00 AM

Registration fee includes T-shirt and race entry.

5K Registration Fees

- \$20 Regular Registration (If by 6:00 PM, Friday, August 28)
- \$25 Day of Race Registration (Begins at 6:00 a.m.)
- \$15 Per Person Group Rate

One Mile Youth Splash Walk / Run Registration

- \$10 All Participants (Youth T-Shirts Only, Begins at 8:00 a.m.)

Location

VSU Campus, Student Recreation Building, 1300 Sustella Avenue

Questions?

Dylan Volpintesta
dsvolpintesta@valdosta.edu
229-333-5898

Register Online @

www.valdosta.edu/blazerdash



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VS CUMBERLAND

OCTOBER 3 2:00 P.M. GSC
VS NORTH ALABAMA

Previous NFL star defends VSU

Aldean Starr
STAFF WRITER
astarr@valdosta.edu

The VSU football team made some changes to the coaching staff this offseason that is headlined by the signing of new defensive coordinator Chad Williams from Blazers rival West Georgia.

Williams will be the third defensive coordinator at Valdosta State in three years, W after coach Bubba Walker left this offseason for a position at Colquitt County high school.

The Blazers are currently ranked No. 16 in the American Football Coaches Association and Williams plans to use his coaching and NFL experience to lead the Blazers to the top by the end of this season.

Williams was an all-conference safety for multiple years at the University of Southern Mississippi.

His accomplishments in college helped him become a sixth round pick in the NFL draft. He spent five years in the NFL playing for the Baltimore Ravens, San Francisco 49ers and Kansas City Chiefs before he pursued his coaching career.

Williams gained experience on the staff of Jacksonville State and Middle Tennessee State as a graduate assistant. Williams also had the chance to coach at the high school level and Morehouse College before his latest job at West Georgia in which he was the special team's coordinator and linebackers coach.

When Williams was asked about why he would leave a West Georgia squad that is ranked ahead of the Blazers in the Gulf South Conference and actually knocked the Blazers out of playoff contention last season, Williams, made it clear it was a better opportunity.

Williams expressed how the Blazers have a great football tradition and he has the opportunity to help students grow on and off the field. He also



Courtesy of Valdosta.edu

First year defensive coach Chad Williams joins the Blazers after leaving UWG. He previously played in the NFL.

expressed how the defensive coordinator position offers more opportunity to call plays and gain recognition than the special team's coordinator position. Williams also mentioned how impressed he has been with the whole defensive unit and does not plan to make drastic changes. He does look forward to help improve the defensive unit's fundamentals and techniques. As far as scheme, he mentioned the Blazers should look similar but play faster and tougher and will still be running a 4-3 alignment.

Williams defense looked impressive during their first official scrimmage this preseason in which they dominated by forcing three and outs on the first five drives by playing fast and flying all over the field.

When Williams was asked about individuals that had the biggest influence on him and what the NFL taught him, Williams responded by mentioning the names Tyrone Nix, Rex Ryan and Mike Nolan. He spoke on how these mentors and the NFL taught him principles of how to play the game and what it takes to be a leader and gain friendships throughout the profession.

Williams will get his debut as defensive coordinator for the No.16 ranked Blazers against Albany State where the Blazers are favored to win this game.

Future athletes Meet the Blazers on the soccer field

Lia Armistead
ASST. SPORTS EDITOR
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Each year, the Valdosta State Athletic department collaborates with Zaxby's for an event called "Meet the Blazer's" for kids in kindergarten through eighth grade who are interested in sports.

All athletic teams participate in Meet the Blazers before the beginning of each season.

The event is an hour long camp that has players and coaches working together to form multiple activities for kids to compete in during that time.

These activities include basic skills for the sport, short scrimmages, and fun games for every age group.

Last Saturday, the Lady Blazers soccer team participated in Meet the Blazers in which 50 kids showed up for the fun.

"It's a great opportunity for the community to get to know the team and program here at VSU," Rebecca Nolin, head coach, said.

Both the team and coaches get excited to host the event each year, in order to encourage young athletes to find a passion in sports, meet new people in the same age group, and have a good time while doing it.

The event is a laid back camp in which both the participants and the VSU players can let loose and have fun, bonding together at the same time.

"[The best part is] seeing all the kids get excited to meet the girls and to hear the kids tell us they will be coming to the



Lia Armistead/TTHESPECTATOR

Goalkeeper and senior Mccall Gardner cheers for one of her athletes at the Meet the Blazers Event on Aug. 22. The camp was held for kindergarten through eighth grade kids to get a chance to learn more about soccer and get to know Blazer athletes.

games," Nolin said. "The young ladies are role models for many of these kids so they take that very seriously and want to make the kids experience as positive as possible."

The program is so popular among young kids that many come back year after year, as they did this year, according to Nolin.

At the beginning of the event each participant receives a t-shirt sponsored by Zaxby's and the athletic department.

These t-shirts are the kids "free

ticket" into the first Lady Blazer game, encouraging them to come out and support the team, as long as they are wearing the shirt.

Nolin hopes to continue the ongoing VSU tradition next year and years to come, as well as participating in many community service events with her team throughout the year.

The Blazer's football team and coaches will be taking part in their Meet the Blazers event this Saturday at 9 a.m. at the field house.

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TWO WAYS TO CATCH UP ON
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