

**ANNUAL REPORT OF INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS**

**FY 1999**

**VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**to**

**THE CHANCELLOR**

**and**

**THE BOARD OF REGENTS**

**of the**

**UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### SECTION A

Summary of Major Institutional Accomplishments . . . . . 1

### SECTION B

Annual Progress in Institutional Strategic Planning . . . . . 6

### SECTION C

Annual Progress in Assessing Institutional Effectiveness. . . . . 7

### SECTION D

Retention and Graduation Rates . . . . . 10

### SECTION E

Overall Institutional Health . . . . . 11

## 1998-99 Annual Report of Institutional Progress

### *Section A: Summary of Major Institutional Accomplishments*

During the 1998-99 academic year, Valdosta State University maintained and enhanced its position as a learning community distinguished by its dedication to student success. For the fourth consecutive year, VSU was invited to send a team to the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) Summer Academy focusing upon the theme of learning communities and organizational change to enhance learning. In VSU's learning community, there is a "level field" where students make important contributions to scholarship and to life on campus. Staff is recognized as having important insights into new ways of doing business.

The University made strong advances in the areas of teaching and learning this year. Semester conversion involved a rigorous examination of every degree program at all levels. Many faculty became involved in interdisciplinary work through teaching the new perspectives courses in Area B (Institutional Options) of the core curriculum. Each course was developed by an interdisciplinary team and includes regional and global dimensions.

Despite semester conversion, some colleges and departments experienced growth. For example, the College of Business Administration experienced a substantial increase in student credit hours. A similar, though not quite so dramatic, increase in majors occurred in the College of the Arts.

This year, VSU awarded six Ed.D. degrees to the first cohort of doctoral students. The University also awarded 323 Master's degrees and 36 Education Specialists degrees. The College of Education began a collaborative external doctoral degree with Albany State University in Secondary Education, Curriculum and Instructional Technology. The Master of Accountancy (MAcc) program enrollment more than tripled and enrollment in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program reached capacity. The new Master of Science in Criminal Justice program completed its first year of coursework. The College of Nursing implemented the RN to MSN option; eight students are enrolled in this option and will earn both the BSN and MSN in the accelerated program. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and the Board of Regents have approved a collaborative effort to offer the VSU Master of Social Work degree on Albany State University's campus beginning in the fall semester of 1999. In the College of the Arts, a new Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design degree program was approved by the Board of Regents.

This was the first full year of operation of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. The Center is home to the Regents' Distinguished Professor and Fellows from each of VSU's colleges/divisions. Among many activities, two workshops were held on the topic of developing and using teaching portfolios and WebCT.

Early in the fall semester, it became clear that many students wanted to register for additional semester hours. The central administration initiated a one-time program called "Take Three On Us." The program involved full-time VSU students registering in October for three additional hours from courses taught primarily by administrators. The courses were quite popular with students, and the Office of University Relations received a CASE award for it.

GSAMS courses, off-campus courses, and web-based instruction are an important part of a regional university's mission. VSU increased total GSAMS course enrollments for the year to 3,338 (1,391 fall semester/1,435 spring semester/512 summer semester 1999). These classes were offered at twelve locations by 108 faculty. The College of Education began offering a number of external graduate degrees at Ware County High School and at Charlton County schools; the focus of these degrees was "School Improvement." VSU continued offering as external degrees at two military bases: the Bachelor of Science in Technical, Trade and Industrial Education, Masters of Public Administration, and/or Masters of Education in Adult and Vocational Education. The College of Arts and Sciences is increasing its web-based curricular activities. The City Management track of the MPA program was developed to be delivered totally on-line in FY 2000.

At Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, VSU course enrollments increased to approximately 500. Student registration was initiated via the internet, the General Studies degree program was upgraded to include a primary concentration area and two secondary fields of study, and a nursing degree program initiated. VSU assumed total operation of the base library.

The Office of Public Services along with academic departments (psychology, family therapy, social work, vocational education, and music) provided service to the region by offering professional courses and activities leading to continuing education units. The Office of Public Services and the Telecommunications/Satellite Unit produced and broadcast 24 one-hour programs on preparation for the SAT in response to a survey of school superintendents in our service area. The Satellite Services Unit also produced and broadcast throughout Georgia the first in a three-course sequence on teaching English as a second language. The series of six programs features "Jeopardy" style questions and two four-student teams. This is the only program of its kind for students at two-year institutions.

Service learning is becoming an important feature of student life on campus. The Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning sponsored a Service-Learning Task Force, composed of faculty interested in service learning. This task force developed a working definition of service learning and designed a service learning inventory that was distributed to all faculty during the spring semester.

The College of Arts and Sciences continued to provide conferences and programs that address significant issues and concerns. The Third Annual Women's Studies Conference grew and attracted participants of national and international renown, and the Third Annual African American Lecture Series and the Second Biennial Writers' Conference drew large audiences. These activities also emphasized the College's on-going strong commitment to meeting regional needs and to diversity and internationalization.

The College of the Arts improved the artistic awareness of the VSU service region. The Valdosta Symphony Orchestra expanded its season to include a sold-out subscription series, two special event concerts, touring concerts, and new family series concerts. Six youth concerts were given for area schools on special morning schedules in Whitehead Auditorium. There were three youth orchestras organized by age and experience. The "Tunes for Tots" performances for younger children and a Valdosta Symphony Orchestra Honors Youth Orchestra are recent innovations. The South Georgia String Project continued to expand, making string instruction available to students at the elementary and middle school level.

The Jekyll Island Musical Theatre Festival's tenth season, a cooperative venture between VSU and the Jekyll Island Authority, was short due to semester conversion, but the performances were exceptional with increasing attendance per play. Planning is in progress for the renovation of the Gould Building to provide indoor facilities for summer theatre and other cultural events.

Other outreach programs of the College of the Arts include traveling exhibitions, theatre tours, music performances, the Fine Arts Academy, and numerous other initiatives (clinics, conferences, workshops, debate invitationals). In addition, the Folklife/Folkarts project sought to research, document, record, photograph, and video tape the ephemeral indigenous arts and folkcrafts of our region. ArtSouth, an outreach arm of the College of the Arts, sought to develop community support groups for the academic and performance entities of the College throughout South Georgia. Its 10 support groups composed of 200 members raised over \$200,000 this year.

There were nine exhibitions in the Fine Arts Gallery which over 7,000 students and adults visited during the year. The Annual South Georgia Regional Art Conference was held in January 1999. Fourteen workshops were presented by art faculty members, area art educators, and art students, and there were 100 students from regional high schools and 15 art educators in attendance. Communication Arts faculty conducted a high school regional 1-AA championship debate tournament and hosted the British National Debate Team. The theatre programs' Children's Theatre Tour traveled to perform 30 times in area schools.

One of the institution's strengths is its Information Technology (IT) Division which is the center for the provision of computing services, information and network support for the VSU community. Its staff of 27 microcomputer and network specialists, programmers, technical coordinators and managers, plus 6-8 student hires, have become parts of the university fabric. During FY99, for example, IT led the planning, specification, purchase and installation of over \$3.1 million in computer and network equipment and components. IT also administers and/or supports all of the Chancellor's Technology Initiatives and related funding, manages the \$625,000 in annual ETACT funds, and insures that those monies go directly to the instructional and research activities of the institution.

IT continued to operate one of the largest computer centers in the USG, running three mainframe "type" Hewlett Packard servers supporting Banner, CUFA and PeopleSoft systems at or near 100% availability with over 250 customers "logged-on" at any given time. In addition to this activity the MIS staff of IT met over 50 requests for special reports or data extracts from the Banner Student and Financial Aid systems, as well as supporting 20,000 student registrations via the Web and telephone. The IT HELP-Desk received almost 7,500 calls in FY99, which resulted in dispatching technical staff to some 5,200 on-site service jobs. The IT network staff continued their efforts in upgrading the campus-wide network to the much faster ATM environment, responded to 80 service calls, and installed over 900 new wall "jacks" to serve added computers in labs and new buildings.

In the Division of Social Work, CARE-NET extended its service region to 18 counties and reached over 800 people for various services, including referrals and support groups. A national Caregivers' Conference was held and over 200 people attended. Training programs have included two statewide conferences.

Special Services served 321 students in the fall and 291 students in the spring. Accommodations included 360 cases of extended time, 128 cases of scribe services, and 72 cases of reader services. Regents Test accommodations were arranged for 37 students. Blazer VIP's was established as a volunteer

organization to assist with the program. Seven volunteer VIP orientation workshops were conducted, and 44 volunteers were trained.

Air Force ROTC Detachment 172 cadets organized three separate blood drives, and 242 pints of blood were collected. They also held a POW/MIA vigil on campus.

The Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Education offered 91 programs to 4,507 students and reached an additional 3,300 students through campus-wide events. Career Services established contact with 1,425 students via class/group presentations, conducted 386 individual career counseling sessions, and hosted on-campus interviews and career fairs representing a combined participation level of 283 employers and 1,350 students. Career Services forwarded 2,652 employer requested resumes to 185 organizations and forwarded 796 student requested resumes to 547 organizations. The Counseling Center provided individual and group counseling to a total of 811 individuals with over 1,952 client contact hours. The Office of Financial Aid disbursed \$23,464,840 in Federal Direct Loans, \$6,582,799 in HOPE Scholarships, and \$5,124,318 in Pell, \$370,000 in SEOG. Students earned \$370,000 in the Work-Study Program. The Office of Housing and Residence Life completed the second consecutive year without the need for a Residence Hall Judicial Hearing. Occupancy was maintained at 100% for the sixth consecutive year, and Residence Life offered 794 activities for 17,927 attendees. Student Health provided acute, routine, and preventive care to 16,589 patients, performed 4,760 laboratory tests, filled 10,731 prescriptions, and provided 227 Female Wellness Physicals and overnight care for 10 patients. The Campus Activities Board sponsored over 100 programs during the year. Attendance at CAB events totaled 17,044 for the year.

The Odum Library is at the heart of the learning community. This year collections added 9,198 volumes, increasing the book collection to 413,439, while reserve item circulation increased 41% (from 5,936 to 9,416) and login activity on GALILEO increased 26%. Reference personnel taught a total of 203 classes which reached 5,273 students, a 17% increase. Network/Phone line upgrades were completed in the Library and the existing 10 MB/sec Ethernet network upgraded to a switched 10/100 MB/sec Ethernet network with ATM 155 MB/sec fiber optic backbone. Academic Systems mathematics software was installed by request from OASIS. The Library's Web page was revised to increase access and make searching easier. Multi-media computer workstations for viewing reference and government document CD-ROMS increased from one to four. Federal Documents processed increased by 27% and the number of Georgia documents processed by 138%.

## *Section B: Annual Progress in Institutional Strategic Planning*

Significant accomplishments and excellent progress occurred toward all University goals. Of special importance are the FY 2001 standards strongly enhancing the goal of providing a quality education. In FY 1996, 63.7% of freshmen met system admissions requirements. Through diligent efforts, 97.3% met standards in FY 1999. This strong base of entering freshmen encouraged faculty to redouble their efforts to fulfill long-term goals of incorporating technology and faculty development. Thirty-five faculty qualified for summer stipends to develop the infusion of high technology into their existing classes. One attained goal, to convert from the quarter to the semester system, has been further amplified to continue a rigorous examination of every degree program at all levels in support of new System program assessment requirements.

The Valdosta State University Institutional Planning Committee (IPC) completed its review of existing strategic planning. Twenty-two five-year goals and 13 university goals are now subsumed into the eight Strategic Goals below:

### **1. To Provide a Quality Education**

Put forth a comprehensive quality curriculum in all degree programs in order to meet the needs of students in this region.

### **2. To Encourage Cultural Diversity**

Promote global and cultural awareness and an appreciation for human diversity. Recruit students from a diverse background.

### **3. To Recruit and Retain Qualified Students and Outstanding Faculty, Staff and Administrators.**

Seek a qualified student body and promote student retention and graduation; attract and retain talented and diverse faculty, staff, and administrators committed to the mission of the University.

### **4. To Continue to Grow as a Distinguished Regional University**

Perform research, scholarship, service, continuing education and creative work that meets regional needs, and supports academic excellence.

### **5. To Improve the Effectiveness and Performance of the Institution**

Maintain a strategic plan to guide the development and improvement of institutional programs, facilities, services, and budgeting; develop policies and procedures accommodating new Regents' policy.

### **6. To Identify and Support Areas of Excellence**

Encourage the growth of singularly effective programs of quality where VSU's leadership can best be utilized.



#### **7. To Increase Funding Sources**

Search for additional public and private funding to achieve higher goals and aspirations than can be achieved through Board of Regents funding alone.

#### **8. To Make an Institutional Commitment to Act**

All at Valdosta State University shall seek to turn these goals into accomplishments using effective assessments to continuously improve.

In Academic Year 1999-2000, the IPC will complete a new Strategic Plan in support of the University's mission statement.

#### ***Section C: Annual Progress in Assessing Institutional Effectiveness***

VSU has focused its efforts on quality enhancement, student success, regional service, and strategic planning to improve institutional effectiveness. Dynamic degree programs, new admission standards, and further enhancements to technology were important aspects of the University's development. New programs in peer mentoring, supplemental instruction in high-risk classes, and the first year experience are designed to improve student retention and success. VSU collaborated with its regional two-year partner institutions in south Georgia to create the South Georgia Regional Education Consortium on the VSU campus. The University continued to stress the importance of applied research by faculty and their students, regional service to improve the quality of life in our service area, and awareness of global/international issues. VSU has supported (through OIT and Project Millennium) the development of advanced uses of technology to create new ways of teaching, learning, and transacting business. The University has been successful in using sponsored research (grants and contracts) and developing foundation support to further its initiatives, endeavors consistent with the goals of the University System of Georgia and of the criteria by regional and disciplinary accrediting organizations.

The College of Education enacted a number of curriculum and program changes. A report to the Board of Regents was submitted in May that documented VSU's progress in implementing the principles. The College of Education established Partner School agreements between selected P-12 schools and VSU teacher education programs. Five discipline study groups began the complex task of determining what subject matter knowledge teachers need to know. Each discipline group consists of faculty from Arts and Sciences, Arts, Education, and the public schools. This past year each of the five discipline groups dealing with Education used national and state (Georgia Department of Education's Quality Core Curriculum) standards, PRAXIS II

objectives, and other relevant material, to define outcomes upon which new and/or revised courses will be offered that are aligned with the BOR principles. The Departments of Educational Leadership and Psychology and Counseling analyzed their programs to assure that the five outcomes stated in the University System's Principles are incorporated in their programs, are assessed, and that sufficient evidence is collected to assure that graduates are proficient in these outcomes.

In the VSU learning community, one of the most important activities is learning about best practices in college teaching. Assessment and accreditation activities are now features of every unit. This year, in the College of the Arts, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design reaccruited VSU's Art Program. Also, the National Association of Schools of Theatre gave initial accreditation to the Theatre Program, the second accredited program in Georgia. In the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Chemistry received program approval from the Committee on Professional Training of the American Chemical Society, a long-term goal of the department and a timely validation of program quality. In a new endeavor, the College of Nursing entered into a contract with Educational Resources Inc. (ERI) to provide assessment of nursing students beginning their major courses, continuing content achievement validation, and an exit exam. All of these tests compare our students' performance to external standards. In addition, students receive feedback regarding their particular learning achievements, including a customized study guide and a review course. Assessment activities extend to the off-campus programs as well. In a recent review of its off-campus programs at Moody Air Force Base, VSU and its Office of Public Services received a commendation from the QES (Quality Education System) Evaluation for the high level of institutional, departmental, and faculty commitment to the Moody programs.

Valdosta State University continues to render vital services to the region and beyond. Residents of the service region make vital contributions to the institution. At the state level, the University once again hosted the Governor's Honors Program. By all evaluations, this was a very successful summer program for many of the best and brightest high school students in Georgia.

Faculty and staff engaged in well over 3,500 service activities in the south Georgia region. Often service took the form of collaboration with schools and school systems, provision of cultural enrichment activities to communities, evaluation of social service agencies, activities with area volunteer agencies (e.g. United Way and Special Olympics), and consultations with business enterprises and Chambers of Commerce. Faculty and staff have many certificates and awards as a result of their service activities.

The College of Education rendered outstanding service to the region through its interaction with school systems, teachers, and students. Unfortunately, student achievement in a large number of schools in south Georgia is below the state and national median. The College of Education has established mechanisms for the reform of teacher education. Actions have included the development of the south Georgia P-16 Council and two graduate programs based on school improvement. Teacher education programs are being evaluated based on student outcomes and modified based on the evaluation data. Graduate programs in Educational Leadership and School Counseling have established expectations of their graduates and aligned coursework experiences based on these expectations. Additionally, the Board of Regents has supported development of a regional Leadership Academy at VSU which will work collaboratively with Columbus State University. This academy will select twenty potential instructional leaders throughout the region and design individualized leadership programs to prepare them for today's challenges. Also seven of the eight departments in the College hold annual conferences for South Georgia and North Florida teachers/administrators. Two of these conferences, Nuts and Bolts and Share the Wealth, have become national conferences attracting participants from throughout the United States.

There are numerous indicators of student success at VSU, but only selected achievements can be identified. For example, the percent of first time examinees who passed the Regents Test improved: 66% in 1996-97, 68% in 1997-98, and 70% in 1998-99. In the Division of Social Work, all graduating students who have taken the first social work licensing test have passed the test. More students at VSU are becoming involved with International Programs through extended study abroad programs. The VSU College of Nursing pass rate on N-CLEX was 94.3%, which is above both the state and national averages. Junior-level nursing students scored well above the national average on the Fundamentals of Nursing test developed and scored by ERI. The Air Force ROTC Program recruited the largest freshman cadet class (50 freshmen) in 10 years, and its retention rate was 80%; the program commissioned 10 new second lieutenants, two of whom were recognized as "Distinguished Graduates." The VSU AFROTC detachment also performed well above the norm in field training, with 56% of the 16 cadets returning with "Distinguished Graduate" or "Superior Performance" awards; (the norm is 20%). Cadet members of the Arnold Air Society received awards for "Best Joint National Project", "Commander of the Year", and "Member of the Year" at the Society's National Conclave. Through its programs and its services, VSU's Division of Student Affairs improved the quality of life on campus. The Division enhanced its effectiveness by identifying institutional needs through data analysis of documentation prepared for the SACS Self-Study.

The Office of Institutional Research and Policy Analysis (IRPA) provides much information for sound analysis of institutional issues. This year, assessments were completed for proposals in the following areas: Doctorate in Public Administration, Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies, Doctorate in Psychology, Master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, Bachelor's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, Master's degree in Gerontology, and the Intellectual Capital Partnership Program (ICAPP) coordinated through the College of Arts and Sciences. Since there are common issues faced by IR personnel in south Georgia, IRPA at VSU helped establish the South Georgia ACCORD (Alliance and Collegiate Consortium Optimizing Research and Data) in conjunction with institutional researchers from A.B.A.C., Bainbridge College, and South Georgia College. The Office also conducted the Senior Exit Survey, Graduate Exit Survey, Student Opinion Survey, Alumni Perceptions Survey, and twelve other surveys.

#### *Section D: Retention and Graduation Rates*

VSU's institutional retention rates for first-year/full-time students improved from 64% in 1996-97 to 69% in 1997-98. Moreover, data from VSU's *Quarterly Enrollment Reports* show that the Freshmen to Sophomore retention rates improved from 54% in 1998 to 59% in 1999. The 5% improvement in retention rates can be attributed to several factors. Beginning with fall semester 1998, the University boldly implemented the more rigorous admission standards which had been set for 2001. This effectively abolished developmental studies for traditional students at VSU. Also, by early adoption of the more rigorous standards, the average SAT score for entering freshmen increased to 997, an increase of approximately 60 points.

For those students who met the higher standards for admission, the University developed the Office of Academic Student Instructional Support (OASIS), a unit that provides academic triage and learning support for "at risk" students. In addition to providing various forms of supplementary instruction in core classes, OASIS faculty developed a Freshman Year Experience program to be implemented in the fall of 1999. They reformulated the VSU 1101 (Introduction to College) course and developed VSU 1102 in support of the FYE program. The Department of Mathematics and Computer Science expanded its use of the Academic Systems computer-based mathematics program in College Algebra. The College of Business Administration developed peer-tutoring programs for "at risk" COBA students. New reports listing students with GPA's below 2.0 were sent to appropriate departments along with some strategies for increasing academic performance and retention. For regularly admitted freshmen (non-developmental studies students), the six-year graduation rate was 45.9% for VSU and 36.2% for the system.

The five-year graduation rate for 1992 first-time/full-time VSU students was 23.5% compared to 21.4% for the University System. The six-year VSU graduation rate was 30.2% as compared to 27.0% for the University System. Given the recent change in admission standards and the other activities mentioned above, VSU's graduation rates should continue to improve.

Student success is often reflected in student scholarship. In an effort to promote student scholarship, the College of Arts and Sciences sponsored the 5th Annual Symposium on Undergraduate Research, at which over forty students from all departments of the College presented results of their research. The success of the symposium has led to a request from the National Council on Undergraduate Research for University representatives to present a session about the multidisciplinary VSU model at its national meeting in June 2000. Expanded student interest in research led to the establishment of the Student Brown Bag Seminar series, which provided a forum for students to present research results to the university community.

#### *Section E: Overall Institutional Health*

The institutional environment at Valdosta State is a dynamic one. Great changes are taking place in the physical appearance of the campus, the level of technology on campus, and the resources to support these changes. New construction projects include the Biology/Chemistry Building, which is proceeding on schedule; this building has been designed to support both the teaching missions of the departments and the research interests of students and faculty. The new Special Education/Communication Disorder building nears completion with occupancy scheduled for the spring semester 2000. The building will house over thirty faculty members as well as the Speech and Hearing Clinic, a number of classrooms, and three technology labs designed to give VSU students the latest in technology to work with those with disabilities. The Psychology and Counseling Classroom Building was completed. It contains a high quality media/technology laboratory, and two classrooms. Plans for the new Student Recreation Center have passed the final review, and construction is anticipated to begin in early 2000. The University Bookstore moved to its newly renovated location. The design phase of the Odum Library addition was initiated. Fund raising efforts have been accelerated for a new Regional Center for the Visual and Performing Arts.

High technology has infiltrated every segment of the VSU community. From the student's first contact with the Office of Admissions to graduation and beyond, high technology is an integral part of the VSU environment. Admissions generated over 10% of all applications via the VSU web site. During their studies, VSU students will find high tech to be part of the vast

majority of their courses. In the College of Nursing, for example, WebCT is a learning supplement in three-fourths of the nursing courses. Technology has also changed the way that faculty work. During the fall semester, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning sponsored workshops that provided 38 faculty training in the use of WebCT for web-enhanced courses.

Technology has also changed the way that business is conducted on campus. BANNER WEB and telephone registration for students is now implemented along with BANNER 3.1 for faculty and administrators. The Office of the Registrar greatly extended the time period to seven weeks for BANNER WEB and phone registration. Expanded WEB features were developed, including mid-term grade reporting and extended student WEB and phone grade retrieval options. A system for deans and department heads to access and set class overrides for qualified students was devised and implemented.

VSU's inventory of microcomputers for FY99 was maintained at the all-time high of 2,400 machines reached in FY98. The emphasis has been to insure that all PC's are Year 2000 compliant. The Information Technology Division assisted in the implementation of the College (formerly Real Education) products purchased to enable early delivery of the MPA Program. Since using Banner for Summer 1996 registration in April 1996, VSU has successfully processed over 85,000 student registrations/transactions using the system and is the only school to support both telephone registration and Web-Based student self-registration from PC's on or off campus. VSU's data network is being gradually upgraded from 10/100 Mbps Ethernet to asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) which will provide greatly enhanced speeds. The VSU World Wide Web site, one of the more popular in the state, experienced over 100,000 "hits" per month in FY99. VSU has become a technology reference school for vendors, with visits by teams from Florida A & M University and from Georgia Perimeter College to view VSU's eight computer touch-screen information kiosks.

International Programs has improved the diversity of the campus environment this year. International student enrollment increased by 8% (168 in 1997 to 182 in 1998) with students coming from 57 different countries. International Programs hosted visiting university faculty and staff from a number of countries, including China, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Northern Ireland, and Romania.

Enhancements to the institutional environment require state and private support. Total private support to VSU climbed above the \$3 million mark for the first time. The Faculty and Staff Campaign's participation in the annual fund drive jumped to 46 percent and donations totaled over \$100,000 for the first time.

Alumni Relations and University Relations are important units, which promote the institution's culture and market its image/programs. Alumni Travel programs included successful alumni trips to Alaska and to Greece. Three Alumni Bulletin magazines were sent to more than 90,000 readers. University Relations distributed 307 general news releases promoting the University's priorities, sent hometown news releases for 1,601 students named to the Dean's List, and prepared hometown news releases for 1,342 graduates. The Publication and Design Services Unit of University Relations handled more than 950 university-wide graphics and publication projects during the year.

To formalize and direct pan-campus and effectiveness assessments, VSU hired a new Director for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning. This position will provide important guidance to strengthen the quality of the learning community and aid in preparation for the SACS team visit in the spring of 2000.