



Valdosta State University

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Valdosta State University (VSU) is a comprehensive University within the University System of Georgia, with a fall 2015 enrollment of over 11,000 students. VSU is a welcoming, and vibrant community founded on and dedicated to serving the communities' rich and diverse heritages. Through excellence in teaching, basic and applied research, and service, VSU provides rigorous programs and opportunities that enrich our students, our university, and our region. Our mission to students is to provide a diverse student population with an inspired education, a safe learning environment, a nurturing community, and a wealth of experience that assists students in molding their futures in a creative, conscious, and caring fashion while preparing them to be lifelong learners who will meet the needs of a changing global society.

Group	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015
Total Headcount Enrollment	2,258	1,972	1,722	1,622	1,442
Full-time	2,218	1,935	1,688	1,585	1,410
Part-time	40	37	34	37	32
Adult (25 years or older at matriculation)	46	25	24	22	24
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2	2	2	1	2
Asian	26	28	19	38	29
Black	933	776	668	602	529
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	5	3	0	3	2
Hispanic or Latino	104	106	96	98	93
More than one race	75	68	72	61	69
Unknown race	33	11	12	15	9
White	1,080	978	853	804	709
Female	1,376	1,161	1,005	945	851
Male	882	811	717	677	591
PELL Recipients	1,149	932	832	759	NA
Military				11	9
First Generation					151

See Appendix Tables 1-5 for additional metrics related to completion provide by the University System of Georgia (USG) Warehouse.

Valdosta State University is committed to educating our diverse student population which consists of students from our local, state, national, and international communities. Our commitment to student success over the past year has led to continued partnerships across campus and with the Valdosta City School System. These endeavors support student success by eliminating barriers and realigning approaches through increased communication between faculty and student services providers.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS, HIGH IMPACT STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES

High-impact strategy	Valdosta Early College Academy (6.5—Sponsor an Early College Academy)
Related Goal	<p>CCG Goal 6: Shorten time to degree completion through programs that allow students to earn college credit while still in high school and by awarding credit for prior learning that is verified by appropriate assessment.</p> <p>CCG Goal 9: Improve access for underserved and/or priority communities</p>
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	<p>The target population of our Early College is first generation, minority students who are at risk for not attending college. Students enter VECA in the 6th grade. The goal of the academy is to remediate any academic deficiencies, and then accelerate the curriculum, so that students are able to begin taking courses at VSU through the MOWR dual-enrollment process when they enter 10th grade. Most Early Colleges begin in High School, so the VECA 6-12 academy is unique. By getting minority, at risk students early (6th grade) there is more opportunity to remediate any academic deficiencies and accelerate their curriculum so that they have space in their high school schedule to take dual-enrollment classes. The purpose of the VECA program is to increase the likelihood that students will attend college, to increase their preparation to be successful in college, and to reduce time to graduation from college. VSU collaborated with the Valdosta City Schools so that local low income students would have access, ability and motivation to attend college. Many will stay in Valdosta and have a relationship with VSU, thus increasing likelihood that they will continue at VSU. This impact the student in a positive manner through access and the institution in terms of enrollment.</p>
Primary Point of Contact	<p>Dr. Karla Hull Professor/Liason with VECA khull@valdosta.edu</p>
Summary of Activities	<p>The Valdosta Early College Academy (VECA) started with a 6th grade class in 2009/2010, and added a grade every year until 2014/2015. The first group of VECA students graduated from high school in 2015. This first graduating class did not have an accelerated middle/high school curriculum which limited their ability to take dual-enrollment classes. Students in the first graduating class earned between 6-12 credits. »</p> <p>2015-2016 Progress: As a result of accelerating the middle grade/high school curriculum, the second graduating class earned a minimum of 21 college credits with some students earning 28 credits.</p> <p>Specific actions taken to achieve the 2015-2016 goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Most college classes use an online learning management system (D2L). To ensure that all VECA students taking college courses, have access to internet, VECA allowed students to stay an hour after the regular school day, to use VECA computers/internet. Other creative solutions included locating free wi-fi spots in the area, so that students could go to Starbucks, McDonalds, etc. with the I-pads provided by VECA. 2) Designed and implemented a College Signing event, mirroring what high school athletes do when they sign with a college to play sports. Representatives from each of the colleges/universities (those institutions where VECA students had applied and made a decision to attend) attended the event, bringing their college/university goodie bags and a form of intent to attend. Parents and community members were invited to attend. As well as the VECA 6-11 grade students. 3) Adjustments to the high school schedule were made to open up more space for dual-enrollment courses.
Measures of Progress and Success	
Measure, metric, or data element	<p>Number of college credits awarded to Early College or Early Learning Academy students in each of the past 5 academic years.</p>

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	<p>VSU ongoing collaboration in the sponsorship of an Early Learning Academy, VECA.</p> <p>Percent of VECA graduating seniors who attend post-secondary institutions immediately after high school graduation.</p> <p>4 year graduation rate from post-secondary institution.</p>
Baseline measures	<p>2015 » The first VECA graduates earned between 6-12 college credits.</p> <p>The Valdosta Early College Academy was implemented in 2009 with two 6th grade classrooms.</p> <p>2015 » 80% of the first VECA graduates attended a post-secondary institution immediately after high school graduation.</p>
Interim Measures of Progress	<p>2016 » VECA graduates earned between 18-24 college credits.</p> <p>2016 » VECA currently has two classrooms for grade levels 6-12.</p> <p>2016 » 100% of the VECA graduates attended a post-secondary institution immediately after high school graduation.</p>
Measures of Success	<p>The long term goal is to create an accelerated curriculum that would enable VECA juniors/seniors to enroll in 30 credits (Junior year) and 30 credits (senior year) for a total of 60 credits. They would earn a high school diploma and have 60 earned college hours which would be the equivalence of an associate’s degree depending on the student’s major.</p> <p>It is estimated that it will take 4 more years to accelerate the middle/high school curriculum to the point where students are able to go full-time to VSU, as a dual enrolled student for their junior and senior year.</p> <p>Each year, for the past two years, we have significantly increased the number of college credits earned.</p> <p>Information from our first VECA graduates indicates they are persisting in college/universities and being successful.</p>
Lessons Learned	<p>What barriers, needs or challenges to achieving these completion goals that have been identified?</p> <p>1) Because most of the VECA students are low-income, first generation students, we learned that many of them do not have access to internet in their homes. Most college courses use an online learning management system (D2L), so students who cannot get online over the weekend are at risk for low performance in the college classes. The first VECA students taking dual-enrollment courses, struggled with this and some earned lower grades because of their inability to access course information and assignments in a timely way.</p> <p>An adjustment of the curriculum was done by their senior year, to provide more time at school where they could access the internet for coursework. VSU and community donors bought computers and donated furniture to establish a computer lab specifically dedicated to the juniors and seniors taking dual-enrollment courses.</p> <p>2) The target population for VECA includes a majority of low-income, minority, first-generation students. Thus, applying for college, understanding and filling out FAFSA forms, and making decisions on which colleges/universities to apply to can be challenging for the students and their families.</p> <p>Last year, VECA had a parent night to assist seniors in filling out their FAFSA forms. The school also dedicates a day for College applications, a time where the seniors go to a computer lab and apply for several colleges/universities. Assistance is provided to ensure forms are completed properly. Pictures of students who have been accepted to a college/university are displayed on a bulletin board as motivation for all of the VECA students from 6-12.</p>
High-impact strategy	Summer Bridge Academy

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Related Goal	Institutional Goal 1: Recruit, retain, and graduate a quality, diverse student population and prepare students for roles as leaders in a global society.
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	The Summer Bridge Academy (SBA) is an invitation-only program designed for a select group of students who wish to attend Valdosta State University but did not meet the requirements for regular admission. Over a 7-week period, students enroll in 8 hours of classes that prepare them for educational success in the future. SBA supports students in meeting the requirements necessary to become a regular student at VSU for the sequential Fall term and equips students with the tools to excel in their classes, have confidence in their academic ability, and be excited to get involved around campus, which will contribute to their personal success as well as to the institutional success of Valdosta State University. This program is also a strategy to address the decline in enrollments we have experienced as an institution.
Primary Point of Contact	Ashley Cooper, Coordinator of First Year Programs aamyers@valdosta.edu
Summary of Activities	SBA was fully implemented in summer 2013. The program allowed students who did not meet one of the academic requirements for admission to be conditionally admitted to the institution contingent upon earning a C in each course taken over the summer. Students were assigned to either an English or math cohort based on academic needs. Each cohort included Keys to College Success (VSU 1101), Human Communication (COMM 1100), and either MATH 1111 or ENGL 1101. All students are required to complete a minimum of 2 hours of tutoring each week. A supplemental instructor and peer mentor are assigned to each group. Students are also required to participate in additional student success workshops and social events. Students who are successful receive full admittance to VSU for fall semester. Students who are unsuccessful are referred to the South Georgia Entry Program run by South Georgia College on VSU's campus.
Measures of Progress and Success	
Measure, metric, or data element	Percentage of students who complete the requirements to be fully admitted for fall semester.
Baseline measures	In the first year of SBA, summer 2013, 82% of the 38 participants were fully admitted for fall 2013.
Interim Measures of Progress	In summer 2014 93% of the 28 participants were fully admitted for fall 2014 In summer 2015 89% of the 28 participants were fully admitted for fall 2015. See Appendix Table 6
Measures of Success	Percentage of students who complete the requirements to be fully admitted for fall semester.
Lessons Learned	In year one there were no students who had completed the program to serve as peer mentors. Each year since, we have recruited 3 successful former SBA students to serve as a paid peer mentor for each new cohort. We reduced the number of mandated social events and success workshops based on the feedback from students of feeling overscheduled. Housing has added an intern to work specifically in the halls to work with the students who live together in one residence hall. For the first two years, students were required to come in undecided. In year three students have been allowed to declare and meet with the academic advisor assigned to their desired major. In the first two years, students had a separate new student orientation. In year three, the students participated in the summer orientation with all summer students. This has streamlined the transition for students and staff associated with SBA.
High-impact strategy	First Year Learning Communities
Related Goal	Institutional Goal 1: Recruit, retain, and graduate a quality, diverse student population and prepare students for roles as leaders in a global society.

Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	First Year Learning Communities (FLCs) provide students the opportunity to begin their college experience with other students who share similar interests and career goals. FLCs consist of small groups of 22-25 first-semester college students taking two to three linked courses as a group. Each learning community is designed to ease the transition from high school to college by allowing first-year students to acquire educational and social skills crucial to their long-term academic success, through an integrated learning environment.
Primary Point of Contact	Ashley Cooper, Coordinator of First Year Programs aamyers@valdosta.edu
Summary of Activities	In fall 2010, VSU decided to build upon the concept of FYE and develop learning communities for students with majors. Each year these communities have been adjusted based on changes in enrollment, curriculum, and policy. In general each learning community has three courses that will meet the core requirements for a given major. The courses include different delivery models and sizes with respect to the seat capacity in each course. Additionally, each community has a "cornerstone course" that serves as the glue of the community. Only FLC students are in enrolled in that particular course, whereas the other two courses could be blended with other FLC or non FLC students. With the introduction of the Student Success Portal in 2012, communication among faculty within each cohort and communication between faculty and student support services staff was significantly strengthened. Additionally, in 2012 faculty teaching within a learning community were provided a small stipend to create a collaborative assignment across the courses helping students develop a multi-disciplinary lens. Faculty are required to complete a mid-term and final report based on their experience in the learning community each fall. Faculty who teach in the FLCs are also required to attend two FLC faculty meetings each fall term. Each year the courses that are selected to create each community are reevaluated by the Coordinator of First Year programs in conjunction with department heads and academic advisors.
Measures of Progress and Success	
Measure, metric, or data element	Retention rate of FLC participants compared to non-participants Average GPA of FLC participants compared to non-participants Pass rates of participants compared to non-participants
Baseline measures	Fall 2010 Overall retention for VSU was 68.6%. The overall retention rate for students participating in FLC had a retention rate of 72.2.
Interim Measures of Progress	Since fall 2010, the retention rate of FLC students has experienced a 0.035 point increase. Over the course of five cohorts, the overall initial fall grade point average is a 2.55; FLC students have a grade point average 0.20 higher than the Non-FLC students. The pass rates for the cohorts in an FLC have steadily increased from Fall 2010 to Fall 2014 (77.5% to 84.4%, respectively). See Appendix Graphs 1-5
Measures of Success	Retention rate of FLC participants compared to non-participants Average GPA of FLC participants compared to non-participants Pass rates of participants compared to non-participants
Lessons Learned	With the increase in dual enrollment credit transferred in by traditional freshmen, we must re-evaluate each year what courses work best for each cohort. For example, ENGL 1101 historically was used in the majority of the learning communities. Now, the number of ENGL 1101 sections used in the communities is less than five. When we expanded learning communities in 2010, faculty were assigned to learning communities. Not all faculty were excited about this new opportunity. Over the last four years, we have had faculty request to participate. We now have a foundation of faculty within the learning communities who have been teaching in the communities willingly and consistently. We believe this consistency and the commitment of these faculty members has a positive impact on the student experience and outcomes.

OBSERVATIONS

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The collaboration across departments for each of our high impact practices shows the strength in team work at VSU. We have leveraged the skills, abilities, and knowledge across divisions and disciplines to impact success. We have collaborated across educational sectors to the public school system to increase access, progression, and graduation for underserved populations.

It is important to note that while this report has focused on strategies not reported on in the past two reports, those strategies continue on our campus. Our Pathways Programs have continued to establish articulation agreements across the state of Georgia and into Florida. Academic Advising has been one of the key areas of focus related to student success including having consultants from the National Academic Advising Association complete a comprehensive review of advising. The results of this report and work completed by our 70/80 Taskforce on Retention have been taken into account with the goals and budgetary requests being considered by senior leadership. The 70/80 Taskforce also identified the use of the Faculty and Advisor Portal as a key strategy for student success. A subcommittee has been developed consisting primarily of faculty to identify ways to market and promote use of the portal. Math placement scores continue to determine the placement of students into the first college level math course.