NEW LEADERSHIP

- Tisa A. Mason, Ed.D., was named president of Valley City State University by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education on Oct. 30, 2014. She began her work at VCSU on Dec. 15, 2014. Mason came to Valley City from Hays, Kan., where she served as vice president for student affairs at Fort Hays State University. She holds a Doctor of Education degree in higher education from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va.

ACADEMIC QUALITY

- VCSU has been ranked No. 1 or No. 2 for six consecutive years by U.S. News and World Report in the category “Top Public Regional Colleges in the Midwest.” VCSU has been named a U.S. News “Best College” for 17 consecutive years.

- VCSU’s online Master’s of Education (M.Ed.) program concentrations in technology and education, teaching and technology, and library and information technologies were ranked No. 6 in TopMastersInEducation.com’s annual “Best Value” rankings for online Master’s in Educational Technology degree programs based on cost, quality and accreditation.

Best Value Online Master's in Educational Technology Programs 2014–15

1. Ball State University
2. Indiana University
3. North Carolina State University–Raleigh
4. Fort Hays State University
5. University of Colorado–Denver
6. Valley City State University
7. Lamar University
8. Dakota State University
9. College of St. Scholastica
10. Appalachian State University

- College Choice ranked VCSU No. 7 in the nation in its list of “2015 Most Affordable Online Colleges for Bachelor’s Degrees.” The rankings were based on total cost, number of online degrees offered and regional accreditation status.

2015 Rankings of Most Affordable Online Colleges for Bachelor’s Degrees

1. Brigham Young University–Idaho
2. Fort Hays State University
3. Baptist College of Florida
4. Lamar University
5. Chadron State College
6. Baker College
7. Valley City State University
8. Amberton University
9. Ohio University
10. Western Governors University
CONTINUED ENROLLMENT GROWTH

- VCSU achieved a Fall 2014 enrollment of 1,378 students, the second highest in school history.

Student Enrollment Growth

- In Fall 2014, VCSU’s enrollment was 59 percent female and 41 percent male; 60 percent of the students came from North Dakota and 12 percent came from Minnesota. The top North Dakota counties for enrollment were Barnes, Cass, Stutsman, Richland and Burleigh.

PREPARING OUTSTANDING TEACHERS

- Founded in 1890 to prepare teachers for the state, VCSU continues that legacy mission today, preparing almost half of its students to teach. VCSU graduates more undergraduate teachers than any other North Dakota college or university.

- VCSU is participating in the Network for Excellence in Teaching (NEXT) program funded by the Bush Foundation of St. Paul, Minn. VCSU and NDSU work with Minnesota State University Moorhead in the 10-year, $5.6 million “Valley Partnership” grant under this program to strengthen teacher effectiveness.

- VCSU has been accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) since 1954, the inception of NCATE. The NCATE team has described VCSU’s Education Program as “World Class” (2008 review). In October 2015, VCSU will host an NCATE/CAEP site visit as part of its reaccreditation process.

TAILORING EDUCATION TO NORTH DAKOTA

- VCSU academic offerings are tailored to keep pace with employer demand and economic changes in North Dakota and the region. Recent additions to the curriculum include programs in agribusiness management, athletic training, business process management, software engineering, and conservation law enforcement.

SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS

- 99% of VCSU 2012–13 graduates responding to a placement survey began working in their chosen field or continued their education within 6 months of graduation.

- VCSU has experienced substantial first-year student retention increases in the last few years. The university’s use of Starfish Retention Solutions, software allowing for better communication among students, faculty and staff in sharing academic concerns, has contributed to the retention success.
A record scholarship allocation—more than $1 million—from the VCSU Foundation was awarded to students for the 2014–15 academic year.

**COLLABORATION WITH N.D. STATE AGENCIES**

- The Macroinvertebrate Lab in the VCSU Department of Science serves as the identification lab for the North Dakota Department of Health water-sampling work. The lab also houses the North Dakota Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Collection for both the Department of Health and VCSU work.

- VCSU faculty and students have done research for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department over several years, including sampling for invasive species and mussel and fish sampling. They also completed a river survey report for North Dakota Game and Fish, summarizing all past data on fish species in North Dakota.

**DECA STUDENTS DO WELL AT STATE**

- Four VCSU business students recently returned from the state Collegiate DECA competition with six medals. Freshman Carson Sorby from Valley City was one of those students. He won the Sales Presentation event, placed second with classmate Staci Hovlad in the Business to Business Marketing competition, and finished fourth in the Banking and Financial Services experience. His experience at the competition/conference culminated with his election to a state vice president position. Each of the VCSU students will go on to compete at the Collegiate DECA International Conference to be held April 18–21 in Orlando, Fla.

**BRINGING STEM TO K–12 STUDENTS/TEACHERS**

- VCSU is home to the Great Plains STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education Center. The center provides professional development opportunities for K–12 teachers and establishes connections with businesses and industries that recognize the need to prepare high school graduates to be career and college ready, equipped with essential problem-solving and communication skills.

- VCSU’s Prairie Waters Education and Research Center provides water education to K–12 students, teachers and resource professionals. In Fall 2014, Prairie Waters began a wetlands education program, using its facility in Kathryn, N.D., and incorporating research throughout the fall, winter and spring seasons at Stoney Slough National Wildlife Refuge near Litchville, N.D.
MUSIC STUDENTS IN NATIONAL BAND

Three senior music education majors—David Burgess, Courtney Pederson and Bradyn Good—were selected by the College Band Directors National Association to participate in the National Intercollegiate Band. The students, selected from over 270 applicants, represent VCSU’s first student musicians selected for the impressive ensemble. They will perform at the CBDNA National Conference at Vanderbilt University in March.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH: SOAR PROGRAM

The Student Opportunities for Academic Research (SOAR) program has announced its student awards for 2015. Student recipients, along with their faculty mentors, are listed with their research projects below:

- Tarah Cleveland with Razib Iqbal, “Investigating a New Approach to Web Visitor Engagement Measurement”
- Kaylee Johnson and Cassy Gilbertson with Armando Ramos, “3D Printing K-12 Project Curriculum”
- Maxwell Kollar with Hilde van Gijssel, “Creating a Bacterial Mercury Sensor Using Synthetic Biology”
- Logan Olesen with Susan Kilgore, “The Use of Sand Fraction Lithology Analysis to Differentiate Sediment Layers at an Archaeological Site in Grand Portage, Minnesota”
- Eric Schauer with Gary Ketterling, “Engineering an Autonomous Ecosystem for Use in Science Classrooms”

The SOAR projects will be presented at a VCSU symposium later this spring.

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY FULFILLED

Last summer sophomore Tarah Cleveland, a software engineering major at VCSU, served as an intern at Microsoft in Fargo. She worked on the Dynamics User Experience Research Team researching user personas, used internally to develop software that makes business processes easier for companies that purchase Microsoft software solutions. In addition to assisting with research, Tarah also organized and conducted interviews with human resource generalists, human resource assistants and software systems implementers. She visited Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, Wash., as part of her internship.

NAIA STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY GROUP

Courtney Dixon, a junior from Casselton, was named to the National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Association of Student-Athletes (ASA); she is one of only 27 student-athletes nationwide selected to serve on the ASA, an advocacy group for student athletes.