I love the month of April. For me it has always been a month of transition and renewal. The weather begins to show signs of spring, while the academic calendar fills with events such as senior recitals, student elections, and celebrations of annual accomplishments. But there is even a more important reason why I love April—it is National Volunteer Month, a time to stop and reflect on how much stronger our university and communities are thanks to those who make a difference by giving of their time, talent, and treasure.

VCSU is truly blessed with many difference makers—from a variety of university boards whose members serve VCSU with distinction, to alumni who honor their alma mater through their outstanding service to their professions and communities, and to local residents who support our students and faculty by attending events and in a myriad of other ways. The blessings are abundant.

As I reflect on the strength of our university through the efforts of our volunteers, many names immediately come to mind, such as the Distinguished Service Award recipients, whose portraits are proudly displayed in McFarland Hall: C. “Van” Vandestreek, Dales Olson, Donald Heimes, Ernest Miedema, Theron Strinden, Russell Hanson, Orville Barber, Herman Stern, Carol (Watson) Peterson, Roger Reierson, Jerry Topp, George Gaukler, Dick Gulmon, Jan Stowman, Mary Lee (Peterson) Nielson, Janet Schultz, Riley Rogers, Ray Braun, Mary Simonson, Jennifer Feist, Steven Welken, and Valley Development Group.

Or how about Dean Pederson, who has received the V-500 Volunteer of the Year Award for three consecutive years! Dean has served on the V-500 Board for 12 years, and in that time he has single-handedly acquired 176 memberships and raised over $215,000 for the V-500 Scholarship Program. There are so many people and companies to thank for making VCSU a strong university.

Our faculty, staff, and students also serve as stewards of place through service to many nonprofit and civic groups as well as through their professional leadership.

For instance, James Boe, Ph.D., VCSU director of graduate studies, recently completed a term as the president of the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA). In addition to leading the association, he was also responsible for hosting a professional development conference for its members—more than 33,000 teachers across the country. By all accounts it was probably the best conference the association hosted in more than a decade.

Jim will tell you that the past year was both rewarding and challenging. At times navigating both his VCSU position and his volunteer responsibilities was like having two full-time jobs. He will also tell you that success does not happen without a lot of people sharing a vision and the work.

As Margaret Mead said, “Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For, indeed, that’s all who ever have.”
Thank you Valley City faculty, staff, students, alumni, residents, and friends, for being VCSU difference makers and leaving your mark on the university. We celebrate you during this month of appreciation and recognize that your impact is yet another reason it is a great day to be a Viking!

**FACULTY SENATE REPORT**  
*K. Peder Gjovik*

[The Faculty Senate report will return next month with information about the Faculty Association vote and Faculty Senate meeting during the first week of May.]

**STAFF SENATE REPORT**  
*Kaleen Peterson*

VCSU’s Staff Senate has been collecting feedback regarding the results of the Employee Satisfaction Survey and subsequent broadband group meetings.

Staff Senate put together a list of actionable items that Cabinet could implement soon, such as ensuring meeting minutes are emailed out to campus. Our goal is that staff members know their voices were heard and that this process is benefiting them both in the short and long term.

We will be providing Cabinet with all of the comments from the group meetings, and we will continue to work on other possibilities and ideas that came from staff for more impact.

We are working with the President’s Office to plan the annual Employee Recognition Dinner that will take place May 14, 2015. In addition to retirements and years-of-service awards, a few new agenda items will be nice and fitting additions to the ceremony. Staff Senate members support this event by taking tickets, pinning flowers, reading off names during the awards, and lining up entertainment and speakers.

Staff Senate plans to poll staff this summer regarding senate activities throughout the year. With a more active group being asked to provide more input to campus administration, some activities for which we have not had high participation could be reevaluated. We are looking forward to making some changes for the betterment of VCSU Staff Senate and the VCSU campus.

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**STUDENT SENATE REPORT**  
*Michaela Halvorson*

Student Senate has also been busy internally as well. We have been reviewing policies concerning student life. These policies include student academic integrity, grade appeal, service animals on campus, a tobacco-free campus and workplace, and significant infectious diseases. Senators came up with many ideas to improve upon the policies and we look forward to seeing the final draft.

Student Senate also hosted an Easter Egg Hunt for Valley City kids and for college Kids. We had a great turnout because of the wonderful weather we had. The Easter Bunny even showed up!

We have been busy with elections for next year’s positions. We have elected our new officer team and Senate has a bright future with these individuals as their leaders. Madelyn Zane was elected president; Courtney Dixon, vice president; Tarah Cleveland, treasurer; Katelyn Willer, secretary; and Jordan Bushaw, NDSA representative. Speaking of NDSA, NDSA recently elected their leaders as well, and VCSU’s own Tyler Manske was elected as the Student Affairs Committee chair. He is very excited about his new position.

We have opened nominations for our yearly awards. These include Teacher of the Year from VCSU, Student Advocate of VCSU, and Viking Pilot.

A VCSU Student Advocate is any individual or group from within the state of North Dakota that supports, sponsors, and promotes the actions, beliefs, and success of the Valley City State University Student Body.

The Viking Pilot is an award honoring those students who have made significant contributions to Valley City State University. They are outstanding campus leaders campus who effectively and efficiently complete tasks and are recognized participants in all aspects of student life.

As I’m writing this I realize that there are five weeks left in the semester. Student senators are busy getting ready for final projects and getting out and enjoying the spring time. We look forward to the end and are excited to see what summer brings us!