Chapter 2: A Decade of Transformation

The 1992 self study theme was the University in Transition, as changes in the North Dakota University System in the early 1990s placed VCSU in the situation of responding to those changes and their effects. The State Board of Higher Education mandated a sharply defined institutional mission, “for the superior small-college preparation of teachers and of small-business personnel for its region,” and its statewide mission of developing instructional technology applications. This mandate for change shaped the challenges for VCSU clearly: to transform “education[al] practice within a culture of innovation” (Holleque, 2000). The dynamics of change and the University’s innovative responses to the Board’s mandate have resulted in far more than mere transition: for VCSU, the 1990s have been a decade of transformation.

The University vision statement from 1994 broadly indicates the philosophic concerns of the campus and the intent to pursue excellence in education:

Valley City State University is a nationally recognized learner-centered caring community committed to continuous improvement.

The national recognition over the past few years from the Blackburn Award for Administrative Excellence (1997), CAUSE Best Practices in Professional Development (1996), top regional public liberal arts college (US News 1998, 1999, 2000), and Computerworld Premier 100 IT Leaders 2001 shows VCSU’s successful pursuit of the direction indicated in its vision. The innovative changes in teaching and learning on campus follow naturally from the student-centered philosophy the vision statement suggests.

The University’s mission statement has been revised during this decade from a simple statement of program and clientele to one that emphasizes the prevailing teaching philosophy and technology focus of the institution:

Valley City State University is a learner-centered community dedicated to continuing improvement in meeting student needs. Preparing individuals to serve in a changing world, the institution provides a quality educational experience in an innovative culture and a technologically enhanced environment.

A leader in the effective use of instructional technologies, Valley City State University is a member of the North Dakota University System and offers baccalaureate degrees in education, business, and the liberal arts.

Approved by the State Board of Higher Education, February 1998

The central ideas of the mission statement have guided faculty, staff, and administration in their efforts to meet the challenges of the State Board of Higher Education’s mandate. The process of planning, review, and revision which VCSU’s vision, mission, and strategic planning follows is discussed in detail in Chapter 4, page 51).
This chapter provides an overview of the key initiatives and significant changes on campus over the past decade, using phrases from the mission statement to demonstrate the ways these changes fit within the framework of how the University sees itself, its relationships with others, teaching and learning on campus, and the uses of technology in education.

**A learner-centered community dedicated to continuing improvement in meeting student needs...**

Over the past decade, VCSU faculty and staff have actively sought ways to improve the quality of learning and living that students experience at VCSU. The customized learning initiative and the transformation of the first year orientation program are two strong examples of the University’s concern for meeting student needs. Two new partnerships with area high schools (dual credit) and the NetWork Center in Fargo provide concrete illustrations of the ways the University may customize learning to assist students in meeting their goals.

**Learning to Live, Living to Learn**

Valley City State University has a long tradition with freshman experience programs. In conjunction with a FIPSE grant which promoted the concept of creating a learner-centered community, significant revisions began during the 1993-94 academic year to align the freshman experience with this learner-centered concept. A group of student leaders, working collaboratively with faculty, staff, and administration, comprised a committee whose charge was to redesign the freshman experience, formerly “Freshman Dialogue.”

This planning committee recommended a new title, “Learning to Live, Living to Learn,” which reflects two important foundations of a learner-centered campus community. The first part of the title, Learning to Live, focuses on the adjustment students must make and the skills they must develop to succeed in a higher education environment. The second part of the title, Living to Learn, introduces the importance of lifelong learning.

The planning committee also recommended that the freshman experience should promote student leadership and development opportunities, not only for freshmen but also for upper-level students, beginning with the active role students performed on the FIPSE Advisory Committee and the Learning to Live Planning Committee. Involving upper-level students as members of the planning committee and as mentors to new students were the first stages in creating a freshman experience which would eventually feature upper-level students as course instructors.

Revisions in the Learning to Live, Living to Learn program also include an orientation component for new freshmen. Beginning in August 1994, freshmen received an opportunity to participate in adventure learning activities (“ropes course”) at the Kathryn Center. While adventure learning was voluntary in 1994, it has evolved to become a required component of the orientation activities provided for freshmen.
during the opening weekend activities. Student feedback from surveys about their experience at the Kathryn Center indicates their satisfaction with this initiative.

Learning to Live, Living to Learn continues to stay aligned with the concepts of learner-centered practices. Featured components of class activities from the Learning to Live program include:

- Freshman pre-registration for classes prior to the start of fall semester. As part of the registration process, they register for Learning to Live, Living to Learn. Twelve sections are offered and maximum enrollment for any section is 16 students. Small class size promotes positive relationships between instructors and students and among students within each section.

- Orientation activities during opening weekend, required for new freshmen as part of the Learning to Live curriculum. Weekend activities are scheduled so students spend at least 16 hours within their Learning to Live groups in adventure learning activities at the Kathryn Center for Lifelong Learning, in notebook computer checkout and computer training sessions, and in other scheduled activities that promote teamwork and social skills.

- Curricular units, including access to campus services, VCSU Handbook on campus policies, time management, learning styles and study skills, conflict resolution and group dynamics, and academic advising. A Learning to Live manual with class activities is required for all class participants. In addition, campus speakers meet with each section to address a variety of issues (i.e., substance abuse, career planning, financial aid, international student programs) during the academic year. Learning to Live sections are also required to attend some of the convocation programs sponsored by the VCSU Program Board and the Student Senate.

- A community service project. Each section must select, plan, and implement a community service project. Collaboration and teamwork are emphasized; service projects require a minimum of eight hours participation from each student during the implementation phase.

Future plans for the Learning to Live program include more consistent and more formal evaluation of the program through review by the Curriculum Committee, stronger integration with the general education program, and exploration of using the Kathryn Center for Lifelong Learning to deliver curricular units on stress management and team building skills.

**Customized Learning Initiative**

In her 1997 opening address, President Chaffee called for open, flexible access to education, mass customization of education, and learner-directed processes. She was referring not to traditional distance education, but rather learning that is self-paced, full- or part-time, any place, experiential, career focused, lifelong, and targeted to meet learners’ goals.
VCSU has begun moving this direction in several ways:

- The targeted use of Title III and Bush Foundation grant money has placed programs and campus courses online, and supported faculty development in customized learning, including extensive, ongoing training in the use of Blackboard, and the increased use of faculty websites for teaching.

- Student Services has implemented changes to accommodate students: the entire NDUS system implemented ALFI (Access Line for Information), a web-based registration, which was beta-tested at VCSU in Fall 2000 and Spring 2001; and, with the assistance of Title III funding, the institutionalization of student services online will be completed by 2003 (see chapter 9 for further discussion of this development).

- Online communities for faculty and students were created in 2000 as the portal for access to online information.

- The development of a faculty development framework (see section below, page 28) will assist faculty in applying learning theories and innovative instructional techniques to create learning that is convenient, effective, and efficient.

**Dual Credit**

Guidelines established by the North Dakota Century Code (28-32-01, Subdivision Q of Subsection 1; 1997 Senate Bill 2003) authorize dual credit courses that can receive both high school and college credit. Eligible students in grades eleven and twelve may earn dual credit by enrolling in any course at either their high school or VCSU if it has been jointly approved by appropriate high school and University administrators.

VCSU has partnered with Valley City High School, Oakes High School, the Vocational Center, and Lisbon High School to provide university credit for specific courses taught in the high school; the high schools also provide high school credit for specific courses high school juniors and seniors may take on the VCSU campus. Per VCSU policy, high school faculty teaching Dual Credit courses must be reviewed by the granting department and possess the same credentials as departmental faculty (VCSU 601.5). Credentials are reviewed by department and division chairs prior to appointment.

Through the dual credit program, the University provides significant opportunities for high school students who are eligible to participate. Being enrolled concurrently in high school and the University provides these students access to a broader selection of courses, greater flexibility in their class schedules and an opportunity to be challenged academically. It allows students to make efficient use of their time by getting an early start on completing requirements towards a college degree. It also benefits the student financially since the student is still living at home and pays only the required tuition and fees for these credits with no room, board, or other related fees attached. While providing this service to these students, the University gains valuable exposure within these high schools which may positively impact future enrollments.
The NetWork Center

The NetWork Center in Fargo, ND, is an approved off-campus site offering credits in the Computer Information Systems-Networking Concentration Major. Starting in Fall 2000, the partnership with the NetWork Center allows students to pursue intensive training and hands-on experience in the information technology industry and earning prestigious industry certifications such as A+, CNE, and MCSE at the NetWork Center while receiving academic credit for the training as an integral part of a bachelor’s degree at VCSU with a major in Computer Information Systems (CIS).

Currently no on-campus VCSU students participate in the program. The NetWork Center is a Veteran’s Affairs approved training site for vets who are on vocational rehabilitation or recently discharged. Credits from prior academic experience are transferred into the program to meet the degree requirements for the BS in CIS-Networking Concentration. NetWork Center students pay all fees, receive student IDs, and are encouraged to participate in university programs. Because the NetWork Center provides computers and network access, the notebook fee is waived for these students per agreement with the NetWork Center. With the change in financing models for NDUS institutions, the leadership team at the NetWork Center and VCSU will be reexamining the partnership in the Summer of 2001 to consider other revenue enhancing strategies beneficial to both partners.

In order to assure quality of instruction and content, a full-time campus faculty person oversees the curriculum and acts as liaison. Part of the assignment is a weekly physical presence at this off-campus site, and any grading is done in consultation with this faculty member.

Over the last year eight to ten students have taken advantage of the opportunity to receive VCSU credit for their training at the NetWork Center. All of them report high satisfaction with the training and supervision. As the program develops, there will need to be a re-examination of how this opportunity can be made available to on-campus students. Three major issues need to be resolved:

- The distance (over 60 miles) makes regular commuting expensive for students.
- It is also cost prohibitive for the NetWork Center to send equipment and trainers to Valley City on a regular basis. This problem is significant but not irresolvable.
- The training at NetWork Center is a full-time assignment (40 hours a week) and prohibits campus students from enrolling in any other coursework.

Both NetWork Center and VCSU recognize these issues. Current and ongoing program review will seek solutions to what is an excellent opportunity for students.
Preparing individuals to serve in a changing world...

Students, faculty, and staff remain aware of the changing concerns and focus of the world beyond the classroom walls. Over the past decade VCSU has developed several significant partnerships to help the University prepare students effectively.

Microsoft-Great Plains Business Solutions

Microsoft-Great Plains Business Solutions, of Fargo, ND, entered into an arrangement with both Valley City State University and Mayville State University in 1998 to design a student internship experience that met the needs of the company and the students of the universities. The internship is part of the Business and Information Technology Division curriculum that faculty, in conjunction with MS-Great Plains personnel, designed specifically to meet MS-Great Plains’ entry-level skill requirements. The Board approved this arrangement under 403.1 Program Approval as a symbol of the importance of this corporate-university partnership in North Dakota.

The internship has two stages implemented over a seven-month period. Selected students in the first stage experience extensive and intensive training within the Customer Service and Technical Support areas of MS-Great Plains. During this period, students become oriented to the culture of MS-Great Plains, noted by Fortune Magazine as one of “The Best 100 Companies to Work For.” The second stage focuses on the job performance. Positive performance reviews by both the faculty supervisor and the company performance review team are required to move from phase one to two.

The director of career services and the Division of Business and Information Technology chairperson coordinate admission into this internship program. The student completes forms, an extensive interview process ensues, the division chair grants final academic approval, and the student then reports to the assigned area at MS-Great Plains. To ensure quality and sufficient progress towards learning, the division chair supervises the internship and assigns grades on a pass/no pass basis. The division chair works closely with the internship coordinator and the MS-Great Plains unit manager.

Since Summer 1999, ten student interns have been enrolled at MS-Great Plains, in Customer Service, Development, and eProcurement. This internship is arranged during the summer between the junior and senior year and continues into the student’s senior year. Of the ten interns enrolled, four have been offered permanent employment with MS-Great Plains upon graduation. Students report significant satisfaction with the experience. The job offers also confirm the company’s satisfaction with the intern’s performance.

Annual follow-up meetings involving the president, vice president, division chair, and director of career services have occurred with the corporate vice president and unit supervisors of MS-Great Plains. Every facet of the partnership’s actions are examined to ensure a quality experience for students. MS-Great Plains also attempts
to hold an on-campus recruitment day and Career Services hosts an MS-Great Plains Day during the spring semester. The relationship has been a productive one for students and for faculty. In exchange for this internship, VCSU uses Great Plains software (gifted to the Business and Information Technology Division) in the accounting courses and by CIS majors in networking.

**International Programs**

To prepare its students to live and work in a global environment, Valley City State University has signed formal partnership agreements with universities in Mexico and Canada:

- Brandon University, Brandon, Manitoba (Nov. 17, 1998)
- Universidad Autonóma de Baja California Sur, La Paz, BCS (June 15, 1994)
- Universidad Regional del Sureste, Oaxaca de Juárez, Oaxaca (October 20, 1998)

Since 1995 there have been 25 student exchanges and five faculty exchanges; recently two secondary education students have completed their student teaching in La Paz. Mexican students serve as language laboratory assistants and provide students enrolled in Spanish classes an opportunity to practice with native speakers. The agreements among the schools provide for two scholarships (tuition waivers) for each year. For Mexican students, VCSU also waives the technology fee and provides a double room in student housing. Should the Mexican student stay at VCSU an additional year, he/she may apply for other types of scholarships. However, the agreement is understood to be for two new students each year.

In October 1999, the VCSU international program, in cooperation with the Valley City Chamber of Commerce and the city of Valley City, hosted **Fiesta Mexicana**, a commercial and cultural event featuring handcrafts, folk art, dancing, and music from Oaxaca and La Paz. Plans are being made for future cultural exchanges: the VCSU Band and Choir are fund-raising for a trip to Mexico in 2002, and a second **Fiesta** will be held on Sept. 27-29, 2001.

International efforts continue to expand. During the 2000-2001 academic year there were over 30 students (not including Canadians) from international lands. Many of these students receive full or partial tuition waivers and work on campus. These students represent countries such as Zimbabwe, Bulgaria, Ghana, Mexico, Nigeria, and Poland. Most significant was the appearance of African students who hit the VCSU web page, applied and enrolled. They have become actively involved in campus activities (two are now student senators), and they have become instrumental in identifying other African students interested in attending. They are also academically well prepared and doing well in their classes. Students from Gambia, India, People’s Republic of China and Nepal have applied for the 2001-2002 academic year. These students bring a world perspective to the campus and classrooms.
Also, in the year 2000-2001 negotiations with the People’s Republic of China’s Ministry of Education are examining a significant student population for the 2001-2002 year and beyond. China has expressed an interest in placing up to 50 students per year in VCSU programs for a two-year cycle. Negotiations are into their fifth month as of this writing. Faculty and student exchanges are also on the agenda.

The institution provides a quality educational experience in an innovative culture...

VCSU’s innovative culture has been the major key to changes this past decade. The shift to Ability based assessment, the development of the Kathryn Center for Lifelong Learning, and the shared administration with Mayville State University illustrate the innovative culture in which the University works.

Ability Based Assessment

The advisory council for the 1995 FIPSE grant, in consultation with faculty and administration, guided the University’s focus on assessment. One of its activities was to restate the Foundation Studies objectives as desired Abilities in behavioral terms to facilitate measurement; faculty formed groups to define these Abilities and determine ways to measure student progress in each.

In the ensuing years, a combination of Bush Foundation and Title III funds facilitated faculty projects and training; by 1999 the Faculty Ability Groups had defined eight Abilities and the specific skills related to each Ability. In Spring 2000, each Faculty Ability Group wrote rubrics to identify five levels of performance for each skill. The Abilities and their related skills are listed in Table 2.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability</th>
<th>Related Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic Engagement</td>
<td>Receptivity, Visualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Positive Interdependence, Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Written, Spoken, Visual, Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Citizenship</td>
<td>Provides Service to Others, Teaches Others, Change Agent Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Awareness</td>
<td>Works with Diversity, Understands System, Interrelationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Gathering Information, Problem Recognition, Creative Thinking, Decision Making, Systems Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Selects, Applies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness</td>
<td>Self-Management, Self-Worth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1. VCSU Abilities and Related Skills
Faculty Senate adopted the *Abilities, Skills, and Levels* document in April 2000. This document, with its definitions and rubrics, is available in the resource room, on the web (<www.vcsu.edu/documents>) and on the I drive of the campus network.

General education (formerly Foundation Studies) areas developed designated Abilities (see 2000-02 *Bulletin*, p. 29; also, general education course syllabi); in addition, every division has selected the particular Abilities its students will demonstrate with high proficiency (indicated in the 2000-02 *Bulletin* on each division page). Students use the Abilities selected by their division/department to focus their digital portfolios (described below, page 34).

Faculty and departments are exploring the potential of outcome-based assessment using the Abilities. The senior portfolios offer a summative assessment measure; faculty in each division are developing rubrics and benchmarks to usefully evaluate both the students and the programs. Some departments are developing formative assessment measures to use with the senior portfolios to evaluate program effectiveness. In addition, the most recent Bush Foundation funding will support Faculty Ability Group review of each Ability, campus-wide, at the sophomore and senior levels. The Abilities and their use in both institutional assessment and general education are further discussed in Chapter 6, pages 108 and 125.

**Kathryn Center for Lifelong Learning**

In August 1994, the University opened an innovative student and employee training center in Kathryn, ND. The Kathryn Center for Lifelong Learning, with offices located on the campus of Valley City State University, provides performance-based, customized training to campus, local, and regional organizations. The center's program is designed to promote teamwork, trust building, peak performance, and leadership development for individuals and organizations through interpersonal skills training. Originally focused on adventure learning, the high ropes challenge course, the program has developed numerous “hands-on” workshops in such areas as leadership development, facilitating, team and personal development, customer service, problem-solving, and personality assessment. The center also offers computer training. Much of its work is customized to meet the needs of corporate or organizational sponsors.

Since 1994, the KCLL has evolved into a vital organization consisting of a director, an adventure learning coordinator, a customized computer coordinator, a half-time administrative assistant, work study students, a student assistant, and periodic interns. In addition to these, several faculty and staff members are trained to facilitate both “high” and “low” ropes activities. The KCLL Advisory Council, a representative group of VCSU personnel and clients, advises the president and director of the center regarding planning, development, policies, and procedures. It helps identify, develop, and implement the most effective and promising programs, clients, and methods. The State Board officially approved the KCLL as a unit of VCSU on November 22, 1996.
The KCLL currently involves itself on campus by providing instructional support for the Division of Business and Information Technology’s corporate training minor, playing an integral role in VCSU freshman orientation, and relying on VCSU faculty, staff and students to assist with facilitation and corporate training needs. Most VCSU freshman students participate in a full day of adventure learning as part of freshman orientation, the first group participating in Fall 1994, and entering freshmen in subsequent years thereafter. In addition, VCSU sports teams (football, women’s basketball, and volleyball), resident assistants, some courses (at the request of faculty), and some high school student days sponsored by divisions (Business Day, Language Arts Festival, Spanish Day, speech tournaments) have all used KCLL facilitators and activities to further team-building, enhance self-esteem, and improve communication.

The center extends the University into the region and state by actively marketing its products to corporate, civic, church, athletic, and educational groups. It is in many ways analogous to a continuing education unit. VCSU has achieved community, statewide, and out-of-state recognition for the services offered by the KCLL. Many businesses and organizations in the state have used the services of the KCLL and, as a result, are more aware of VCSU. In 1999-2000, the latest year for which data are available, the Kathryn Center conducted 150 trainings for 2,700 learners, covering 12,000 hours throughout much of the eastern two-thirds of North Dakota.

The self supporting activity of the KCLL is under constant review. The chilling economy of 2000-2001 has caused many companies to reassess themselves, especially those in North Dakota and the northern plains states. Issues before KCLL are not unlike those before all businesses within rural economic markets. The rural location 75 miles from the Fargo metroplex provides an additional, unique challenge to the marketing and client development efforts of KCLL staff.

While the KCLL maintains a loyal client base, the ability to develop new clientele under these circumstances has been particularly challenging. The growth of computer training in corporate, private and public educational markets has provided additional competitive challenges. To the staff’s credit, the income base compared to past years, has not diminished. In this uncertain business climate, the KCLL has been exploring the development of an overnight, corporate training facility (a remodeling of the current center to accommodate multiple days events) with private investors. Additionally, the KCLL staff in conjunction with the VCSU Executive Team will reassess center functions with an eye toward long-term sustainability. A new and focused business plan is expected during the Fall 2001 term.

**Faculty Development Framework**

A year-long Bush Foundation planning grant in 1999-2000 allowed faculty to explore campus needs and determine an appropriate direction for faculty development over the next five years. The critical teaching and learning concerns focused on the need to develop new teaching/learning strategies and assess the
outcomes appropriately to understand both how students learn and how the University can support and encourage that process.

To meet these needs, VCSU is in the process of developing a campus framework for teaching and learning. The unit will be a central office on the campus and its assignments will include helping faculty understand how best to create learning that is convenient, effective, and efficient while promoting instructional techniques to enhance face-to-face and online technology-enhanced teaching and learning. In addition to assisting faculty, the unit will provide a focal point for classroom research and campus assessment of teaching and learning, including not only new teaching strategies, but also the digital portfolio assessment.

The framework will centralize grant and resource development support as well as providing a menu of professional staff development opportunities. Specific campus activities coordinated by the unit are: a) summer institute, b) teaching and learning roundtables, c) online teaching initiative with course info, d) support the multimedia stations on campus used in creation of senior portfolios. A complete overview of the unit including visions, purposes, and strategies is in the 2000-2003 Bush Foundation grant proposal as a center for teaching and learning.

Shared Administration with Mayville State University

Mayville State University (MSU) and VCSU are autonomous institutions with similar missions, located 75 miles apart. They have separate accreditations and budgets. Both prepare people as teachers, for business careers, and for professional and graduate studies. To improve quality and efficiency, they share four administrators and several cross-campus ventures, while each maintains its unique identity.

The arrangement was established in December 1992 by the State Board, which voted that the two universities would “be served by one administrative team and collaborate on academic offerings, programs and services, which, through joint ventures, would strengthen opportunities for students and faculty.” The current shared president of both institutions was appointed in July 1993.

In January 1994, transition teams from both campuses worked together to develop a shared vision, goals, and action plan for the partnership. Both campuses committed to the following vision, which formed the basis of their strategic plan from 1993 to 2000:

- Maximizing learning for a lifetime
- Sharing and developing resources
- Providing organizational efficiencies
- Documenting results

In 1999-2000, the State Board of Higher Education adopted a new approach to strategic planning, identifying six cornerstones on which institutions are to take action. They are: economic development, educational excellence, flexible and
responsive system, accessible system, funding and rewards, and sharing the vision. In moving to the new format for their 2001 strategic plans, VCSU and MSU substituted the cornerstones for the four points above.

Executive leaders of both universities meet regularly to develop and track the strategic plan and discuss matters of mutual interest. Currently the two universities share a president, vice president of business affairs, comptroller, and director of financial aid. At times, they have also shared one or more of the following positions: vice-president for academic affairs, director of facilities services, human resources officer, grants officer, and cooperative education director. The initial success of the arrangement was noted in 1996, when the MSU-VCSU shared administration won the John L. Blackburn Award for exemplary models of administrative leadership from the American Association of University Administrators.

The State Board of Higher Education has made no attempt to direct the universities regarding specific collaborative efforts. Of the many ideas for collaboration discussed, formally and informally, among people from both universities, the following collaborative ventures on “academic offerings, programs, and services” have developed since 1993:

- A collaborative $1.7 million grant for instructional technology development
- Information technology track in collaboration with MS-Great Plains Business Solutions
- Accounting and other courses shared over the Interactive Video Network
- Partnerships established with two universities in Mexico and one in Canada
- Jointly offered minor in library science
- Library collection strategies coordinated to achieve savings
- Information and procedural exchanges in financial aid
- Information and procedural exchanges in other student affairs areas
- Multi-year loan of grand pianos
- Information and procedural exchanges in support of notebook computer initiatives
- Information and procedural exchanges in business affairs

In addition to expanding opportunities for students and improving procedural efficiencies on both campuses, the arrangement has resulted in savings from reduced administrative salaries that have made many improvements possible on each campus otherwise not possible due to limited state funding. These include higher salary increases than state funds provide and the transition to universal computing for all students and faculty.

Although a number of mutually beneficial activities has occurred and both institutions have put their savings to important uses, most activity between the two has consisted of capitalizing on opportunities as they arise.

The initial success of the arrangement was noted in 1996, when the MSU-VCSU shared administration won the John L. Blackburn Award for exemplary models of administrative leadership from the American Association of University Administrators.

Although a number of mutually beneficial activities has occurred and both institutions have put their savings to important uses, most activity between the two has consisted of capitalizing on opportunities as they arise. Responses to a VCSU campus climate survey question in 1999-2000 found that people were generally neutral about the relationship (“The MSU/VCSU partnership strengthens our institution” generated a 2.54 average response on a 5.0 scale.)
Recognizing the considerable changes each campus has experienced over the past five years, the president established a task force in Fall 2000 to examine “the long apparent disconnect between the word ‘partnership’ and the nature of the interactions between the two campuses” and make recommendations to the joint executive team regarding the relationship.

The six-member team (three faculty from each campus) reported in December 2000, that the strength of the relationship is the shared ventures that increase student opportunities and conserve fiscal resources. The positive public image of the “partnership” has served worthwhile purposes statewide. The report concluded that the members were “not prepared to recommend joint activity between VCSU and MSU that goes beyond shared administrators and ‘normal’ possibilities that could take place between any two campuses in the North Dakota University System.” *(The Rapidly Disappearing Task Force Report to the Joint Executive Team, December 2000).*

The Executive Team accepted that advice and informed all faculty and staff that sharing of administrators will continue unless and until the State Board of Higher Education decides otherwise; the arrangement between MSU and VCSU would be referred to as “shared administration;” and the administration encourages collaborations between the two institutions that would (a) provide more time for professional development, (b) assist in addressing low-enrollment classes or programs, (c) enrich the learning opportunities for students, or (d) provide opportunities for both campuses to increase enrollment. The president also asked the chancellor to review the cost each campus incurs for shared administrative salaries.

**The Medicine Wheel Park**

Astronomy students began construction of a medicine wheel as a class project in 1992. This project, originally funded by volunteer labor, materials, and equipment, was awarded approximately $80,000 in grants and in-kind donations in 1999. The 19 acre park is located on a bluff just above the campus to the south. Attractions of the park include a reproduction of a Native American medicine wheel (calendar), a meridian calendar, a scale model of the solar system, a concrete bicycle path stretching across the park along the rim of the bluff, several nature trails leading from the campus up the hillside through a riparian woods, and historic Native American burial mounds. Except for one acre of land owned by the City, the park is located on University land.

The park is used for educational activities for VCSU courses. Tours and field trips for the public, in particular K-12 school groups, are provided by VCSU.
The Community School of the Arts

The Community School of the Arts provides the citizens of Valley City and the surrounding communities with access to a variety of arts programs, including music, the visual arts, literary arts, and drama. Founded in 1994 as a preparatory department affiliated with the University, the program started with just two piano teachers and twenty piano students. The program was expanded in 1996 into a Community School of the Arts. In 1999 it became a fully certified member of the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts. At present there are over 200 students participating in a variety of arts programs, and 19 members of the faculty.

The director of the Community School of the Arts is guided by an advisory board of community members, including representative parents, civic leaders, and University and public school faculty. The University provides the facility, fiscal agency, and ¼ release time for the director; the Community School is otherwise self-supporting, funded by tuition, grants, and donations.

Students from elementary school through college age have participated in Community School programs, as have members of the community at large. The youngest students to participate in Community School activities were 1½-3 years old participating in a Kindermusik class, and the oldest participants have been in their 80's – some in private music lessons, and some in the Community Chamber Orchestra or Valley Voices Women's Choir. In addition to serving the Valley City area, the Community School draws students from 19 communities in the region.

The music programs at the Community School have been highly successful. From the initial offering of only piano lessons, the program has grown to include private lessons in voice, piano, organ, guitar, strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion instruments. A music theory computer lab offers weekly instruction in music theory. Other successful music programs include the Community Chamber Orchestra, the Valley Voices Women’s Choir, an annual Chamber Music Festival and a program for instruction of string instruments in the public schools.

The ever-changing curriculum of the Community School is designed to reflect the demands and needs of the community. Some of these programs include private and group lessons in painting, drawing, ceramics and printmaking, based on demand. The Girl Scout Art Day and the Ceramic Communion Cup Program are annual events.

Since its inception, the Community School of the Arts has made the arts a more visible and integral part of Valley City and the surrounding communities. A scholarship program aids in the effort to make the arts accessible to as many people as possible. The VCSU Community School of the Arts is always receptive to new ideas for programs and willing to experiment with programs that will appeal to new audiences. Because of this flexibility, the Community School maintains a vital and exciting presence within Valley City and the surrounding communities.
A leader in the effective use of instructional technologies...

In 1990 the State Board of Higher Education assigned VCSU the statewide mission of developing instructional technology applications. Three significant changes on campus, the establishment of the Center for Innovation and Instruction in 1993, the notebook initiative in 1996, and the developing use of digital portfolios (required of all students entering under the 1998-2000 Bulletin or later), illustrate the University's leadership in instructional technologies. At VCSU, instructional technology has become “a structured, strategic emphasis that runs throughout the organization” (Luker, quoted in Computerworld, January 1, 2001)

The Notebook Initiative

In 1990 VCSU received its special mission designation as a leading institution in the application of teaching technology because of its already rich application of instructional technology in the classroom. At that time, VCSU had the richest per-student access to computers of all the institutions in the state (one computer station per 4.9 students) and was already supplying consultants in multi-media applications and distance learning technology.

For faculty, students, administration, community members, and staff involved in the technology planning process, the next logical step was to provide universal access for students and multi-media teaching stations for innovative instruction. By August 1996 all students and faculty had IBM ThinkPad notebook computers. Twenty classrooms have been renovated to provide network capabilities, with multi-media teacher stations and projection televisions to display computer or video information. The notebook initiative has also required the development of a Help Desk, and the restructuring and realignment of technology support personnel: both academic and administrative support personnel now report to the VPAA. VCSU is the first institution in the state, and one of the first in the nation, to provide notebook computers to all students and faculty.

The notebook computers and related resources have changed teaching and learning at VCSU. The results of four years of student surveys, available at Dr. Holleque's faculty site <http://community.vcsu.edu/facultypages/kathryn_holleque/Surveys.htm> document the changes students note in their learning.

According to these surveys, most students are using the computers in the following manner:

- 92 percent use their computer daily.
- 86 percent access the Internet and 93 percent use e-mail at least daily.
- 77 percent report having more communication with faculty because of computer availability.

Moreover, they are using the computers in ways that seem to enhance their experience in terms of commonly accepted indicators of good practice in teaching and learning:
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- 84 percent say it is now easier to be more actively involved in learning.
- 83 percent say computer use helps them take more personal responsibility for their learning.
- 83 percent say computer use helps them better integrate and organize knowledge in meaningful ways.
- 73 percent report that computer use increases their curiosity and interest in learning.

Finally, the students’ summary comments are uniformly positive:

- 91 percent say technologies enhance learning.
- 79 percent say in-class use is valuable for learning.
- 75 percent say that using computers helps them meet their learning goals.
- 92 percent report that using computers saves them time.
- 91 percent say having technology skills is important to their future employment.

VCSU has received national recognition for its technological innovations:

- Computerworld (January 1, 2001) discusses VCSU’s strategic use of technology as a model for both education and business transformation, and describes many ways technology has changed traditional classroom approaches at VCSU. The article is available on the web at <http://www.computerworld.com/cwi/story/0,1199,NAV47_STO55572,00.html>.
- Educause Quarterly (Number 1, 2000) describes the current level of instructional technology usage at both VCSU and MSU; an online version of the article is available at <http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/EQM0017.pdf>.

Digital Portfolios

The 1995-2000 Title III grant focused on implementing the digital portfolio initiative. The portfolio is both an assessment tool, integrated into the curriculum at VCSU, and an employment tool for graduating seniors who can use it to demonstrate certain abilities to prospective employers.

Beginning with the 1998-2000 catalog, VCSU requires senior students to create digital portfolios that illustrate the intellectual and job-related Abilities they have developed while studying at VCSU.

Students begin work on their portfolios in general education courses, by preparing projects that show their achievement of the Abilities each general education course emphasizes (see the General Education Abilities, page 29 of 2000-2001 Bulletin, for more specific information). As students progress in their majors, they further
develop some of these Abilities that pertain specifically to their major fields of study. The specific Abilities developed in each division are indicated in the description of each division (2000-2001 Bulletin, pages 39-67). Each class includes projects and activities that allow students to develop and illustrate their achievements in the specified Abilities.

Currently, students prepare their digital portfolios on CD-ROMs. The portfolio presents the best work each student has completed while studying at VCSU, work that illustrates significant achievements of at least five of the eight VCSU Abilities. Some of these Abilities are major-specific, while some may relate to the student’s minor field, general education studies, or co-curricular activities.

**Center for Innovation in Instruction**

The Center for Innovation in Instruction (CII) is an instructional technology training and resource center dedicated to developing and supporting instructional innovations and the applications of emerging technologies in the K-12 classroom. With the mission of “improving teaching with technology,” the center’s primary services include workshops for inservice educators in technology planning, using instructional technology hardware and software, and integration of instructional technology into the curriculum. Its primary customer base is K-12 teachers and administrators.

VCSU serves as the host location and fiscal agent for CII. It was established in 1993 through a grant from the North Dakota Educational Telecommunications Council and is currently funded by state education, vocational education, and higher education groups. CII receives some of its funding from the legislature. All CII staff are VCSU employees. CII uses VCSU financial and administrative services, including human resources, accounting, facilities, and telecommunication infrastructure and support services.

The Center for Innovation in Instruction has a board of directors made up of representatives of its major stakeholder groups. The Board’s function is advisory, helping CII plan, and advocating for CII among various stakeholder groups. VCSU president, Dr. Ellen Chaffee, serves as the president of that board. Other members include representatives from the Department of Public Instruction, the State Board for Vocational and Technical Education, the ND University System, NDSU/UND Educational Administration Programs, and a superintendent from east North Dakota, a superintendent from west North Dakota, an appointee from the Greater North Dakota Association, and a K-12 teacher.

CII develops and delivers resources and services to its primary customer base: North Dakota public school districts. CII also works with teacher preparation programs at state post-secondary institutions to better prepare new teachers to integrate modern technology resources into their classroom practice. CII services are delivered to customers primarily as workshops, training sessions and consultations. Fifty percent of CII’s workshops are offered for graduate credit through continuing education departments at NDSU, UND and MiSU.
CII serves as a lead agency in North Dakota on a number of school technology planning, funding and technology integration training initiatives. For instance, the center, along with the State Board for Vocational and Technical Education, co-directs a statewide five-year technology integration process funded by a $7 million Technology Innovation Challenge grant from the US Department of Education.

By serving the needs of educators statewide and providing leadership in the area of instructional technology, the partnership with CII extends VCSU’s presence throughout the state and helps it accomplish the 1990 university system mandate to provide leadership in the area of instructional technology.

**Regional Technology Center**

The Regional Technology Center is an exciting new partnership between the Valley City-Barnes County Development Corporation and Valley City State University. Universities in the NDUS have a long and successful history as economic and educational “engines” within their rural communities. This partnership provides a vital link between higher education and the private sector to develop economic alternatives to the agricultural base of the region.

The purpose of the Regional Technology Center is to revitalize the local economy and link Valley City and this rural region to the global marketplace by the development and support of information technology (IT) professionals and companies. The Regional Technology Center in cooperation with the University will generate a ready workforce, offer a higher level of technology services, provide training and education leading to new job opportunities and serve as a business incubator. New information technology companies that are being recruited to locate in the business incubator or in Valley City-Barnes County will need the technical services, training, and telecommunication infrastructure available through the Center.

The Regional Technology Center has been planned and organized over a four year period. These plans came to fruition with the start of construction during the 2000-2001 academic year. The 20,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art facility is located on University property on Winter Show Road and 5th Avenue Southeast in Valley City. The center houses 10,000 sq. ft. of high tech business space and an additional 10,000 sq. ft. leased to Valley City State University for the Center for Innovation in Instruction, the Technology Education Program, and other University-related programs and services. A variety of telecommunications equipment is available, including web services and VoIP (voice over internet protocol) for phone and data services. Valley City State University provides on-going management services for the technology center as well as providing technical consultation with regard to VoIP, ISP, broadband services, multimedia equipment, networking, and troubleshooting.

The Center for Innovation in Instruction and the technology education program moved into their new quarters at the center in April 2001. Two other tenants began work at the center this summer; one already employs two VCSU graduates, and the other interviewed students and started operations in August.
The Center seeks to recruit information technology companies looking to start and/or expand their operations by providing state of the art networking services, on-going training and a constant source of new, higher skilled employees. Targeted information technology companies include hardware and software technical support, web-based companies, e-commerce, accounting and other higher level back office operations. Students gain first-hand, real-world experience through internships, summer employment, part-time employment and ultimately full-time employment. New businesses will have ready access to a highly trained workforce and the state will have alumni who may choose to remain in the state. Entrepreneurship will be rewarded to the benefit of the region where out-migration of the young is a serious problem for North Dakota.