Chapter 5: The institution has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes

Governance and Administration

Valley City State University has well-defined and understood organizational structures, policies, and procedures in place that make for an effective administration. The University follows the policies and procedures as set out in the North Dakota University System policy manual. These policies and procedures are available on the web and cover a wide range of topics from governance and organization to purchasing.

In addition the University has its own policies and procedure manuals. These can be found on the University’s home page under documents. Each year a document called Baselines is produced and distributed to all faculty and staff. This document contains, among other items, an organizational chart and a complete listing of the University’s committees, their composition and their duties. This structure and policies offer all faculty and staff the opportunity to provide input into major decisions made by University administration. This also provides administration with a broad foundation of information on which to base decisions.

Administration

State Administration: The State Board of Higher Education and the Chancellor

The North Dakota Century Code (Chapter 15-10-17) establishes the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) as the governing body for the North Dakota University System (NDUS). As a constituent campus of the NDUS, Valley City State University is governed by the SBHE. The VCSU president reports to the SBHE and chancellor.

Membership of the State Board consists of eight persons appointed by the Governor. Seven are subject to North Dakota state Senate confirmation; they serve not more than two four-year terms. The eighth member is a student appointed by the Governor from a list of names submitted by the North Dakota Student Association. The student member serves a one-year term, and not more than two consecutive terms. In addition to the eight voting members, one non-voting faculty representative, elected by the Council of College Faculties, serves a one-year term.

The chancellor serves as the system’s chief executive officer. The chancellor and the system office staff support the SBHE in developing public policy for the NDUS, in advocating on its behalf, and fostering shared leadership throughout the system.
University Administration

The president and vice presidents meet at least twice monthly with the comptroller and the CIO (the Executive Team) to ensure coordinated University leadership. The chancellor evaluates the president annually and the president evaluates all who report to her annually. The president, vice president for business affairs, and comptroller have served in those roles since 1993. The vice president for student affairs has served in that role since 1985. The vice president for academic affairs came to VCSU in 1999. Three times in the last eight years, the administration has sponsored confidential written evaluations of all top administrators by all or a representative sample of the faculty and staff. The results are used as input to personal development plans and performance reviews. The results have been so consistently positive and are necessarily so general that administrators focus more on gathering feedback for themselves and those they supervise on a daily ad hoc basis.

**President**

The president is the chief executive officer of the institution and a member of the chancellor's executive staff. The president is responsible to the chancellor for all matters concerning the institution and is an advisor to the chancellor in matters of inter-institutional policy and administration. SBHE Policy 305.1 (President's Authority and Responsibilities) outlines specific responsibilities and duties, including the obligation to insure effective and broad-based participation in the decision-making process from faculty, staff, students, and others in those areas in which their interests are affected. The VCSU foundation director, the director of athletics, the director of the Center for Innovation in Instruction, and vice presidents for academic, business and student affairs all report directly to the president.

**Vice President for Academic Affairs**

The vice president for academic affairs is responsible for the general administration, organization, and development of the academic and instructional programs and services of the college. The vice president is responsible for coordinating and supervising the administrations of six academic divisions, the library, the director of admission and records, the chief information officer, and the director of the Kathryn Center for Lifelong Learning.

The six academic divisions of the University are

- Business and Information Technology
- Communication Arts and Social Science
- Education, Psychology, and Technology
- Fine Arts
- Health and Physical Education
- Mathematics and Science
The vice president for academic affairs is the designated officer in charge of the campus in the absence of the president.

**Vice President for Business Affairs**

The vice president for business affairs is responsible for developing, coordinating, and supervising the administration of all fiscal matters related to the campus, including budget development, purchasing, and all accounting functions. Departments and services reporting to the vice president for business affairs include the comptroller, the business office, the office of facility services, the faculty materials center, and human resources. The vice president coordinates campus development and supervises new construction. The vice president serves in a dual capacity as the vice president for business affairs for both Valley City State University and Mayville State University.

**Vice President for Student Affairs**

The vice president for student affairs is responsible for administering, organizing and developing the programs of student services with the purpose of maintaining a campus social and living environment wholesomely supportive of the academic curriculum. The vice president is responsible for the programs of:

- Enrollment management
- Student academic services
- Financial aid
- Counseling
- Career services
- Student union
- Student activities
- Housing
- Student government
- Health services
- Food service
- Bookstore

The student affairs unit has recently realigned its assessment goals with the Roundtable cornerstones. The new Student Affairs Assessment Plan and a summary of the changes to programs and services resulting from assessment are available in the resource room.

**Governance**

The community culture at VCSU strongly values shared governance. The size of the institution and the number of standing and advisory committees established to direct the curriculum, resources, student experience, and faculty and staff activities provide opportunities for all on campus who wish to be involved in decision making. The Policy Manual (V301) describes a procedural, shared governance, “a democratic approach appropriate to an academic community.” That VCSU has been able to
move forward so successfully in educational technology over the past decade demonstrates the commitment of the faculty, staff, students, and administration to active, shared governance.

**Faculty Association**

As stated in its constitution, the purpose of the Faculty Association is “to foster a liberal education of high quality that is consistent with the University mission, to make determinations regarding the role and status of the faculty, and to render formal advice to the President of the University on such matters.” The Faculty Association Constitution is VCSU Policy V201.

Voting members include faculty with rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor, and any other faculty teaching half-time or more. Non-voting members include professional-level administrators. All councils and committees representative of the faculty as a whole are accountable to the association.

The association meets monthly to discuss matters referred to it by the Faculty Senate or raised by its members. Over the past ten years, the Association has worked with the Executive Team and the Student Association in making a number of significant, campus-wide decisions:

- approval and implementation of the notebook initiative
- agreement on a single platform (IBM) for campus computers
- revision of the mission statement
- development of Abilities definitions and levels, and approval of the final Abilities document

During the 2000-2001 academic year, 88 percent of the faculty attended at least two of the nine monthly association meetings; in addition, virtually every full-time faculty member participates in the work of the association through committee assignments.

**Faculty Senate**

The Faculty Senate is the principal working body of the faculty with respect to academic policies and procedures, and functions as an executive team of the Faculty Association. As such, it receives and acts upon recommendations, proposals, or concerns from divisions, departments, committees, students or other individuals. If actions of the Faculty Senate are supported by a unanimous vote, they are reported to the Faculty Association as action taken. Otherwise, they are referred for additional consideration or placed on the agenda of the Faculty Association.

The elected officers of the Faculty Association, one representative elected from each of the six academic divisions, the Council of College Faculty representative, a student representative selected by the Student Senate, and the president of the University or her representative, comprise the Faculty Senate.
Faculty Association Committees

The Faculty Association and Senate discharge their work through established committees that either channel their recommendations back to the association or the senate or forward them to the University president. Faculty members predominantly compose association committees, with student representation and administrative participation as appropriate to the issues. The standing committees, as defined by the constitution, include

- Curriculum Committee
- Welfare Committee
- Budget and Salary Committee
- Standing Committee on Faculty Rights
- Teacher Education Committee
- Council of College Faculties
- Library Committee
- Financial Aid Committee
- Diversity Waiver Selection Committee
- Athletic Committee
- Academic and Scholastic Standing Committee
- Constitutional Review Committee

Recognizing the full load faculty carry, administration and faculty have intermittently initiated discussions about reviewing and restructuring the standing committees. This will be a key agenda item for the 2001-2 academic year. The Faculty Association and senate have the prerogative to create ad hoc committees when necessary.

As described in the VCSU Policy Manual, Section V307.1, various administrative committees/advisory groups also include faculty representation:
- Academic Policy and Affairs Council (APAC) (VPAA and Division Chairs)
- APAC+5 (Registrar and Directors of Technology, Kathryn Center, Library, Admission)
- Institutional Improvement Committee
- Faculty Development Committee
- International Advisory Committee
- Technology Advisory Committee
- University Budget and Facilities Committee
- Title III Advisory Committee
- Judicial Council
- University Hearings and Appeals Board
- Adult Curriculum Advisory Committee
- Student Grievance Committee
- Education & Psychology Division Appeals Committee
- Financial Aid Committee
- Minority Recruitment Committee
- Staff Personnel Board
- Mayville/Valley City Loss Control

Faculty members predominantly compose association committees, with student representation and administrative participation as appropriate to the issues.
CHAPTER 5

The Student Association

All enrolled students of the University are members of the Student Association, which elects four officers and ten student senators to form the Student Senate, the governing body of the Association. Program Board and the Inter Fraternity-Sorority Council also each select one representative to participate on Student Senate.

The Student Senate concerns itself with issues of campus life, including issues arising from the Inter-Residence Hall Council, the Inter Fraternity-Sorority Council, and the Activities Board. The Student Senate administers an activity fee budget of over $100,000 every year which the Finance Commission recommends to the University president for expenditure of the student activity fee. These fees support student activities and the Memorial Student Center. Over the past 10 years, Student Senate has discussed, debated and approved University fee levels. Two increases in the activity fee, a technology fee, and a recent increase in the technology fee (2000) have gone through Student Senate.

Each year Student Senate assigns student representatives to appropriate faculty and administrative committees (Financial Aid, Judicial Council, UHAB, IIC, etc.) On most committees students are active voting members. Open forums are used to receive student input on ideas or major discussions such as increasing the student activity fees and the notebook initiative.

The Student Senate actively participated in planning and approving the campus-wide notebook initiative, and in reviewing the University mission statement. For several years it worked with the Faculty Association Welfare Committee to develop an improved course assessment tool, which was approved in 1998 as a faculty option to the standard course assessment form. In addition, Student Senate revised the student grievance policy and the alcohol policy in 1996-1997, and developed a Publications Board to oversee the student publications in 1997. The Senate wrote resolutions in 2000-01 regarding the BA/BS degree graduation policy and per-credit tuition.

Members of the Student Senate have testified before North Dakota legislative committees on behalf of the University, and they are active in the North Dakota Student Association. During the 1999-2000 school year, one VCSU Senate member participated in the state-wide Roundtable for the North Dakota Legislative Council Interim Committee on Higher Education, which culminated in the report discussed in Chapter 4, page 54. A student from VCSU was one of two student representatives on this state-wide committee.

The Staff Personnel Advisory Committee

The Staff Personnel Advisory Committee (SPAC) acts as an advisory committee to the University president and the director of human resources on matters relating to staff personnel, and initiates and reviews proposed revisions to staff personnel policies. SPAC also provides an avenue for distribution of information and governance issues across campus. Banded staff at VCSU are divided into four employee groups:
CRITERION 2: RESOURCES

CHAPTER 5

Professional, technical/para, facilities or office support. Each group elects two representatives to serve as liaison between their group and the SPAC committee.

SPAC is the most direct avenue of information passed from staff to the president. Each of the four staff groups meets on a monthly basis, and forwards issues to SPAC for clarification or discussion with the other groups. SPAC meets monthly with issues reported by the staff group representatives. Monthly minutes are distributed to SPAC members and the president, who responds to issues and topics discussed. Any items requiring more input or clarification are discussed one-on-one with the president, or are referred to the appropriate VCSU administrator for response or information. Many times, administrators will attend group or SPAC meetings to discuss or share responses to issues raised.

The committee advocates and solicits numerous training topics and projects from across campus to allow all staff personnel continued growth, development and involvement in campus activities. Recent training opportunities and ongoing projects developed by SPAC include

- CPR/First Aid/AED training – done annually
- Customer Service
- Team Building Development Workshop
- Convocation Sharing of State Developed Cornerstones
- Continued Campus Wide Staff Development Plan
- New Employee Welcome Packet
- Staff Service Recognition Awards
- Employee of the Year Award
- Highway Clean-Up Program (with Faculty and Students)
- Food Pantry Collection

Areas SPAC is currently striving to improve include staff participation in campus events (i.e. opening school activities), increased staff participation at their banded group meetings, increased attendance at trainings, and clearer avenues for staff input.

Human Resources: Faculty, Students, and Staff

It is the people of Valley City State University who give the university its strong culture and warm atmosphere.

Faculty

Faculty members at Valley City State University possess the necessary professional competencies to provide effective instruction and to carry out related responsibilities. The faculty demonstrate a genuine concern for their students’ personal and intellectual development and career success. They are committed to scholarship in their professional disciplines and to the process of teaching and learning in higher
education. Faculty quality is documented by credential files, by self-evaluation, and by student and peer assessments. The table below summarizes the distribution of degrees and tenure, across all six divisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th># Faculty</th>
<th>Tenured</th>
<th>Terminal Degree</th>
<th>Master’s Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CASS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health PE</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math/Science</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1. Faculty by Division, Tenure, and Degrees

*Includes 1 ELT

It is important to note that five recently hired tenure track faculty must initiate and complete a doctorate prior to the award of tenure. All five are currently enrolled and on schedule. The recruitment and hiring of full-time and especially part-time faculty with terminal degrees has become extremely difficult. This “grow-your-own” philosophy has been implemented quite successfully with both faculty and technology staff. The University endeavors to assist faculty in completing their doctoral programs.

The recruitment and retention of a highly motivated, skilled and innovative faculty is no small chore. Location, depressed salaries, and a sagging national economy, especially in the agricultural sector, present obvious challenges. Most noteworthy is the high caliber of individuals the University has been able to retain and recruit. The focus on teaching and learning within a technologically sophisticated environment has been key to faculty recruitment. But the challenge to recruit and retain will remain. Once trained and experienced in a notebook culture, these faculty become highly sought-after by other universities.

Adjunct and Part-Time Instruction

VCSU has held a long tradition of minimizing the use of adjunct professors. Because consistency and quality of instruction provide the best learning environment, the faculty is committed to an educational experience directed and led by full-time professors. Student comments and alumni studies repeatedly affirm this value.

Such a commitment remains a paramount strength of the institution. The full-time faculty deliver an overwhelming majority of the curriculum. In 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, an adjunct budget of $163,220 represented 6 percent of the total dollars allocated to full-and part-time faculty salaries. Of the 6 percent, ¾ went to true part time instruction. The remaining ¼ supported full-time faculty accepting overload assignments, which represents one means of additional income for faculty in a state with historically low salary standards. The commitment to instruction by full-time faculty is overwhelming. It remains to be seen whether the economic climate will allow VCSU to sustain this commitment to full-time instruction.
Faculty Assignments

The annual faculty assignment is 12 credits per semester or approximately eight three-credit classes an academic year. Inspection of annual course offerings (an average of 610 courses a year) reveal that a vast majority of the curriculum is comprised of three-credit offerings (44 percent) followed by two-credit (31 percent) and one-credit offerings (16 percent). Four-credit offerings exist predominantly in the sciences and are few (9 percent). The recent introduction of eight-week courses on a very limited basis has provided additional opportunities for students to pick up specialized courses and offered faculty a means of additional income.

Class size generally approaches a 17:1 student faculty ratio. Only a few classrooms serve classes larger than 50. And while class size and course loads seem reasonable, faculty have considerable student contact time. Add governance, service to the broader community and scholarly or artistic activity, and one quickly sees a committed but taxed workforce. One additional faculty line was added in 2000-2001 (business). Another will be added in 2001-2002 (education). Strategic planning processes enable divisions to link staffing requests to goals and mission.

A history of budget cuts through the early 1990s is the source of some of this staffing pressure. Internal reallocation to support the notebook initiative along with the assignment of faculty to administrative posts also prevented replacement of faculty. However, as grants have picked up some of the one-time reallocation costs, and as enrollment stabilizes, opportunities to restore needed staff give rise to optimism. The infrastructure to support instruction remains inadequate, however, and is an issue in need of attention for the coming decade. Only three of the six divisions have a full-time administrative assistant.

Faculty Release Time

Research grants, athletic coaching or administrative assignments comprise the three largest categories of faculty release time. The vice president for academic affairs is the only full-time academic administrator. Three faculty are on full-time release to service grants, research, or support services (technology education, instructional technology and the Information Technology Center respectively). The academic divisions are led by a division chair from the faculty with ¼ release. Two division chairs have an additional ¼ release to either chair a department (music) or to supervise a large teacher education unit. Coordinators of this NCA self-study report were granted up to 3/4 release time.

VCSU is a member of the Dakota Athletic Conference (DAC-10) under the auspices of the NAIA. Coaching duties comprise significant release time assignments for faculty in the division of health and physical education. Two coaches hold tenured positions (track and women’s volleyball). All other coaches are non-tenure track appointments. The policy of the University is to fill faculty-coaching appointments with non-tenure track appointments.
Replacements to cover faculty release time appointments are generally part-time adjuncts, which defines the major need for adjuncts on campus.

**Faculty Scholarship**

While teaching is the primary responsibility and concern of faculty at VCSU, the faculty and administration also recognize that the pursuit of scholarly work improves the quality of teaching and learning on campus. Therefore, despite full teaching schedules and minimal monetary faculty development support, VCSU faculty have actively engaged themselves in the pursuit of scholarly activities. For the past four years, these activities include:

- One faculty member has published a book and has another book forthcoming.
- Fourteen different faculty members have published articles in refereed, academic journals or conference proceedings. Faculty articles have appeared in journals like *The Prairie Naturalist*, *Paideuma: A Journal dedicated to Ezra Pound Scholarship*, and *The American Music Teacher*. Published articles in conference proceedings include, the Canadian Mathematical Society, the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (a number of articles), and the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education.
- Twenty faculty members have presented papers at academic conferences; most faculty members attended a conference during the period surveyed.
- Many faculty speak to local groups and provide expertise at area workshops. A number of faculty members give lectures for the Barnes County Historical Society Lecture series, and faculty often serve as experts for K-12 in-services.
- Three faculty members have conducted seminars in Mexico at VCSU’s sister university in La Paz.
- The art and music faculty exhibit their work and perform at concerts.

VCSU faculty members have also received grant money to facilitate research opportunities and enhance programs offered on campus. One faculty member received a Fulbright grant for the 2000-2001 academic year; another received a Fulbright award for 2001-2002. Faculty research on campus includes work on learning styles, Eurasian Watermilfoil (a VCSU faculty member first documented Eurasian Watermilfoil in North Dakota), Sheyenne River invertebrates, Medicine Wheel Park development, Norwegian immigrant women, the Cold War West, Ezra Pound, Lewis and Clark’s celestial navigation, student perceptions of the impact of notebook computers on learning, and a variety of math and computer projects.

**Faculty Development**

Faculty development is important to the promotion of scholarship on any campus. At VCSU, an annual stipend of $200 has been provided for each faculty member to attend a conference or workshop, with allocation methods determined by the divisions. State fleet vehicles are provided for travel within the state of North
Dakota. The VPAA office seeks to provide additional support to those people attending regional and national conferences to present papers.

Because of limited faculty development monies on campus, grants from outside sources have played an important role in the total faculty development picture. Bush Foundation grants have provided important faculty development dollars. Most faculty have received Bush Foundation monies to enhance their technology skills. Title III grant monies have also enabled VCSU faculty to develop new skills.

Since faculty development is so crucial to a university community, the Faculty Development Committee at VCSU spent the 1999-2000 academic year discussing changes to the faculty development policy that was implemented in 1996. The key feature in the committee's discussions is the inclusion of a paid sabbatical. All of the new proposals are designed to encourage and facilitate academic scholarship on the campus of VCSU. The Faculty Association has discussed the new policy proposals during the 2000-2001 academic year.

### Students

The 1990s were a decade of transformation for students as well at Valley City State University. The student body demonstrates a marked increase in both diversity and quality, with a 25 percent increase in minority students (from 32 to 48), and increases in both the average ACT scores and GPA of new freshmen. The implementation of notebook computers changed both the ways students learn and the culture of communication on campus. Orientation programs and services have been greatly enhanced with the introduction of the summer orientation program (1992), the ropes course (1994), and the development of Freshman Dialog into a more extensive orientation course, Living to Learn (1995). Student services are being developed in the online environment to provide convenient access to students both on-campus and at a distance.

Results of the ACT Student Opinion Survey show generally high levels of satisfaction with programs and services at VCSU. Perhaps the largest single concern for the future is enrollment. Demographics of the traditional areas VCSU draws from are changing.

### Enrollment

State-wide, North Dakota is facing demographic challenges. From 1990-2000, only 5 of the 53 counties in North Dakota showed any growth in population, and the number of high school graduates in the state is expected to decline by 16 percent over the next ten years. In the fifteen counties surrounding Valley City, the number of high school graduates is expected to decrease by 12 percent over the same period. At Valley City State University, the majority of students (approximately 78 percent) come from within the state. As the number of North Dakota high school graduates decreases over the next several years, marketing strategies will have to shift to students from other states, other countries, and to students taking classes online.
As Figure 5.1 shows, the headcount enrollment over the past five years has varied from a low of 1054 in 1997 to a high of 1,121 in 1996. Full-time equivalent student enrollment ranged from 876 in 1997 to 932 in 1996, amounting to a variance of approximately 6 percent. A history of stable enrollment patterns can be seen in the Comprehensive Planning Enrollment Report in the resource room.

Students at Valley City State University come from 17 states, three Canadian provinces, and eight foreign countries. Fifty-five percent of the enrollment comes from the surrounding seven counties. The past ten years have seen an increase in the number of out of state students, from 11 percent in 1990 to 22 percent in 2000. Students of minority cultures make up about 10 percent of the student body, with non-resident aliens at 4.58 percent, Native Americans at 2.29 percent, Hispanic and Black/Non-Hispanic at 0.82 percent each, and Asian/Pacific Islander at 0.45 percent. Residency status, age, and student classification breakdowns can be found in the VCSU Fall Enrollment Statistics Report (see resource room).

Over the past decade, the average ACT score for new freshmen increased from 20.0 to 21.1, and the average GPA of new freshmen increased from 2.80 to 3.13. The four year graduation rate has increased from 14 percent to 26 percent. The number of transfers has increased from 69 in the Fall of 1990 to 88 in Fall 2000.

The director of enrollment management coordinates the marketing and recruitment efforts of the University. The director, along with two admissions counselors and one administrative support staff position, oversee a program of high school visits, career fairs, direct mail and telemarketing. Use of the World Wide Web, e-mail, and CD-ROM have become important marketing tools.

Retention

Over the past five years, an average of 68.3 percent of the new freshmen return for a second year of study at VCSU, compared to the national average sophomore return rate of 71.9 percent (ACT, Inc., Feb. 16, 2000). VCSU’s sophomore return rate is actually fairly good, considering an average of 24 percent of the entering freshmen at VCSU indicate on the CIRP survey that the chances are “very good”
that they will transfer to another college before graduation. The national average for this question is 10 percent.

Figure 5.2 shows a slight decline in the retention rate over five years.

VCSU’s graduation rate, however, has increased significantly over the past decade. As Figure 5.3 indicates, the five year graduation rate has jumped from 23 percent for the class entering in 1990 to 38 percent in 1999 for the class entering in 1995.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entering class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite these improvements in retention, VCSU’s five year graduation rate in 1999 is still below the national average reported by ACT in 1999 of 42.2 percent (ACT, Inc., Feb. 16, 2000). Several retention strategies are in place that assure students every opportunity to be successful and to persist in reaching their academic goals:

- A comprehensive orientation program is in place to assure that all new students begin their college careers with the tools and experiences necessary to be successful.
- A peer tutoring program, study skills classes, and academic advising and counseling are available to all students.
A system of monitoring class attendance is in place and faculty report students having difficulty in classes to the director of student academic services.

In addition to these measures, exit interviews are held with all students withdrawing from the University and surveys are conducted with students who do not return. Students leave Valley City State University for a number of reasons, including family, academic, finances, health, and geographic location. These are similar to the national data reported by ACT, which indicates that the three “primary reasons students leave college are financial problems, inadequate academic preparation, and difficulty adapting to college life” (Habley, *ACT Office for the Enhancement of Educational Practices* 2000). Data from VCSU’s exit interviews is available in the resource room.

**Staff**

Members of the staff at Valley City State University assist the administration, faculty, and students in maintaining an environment conductive to learning, providing technical and clerical assistance, maintaining records, and managing the physical plant.

In 1999, the NDUS developed a new classification system that places staff in broad salary bands that focus on the knowledge and skills of the individual, rather than the narrow focus of a particular job description. The new system provides management flexibility to develop positions and assign work based on the need of the organization, rather than depending on pre-existing job classifications. Changes in work assignments are thus accommodated without an immediate need to review classification and pay grade.

VCSU employs 90 full-time and three part-time staff, who fall into six bands, as indicated in Table 5.2. One-third of these individuals in staff positions have worked at VCSU at least 15 years, providing strong stability in campus offices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th># Employed</th>
<th>Mean Salary</th>
<th>Average Years of Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 1000</td>
<td>Administration Managerial</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$41,128</td>
<td>14.13 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 3000</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$30,532</td>
<td>6.13 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 4000</td>
<td>Technical &amp; Paraprofessional</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$22,063</td>
<td>12.17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 5000</td>
<td>Office Support</td>
<td>16 FT; 3 PT</td>
<td>$18,953</td>
<td>12.11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 6000</td>
<td>Crafts and Trades</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$21,047</td>
<td>14.6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 7000</td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$15,531</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2. Staff Classification, Salary, and Years of Service

VCSU has identified market salary values for all staff positions on campus. These values, level of responsibilities, and internal equity are used in determining salary.
increases above across-the-board increases. VCSU has a Salary Administration Policy to address salary applications. Annual responsibility reviews are used to assess staff performance.

All regular employees of VCSU are eligible for three course tuition waivers per calendar year, following the guidelines in Human Resource Policy 33. In addition, employees enjoy many training opportunities, including customer service workshops, computer training workshops both on and off campus, and informational workshops at convocation each August.

Information and Technology Resources

Information and technology resources are among the strongest assets of Valley City State University.

The Library

Academic libraries are, and have been, in the forefront of technological change in adopting their learning resources for students and faculty to the changing formats of information. From the earliest technological format—from books, filmstrips, microforms, 16 mm films, videos, videodiscs, CDs, CD-ROMs, and now online access to digital databases, academic libraries are providing learning resources in every useful format to their students and faculties. VCSU’s Allen Memorial Library has actively participated in these revolutionary changes.

The result of these changing formats of information is that both the variety of the library’s learning resources and the access to these learning resources have increased dramatically, especially over the last 10 years. In 1991 the Library’s 11 online terminals initiated access to its online catalog, ODIN (Online Dakota Information Network), while access to online full-text periodicals began in July 1996. With the advent of a networked campus and the use of a notebook computer by each individual student and faculty member in August 1996, hundreds of access points to the library’s catalog and full-text periodicals became available from networked classrooms, offices, dormitories, and other residences. In keeping with the University’s policy of providing universal online access to students, faculty, and staff, the library is working to make as many as possible of its learning resources available online so that students and faculty can access them on their notebook computers from any location that has a network port or a telephone.

The library’s web pages now provide access to the learning resources of the library, including our online catalog, which contains both print and digital resources, the 32 online subscription databases to which the library currently subscribes, thousands of other online catalogs worldwide, as well as information on the Internet. The library web pages, which have been recently redesigned and are constantly updated, provide an overview of the library’s resources on the first page, plus a general reference page, and an individual web page for each of the six academic divisions. The web page for each division contains online resources germane to that division’s academic
programs. Since the quality and accuracy of non-library web information varies tremendously, the library web pages also provide access to librarian-vetted Web sites with URLs for sites that contain only high quality and accurate information.

**Use and Service**

As expected from these changes in format, use of the library's physical-format learning resources has somewhat declined, while online use of the library digital learning resources is high—especially since the University's policy provides universal online access to students and faculty. This is true even though only partial user statistics of online resources are available, as online resources are relatively new, and vendor statistical packages are even newer. However, the online statistics that are available document the fact that customer use of the library's online resources has increased access to the library's learning resources and more than made up for the drop in the use of the library's physical-format resources.

From January 2 to June 30, 2001 the VCSU web site was “hit” (clicked on) 24,810 times, according to the statistical package that is currently in use. At least 9 percent of the use is between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. (hours when the library building is not open). Not counting the home page of the library (library.vcsu.edu) which opens first, the subscription database page was used most, followed by the business division's page, the Newspapers Online link, the general reference page, and the encyclopedias link.

In addition, most online commercial vendors have recently started providing their customers with information on the use of their subscription databases, although there is little standardization between vendors in the types of information they collect. User statistics for 2000-2001 (the only year for which substantial statistics are available) show 17,780 user logins, 21,692 searches, and 78,638 views of database items. The 78,638 views represented 52,565 online uses of periodicals and 26,018 uses of online books (including online encyclopedias, dictionaries and ebooks) and 55 views of in-house library digital newspaper database.

The total circulation of the library's physical-format learning resources was 38,781 in 1990-1991, before the introduction of online digital resources in our library. Annual circulation statistics remained constant in the period from July 1, 1989-June 30, 1994, averaging about 39,500 a year. However in 1995-1996 they dropped to 33,391, in 1997-1998 to 23,783 and in 2000-2001 to 17,227. This drop coincides with the availability of full-text online periodicals in July of 1996, universal access via notebook computers for all faculty and students in August 1996, and the increasing number of online resources the library is making available to its users.

Combining the use of online resources for 2000-2001 with the use of physical-format statistics for 1999-2000 show that the use of the library's learning resources has increased dramatically. Table 5.3 shows 95,456 documented instances of use of the library's learning resources in 2000-2001.
The major drop in use of physical-format resources is not in the use of books but in the use of paper-format periodicals (as opposed to online full-text periodicals), paper pamphlets (vertical file), and paper reserves (online courses use the reserve software in Blackboard). The use of physical-format audiovisual resources has actually gone up. When the use of the library’s online resources is combined with the use of the library’s physical-format resources, use of library resources has increased 139 percent, more than doubling use compared to 1991.

The fact that some users tend to use internet information even though it is not quality-vetted and that, in 2000-2001, 12.4 percent of VCSU students were being taught on off-campus sites and used libraries located at those sites also contributed to the drop in the use of physical-format learning resources. However, the high use of the library’s online resources demonstrates the library’s success in making information available in the formats that students and faculty need.

### Interlibrary Loan

Another indicator of the changing nature of student and faculty use of information resources, whether provided by the library or available elsewhere on the World Wide Web, is the library’s interlibrary loan statistics. In 1990-91 there were 2,441 items borrowed from or loaned to other libraries. By the academic year 1999-2000, with the advent of online information in the library subscription databases and on the Internet, interlibrary loan, while still important, had decreased somewhat to 2,146, a drop of 12 percent. This is also an indicator of the changing role of the library. Users can now access thousands of full-text periodicals online via the library’s subscription databases, as well as ebooks, and have less need to request paper copies of these articles and books for them via interlibrary loan.

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**Table 5.3. Circulation Statistics**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>12,377</td>
<td>10,584</td>
<td>26,018 views</td>
<td>36,602</td>
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<tr>
<td>Periodicals</td>
<td>17,173</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>52,365 views</td>
<td>53,511</td>
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<td>Documents</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pamphlets</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Collection</td>
<td>5,809</td>
<td>2,323</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,323</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-print</td>
<td>2,807</td>
<td>2,949</td>
<td>55***</td>
<td>3,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Circulation</td>
<td>38,781</td>
<td>16,818**</td>
<td>78,638 views</td>
<td>95,456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Use of online database subscriptions
**Does not include renewals of library materials
***Use of The New York Times on CD-ROM starting 2/12/01

When the use of the library’s online resources is combined with the use of the library’s physical-format resources, use of library resources has increased 139 percent, more than doubling use compared to 1991.
Access to North Dakota Academic Libraries

In 1991 the online catalog, ODIN (Online Dakota Information Network) became operational, and at the time was considered “spectacular and revolutionary” as libraries were among the first organizations to make extensive use of online databases, giving users direct knowledge of the learning resources in other member libraries. In 1991 ODIN provided access to 11 North Dakota academic libraries, two North Dakota public libraries, and a network of libraries in South Dakota and Minnesota. By 2001 the number of ODIN libraries had more than quadrupled, now including 52 North Dakota academic, public, private, and special libraries, and through the web provides access to thousands of catalogs worldwide. Web-based ODIN is also much easier to use than the system’s initial telnet version software which was DOS-based and required learning a number of two-letter commands in order to use the online catalog.

The number of records in ODIN has increased dramatically, almost doubling between 1991 and 2001. In 1991 ODIN contained 1,160,443 book and audiovisual records, of which 789,725 were unique titles. At VCSU these online records were only accessible from 11 dedicated computer terminals located in the library. By June 30, 2001 ODIN contained 2,242,037 book and media records, with 1,516,819 unique titles, and these records are accessible from hundreds of student, faculty, and staff computer notebooks.

Access to Learning Resources on Campus

The number of learning resources in the library has also increased significantly in the last 10 years. On June 30, 1991, the library contained 84,191 books volumes and 4,260 audiovisuals. By June 30, 2001, the collection had increased to 92,934 book volumes (including 5,969 purchased ebooks) and to 15,069 physical-format audiovisuals. The trend in collection development is shown by the increase in audiovisuals, the acquisition of ebooks, the switch from digital to online databases discussed below, and the increasing number of online databases provided by the library.

Although the number of print periodical subscriptions within the library has declined from 395 on June 30, 1991 to 320 on June 30, 2001, this is more than made up for by user access to 2,923 full-text periodicals and journals. In fact, it is the library’s policy to substitute the full-text online periodical or journal for the print edition whenever the full-text of the journal becomes available online in one of the databases the library subscribes to. This continuing change from print to online periodicals is another indicator that the library is successfully moving to an online environment, and increasing student and faculty access to more learning resources as a result, as the online databases contain many full-text periodicals that were previously unavailable to library users in paper format.

In 1991 the library provided paid access to only five digital copyrighted subscription databases, four of which were indexes to periodical citations and did not contain full-text articles. On July 1, 1995 the library purchased access to four online periodical databases and added an online encyclopedia with the advent of notebook
computers in August 1996. The number of online resources has grown constantly since then. As of June 30, 2001 the library provides paid online access to 31 online copyrighted subscription databases that are all accessible online on the library’s homepage(s) using VCSU’s LAN. Students and faculty access these databases from their classrooms, offices, dormitories, and residences, as well as from the 58 notebook ports in the library. A list of the databases available is provided in the library narrative, or may be viewed through the library web pages.

The library has also purchased permanent access to 5,969 netLibrary e-books for students and faculty use. Access to these copyrighted electronic books is not available free on the Internet. netLibrary also contains over 3,500 ebooks on which copyright has expired and has electronic indexes for both collections. The free ebooks are also available in scattered locations on the Internet. The 5,969 purchased copyrighted e-books are cataloged in our online catalog.

Each academic division has a section of the library’s budget and the faculty members of each division recommend to their division chair the purchase of learning resources of particular usefulness for their academic programs. Faculty members thus select most of the specific subject-related print and audiovisual resources (including videos, CDs, and CD-ROMs) and online databases purchased by the library. The head of collection development and other library staff members also recommend specific print, non-print, and online database subscriptions to faculty members who then decide whether these resources would be useful additions to the library’s learning resources.

Staff

As in most small academic libraries, each professional member and paraprofessional member of the library staff wears a number of hats in providing library services that in larger libraries would be provided by a number of separate individuals—which makes the professional lives of our library staff very interesting. There are four professional staff members (two 12-month positions, and two 9-month positions) one 12-month paraprofessional position, five part-time library assistants who each work 17 hours per week, and a number of student assistants. Details regarding the staff assignments are available in the library narrative located in the resource room.

Facilities

The library building was constructed in 1951 and has generally proved adequate to house the library’s collections of learning resources, provide space for students and faculty to use them, offices for library staff, and even space to place relatively recent technological inventions such as computers, scanners, a CD-ROM burner, large and small screen televisions, a CD-ROM tower and CD listening equipment. The library has also been retrofitted to provide 58 network ports for student computer notebooks, 14 network ports for desktop computers for student use, nine ports for networked staff desktop computers, and three ports for three staff notebook computers.
Space for periodical storage appears to have been resolved with the use of microfiche and microfilm; the curriculum library and the reference area, however, do face space problems and the need to weed. Specific details describing the periodicals, curriculum library, and reference area space issues are provided in the library narrative located in the resource room.

**Expenditures**

In a climate of economic restraint the library's budget has remained relatively flat, except for minimum salary increases, and inflation has dramatically decreased both the library purchasing power for learning resources and the purchasing power of the salaries of the library staff. Despite these challenges, the library continues to provide excellent service through strategic use of limited resources. Specific information about the library budget may be found in the library narrative, located in the resource room.

The library's membership in networks and consortiums has stretched the library's financial resources in the purchase of electronic resources—sharing an online catalog with 51 other North Dakota libraries and purchasing of online databases jointly with other libraries through the library's membership in library networks and consortiums.

The library's staff is dedicated to continuously improving these services and increasing the learning resources that it makes available to users—as shown by its collection development statistics for both print and digital resources. While use of the library's physical-format resources has declined, use of the library's online resources is high. This is in keeping with the University's mission of providing a quality educational experience in a technology-enhanced environment, which includes universal online access.

Despite budget and staff constraints, the library is successfully working within the initiatives and mission of the University in providing learning resources and services needed by students and faculty. Student satisfaction with library facilities and services is high, The ACT Student Opinion Survey rated library facilities and services 4.03 in 1995, 4.06 in 1997, and 4.15 in 2000, compared to a national average of 3.87 in 2000 for library facilities and services. Students also ranked the library facilities and services third highest out of 65 categories they evaluated.

**Information Technology at VCSU**

Information technology (IT) at VCSU is pervasive, democratic, and strategic. Special attention is given to integration with the teaching and learning process throughout the curriculum. These goals are achieved with a limited budget. The key is an uncommonly high degree of University wide standardization and proliferation that exponentially increases the value of the information technology investment.
Computerworld writer Kathleen Melymuka describes the impact of information technology at VCSU:

“The result is a model for education - and business - of how the strategic use of technology can improve processes (teaching), boost the quality of products (graduates), reinvigorate employees (teachers and staff), tighten relationships with customers (prospective employers of graduates), forge links with the community and ultimately transform the organization.” (“Laptop U,” January 1, 2001).

**Alignment of IT Resources with State and Local Needs**

*Information technology at VCSU is student centered*

Efforts to move toward the University goal of customized learning focus on the needs of customers in terms of appropriate and convenient access to learning. The extensive development of the campus web site provides customers with improved access to information.

Multiple years of surveys conducted by Dr. Kathryn Holleque of the Education, Psychology, and Technology Division, provide evidence that the notebook computer environment and online courseware has positive effects on multiple indicators of student centered learning. The details of these surveys are included in the following documents: 1) “Validating the University Mission: The Learner Survey,” 1999, 2) “Transforming Higher Education: Excellence Within a Culture of Innovation,” 2000, and 3) “The X Factor,” 2001.

**VCSU seeks both internal and external opportunities for improving efficiencies**

VCSU provides centralized IT services that are shared by all departments, including help desk, e-mail, intranet services, Internet access, web site, and online course management systems.

VCSU has standardized on a single software image for all campus users including: Microsoft Windows 98 and Office 2000 professional, Novell intranet and GroupWise e-mail, and antivirus software.

All NDUS campuses share many IT-based systems including ODIN, IVN, and administrative computing.

VCSU cooperates with the Information Technology Division (ITD) of North Dakota by supplying an annual technology plan and committee work that results in statewide standards. In 2000, ITD spearheaded the deployment of a statewide telecommunications network and now supplies Internet access to VCSU.
Information technology is well managed

VCSU has completed an institutional technology plan each year since 1995. The technology plan stems from an institutional strategic plan that stems from a NDUS strategic plan.

VCSU has a Chief Information Officer (CIO) who serves on the campus Executive Team.

A Technology Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of students, faculty, staff, and community members, provides input on technology planning and policy decisions.

VCSU has a central IT budget that includes the following: all computer hardware (with the exception of grant funds), nearly all IT related operating expenses, and all IT salary funds (with the exception of grant funds).

VCSU provides leadership for developing a shared infrastructure

VCSU is working closely with the Valley City - Barnes County Development Corporation to build the information technology economy. Together they have created a Regional Technology Center.

Valley City State University is home to the Center for Innovation in Instruction. The CII delivers technology training and leadership to K-12 schools throughout North Dakota and provides training and technology leadership at VCSU.

VCSU personnel serve on statewide and University System committees and task forces. President Chaffee currently serves on the board of an industry-based, statewide Information Technology Council of North Dakota. The CIO currently serves on an NDUS Information Technology Council (ITC). Several Information Technology Center staff meet regularly with peer groups from the other NDUS institutions. The comptroller, registrar, and the director of the library have contributed significant input to develop and secure NDUS information technology services appropriate to their respective areas.

Major Initiatives and Resources

Some of the major technology initiatives at VCSU are the notebook computer initiative, customized learning, electronic portfolios, and the Interactive Video Network.

The Notebook Computer Initiative

The phrase “notebook computer initiative” is commonly used at VCSU to describe a full range of computing services that correlate to the introduction of notebook computers for all VCSU faculty and full-time students in 1996. These computers are upgraded approximately every 24 months. The actual range of upgrade has been 18-30 months.
Classrooms are equipped to take advantage of the notebook computers. VCSU has approximately 52 classrooms. Of those 52 rooms, seven to ten rooms have specially designated functions, such as a chemistry laboratory and art studios. Thirty-six classrooms are equipped for projecting the notebook computers and other audio/video sources. Thirty-three classrooms have at least one LAN connection. Twenty-five classrooms are fully equipped with network and electrical connections for every student; a networked laser printer; and a large screen projection device for projecting computer, VCR, and other audio/video equipment. This is sufficient to meet classroom requirements during peak hours (9-11 a.m., Monday-Wednesday).

With more LAN (Local Area Network) connections than people, all users have convenient, high-speed access to networked information while on campus. The proliferation of notebook computers and LAN connections, combined with a modem pool, provide anytime, anywhere access to networked information and electronic communications.

A centralized, campus-wide Help Desk is available for technical support to students, faculty, staff, and administration. The Help Desk is currently open approximately 13 hours per day, Monday-Thursday and eight hours on Friday. The Help Desk is the single point of contact for all IT related services. Responsibilities of the Help Desk include the following: customer referrals to ITC specialists and other experts; inventory management and distribution of all campus portable and desktop computers; license management and loading of the campus standard software; computer hardware and software troubleshooting and repairs; checkout of video camcorders, digital still cameras, LCD projectors, and scan converters; installation and troubleshooting of classroom multimedia equipment; installation and maintenance of distributed multimedia production workstations; and the maintenance of distributed laser printers.

The Effects of the Notebook Initiative on Campus Life and Learning

This rich technology environment has transformed nearly all aspects of the campus. Students are more involved in the learning process as they use their computers to conduct research, communicate, create and solve problems, and take notes. Students develop electronic portfolios that demonstrate abilities not documented on a resume or transcript. The campus web site has become the preferred campus information system, and in many cases the only source of particular information. Employees use technology for research, electronic forms processing, communication, and problem solving.

Multiple surveys of three separate groups of users, conducted over several years, provide evidence that students, faculty, and staff believe the notebook computer initiative provides a more effective learning environment.

Surveys sponsored by the TAC (Technology Advisory Committee) can be found in the annual campus technology plans, copies of which are located in the resource room. Questions administered before and after the implementation of the notebook computers produced the following results:
Faculty and staff rated technical support higher in 1997, as compared to 1995. In 1995, when asked how they felt about the current level of technical support, faculty and staff had a rating of 2.5 on a 5-point scale, with 5 being a high level of support and 1 being a low level of support. In 1997 the rating climbed to a 3.6. One conclusion is the Help Desk created in 1996 and standardization made it easier for technical support personnel to provide knowledgeable service. Related questions revealed that technical support personnel served more users in 1997 than in 1995.

Faculty and staff rated the level of training higher in 1997, as compared to 1995. In 1995, when asked how they felt about the current level of training opportunities, faculty and staff had a rating of 1.9 on a 5 point scale, with 5 being a high level of training opportunities and 1 being a low level of training opportunities. In 1997 the rating climbed to a 3.5. Standardization of software greatly facilitated a campus-wide training strategy.

Students were surveyed in General Psychology during the first semester of the notebook computer initiative in 1996.

At the beginning of the semester, a clear majority (64 percent) of students believed that technology would at least mostly enhance the learning experience. By the end of the semester, 74 percent reported technology had mostly or definitely enhanced the learning experience, and only one percent reported it had not enhanced it at all.

When asked what they thought about the prospect of using a computer lab instead of their own computers, students overwhelmingly indicated a preference for using their own computers. 89 percent of them reported that they would mostly/definitely prefer their own computer, and of those, 71 percent were in the definite category. Only three percent of the students indicated a definite preference for a computer lab.

94 percent of the students reported that using their notebook computers had increased their communication with other people at least some. Only one percent indicated using them had not increased communication at all.

92 percent of the students reported that having their own computers saved them at least some time.

Results from ACT Student Opinion Surveys conducted in the Spring of 1997, 1998, and 2000 show strong and increasing student support for the notebook computer initiative. The surveys also indicate students are more satisfied in 2000 with the level of use of the computers in the classroom setting.

When asked, “how much has the notebook computer enhanced the learning experience” 58 percent of the students indicated, “mostly or definitely
enhanced it” in 1997 and this number rose to 82 percent by 2000. Only five percent of the students indicated, “not enhanced or mostly not enhanced it” in the 2000 survey, compared to 16 percent in 1997.

- When asked “how satisfied are you with the level of the use of your notebook computer during class time” 50 percent of the students indicated “very satisfied or satisfied” in 1997 and this number rose to 76 percent in 2000. Only eight percent of the students indicated, “dissatisfied or very dissatisfied” in the 2000 survey, compared to 27 percent in 1997.

Starting in 1998, the faculty and staff survey included questions from the student survey. The results from the 1999 faculty and staff survey indicate the following:

- When faculty were asked “how much have the notebook computers enhanced learning” 75 percent indicated “mostly or definitely enhanced it.” Only six percent indicated, “not enhanced or mostly not enhanced it.”

Collectively, these surveys indicate strong support and continued integration of the notebook computer initiative.

**Customized Learning and Technology**

VCSU received a federal Title III grant in 1998 worth $1.7 million dollars over five years. The purpose of the grant is to develop a customized approach to learning by deploying two major components. The first component is the delivery of the technology education degree program in a customized manner. The second component is the delivery of student services in a customized manner.

From an information technology infrastructure perspective, a critical component is the implementation of an enterprise level, online coursework management system. VCSU deployed a TopClass server as a pilot project in the Fall of 1997. The 1998 Title III grant provided funding to make online coursework management software a standard application available to all faculty and students at VCSU. A Blackboard CourseInfo system was deployed in the Spring of 1999. A full-time applications developer was hired in December 1999. An enterprise level UNIX server was deployed and a half-time faculty trainer was hired in May 2000. The use of CourseInfo included 12 faculty and 23 courses in the Fall 2000 semester and 23 faculty and 43 courses in the Spring 2001 semester.

As part of the Title III grant, the technology education faculty are preparing coursework in order to deliver a program online to distance learners. However, most of the online coursework campus wide is designed to supplement classroom instruction, in what is referred to as a hybrid learning environment. The hybrid learning environment is evolving toward a point where some students, perhaps only a few in a large class, will be able to take a course completely at a distance, if necessary. This is physically possible today. Initial survey research, described below, indicates the effectiveness of the hybrid learning environment.
The Effectiveness of Hybrid Learning

Survey research described in *The X Factor* (Holleque, 2001), reveals that student interaction in an online learning environment appears to have some advantages over the traditional classroom. Students tend to agree with each of these seven statements:

1. Students experience a higher degree of student interaction in the online environment.
2. Online group discussions are more comfortable for students.
3. Students have more meaningful interaction with each other in an online environment.
4. Students are more likely to share their own opinions on a given course topic in an online environment.
5. Students are more likely to share their ideas in an online environment.
6. Students are more likely to discover what other students think about a given course topic in an online environment.
7. Students gain a wider perspective when discussing course topics with other students online.

In the survey follow-up exercise in April 2001, when asked to explain the impact each of these statements had on learning, students consistently made several points related to student interaction in an online learning environment compared to that in a traditional classroom. Among them were these, in brief:

- More comfortable and positive experience.
- More honest and fuller expression of ideas, equal opportunity for input.
- Less pressure, overcoming shyness, more confidence, fewer inhibitions.
- Freedom from fear, less stress, less intimidating.
- Expanded points of view, broader spectrum of ideas, remember more.
- More productive, input quality improves, worthwhile feedback.
- More free and open communication.
- Time for reflective communication.
- More in depth communication.
- More open, reciprocal sharing.
- Value differing points of view.

In considering the potential impact of online instruction and student services at VCSU, the Technology Advisory Committee developed the following resolutions in the Spring of 2001: 1) We believe online instruction can help customize learning and services. 2) We believe hybrid delivery can improve learning. 3) We believe that we can provide quality, distance learning instruction to under-served markets.

**Issues to Address**

The development of online student services is strongly dependent on the administrative computing information system. This is a common system for the entire North Dakota University System. The North Dakota legislature has not
funded requests to replace this system during the 1999-2001 biennium, and only minimally in 2001-2003 biennium. Without a new administrative computing system, VCSU will be limited in the number and type of online services available to all students. The current system provides access to online registration and online admissions. Other online services may be added over time. VCSU can develop and provide online student services for distance learners, but the backoffice processes will require manual tasks that will not scale to serve all students.

Significant information technology development remains in order to deliver an integrated system of online student services, online coursework, and an electronic academic assessment system (electronic portfolios).

**Electronic Portfolios**

Thanks to a 1995 Title III grant, VCSU had the funds to develop an electronic portfolio requirement for all students. The timing of this initiative directly corresponds to the implementation of the notebook computer initiative. The personal notebook computers gave students the tool to effectively store and manage a portfolio of their best work in college. The portfolios provided yet another application and reason for personal, ubiquitous access to computers. The electronic portfolio initiative matured as it combined with an academic initiative, whereby students are required to demonstrate a set of Abilities in their portfolios.

The information technology infrastructure implications include multiple portfolio production workstations throughout campus. The portfolio production workstations allow students and faculty to capture and manipulate pictures, video and audio, and to create CD-ROMs for the corresponding large file demands of these types of digital files. The grant provided the initial funding for these stations. The University is obligated to fund the replacement equipment.

There is a potential need for a centralized information management system for tracking student progress toward the Abilities and for storing and retrieving the corresponding portfolio evidence. Funding for a commercial product was included in the 1998 Title III grant. Unfortunately, the commercial product specified in the grant is no longer able to meet the needs of VCSU. Alternatives are under consideration.

**IVN (Interactive Video Network)**

NDUS maintains an IVN (Interactive Video Network) classroom on the VCSU campus. A separate telecommunications network links multiple IVN classrooms together. VCSU personnel are responsible for coordinating and facilitating activities in the classroom.

The NDUS allocates funds to IVN for annual telecommunication costs, central technical and administrative personnel, classroom equipment, and all other related information technology associated with the system. The IVN pays campuses $10 per hour for technical support expenses, during the time they receive an event.
IVN is a partnership among the NDUS campuses and would never have accomplished what it has done without the support and active involvement of each campus. The SBHE policies that relate to IVN are included in the Policy section of the Coordinators Handbook, along with procedures and guidelines established by the NDUS Academic Affairs Council, and operating procedures developed by the IVN coordinators and staff.

**IVN Credit Events**

Four types of courses are offered via IVN at VCSU:

- Courses from programs approved by the NDUS chancellor that are sent/received by VCSU (see approved list in the resource room)
- Courses from approved programs VCSU sent/received to augment the curriculum
- Cross-listed courses, between VCSU and MSU (included above in sent/received)
- Courses from approved programs sent by other institutions and are received by VCSU for area students

Valley City State University offers credit classes via IVN to augment the following programs:

- Business administration major (Area of Concentration – Accounting) *
- English as a second language endorsement (English)
- General education or composite science (Physics, Chemistry) *
- Geography minor *
- History major and minor *
- Library media and information science minor *
- Vocational technical education Major
  (* denotes cross-listed courses with MSU)

The number of courses sent by VCSU over IVN has increased since 1996-97 from 10 to 13 in 2000-01 and the number received has increased from 7 in 1996-97 to 10 in 2000-01. The number of students served in the period has grown from 166 to 325. (Complete statistics available in the resource room.) IVN courses are considered part of faculty load, subject to program review by the department offering the course.

**IVN Non-credit Events**

In addition to the many credit classes offered via IVN, Valley City State University participates in various meetings, seminars, workshops, and special events. During 2000-2001, the primary non-credit user of IVN resources was the North Dakota University System. The secondary non-credit users were state government agencies and K-12. Last year, 25 non-credit events utilized 150 IVN hours at VCSU. A list of organizations that utilize IVN resources at VCSU is available in the resource room.
**Changes in IVN**

Originally, VCSU was primarily an IVN receiving site for programs such as social work and nursing. With the development of the VCSU-MSU partnership, the focus changed to offering more courses between VCSU and MSU. Eventually VCSU and MSU received joint approval to deliver programs such as library media and information science (LMIS) and geography minors.

In the Fall of 1999, IVN installed new state-of-the-art VTEL videoconferencing equipment statewide. After some difficulties with new scheduling software, Merlin software was installed for increased reliability. In early 2001, IVN was converted to the statewide fiber optic digital network for increased bandwidth.

Other changes include the addition of a second IVN classroom at VCSU for Fall 2000 and the addition of network connections, network switch, and network printer to both rooms. The second classroom provides for increased opportunities for hosting credit and non-credit events. The networking of both IVN classrooms allows VCSU to deliver and receive cross-listed courses with MSU in a manner consistent with student use of notebook computers in the traditional classroom and curriculum.

**The Future of IVN**

Implementation of new technologies will likely have both positive and negative effects on future IVN usage. New standards offer videoconferencing over the Internet to reach customers in-state and world-wide. A recent statewide taskforce evaluated videoconferencing units and proposed to expand IVN capabilities to the Internet. As videoconferencing technology evolves and prices drop, IP-based deployment will become pervasive. For successful implementation of this technology, there must be adequate funding for network bandwidth. The continued development of the statewide communications network, currently underway to all North Dakota cities, is imperative. This project will spur economic development and provide citizens with more educational and entrepreneurship opportunities.

The online (Blackboard) initiative at VCSU may eventually impact IVN use. Currently several faculty are using Blackboard to augment IVN courses. As faculty become more comfortable with online software, some courses may be offered completely online. This would reduce the current offering on IVN and open time slots for other types of use.

**Are we using IVN resources efficiently and effectively?**

The primary use of IVN resources has traditionally been the augmentation of courses in the VCSU curriculum. This includes the share of courses with MSU through cross listings. Other institutions in the North Dakota University System are also using the VCSU IVN classroom to deliver graduate and undergraduate courses, including Extension and Career Development, to students in the Valley City area. All of these indicate the effective educational utilization of IVN resources.
IVN facilities are also used widely for events such as meetings, seminars, workshops, and training. This saves many dollars in time and travel expense for the University, state, and ultimately the taxpayers of North Dakota. The completion of a second IVN classroom during Fall 2000 greatly improved the effective use of IVN resources by increasing available room openings and eliminating event time conflicts often encountered with having only one room.

Community groups, local professionals, and area school children are often participants in special IVN events on the campus of VCSU. One recent event on March 21, 2001, was a presentation about the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Across the state, IVN delivered this event to over 500 participants at 13 receiving sites, including 41 children and four teachers from Washington School in Valley City. In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the North Dakota Interactive Video Network, special events on a variety of topics were held each month during the 2000 – 2001 academic year. IVN events are often announced in the monthly campus Hotline and the Valley City Times Record local daily newspaper to notify individuals and promote local participation.

Many students, faculty, administrators, and staff currently use IVN resources at VCSU. While the online initiative may affect usage in the future, it may offer an opportunity to promote additional curricular usage that could have a positive effect on the institution's enrollment. Increased staffing for IVN would also help to promote the utilization of its resources and its overall effectiveness.

**System Resources at VCSU**

ITD (Information Technology Division) of state government negotiates Internet access for all state agencies and spearheaded the implementation of a statewide network. VCSU is connected to the statewide network via a 10Mb service.

VCSU maintains an AS/400 midrange computer for RJE (remote job entry). Prior to December 2000, this AS/400 also hosted a student prospect and tracking system used exclusively by the enrollment management office at VCSU. Due to the limited capabilities of the tracking system, VCSU contracted with the North Dakota Association of Counties to build a new database system. This system, built using Access programming, is used by the enrollment services personnel to track information about prospective students. As soon as the student applies for admission, the Higher Education Computer Network System is utilized for official state reporting.

VCSU maintains a second AS/400 that hosts a textbook management system for the campus bookstores at both VCSU and MSU.

VCSU has a campus Ethernet LAN consisting of a Gigabit Ethernet fiber optic backbone, nine network servers, 56 printers, and approximately 2,000 nodes. All nodes are connected to the Internet. All buildings on campus are connected to the LAN with the exception of a few storage buildings, family student housing, and a
small building used by the Art Department for ceramics. A gigabit LAN extends to the Regional Technology Center located on University property. This LAN extension provides VCSU entities located in the Center with continued access to campus LAN resources and phone services.

The system resources provide network connections in every residence hall room and lounge. A printer is provided in each residence hall. Both student lounges in the Student Union have numerous network connections as well as all meeting rooms. The library also offers student study space with network connections. Plans are currently underway to address the need for network access in the family housing units.

VCSU maintains a phone switch and communication lines throughout the campus. The University provides students with phone service in the resident halls. Campus personnel configure the phone switch software and other phone services are outsourced.

**Future Use and Impact of Technology**

Information technology is increasingly vital to accomplishing the University mission. The reliance on information technology is driving the demand for increased reliability of services. The demand for computer network reliability will dictate the need for more enterprise level server pools with features such as server mirroring and central hard disk arrays, redundant network hardware, software and hardware for monitoring and ensuring the security of network servers, and redundant WAN services.

The increasing number and variety of applications is driving the demand for the integration of applications in a more seamless and efficient environment. The Cisco AVVID (Advanced Voice, Video, and Integrated Data) system recently deployed in the Regional Technology Center is a pilot project that will provide valuable experience and insight with the convergence of voice, video, and data services. Significant development remains in order to integrate the systems of online student services, online coursework, and an electronic academic assessment system. The Title III grant awarded to VCSU in October, 1998, provides some financial support for accomplishing the online development objectives.

The rich technological environment at VCSU creates many opportunities for new applications. The introduction of new applications and the integration of current applications is a continuous process that is still evolving toward the capacity of the current environment. As the sophistication of the technological environment increases, there is an increased need for training and IT support staff.

The growing deployment of e-commerce practices throughout the education industry requires student access to industry standards for such commerce. Software advancements and the increased use of multimedia materials dictate an aggressive information technology replacement cycle.
The increased application of telecommunications will facilitate an increase in partnering activities with other institutions and organizations. Specific partners that could especially benefit include MSU; LaPaz, Mexico; Oaxaca, Mexico; Brandon University, Canada; K-12 schools; and regional businesses.

**Business and Student Services Resources**

Student services and business affairs complement and strengthen the academic mission.

**Financial Aid and Scholarships**

Valley City State University follows the rules and regulations for distributing financial aid as outlined in Federal regulations and the Department of Education Student Financial Aid Handbook. Students and their families are informed about opportunities for financial aid through the Bulletin and the Guide to Student Aid. A full-time director (shared with MSU), an assistant director, a half-time administrative assistant, and two student assistants administer the financial aid program.

The financial aid budget (cost of tuition, fees, room, board, books, supplies, and personal/misc.) for full-time students has increased from $6463 in 1992 to $9264 in 2000. While costs for students have continued to rise, funding of the primary campus-based programs has actually decreased. Generous supporters of Valley City State University have contributed to scholarship accounts enabling over 38 percent of enrolled students to receive approximately $340,000 in campus based scholarship programs.

The University assists students in managing the costs of attendance and utilizes sound debt management practices. The student loan default rate at VCSU is one of the lowest in the nation, often showing a default rate of two percent or less.

**Office of Career Services**

The Office of Career Services provides a complete array of services for currently enrolled students and alumni of Valley City State University, including assistance in career decision making, campus employment, job search skills and campus employment. Information about on and off campus employment, internships, summer, part-time, and full time positions is made available through hard copy resources and the career services web page. Credential files are maintained on all students and alumni, and an annual placement report summarizing the activities and events of the Career Services Office, the graduating class, and alumni is produced and distributed on campus.

**Career Development**
A formalized four-year Career Development Plan is in its second year on the campus. Students are assisted and work with career services staff from the Learning to Live course through the Senior Seminar course. During the Freshman Learning to Live course students create a career portfolio, the first step in identifying “Who Am I?”

The actual Career Development Plan has the following four steps:

1. Career Services presents in all Learning to Live classes (orientation course) where students begin a career portfolio and hear about the services available to them.
2. Individual appointments with all second year students by career services staff to review their career portfolio.
3. Students are encouraged to do a job shadow or an internship experience during their junior year.
4. Students enroll in the Senior Seminar class, which provides the necessary training in job search skills.

The Senior Seminar class in education meets during the first five weeks of the semester before students leave for their student teaching experience. The current goal is to incorporate the Senior Seminar: Job Search Skills class with the Portfolio class and have it required of every student at the University. Students who have attended generally have a much clearer idea of how to conduct a job search and know the hard work that is involved in the process.

**Internships**

The internship program, administered through the Office of Career Services, provides students (who are of sophomore standing or better and have a 2.5 cumulative grade point average) the opportunity to gain valuable on-the-job experiences while applying their classroom knowledge. There are specific guidelines for the student intern to follow and the work site must be approved by the career services director. A work agreement form and a learning contract are completed by the employer and student intern and maintained in the student's internship file. With the exception of human resources students, who are monitored by the director of career services, the academic departments are responsible for supervising students in their area(s) and for awarding the credit/grade at the completion of the experience.

**Campus Employment**

There are two student employment programs on the campus of Valley City State University. The College Work Study Program is a financial need-based work program: a student’s eligibility to participate is determined by the director of financial aid following a review of the federal financial aid application. Students who are eligible and agree to participate are placed in an appropriate work setting on the University campus: they must be paid a minimum of $5.15 per hour and all work must be based around the student's class schedule. VCSU’s second employment program is the Student Assistance Program, open to any student who has a desire to work, with no financial need necessary. All offices and academic areas have the opportunity
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VCSU’s Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program is designed to offer adult learners the opportunity to apply learning received from life and work experience toward a VCSU degree.

The Campus Activities Board is responsible for formulating and carrying into execution a broad social, recreational, and cultural program of activities.

to interview and hire students to work through this program. The student employee must be paid a minimum of $5.15 per hour and work is scheduled around the student’s class time.

All student employees are provided with a Student Employee Handbook at the beginning of the academic year. At midpoint fall semester, student employees attend a one-hour training session and are given the opportunity to evaluate their work setting. Supervisors evaluate student employees at midpoint, fall semester and again at the conclusion of the academic year. Any problems, concerns, or complaints by either side are handled between the supervisor, student employee, and the director of career services. All student employees are expected to be valuable members of the team and perform the necessary job requirements in a professional manner. Student workers are warned and a dismissal can occur if problems are not remedied. Supervisors may nominate student employees for the Student Employee of the Month award. At the end of every year, a Student Employee of the Year is selected from the year’s monthly winners.

Prior Learning Assessment Program

VCSU’s Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program offers adult learners the opportunity to apply learning received from life and work experience toward a VCSU degree. Participants in the program develop a personalized portfolio of prior learning experiences through a one-credit course – BUSI 190 Career Planning and Portfolio Development. The course is designed for adult learners and supported by the PLA coordinator. Since 1997 between 10 and 18 students per year have enrolled in the course.

The portfolio describes and documents prior academic and non-academic learning and includes a plan for the use of the credits within a degree completed at VCSU. Much of the documented learning is of non-college experience prior to entering or returning to college. It often includes experiential development or work competency. Faculty from the academic area in which the credit request is made review the portfolio materials. The process results in credits being granted, not granted, or partially granted with additional work needed.

This program is administered through the Office of Career Services and is based on principles developed by the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL). Details concerning the program are available in the Prior Learning Assessment Program brochure and enrollment data are in the resource room.

Student Activities

Student activities occur in a variety of settings and are the result of many group efforts. The director of the Student Union and student activities serves as the advisor of the Student Senate Campus Activities Board. The Campus Activities Board operates on a budget allocated by the Student Senate through student fees. The Campus Activities Board is responsible for formulating and carrying into execution a broad social, recreational, and cultural program of activities. Programs
include dances, entertainers, speakers and special events such as Homecoming, Sno-Daze and Alcohol Awareness Activities. During the summer school session, the program has been expanded to include picnics, discount movie passes, golf passes, bowling night, a trip to an amateur baseball game, and activities such as canoeing.

In order to actively involve incoming students, new students are asked to complete a survey indicating the activities they were involved in during high school and the types of activities they would like to see/take part in while a student at VCSU. This information is given to advisors or department heads so they can contact these students. This also helps the Campus Activities Board plan events that will be successful and well attended.

The Division of Health and Physical Education along with the Department of Athletics hosts a comprehensive program of intramurals. A director of intramurals plans and promotes a yearlong schedule of male, female and co-ed activities. Included are softball golf, bowling, basketball, volleyball, and racquetball. In 2000-01, 292 men and 220 women participated in intramurals. Over 300 students participated on co-ed intramural teams. Students consistently give high satisfaction ratings to the intramural program.

Musical groups and concerts are sponsored by the Department of Music as part of its curricular offerings. In addition, over 20 student organizations and clubs provide student opportunities for campus involvement and the development of leadership skills.

**Head Start**

In 1993 Valley City State University began a lease agreement with Community Action Region VI - Head Start. As a federally funded program, Head Start provides childcare and educational programs for qualifying families. The lease agreement calls for an annual payment to the university for approximately 7,000 square ft. of space on the first and second floors of Mythalar Hall. The on-campus location provides convenient childcare services for enrolled students with children and it serves as a practicum site for students enrolled in early childhood programs.

**Food Service**

The Valley City State University food service is managed by Sodexho Marriott Services, Inc., in accordance with the provisions of a five-year management agreement. Sodexho Marriott Services employs a general manager, chef manager, and an adequate number of employees to prepare and serve a variety of meals in the cafeteria and the Viking I. Residence hall students are required to select a board contract from a number of available options.

Sodexho Marriott Services adheres to stringent standards for food preparation and safety, and is responsive to their customers through comment cards, surveys, and
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Residence Hall Life

Valley City State University owns and operates five residence halls. The residence halls are an important component in the total educational experience of students. The residence halls provide a wide variety of educational, social, and cultural programs throughout the academic year. Each residence hall is equipped with lounges, laundry rooms, exercise equipment, large screen televisions, and kitchenettes. Each room is fully furnished and includes phone service, voice mail, and network connections.

All freshmen and sophomore students are required to reside on campus and participate in the board plan. Exceptions to this policy are listed on p. 30 of the 2000-01 Student Handbook.

The residence halls are managed by the vice president for student affairs, the assistant director of housing, an administrative assistant, two live-in head residents and a staff of 16 resident assistants.

The newest residence hall on campus is over 30 years old. While the residence hall facilities and furnishings are well maintained, it is becoming increasingly important to consider new construction or renovation. The competition for students and the need to provide modern and up-to-date housing facilities make it necessary to explore the conversion of existing structures into suites or apartments. The modernization of campus housing is indicated in the VCSU Strategic Plan.

Health Services

A registered nurse provides health services to University students at no charge. The nurse’s office is open from 9:00 AM to noon Monday through Friday. Services offered include over the counter medications, first aid supplies, blood pressure checks, allergy injections, strep testing, HIV testing, and referrals to clinics and hospitals. Family planning services are also provided in cooperation with an area Family Planning Center. A portion of the University fee provides funding for salaries and supplies.

Counseling

Counseling services are designed to assist student in resolving personal, career, academic, social and medical problems and concerns. Services are provided without cost to the student on an appointment or walk-in basis. A licensed professional
counselor serves as the University counselor and is on duty to provide personal counseling, group counseling, workshops and seminars. In addition to the licensed professional counselor, two other members of the student affairs staff, the director of student academic services, and the vice president for student affairs possess Masters degrees in counseling and guidance and provide counseling services as needed. Students at VCSU rate Personal Counseling Services higher than the national average for college students on the ACT Student Opinion Survey.

The Bookstore

The bookstore, located in the Student Union, carries a variety of trade books, reference books, computer supplies and software, office supplies, candy, giftware, and apparel. The bookstore is managed by a manager and assistant manager and maintains adequate inventory variety and quantities. The bookstore manager works with faculty in selecting and ordering instructional materials for courses each semester. Pricing and return policies are set at levels that will provide a profit, and contribute to the overall stability of auxiliary operations. The bookstore manager reports to the Student Union director. A bookstore advisory committee, consisting of faculty, staff, and student customers is being formed to provide advice and feedback to the bookstore manager.

Teacher Center

The ten teacher centers of the North Dakota Network loan materials to area schools and instructors to provide opportunities for continuing education. Valley City’s teacher center, housed in the lower level of Allen Memorial Library, receives limited University support of space, furniture, utilities, and telephone. The library received a grant from the teacher center to catalog its materials on ODIN; consequently, borrowing privileges for the materials were extended to the University. No printed agreement formalizes this relationship.

Faculty Materials Center

The Faculty Materials Center provides photocopy and printing equipment and services throughout campus to students, faculty, and administrative offices. The FMC serves as a valuable and economical resource in VCSU campus marketing. A number of publications, brochures and newsletters are designed and produced in the FMC, including the Report to Investors, Baselines, Kathryn Center and CII handouts, Alumni Bulletin and VCSU scholarship auction materials. The FMC director and staff strive to meet customer needs by producing quality products quickly and at a reasonable cost. The Faculty Materials Center director reports to the vice president for business affairs.

Physical Resources
The physical plant has undergone a series of changes to accommodate the changes in the way instruction is delivered, providing a networked campus that includes wired classrooms, faculty, and administrative offices, and dormitories. Other projects not directly related to instruction enable the institution to provide a safe and pleasing environment for academic instruction, including the McFarland Hall renovations and the health and safety project in Vangstad, McFarland, and McCarthy Halls.

**The Physical Plant**

Campus buildings include a total of 505,139 square feet of floor space with a total building replacement cost of $39,282,300. Equipment inventories for instructional purposes exceed $4.6 million on a cost basis. The campus covers 94 acres of which 64 acres are maintained intensively.

McFarland Hall houses all main administrative and student services offices. The director of the Student Union and student activities is located in the Student Union. The University health nurse is located in Graichen Gymnasium and the athletic director is located in the W.E. Osmon field house.

Approximately 56 regular classrooms, of which 25 are networked to support the notebook computer initiative, provide an attractive environment for teaching and learning. Facilities include four auditoriums for campus programs, lectures, and public performances and presentations. Vangstad Auditorium is an historic feature of the campus with a seating capacity of 825; Froemke Recital Hall in the Foss Music Building seats 210. Theatre 320 in McFarland Hall seats 100 for drama performances, and the Science Center lecture hall seats 100. The Science Center also houses a planetarium with seating for 50 persons.

The campus athletic complex is used for instructional programs in health and physical education and for intercollegiate and intramural sports competition. The facilities include a fieldhouse arena with basketball court and seating for 2,600 spectators. The arena, which received a new hardwood floor in 1998, is convertible to an all-purpose area for basketball, volleyball, indoor tennis or free exercise. Adjacent to the fieldhouse is Lokken Field, a football stadium with seating for 2,500 spectators. A new eight lane track was installed in 1997, and new seats were installed in 1999. Included in the athletic complex is a three-diamond softball complex, and practice field areas. Graichen Gymnasium, located in the main campus area, is used for faculty offices, volleyball matches, intramural sports, and classroom instruction.

Auxiliary services buildings, funded on a self-liquidating basis, include the Memorial Student Center which accommodates the food services, bookstore, swimming pool, conference rooms and networked lounges. Five residence halls are capable of housing 258 men and 318 women students. Sixteen two-bedroom apartments units provide student family housing accommodations.

The Medicine Wheel and Regional Technology Center are both on land owned by the University; both are described in Chapter 2. The astronomy classes assist in
maintaining the Medicine Wheel. RTC land is leased to and maintained by the Valley City-Barnes County Development Corporation.

Overall, buildings on the VCSU campus are in good condition. The only large improvement needed is tuckpointing on many of them because of age. Other general improvements are needed on sidewalks, alleys and parking lots. Also, Foss Hall, Robertson, Myhler, McCoy and the field house need elevators. The University is currently in the process of doing a comprehensive facilities analysis and will be upgrading the heating and lighting system with $2.3 million financed through a state municipal lease. A summary of the performance contracting program is available in the resource room.

The University is funded by the state for one large capital project every two years. More money is needed to complete other projects such as making Graichen Gym handicapped accessible and providing a second exit from the basement. However, such projects are placed on a deferred maintenance list due to lack of state funds. The *VCSU Master Plan* (available in the resource room) outlines the various physical plant improvements pursued as funds become available.

**Organization and Resources**

The operation and maintenance of University physical facilities is the responsibility of the Facilities Services Department. The department consists of a director, an executive housekeeper, a full-time administrative assistant, twelve full-time custodial positions, and thirteen trades people.

The Facility Services Department provides services and programs for plant operations, building maintenance and repair, custodial services, grounds care, utilities and energy management, transportation, and motor pool. The department also provides service support for special events and participates in the planning and construction of new facilities and remodeling of existing structures.

**Improvements of the Past Ten Years:**

- Complete remodeling of main floor McFarland Hall including student service office areas
- Remodeling of first and third floor McFarland
- Air conditioning installed in student service office areas and Foss Music Hall
- Renovation of 25 classrooms in support of notebook computer initiative
- Elevators installed in McFarland Hall (2), McCarthy Hall (1), and library (1)
- Sprinkler system and other fire safety upgrades in McFarland and Vangstad Hall
- New roofs on Rhoades Science Building, Foss Music Hall, Kolstoe Hall, field house classroom, family housing, and ceramics building
- Renovation of footbridge
- New 250 hp boiler installed
- Networking of all residence halls
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- Upgrade of campus outdoor lighting
- Chemistry Lab waste facility

Campus Safety

Security

Each year in accordance with the Campus Security Act, Valley City State University publishes its crime statistics and campus security measures. Included in the document, which is circulated campus wide and published on the VCSU Web site, are VCSU’s campus security policy, crime statistics, safety and security measures, and prevention tips.

Campus security is provided by a nighttime campus security officer. The security officer patrols the campus both on foot and vehicle and is in direct radio contact with the 24 hour power plant office and the Valley City Police Department. Specific policies are in place for after hours entry into buildings.

As the result of a recent nighttime walk-through on the campus, lighting was re-evaluated. Lights were added in several entryways and alleys. Parking lot lights and streetlights were upgraded. Battery pack emergency lights have been installed in every building.

Campus safety and security information is placed in each residence hall room at the beginning of every school year. According to the ACT Student Opinion Survey, students are satisfied with the level of safety on campus. Student rated personal safety and security on campus at a level 3.87 on a scale of 1 to 5. The national average for college students is 3.68. The Report to Investors reports campus crime statistics, demonstrating that students live in a very secure environment.

Fire Safety

McFarland Hall and Vangstad Hall have had recent sprinkler system upgrades. Fire escapes on McCarthy, McFarland and Vangstad had repairs and upgrades. New fire doors were installed on the first floor of McFarland Hall. All smoke detectors were recently replaced with more sensitive smoke and heat detectors and the visibility of all exit signs was improved.

All campus buildings are connected to a central fire alarm system which is staffed 24 hours a day. Resident assistants receive training on fire prevention and fire safety procedures. Fire drills are conducted annually in all residence halls and each room is equipped with a smoke alarm.

The Valley City fire department conducts the fire drills in all of the dorms. All smoke alarms are checked yearly and all other safety devices such as extinguishers and hoses are checked monthly. Life safety projects are a high priority on the campus and money is available through the state for these kinds of improvements.
Fiscal Resources

Valley City State University is committed to maintaining a level of expenditures that will provide both the environment and human resources necessary for effective teaching and learning. Resources are allocated in a manner that will support the goals and strategies of the institution. One example of this commitment to University goals is the accomplishment of the notebook initiative without any additional state funding.

Valley City State University receives an unqualified opinion on its financial statements from the North Dakota State Auditors Office on the annual audit. This is an indication that financial reports are consistent with industry standards and that the data are comparable to other institutions.

As part of the statewide Roundtable review of higher education in 2000, the Board and the legislature launched a process that could yield major changes in how campuses are funded. In the distant past, the larger campuses were funded by enrollment-driven formulas and the smaller campuses had a minimum-staffing model to address their lack of economies of scale. As resources became ever more scarce, funding fell farther behind formulas and minimum staffing disappeared. By the end of the 1990s, one could describe the funding process as “spreading the pain” by increments to or from the historic base.

The emerging model creates out-of-state peer institutions for each North Dakota campus. The theory is that equity for each campus will be defined with reference to those peers, not to other NDUS institutions, and that the state will adopt a philosophy that X percent of the total cost per student should be funded by the state. Developing these ideas and identifying peer institutions has consumed 2000-2001. At this writing, the likelihood of implementation and the potential impact on VCSU are not known. One thing is clear: VCSU has no real peers. Only about 10 public baccalaureate institutions under 1,000 FTE exist; several of them are special mission or branch campuses; and only Mayville State (another NDUS institution) provides notebook computers for instructional use. Therefore, the benchmark against which VCSU will be measured is subject to an extraordinary amount of judgments on which reasonable people may well disagree.

Expenditure Patterns

Total education and general expenditures includes expenditures from all sources of funding including state appropriations, federal and state grants, and other current funds with the exception of auxiliaries. Table 5.4 gives those expenditures by function over the last four years.

The functions of instruction and academic support are directly related to teaching and learning. These two functions account for over 50 percent of total state-appropriated expenditures for the University.
Starting in 1998, computing operations, including those directly related to instruction, have been budgeted under institutional support. This accounts for the decrease from 1997 to 1998 to the instructional function. The increase in academic support in 1997 reflects the expenditures related to the lease on the student computers. Also, in 1998 all technology-related expenditures were recorded in the Information Technology Center budget. This included those information technology purchases that are directly related to instruction.

Currently, instructional technology items are budgeted under two areas, instructional support ($141,311 in 2000-01) and instruction (equipment only) ($15,000 in 2000-01).

**Budgeting and Accounting System**

The financial resources of Valley City State University are managed and records maintained by a system of budgeting and fund accounting. The accounting methods used are in accordance with accounting standards and audited annually by the
Office of the State Auditor. The State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) Budget and Finance Committee, and the ND Legislative Council Audit and Fiscal Review Committee review audit reports and related recommendations. The most recent audit reports are available at the comptroller's office. Meeting minutes from the SBHE and the ND Legislative Council committee are available through their websites. An audit report with financial statements, recommendations for improvement, and response to the recommendations from the University is issued each year.

The budget process consists of a biennial budget and an annual budget. The biennial budget is prepared every two years in accordance with guidelines and requirements establish by the State Board of Higher Education and the North Dakota Office of Management and Budget. This budget provides the basis for input into what is included in the Governor's budget, which is submitted to the North Dakota legislature.

Each year the University prepares an annual budget following guidelines set by the State Board of Higher Education and taking into consideration any legislative intent included in the appropriation bill. The budget is made up of four main line items: salaries and wages, operating expenditures, equipment, and capital improvements. In an effort to get useful input, all vice presidents collect requests from their departments. The vice president then forwards those requests that he is recommending for inclusion in the budget to the Executive Team for their consideration. When the annual budget is completed, it is forwarded to the chancellor for his approval.

The VCSU Foundation

The VCSU Foundation is responsible for alumni relations and fund-raising activities. The mission of the VCSU Foundation is to support Valley City State University by involving alumni and friends of the University in activities and private giving that meet the University’s needs and advance its welfare.

Defined in the VCSU Policy Manual, Section V307.1, the Valley City State University Foundation was formed in 1996 as an umbrella organization to coordinate all University fund-raising. This cooperative arrangement consists of V-500, the VCSU Alumni Association, the Century Club, the Board of Regents, and Valley City State University. The Foundation coordinates fund drives of all kinds, develops new approaches to charitable giving for the University, and supports the efforts of the alumni, V-500, and athletic organizations. The Foundation itself accepts gifts of any size and for any purpose not designated specifically for one of the existing groups. It manages and invests funds in accordance with the wishes of the existing groups and donors.

Valley City State University and the VCSU Foundation have signed a Memorandum of Agreement. Under that agreement the University

- Provides at no cost payroll services
- Provides at no cost technology support services as well as online access
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- Provides access to such VCSU files as are relevant to the business and purpose of the Foundation
- Provides services to the Faculty Materials Center on the same cost and priority basis as that used for University departments
- Provides assistance from the information technology staff as needed at no cost to the Foundation
- Furnishes office space for the Foundation, to include janitorial services, electricity, telephone, and heat at no charge. The Foundation pays the University for its postage charges. The University owns all office furnishings. Unless specifically itemized, the University will be the presumed owner of all office equipment. The Foundation purchases its own supplies.

Personnel and Governance

Personnel of the Foundation consist of the executive director who focuses on planned giving, capital campaigns, and major gifts; the assistant director in charge of alumni relations and V-500; and the administrative assistant responsible for accounting, data input, and clerical duties. The assistant director and administrative assistant report to the executive director, who reports to the University president.

A board of directors governs each of the four contributing entities (V-500, alumni, regents, and athletic boards). These boards then elect two representatives to serve on the Foundation board along with the president of Valley City State University. Board meetings are open and are scheduled at least quarterly. The minutes of these meetings are on file in the Foundation office.

V-500 has faculty representation from each of the academic divisions. As non-voting members, these faculty serve in an advisory capacity. The Booster Board and Alumni Association also have members who are faculty, though the by-laws of each do not state that faculty must be represented.

Achievements of the Foundation

The Foundation formed the Board of Regents in 1998 as the major gift arm of the organization. The resulting level of deferred giving is conservatively estimated at 1.5 million dollars. The Foundation has realized success in the area of annual giving as well. Figures for annual giving for the 1999-2000 reflect a total of $973,000 in revenue. This is up from $647,000 in 1997-98.

The VCSU Foundation has been effective during its first four years of existence in bringing together in a coordinated approach all of the various campus fund raising initiatives and providing continuity to the advancement program. As a result, the University is better able to track gifts, recognize donors, and update the database. In addition, pooling investments has resulted in increased earnings, and the Foundation has also been instrumental in increasing the awareness of planned giving and its importance to the University.
Foundation assets grew from $1.72 million in 1996 to $2.1 million in 2000. Scholarship allocations in 1995-1996 were nearly $171,400. In 1997-1998 the Century Club was brought under the umbrella of the VCSU Foundation and $242,040 were allocated. In 2000-2001, that number had increased to just over $287,000. The Foundation was also successful in raising the dollars necessary to replace the lighting and the floor in the field house. This project totaled approximately $200,000, with the Foundation raising $115,000 of that total.

The VCSU Foundation has been instrumental in the acquisition of many enhancements for the University. These successes include: working in partnership with several area businesses to acquire a moving message, digital reader board; joining with the local public school system to raise funds to build a new track at the college fieldhouse; organizing a fund drive for campus reforestation, securing corporate sponsors to replace the tartan floor in the field house with a new wood floor; assisting with a grant to purchase seats for the VCSU stadium; securing private funding for new lights in the planetarium; steel drums for the VCSU music department, and carpet in the library.

Challenges Facing the Foundation

The VCSU Foundation is faced with many of the same challenges that similar entities face in other rural areas. The local business district has been under economic stress for several years due to changing shopping patterns, the lure of large shopping malls and the presence of the Internet. The local economy is highly dependent on agriculture and as such has experienced the instability of the markets and a dependence on declining federal farm aid programs.

The University’s efforts to offset the impact of the local and statewide economy are beginning to pay dividends. During the last three years the Foundation has been hosting reunions of alumni and friends in other states. This past year such events occurred in Arizona, Oregon, California, Washington, Minnesota, and Colorado. These and other events and activities are beginning to see results.

The VCSU Foundation is still in its infancy. As it grows and matures, it will begin to reap the benefits of those efforts. VCSU was one of the last schools within the North Dakota University System to develop a foundation. Without a doubt, the efforts are on the right track. Results include an increased asset base, increased scholarship allocations, and important resources for other campus priorities and needs. Clearly, the VCSU Foundation is becoming a major asset to the University community.

Grants

As state funding has remained flat during this decade of transformation, grants have become an increasingly significant resource for faculty development as well as supporting innovations in instruction and research. A FIPSE grant in 1994, followed by a Title III grant (held jointly with MSU) helped faculty focus on assessment and develop the eight Abilities and the senior portfolio requirement. A Bush Foundation
grant during that same period assisted faculty in working on instructional technology tools as they developed effective ways to integrate the notebook computers in their classrooms. A second Title III grant (1998-2003) further funded the development of technology education and online student services at VCSU.

The improvements to teaching and learning these grants have made possible have inspired faculty to seek further grants to support their classroom teaching, research, and program development. In the past year alone, faculty at VCSU have applied for 18 grants, for projects as diverse as developing technology education opportunities in the K-12 classrooms of Barnes County, to invertebrate testing of the Sheyenne River to determine water quality, or the purchase of string instruments for Community School of the Arts students.

The growing interest in pursuing grant monies has brought to light a new need on campus—someone to coordinate and track grant requirements, oversee financial decisions, and assist in developing both initial applications and the subsequent reports. The development of such a position is currently under discussion.

**Strengths**

- The ACT Student Opinion Survey reveals high levels of student satisfaction overall with student services, the library, and information technology on campus.
- Universal access through the notebook initiative has led to strong technology computing integration throughout all core functions of the University.
- An extensive local area network, supported by appropriate classroom presentation equipment, facilitates effective implementation of the notebook initiative.
- Considerable effort and resources focus professional development activities on the effective use of instructional technologies.
- The University enjoys a well-maintained physical plant.
- Improvements to the physical plant have been accomplished in part with financial support from private donors.
- The University’s resources are allocated in a manner that supports the goals and strategies of the institution.
- The University enjoys widespread community support and reciprocates through participation in civic and cultural activities and economic development initiatives.
Faculty and staff are resourceful, inventive, and hardworking.

Challenges

- The state demographics show clear out-migration as well as a decline in high school age students. The University will need to seek new markets to replace the declining population of 18-20 year olds.
- While the physical plant is in good condition, deferred maintenance is an ongoing concern.
- Because the newest residence hall on campus is over 30 years old, residence hall renovation is necessary to aid in the recruitment and retention of students.
- Salary levels and staffing problems remain a significant issue. The University must continue to improve salary levels for all employees. Reaching market parity will allow the University to more effectively recruit and retain employees.
- A new state finance model, instituted July 1, 2001, will give the University greater autonomy and control of tuition revenues. This will place stronger focus on effective enrollment management strategies.