

Chapter 5: Preparing for the Future

The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Valley City State University has a long-standing history of strategic planning that relies, in part, on informed analysis of societal and economic trends, not only within North Dakota but also beyond its borders. While operating within the broader context of the North Dakota University System and accountable to the State Board of Higher Education, the institution retains its own identity and designs initiatives in congruence with its vision, mission, goals and priorities.

The current North Dakota University System Strategic Plan covers the timeframe of 2009-2013. Its vision and goals are as follows:

Vision: Leading the nation in educational attainment through access, innovation, and excellence.

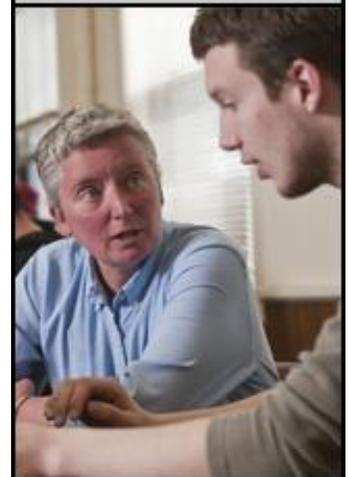
- *Goal 1: The North Dakota University System is accessible, a view held by all North Dakotans.*
- *Goal 2: North Dakotans recognize that the North Dakota University System is affordable at a level that can be sustained.*
- *Goal 3: The North Dakota University System increases the overall vitality of the state through exceptional education, research, training, and service.*
- *Goal 4: The eleven institutions comprising the North Dakota University System work together to achieve the vision effectively.*

Progress toward each goal “will be assessed through objectives that are specific, measurable, and actionable with assigned responsibility and timeframes. The majority of these stated objectives are directly linked to the required accountability measures outlined in SB 2038 adopted during the 2009 legislative session” (NDUS Strategic Plan, 2009). Each year the University System office publishes a document indicating annual campus performance for the accountability measures required by state law; campus planning is shaped in part by the System goals and relies on accountability measures data to measure progress toward those goals.

Strategic Planning

Over the past decade, VCSU has operated under three strategic plans. The first, published in Fall 2001 and intended to shape planning process from 2001-2007, was based on the Cornerstones of the North Dakota Roundtable report, which was adopted in July 2000 by the State Board of Higher Education, and responded to legislative changes that allowed each campus

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to keep its tuition revenues. The *Fall 2001 Strategic Plan* document provides a full background of the context in which this plan was developed and the campus process and data used.

In 2006, the campus began a new planning process that focused on VCSU's need to improve recruitment and retention as full-time enrollment began to drop. The resulting *Growth Plan* in 2007 identified a series of actions that would achieve results (growth) by 2010, to include marketing of selected majors, articulations with several two year campuses, the addition of several intercollegiate men's and women's athletic programs, increased scholarship funding, and the development of the new graduate program. Funds were set aside specifically to support marketing efforts of designated majors and articulation development with Wyoming community colleges.

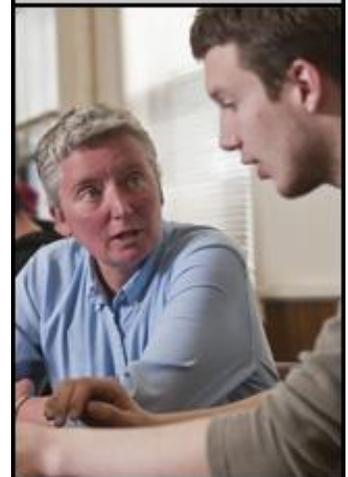
In developing this plan, members of the Executive Team visited with each academic unit to identify growth opportunities. Information from these meetings was used by the Executive Team to draft the initial version, while the newly formed University Council, made up of division chairs from each academic area, the Executive Team, and leadership from key offices (such as the Registrar), reviewed the later draft versions of the *Growth Plan*, and met monthly during the next year to report on its implementation.

The current strategic plan, developed in 2009-2010 by a specially appointed committee with broad campus representation, maintains the campus focus on enrollment growth, while bringing attention back to the need for facility improvements. *VCSU 2015* provides a framework for growth and improvement over five years. During the first year of its implementation, the Success 2015 committee has reviewed the plan, met with those responsible for each action, and established baseline data where pertinent. This committee will continue its oversight and annual review as the plan is revised and updated.

To build on the individual program efforts encouraged so successfully by the 2007 *Growth Plan*, the *VCSU 2015* plan requires each academic area to develop strategic plans and complete annual program updates to document goals, decisions, planning, and results. All academic units completed their strategic planning processes during Fall 2010, with their first Annual Program Updates (which establish baseline data and provide planning updates) due in Spring 2011. These planning processes helped support some of the budget requests presented in Spring 2011's annual budget review.

The University uses a wide range of tactics to assess current functions and future challenges. A coordinated strategic planning process from the president to divisional units ensures integration of the mission and purposes of the University into individual work plans and goals. The self study has confirmed that an integrated planning process facilitates productive work patterns. Such integration of purpose, coupled with a ubiquitous computing environment, facilitates communication processes. The University's effectiveness is predicated on its ability to assess and communicate in ways that afford strategic and timely decision-making.

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Appropriate communication and integration of purpose have enabled constructive responses to the ever-demanding changes before small universities in general and specifically to the unique demands before a small, rural, public liberal arts university in North Dakota. The “Decade of Transformation” section in chapter one of the *2001 Self-Study Report* aptly depicts the versatility and effectiveness of the University through the last decade of the twentieth century. The institution remains well positioned to seek the next level of excellence because the campus culture that allowed VCSU to respond so well in a turbulent decade continues to make the campus vital and responsive.

Core Component 2a. The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

Numerous trends impact planning at VCSU, and the institution ignores them at its peril. The short list includes these:

- Changing demographic landscape of North Dakota
- Possibility of diminishing financial support from the legislature
- The need to obtain funding from outside resources
- Lifelong learning pursuits of the citizenry
- Necessity of professional growth and development opportunities
- Demand for ensuring success of all students
- Commitment to meeting learning needs of the twenty-first century
- The changing face of educational practice
- Increasing need to be able to find information
- Explosive opportunities in communication
- Rapid evolution of technological developments
- Globalization of business and education operations
- Competition with ten other system campuses in North Dakota, in addition to online and for-profit universities

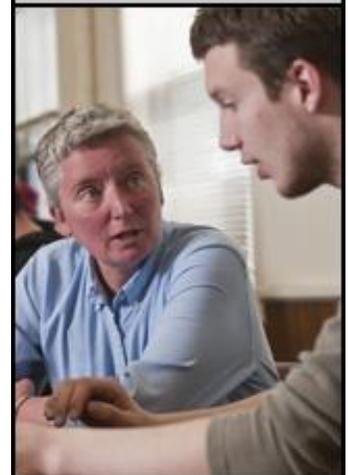
Each of these areas presents both challenge and opportunity, and most involve change, something the University embraces as a matter of routine practice. VCSU’s strategic planning efforts over the past decade have attended to these trends and have demonstrated the institution’s ability to plan realistically to meet future challenges.

Three accomplishments in particular demonstrate this ability to meet societal and economic changes and prepare for the future: the establishment of the graduate program, securing grant funding initiatives, and expansion of the undergraduate education enterprise. Additional benchmark accomplishments further define VCSU as a progressive, innovative, responsive organization.

Graduate Program

The mission and vision of Valley City State University in the 1990s focused on national leadership in quality learning and innovation through technology.

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The Master of Education, established in 2005, grew from the University's strong tradition of educational leadership and technological innovation. The M.Ed. rose from the needs of the state and the historic mission of the University, expresses the University's continuing commitment to a mandate from the Board, and capitalizes on strategic niche expertise the University has been developing for well over two decades. The program is built on strong undergraduate programs in Education and has strengthened the University's ability to continue doing what it already does well, while serving a new clientele. It has enabled the University to work effectively with its own teacher-education graduates throughout their careers.

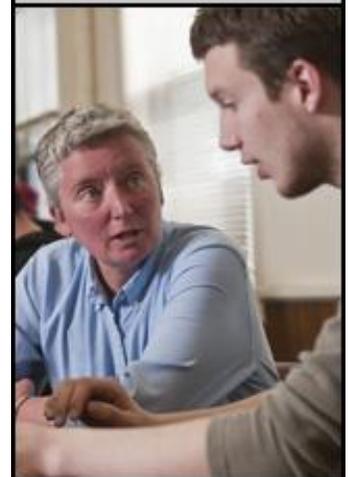
The online Master of Education degree at VCSU is a practitioner-oriented degree, designed for the practicing teachers. The program requires four core courses that provide students with the foundation for educational research and graduate study in education. Four concentrations are available: Library and Information Technologies, Technology Education, Teaching and Technology and Teaching English Language Learners. In each case, the curricular concentrations build on an undergraduate strength at VCSU, and respond to a particular market need.

Library & Information Technologies. VCSU has designed this concentration for teachers at either primary or secondary levels who may be required by their district to fill a part- or full-time library position. The concentration is designed to meet the growing state and regional needs for school library media specialists and librarians. A 2004 ALA (American Library Association) task force conducted by M. Harlan, S. Norton and H. Adams concluded that “over 50 percent of all professional librarians [will be] retiring by 2014, [and] rural school districts face a big challenge in recruiting and retaining professional and support staff to fill vacant positions.” This concentration has helped to meet the educational needs in an online environment which is available not only statewide, but also regionally and nationally.

The curriculum meets both the AASL/NCATE (American Association of School Librarians/National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) School Library Media Specialist preparation standards and the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction standards for the preparation of library media specialists at the highest credential level - LM01. This is the only graduate-level library science program in the state.

Technology Education. Valley City State University has designed this concentration for primary and secondary level educators who are interested in teaching Technology Education, a field that currently faces a substantial nationwide shortage of qualified teachers. The program is also the only one in North Dakota that provides teacher licensure through a combination of undergraduate and graduate courses. Curriculum in the courses is consistent with the Standards

The online Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree at VCSU is a practitioner-oriented degree, designed for the practicing teachers.



for Technological Literacy defined by the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association.

Teaching & Technology. Valley City State University has designed this concentration for teachers at either primary or secondary levels wishing to pursue a master's degree. It is a unique program, not only in the state, but also in the country. Curriculum focuses on the use of technologies to enrich teaching and learning. With the rapid changes in technology, teachers must become effective users of technology and develop strategies for successfully integrating technology into the classroom to enhance the learning experience. Curriculum in this concentration provides students with an understanding of the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) as defined by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

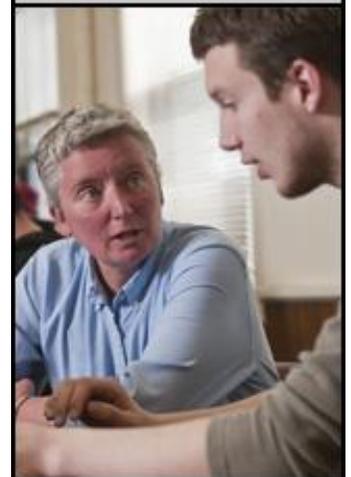
Teaching English Language Learners. Valley City State University has designed this concentration for teachers at either primary or secondary levels wishing to pursue a master's degree. The Concentration in Teaching English Language Learners (ELL) provides in-service teachers with the cultural and linguistic pedagogy needed to address the ELL needs. This concentration capitalizes on the University's excellent reputation and historic role in teacher preparation and the University's strength in ELL teacher training and couples it with its successful online M.Ed. The ELL endorsement is approved by NCATE and is embedded into the concentration. One of only two such programs in the state, it provides ELL trained teachers for all the major public school districts across the state, including Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, the Hutterite colonies, and the Tribal schools.

With premier programs built on a long-standing tradition of excellence, the VCSU School of Education and Graduate Studies is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the North Dakota Educational Standards and Practices Board (ESPB), and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

In 2008, NCATE granted accreditation to VCSU at two levels. VCSU's undergraduate teacher education programs were accredited at the initial teacher preparation level, which applies to programs that prepare students for their first license to teach. In addition, VCSU's new online Master of Education program received accreditation at the advanced level, which includes post baccalaureate programs for teachers who have completed initial preparation.

To receive accreditation from NCATE, schools must meet rigorous standards set by the profession and members of the public. Teacher candidates must have in-depth knowledge of the subject matter as well as the skills necessary to convey that knowledge to students. The college or university must carefully assess student knowledge and must have partnerships with P-12

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schools to help students learn. Candidates must be prepared to understand and work with diverse student populations. Faculty must model effective teaching practices and the school must have the resources, including information technology resources, necessary to prepare candidates to meet new standards. NCATE revises its standards every five years to incorporate best practice and research in order to ensure that the standards reflect a consensus about what is important in teacher preparation today.

In their report, the NCATE Board of Examiners identified several key strengths of VCSU's programs. The report recognized VCSU's faculty for its high quality as evidenced by both faculty credentials and evaluation by students and colleagues. VCSU's field experience program was recognized as giving students opportunities to learn by participating in live classroom settings. The report also noted VCSU's centralized assessment system that helps students develop and model professional dispositions, as well as recent improvements to that system developed by faculty and the VCSU IT staff. NCATE also named as a strength VCSU's technology-rich environment, including its laptop initiative in which every full-time student is issued a laptop computer.

The graduate program has continued to grow at a predictable rate. Since it was established in 2005, it has increased by ten to twenty students each year.

Table 5.1 Graduate Student Enrollment by Concentration

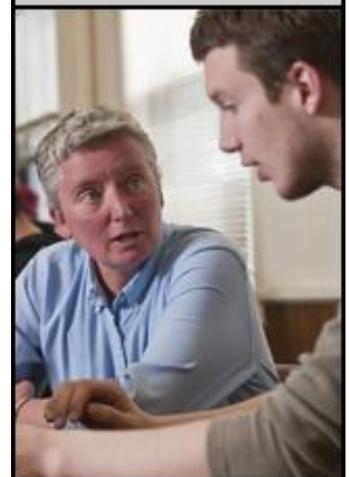
Active Students in Concentrations	Fall 08	Fall 09	Fall 10
Teaching and Technology	49	53	66
Technology Education	32	23	34
Library & Information Technologies	31	37	31
Teaching English Language Learners	0	5	6
Non-Degree Seeking	1	2	4
Concentration Totals by Semester	113	120	141

Its first graduates were in 2007 when 13 students completed the degree. In 2010 the program met one of the institution's original goals of graduating 30 students by 2010. Table 5.1 illustrates enrollment growth in the graduate program over the last three years.

Grant Funding Initiatives

The institution has profited from grant writing activity for decades. Three current initiatives which demonstrate a more aggressive approach to grant writing have assumed a prominent role in strengthening educational operations.

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STEM Education Funding and the Great Plains STEM Education Center

In December 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law an omnibus spending bill that included \$750,000 in funding for Valley City State University to extend its role in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education. The funding allowed VCSU to develop the Great Plains STEM Education Center, which provides professional development training for K-12 teachers in STEM methodology, and which promotes and supports STEM-related activities in the state. Further support from another federal spending bill and funding from the North Dakota State legislature in 2009 and 2011 allowed for further expansion of the Center's impact.

These efforts in STEM education are rooted in a decade of program development which provides technology and engineering methodology for teachers. In 2000, VCSU launched its online degree program in Technology Education, aimed at providing technological literacy for all students based on content standards published by the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA) and endorsed by the National Academy of Engineering (NAE). In 2005, VCSU launched a concentration in Technology Education for its online Master of Education degree program. In 2008, VCSU signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Center for Technological Literacy of the Museum of Science Boston to bring quality standards-based engineering and technology education to K-12 schools throughout the region.

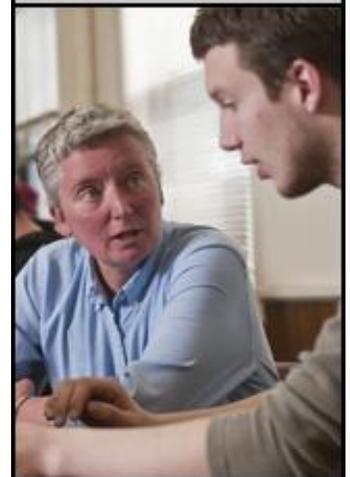
Bush Foundation Valley Partnership

Also in December 2009, Minnesota State University – Moorhead (MSUM), North Dakota State University (NDSU) and Valley City State University entered into a partnership to improve teacher training and effectiveness that the Bush Foundation has committed to support with payments of up to \$5.65 million over 10 years. The partnership joined 11 other institutions the Bush Foundation is funding to redesign teacher preparation programs.

The partnership allows VCSU to redesign its curriculum to include increasing field experiences offered to students, offering curriculum in emerging fields such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and ELL (English Language Learners), and improving the understanding and application of assessment strategies.

According to the terms of the Letter of Commitment, the Bush Foundation is supporting the partnership's strategy to build and implement a dramatically redesigned teacher preparation program that will develop and guarantee the effectiveness of 250 teachers annually beginning in 2014. The partnership will implement recruiting strategies that target middle school students, high school students, college students and career transition professionals with customized approaches. Students will be offered a comprehensive range of certificates recognizing achievement in areas of academic specialization that, through articulation agreements, will be recognized by all of the partners. Prospective teachers graduating from the partnership will be placed in

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partner schools that provide trained mentors and share assessment data to gauge new teacher impact.

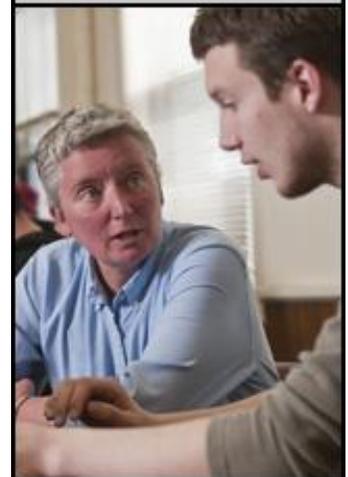
Project Nexus: Institute of Museum and Library Services

Project Nexus, a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, provided \$574,000 to develop and implement a successful online graduate library program. The grant was completed in June of 2011 and met all of its outcomes. A second grant for \$232,000 was awarded in 2011 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. It provides professional development support for school librarians in North Dakota and surrounding states through 2014.

The Project Nexus outcomes and VCSU's progress are delineated below:

1. **Develop an online comprehensive, high quality, accessible graduate curriculum in library and information technologies** accredited by the American Library Association/American Association of School Librarians (ALA/AASL) and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). North Dakota has been without a master's level library media degree program since the mid-1970s. The curriculum will also meet the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the North Dakota University System requirements to assure program/course validity in meeting the State Library Media Certification (Teacher) Standards. The program was reviewed as part of the NCATE site visit and approved through NCATE in 2008. The faculty are currently pursuing program accreditation through NCATE/AASL. Graduates of the program are eligible for LMO1 licensure through the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.
2. **Through partnership efforts recruit fifteen graduate students each year for three years.** A recruitment plan for students will be designed based on surveys documenting extensive interest by school librarians and prospective school librarians. Partnering with the North Dakota Tribal Colleges broadened recruitment to underrepresented areas. The program regularly enrolls about 30 students each term.
3. **Provide tuition assistance to support disadvantaged professionals.** North Dakota K-12 educators are at a financial and geographic disadvantage due to low salaries ranking 50th nationally and because there are no in-state graduate library education programs. During the three-year period of the grant, 117 grants were awarded for tuition support.
4. **Successfully implement a library program.** In an asynchronous online environment the curriculum will be delivered to the identified audience. The accredited Master's degree will be implemented during a two year cycle. The program is accredited (by NCATE in 2008) and delivers a Master's degree students can complete over the course of two years (six terms, including summers as regular terms).

Project Nexus, a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, provided \$574,000 to develop and implement a successful online graduate library program.



Assessment included evaluating enrollment, retention, completion, and employment rates. Data from an ongoing evaluation of the Project Nexus librarian certification and M.Ed. programs, of individual courses, and of enrollment statistics, was gathered throughout each year and compiled and reported at the end of each grant funding year.

All three of these grants are providing faculty with additional support to develop curriculum and assessment tools, to improve recruitment, and to collaborate with and have a stronger impact on the K-12 constituents VCSU serves.

Expanding the Undergraduate Education Enterprise

Out-of-State Articulations

In 2008, VCSU signed an articulation agreement with Northwest College (Powell, WY) that offers students in Wyoming the opportunity to complete VCSU's Elementary Education, English Education and History Education degree programs via distance learning. The agreements address an unmet demand for Elementary, English and History Education degree opportunities throughout the state.

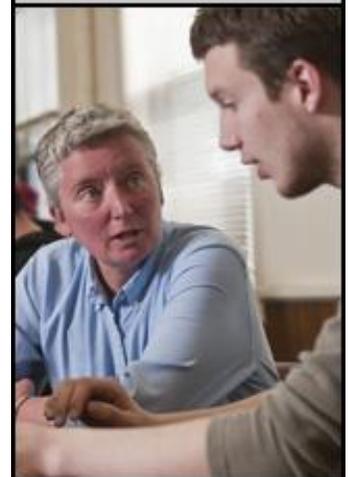
According to the agreements, VCSU will recognize students who have completed Northwest's Associate of Arts degree as having met VCSU's General Education requirements (with some exceptions). They will then be eligible to earn VCSU's Bachelor of Science degree in Education, with Elementary, English or History Education majors, by completing VCSU's Professional Education Sequence, other specified courses, and the student teaching experience. VCSU will deliver these courses using methods that allow the students to complete the program without being present on the VCSU campus. Delivery methods will include online and summer workshops conducted by VCSU faculty on the NWC campus. VCSU uses flexible delivery methods (such as online and summer workshops) so that students may complete all required coursework in Wyoming.

The original partnership with NWC has proved very successful. Other campuses in Wyoming have contacted VCSU about developing similar arrangements because of the positive comments NWC provided at regional meetings. In 2010, the Higher Learning Commission granted the last of three requests from VCSU to deliver these programs to Wyoming, approving all seven community college sites. Agreements with these other colleges have been set up to mimic the Northwest College program. Student enrollment from Wyoming in Spring 2011 was 40 students, with an anticipated total of 70 students Fall 2011. This growth comes from the addition of two new articulations added Spring 2011, and enrollment is now expected to stabilize.

Agreements with North Dakota Colleges and Universities

In 2003, articulation agreements were signed to facilitate credit transfer and provide a smooth transition from one related degree program to another Dakota College at Bottineau (DCB) and Lake Region State College (LRSC) with

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VCSU in the programs of Music/Music Education, Music with an Emphasis in Business, Art/Art Education, and Physical Education.

A unique agreement between VCSU and DCB was developed in 2004-2005 for the delivery of the third year of the VCSU Fisheries and Wildlife Science major on the Dakota College at Bottineau campus. Courses in this program are taught over Intervideo network (IVN). The success of this program has affected VCSU in two ways: first, VCSU has experienced strong enrollment in this program, doubling the number of majors from Fall 2009 to Fall 2010. Second, the strength of this agreement has led to three other agreements, each of which brings students to VCSU while also benefiting DCB's programs and enrollment:

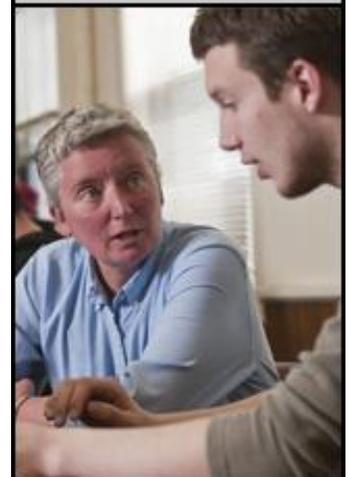
- The Dakota Nursing Program, started in 2008 on the VCSU campus, offers residents in this region much-needed nursing credentials. Students take some courses from VCSU, and complete the nursing components/ADN degree through DCB on VCSU's campus.
- The Bridges program. This program responds to the NDUS Office's expressed preference that the two year colleges provide developmental coursework, and to VCSU's need to offer an option to students who do not meet entrance requirements. Students are able to live on campus and take courses from both DCB and VCSU while completing a one year certificate from DCB. They are then eligible to transfer to VCSU and continue their academic career. In addition, DCB offers developmental courses to VCSU students, to assist with student academic needs.
- Three AAS and AA/AS Degree options. These four programs are new to VCSU's campus in Fall 2011. They will function much as the Bridges program, with students enrolled in courses from both campuses and articulations developed to allow for seamless transfer after students complete the DCB degree.

In addition to these new programs, VCSU continues to partner with NDSU in delivering its Elementary Education program in Fargo, and is finalizing new agreements to collaborate in Art. Further, the institution is now collaborating with the University of North Dakota (UND) Graduate School to offer components of their Master's of Business Administration degree to VCSU students thereby allowing VCSU students to participate in their Bridge to the MBA program. Two programs currently in development include a collaboration to receive the Medical Laboratory Science major from UND and an articulation to provide a four-year degree pathway for students in the journeyworker track at North Dakota State School of Science.

Additional Benchmark Accomplishments

Accomplishment across the University is not limited to education. Other endeavors and attributes reflect an institution committed to continuous improvement and meaningful, planned change that will ensure its success in meeting the needs of the broad community of learners it serves.

The Dakota Nursing Program, started in 2008 on the VCSU campus, offers residents in this region much-needed nursing credentials.



- Taking steps toward becoming a more environmentally responsible campus, including participation in city's new recycling initiatives, is a reality.
- Establishment of a new IT Data Center as a facility upgrade enhances operations.
- The institution added new offerings for student athletes that include golf, track & field, and cross country teams.
- The 2009 flood demonstrated the importance of technology tools for interaction with students; the H1N1 threat the following fall presented new scenarios where technology could solve problems. Recognizing the practicality of these tools for all teaching, faculty continue to explore teaching technologies to diversify the experiences of student learners, both in the classroom and those learning from a distance.
- The new Prairie Waters Education and Research Center provides new opportunities for student and faculty research as well as a wealth of information and educational opportunities for regional K-12 students to learn about science and water issues.

Just as it did in the last century, Valley City State University continues to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness, in part, because of the planning and assessment processes that guide decision-making, improvements, and change, all resting in a mission statement that is appropriate and fluid.

Evaluation of Core Component 2a

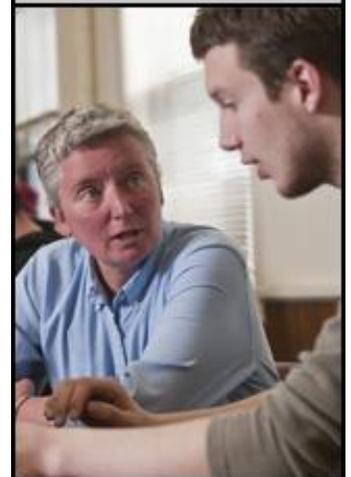
Valley City State University is well aware of changing societal and economic trends that require it to be both innovative in shaping itself to meet the future while responding to current needs and stresses. Concerns about changing demographics have proved more significant than economic trends during the past decade; VCSU has successfully identified new markets to off-set expected enrollment declines in its traditional market and sought significant grant support to strengthen academic offerings.

Strengths: VCSU succeeds by deliberately matching its strengths with market needs, from developing a graduate library concentration for inservice teachers across the state (the only such program in North Dakota), to establishing a water education and research center (which served over 1000 visitors in its first year of operation) from the work of several biology professors and the campus macroinvertebrate laboratory.

Ongoing initiatives: VCSU has been able to leverage grant funding to support new initiatives and programs. They have provided support for curriculum development and student scholarships as well as peripheral support of staff and faculty. The three grants described in this section continue to support the quality of the programs as they grow and become self-sustaining.

Challenges: Program growth brings challenges in staffing, policy development, and assessment. After decades of low enrollment and a tight budget, VCSU must now learn to manage growth successfully.

Valley City State University continues to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.



Core Component 2b. The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Valley City State University allocates resources in support of the University mission. As countless awards and decades of successful accreditations attest, VCSU is renowned as a high quality, stable educational institution with a strong foundation. Fulfilling the mission and in line with NDUS goals, all planning and assessment processes guide decision-making, improvements, and changes within the organization. While a perpetual needs list exists, resources are sufficient to ensure continued accomplishment. A new campus master plan provides direction for the operation and maintenance of physical facilities, and the institution makes budget allocations according to goals and needs. Reported performance evidence validates wise use of all assets – human, physical, and financial.

Human Resources

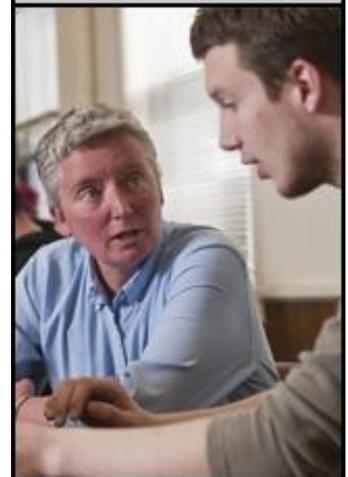
The field of Human Resources has expanded within the North Dakota University System (NDUS) over the past ten years. One large initiative demonstrating this growth and commitment to the field was the implementation of PeopleSoft. PeopleSoft brought an HRMS system to the NDUS and is used to maintain and centralize employee payroll processing, employee data warehousing, and data security.

The Human Resources Department at VCSU expanded and reorganized in September of 2010. The Director of Human Resources (HR) role expanded from half-time to full to dedicate more time and attention to the field. Payroll was extracted from the Business Office and combined with HR to form a new Employee Services Department. Resulting from turnover, a split position of Grant Accounting and Career Services was also reorganized in this process. The Payroll Manager acquired the Grant Accounting responsibilities and exchanged transactional payroll duties, which were combined with the remaining Career Services duties. The reorganization of duties within Payroll furthers the relationship of Employee Services with the student hiring processes.

At VCSU, several processes have been strengthened to ensure legal compliance. The hiring process was reviewed and improved to include electronic application submission, consistent posting timelines, applicant tracking and screening processes, and documents to ensure objective hiring decisions on the part of the committee. In 2009, VCSU implemented a background check policy that requires all new employees to successfully complete a background check before starting in their position.

Whether students, faculty, or staff, the human resources of VCSU are notable for their steadfast dedication to maintaining an environment conducive to learning, providing technical and clerical assistance, keeping records, and managing the physical plant. Valley City State University permanent employees are either faculty or staff. Staff includes administrators and other

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support personnel. Employees are also categorized by funding sources into state-funded positions, or grant and local positions. In addition to permanent employees, Valley City State University has adjunct faculty, temporary employees, and student employees.

VCSU employs a total of 325-350 people including faculty, staff, administrators, adjunct faculty, part-time employees, and students. The full-time equivalent (FTE) of all permanent employees included in the 2009-2010 annual budget is 162.79, which is an increase of 2.67 FTE when compared with the 2001-2002 annual budget. Spring semester 2010, the institution employed a total of 326 people, with 155 of them at full-time status. Regular performance reviews, evaluation, assessment, professional development, and individual growth plans promote increased productivity and generate improvements.

Faculty

Faculty Appointments. Faculty members at Valley City State University possess the necessary professional competencies to provide effective instruction and to carry out their related responsibilities. The table below summarizes the distribution of degrees and tenure, across all five divisions.

Table 5.2 Faculty Degrees by Division (Full-time, tenured or tenure-track only)

Division	#Faculty	Tenured	Terminal Degree	Master's Level
CASS	14	5	8	6
Education	14	9	10	4
Fine Arts	7	5	6	1
MSHPE	14	10	10	4
Business	11	7	2	9
Total	60	36	36	24

The number of full-time faculty with terminal degrees has increased by 47% over the past decade. Retention of faculty is also fairly strong: 26 faculty members (43%) have served VCSU for more than 10 years.

While small class sizes are a hallmark of VCSU, this also results in inequities of workload as some programs must be subsidized by larger programs and general education courses. In addition, faculty may choose to offer independent studies to assist students toward timely graduation, which further add to their workloads. Efforts have been made across campus to develop curricular options that reduce the need for these independent studies; the addition of online courses and growing enrollment have also reduced the number of independent studies, although not necessarily reducing workload. Recognizing the strain overload places on both the faculty member and the colleagues who must pick up the University service duties, APAC has developed a policy for discussion this coming fall which restricts faculty overload to 1/5 of a full-time contract. Such restriction will help the Academic Affairs office more readily identify programs needing additional faculty support.

Faculty members at Valley City State University possess the necessary professional competencies to provide effective instruction and to carry out their related responsibilities.



In the middle of the past decade, VCSU faced dropping enrollment and the possibility of reduction in force. During much of this decade, no new faculty lines were added, and new initiatives were funded entirely through reallocation and grant support. The Fisheries and Wildlife Science major, for example was approved by Faculty Association vote on the condition that the program be self-supporting within five years, with 'self-supporting' defined as an enrollment of 40 majors. The start-up funding for the faculty position came from a grant. Other new programs were developed through curricular revision and faculty overload. The success of these ventures can be seen with record enrollments; the challenge now lies in managing growth and reducing faculty overload.

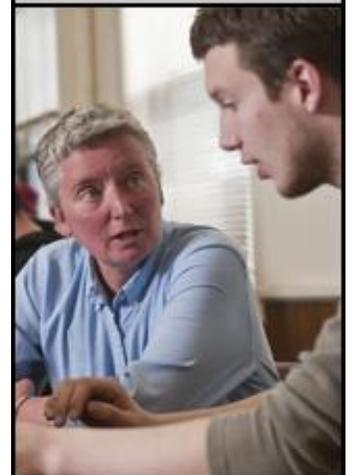
With the enrollment growth VCSU has experienced over the past few years and the support of grant dollars in Education (Bush Foundation) and STEM areas, VCSU has seen a recent increase in special, non-tenure track appointments. As the University adjusts to growth, the use of these appointments is deliberate: one year appointments allow the department to gauge the continued growth of a program and to fund the position from more flexible, local accounts. In this way, enrollment revenues directly support instruction. Full time (even though temporary) appointments benefit students more than a series of adjunct appointments, since faculty have more interaction with the department and institution, and stronger commitment to its programs and purposes, all of which strengthens continuity of instruction.

Not every new faculty hire is a special appointment, however; in areas of institutional strategic commitment, where program stability is reasonably assured, the University has committed to additional tenure-track positions, believing that this is VCSU's best way to locate quality faculty who might otherwise be put off by low salaries (see below). Four such positions have been developed in the past two years—psychology, technology education, fisheries and wildlife, and elementary education.

Faculty Salaries. Salaries over the past decade remain a challenge. Table 5.3 provides a comparison of salaries by rank, demonstrating North Dakota's continued lag in compensation. These lower salaries make job searches challenging, as the compensations offered to make up for these lower numbers—low cost of living, inexpensive housing, full medical benefits, low crime rate, excellent public education—are hard to quantify for the would-be employee.

The news is not all bad, however: in an otherwise depressed economy, North Dakota in general and VCSU in specific have fared well. While many universities have frozen or even cut salaries, made mandatory furloughs, and reduced contributions to retirement plans, VCSU has been able to offer salary increases every year over the last ten years. This is due in part from North Dakota's strong agricultural sector and increasing oil production. ND is now the fourth largest oil producing state in the US. According to the American Association of University Professors, the average salary increase for the 2009-2010 academic year was 1.2%. At VCSU the average faculty salary increase was 6.4% in 2009-10. Over the past decade, average faculty salary

While many universities have frozen or even cut salaries, made mandatory furloughs, and reduced contributions to retirement plans, VCSU has been able to offer salary increases every year over the last ten years.



increases have ranged from 2.0% (2004-05) to 6.4% (2009-10), with an average increase over the decade of 4.6% annually.

Table 5.3 Average Faculty Salaries

AVERAGE FACULTY SALARIES, ACADEMIC YEAR 2008- 09				
NDUS includes VCSU, MaSU, and DSU				
	Profs	Assoc Profs	Asst Profs	Instructors
U.S.	\$ 84,488	\$68,193	\$56,977	\$ 43,970
Regional	\$ 74,458	\$61,588	\$52,528	\$ 39,741
NDUS	\$ 60,792	\$52,814	\$46,401	\$ 41,140
Variance from Regional	-18%	-14%	-12%	4%
Variance from National	-28%	-23%	-19%	-6%

(Source: NDUS Employee Compensation Report dated March 2010)

At VCSU the average faculty salary increase was 6.4% in 2009-10. Over the past decade, average faculty salary increases have ranged from 2.0% (2004-05) to 6.4% (2009-10), with an average increase over the decade of 4.6% annually.

Staff

Staff are placed in broad salary bands that focus on the knowledge and skills of the individual. VCSU employs 84 full-time and 8 part-time staff, who fall into bands as indicated in Table 5.4. The average years of service in each band indicates the stability and experience in offices across campus, and the dedication of staff, like faculty, to the University.

Table 5.4 Staff by Broad Band Number

Band Number	Description	2010 # Employed	Average Years of Service
Band 1000	Administration Managerial	17 FT, 1 PT	17.00 years
Band 3000	Professional	20 FT, 1PT	9.74 years
Band 4000	Technical & Paraprofessional	11 FT, 1 PT	11.32 years
Band 5000	Office Support	12 FT, 5 PT	13.8 years
Band 6000	Crafts and Trades	14 FT	12.44 years
Band 7000	Services	10 FT	7.68 years

VCSU has identified market salary values for all staff positions on campus. These values, the 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.

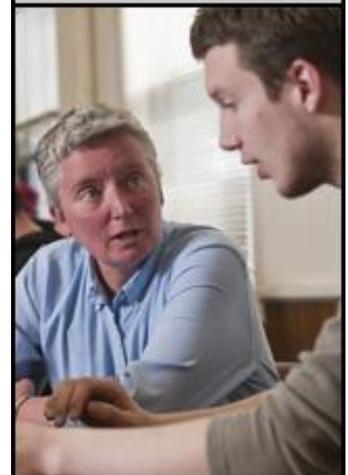


Table 5.5 Salary Increase in each Band over 10 years

Band Number	2001 Mean Salary	2010 Mean Salary	Average increase over 10 years
Band 1000	\$41,128	\$57,926.04	41%
Band 3000	\$30,532	\$37,306.00	22%
Band 4000	\$22,063	\$29,038.00	32%
Band 5000	\$18,953	\$25,413.53	34%
Band 6000	\$21,047	\$31,201.57	48%
Band 7000	\$15,531	\$23,670.00	52%

While staff salaries generally run about 12-15% below regional and national comparators, Table 5.5 demonstrates the progress VCSU has made in raising salaries. Through application of minimum dollar per month salary increases, VCSU has intentionally increased the salaries of the lowest paid staff.

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 during Welcome Week each August.

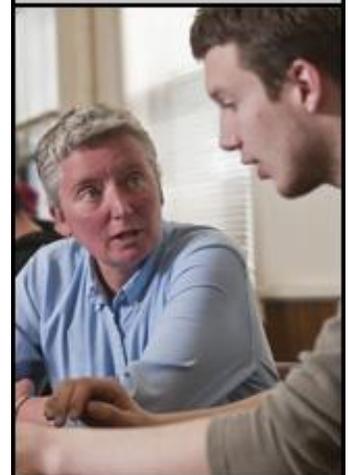
Fiscal Resources

Valley City State University is committed to maintaining a level of expenditure that will provide both human resources and the environment necessary for effective teaching and learning. Resources are allocated in a manner that will support the goals and strategies of the institution. With enrollment increases, budget allocations are made to hire additional faculty in high demand growth programs. VCSU has continued its commitment to a technology-infused teaching and learning environment by refreshing laptop computers with the latest technology every two years and by allocating resources for technology upgrades in classrooms.

Valley City State University, through the comprehensive North Dakota University System financial audit, receives an unqualified opinion on its financial statements from the North Dakota State Auditor’s Office annually. In addition, the North Dakota State Auditor’s Office made note at the May 12, 2010 meeting of the North Dakota Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review Committee that the 2007-09 operational audit for VCSU did not contain any findings or recommendations.

Under the current funding model for the North Dakota University System, state funding is allocated based on parity, equity and special initiatives. The parity portion of the model forms the largest portion of the budget request and includes the estimated cost of salary and benefit increases and operating and utility inflation. The equity portion of the request is calculated

Valley City State University is committed to maintaining a level of expenditure that will provide both human resources and the environment necessary for effective teaching and learning. Resources are allocated in a manner that will support the goals and strategies of the institution.



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based on revenue per student for each campus compared to the revenue per student at each campus's set of peer institutions. Equity funding granted through the legislative process has been targeted to campuses that are the farthest behind their peers in terms of funding.

The revenue per student at VCSU is considered to be not significantly behind the average funding at the institution's peer set; VCSU received a small allocation of equity funding until a minimum distribution was adopted by the NDUS in the 2009-11 and 2011-13 bienniums. The allocations for VCSU were \$250,000 in 2009-11 and \$242,000 in 2011-13. This peer-based portion of the System budget request is no longer a priority of the Legislature and may not exist after the 2011-13 biennium. The 2011 Legislature established an interim committee to study funding models for the University System. A recommendation for performance-based funding is a likely outcome of the committee's work.

Given strong state legislative support, increased grant and contract activity, increased external scholarship funding and increased enrollment, VCSU has experienced significant growth in total revenues available for operations (see Table 5.6).

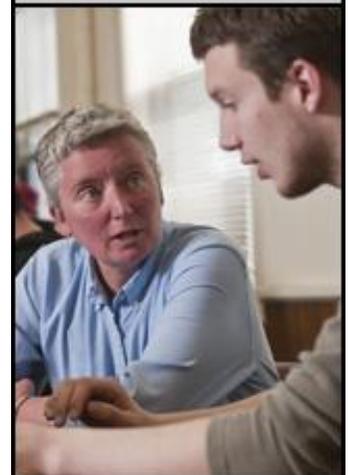
Table 5.6 Revenues by Source

Revenues by Source				
	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
State appropriation	\$ 5,956,027	\$ 6,545,233	\$7,121,904	\$8,225,309
Tuition and fees	3,738,732	3,462,872	3,935,945	3,933,233
Federal grants and contracts	1,230,899	1,413,143	1,492,628	1,975,351
State and local grants and contracts	185,583	95,809	65,004	33,068
Nongovernmental grants and contracts	44,713	50,901	38,385	354,762
Sales and services of educational dept	168,571	250,585	222,823	294,701
Auxiliary enterprises	2,264,778	2,197,226	2,246,691	2,351,259
Gifts	720,485	795,297	817,977	929,511
Investment Income	234,309	156,082	86,820	201,411
Other	36,073	16,156	27,807	17,028
Total	14,580,170	14,983,304	16,055,984	18,315,633

Source: North Dakota University System Annual Financial Statement

Revenue Trends

Given strong state legislative support, increased grant and contract activity, increased external scholarship funding and increased enrollment, VCSU has experienced significant growth in total revenues available for operations (see Table 5.6). The revenues collected are sufficient to meet current financial obligations and commitments.



The legislative appropriations to the University are primarily from the General Fund with the exception of state bonding for capital improvements in 2003-05 and the allocation from the State Oil Trust Fund of \$2,200,000 for replacement of the campus steam distribution system in 2007-09. The history of the General Fund Appropriations is presented in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Appropriations by the North Dakota Legislature

Appropriations by North Dakota Legislature				
Biennium	Salaries Operations & Equipment	Capital Improvements	State Bonding or Oil Trust Fund Capital Improvements	Biennial Total
1995-97	\$8,999,712	\$561,694		\$9,561,406
1997-99	10,291,586	904,932		11,196,518
1999-01	10,928,157	847,225		11,775,382
2001-03	11,414,513	1,240,334		12,654,847
2003-05	11,304,672	265,334	785,300	12,355,306
2005-07	11,836,526	658,416		12,494,942
2007-09	13,350,137	845,553	2,200,000	16,395,690
2009-11	16,625,501	2,563,337		18,188,838

Source: University Office of the Vice President for Business Affairs

The functions of instruction and academic support are directly related to teaching and learning. These two functions account for over 53% of total operating expenditures for the University.

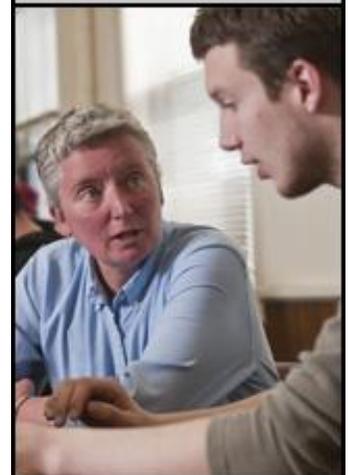
Expenditure Patterns

Total education and general expenditures include expenditures from all sources of funding including state appropriations, federal and state grants, and other current funds with the exception of auxiliary sales and services. Table 5.8 (next page) 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 53% of total operating expenditures for the University. The increase in the percentage of the budget spent in the operation and maintenance of plant function in FY 2010 is the direct result of a state appropriation increase for deferred maintenance. This temporary increase continued through the second year of the biennium, FY 2011.

Budget and Accounting System

The financial resources of Valley City State University are managed and records maintained in ConnectND, a PeopleSoft integrated administrative system. The accounting methods used are in accordance with generally



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accepted accounting standards and National Association of College and University Business Officers guidance. The financial statements are audited annually by the Office of the State Auditor.

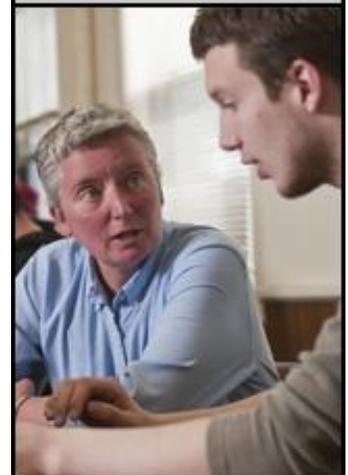
The State Board of Higher Education Budget, Audit and Finance Committee, and the ND Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review Committee review audit reports and related recommendations. The most recent audit reports are available in the Vice President for Business Affairs office. An electronic copy is available in the Resource Room.

The accounting methods used are in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards and National Association of College and University Business Officers guidance.

Table 5.8 VCSU Expenses by Function

VCSU Expenses by Function Fiscal Years 2007 through 2010								
	FY 2007	%	FY 2008	%	FY 2009	%	FY 2010	%
Instruction	5,475,522	44.8%	5,662,422	43.3%	5,822,357	42.3%	6,506,726	42.0%
Research		0.0%	56,804	0.4%	184,135	1.3%	162,314	1.0%
Public Service	203,573	1.7%	313,129	2.4%	345,844	2.5%	119,813	0.8%
Academic Support	1,333,203	10.9%	1,358,813	10.4%	1,520,866	11.1%	1,715,721	11.1%
Student Services	929,242	7.6%	979,608	7.5%	1,029,921	7.5%	1,157,851	7.5%
Institutional Support	1,441,020	11.8%	1,588,887	12.1%	1,556,261	11.3%	1,837,683	11.9%
Operation and Maintenance of Plant	1,632,836	13.4%	1,897,546	14.5%	2,028,438	14.7%	2,498,964	16.1%
Depreciation	798,748	6.5%	764,930	5.8%	692,292	5.0%	891,962	5.8%
Scholarships and Fellowships	405,321	3.3%	466,798	3.6%	576,554	4.2%	614,809	4.0%
Total Ed and General Expenses	\$12,219,465	100%	\$13,088,937	100%	\$13,756,668	100%	\$15,505,843	100%

The budget process includes development of a biennial budget and an annual budget. The biennial budget is prepared every two years in accordance with guidelines and requirements established by the State Board of Higher Education and the State Office of Management and Budget. Prior to establishing the guidelines and requirements, the State Board of Higher Education solicits input from the eleven campuses regarding priorities and initiatives to include in the University System biennial budget request. The State Board also sets the guidelines and approves major capital projects to be included in the System budget submission to the Governor. The biennial budget provides the basis for input into what is included in the Governor's recommended budget for the University System, which is submitted to the North Dakota Legislature.



An annual budget is developed by the University by gathering input from campus constituents, aligning budget requests with university strategic initiatives and following State Board of Higher Education guidelines. The State Board guidelines include consideration of legislative intent as contained in the biennial appropriation bill. Campus input is gathered through a budget request process which includes completion and submission of budget request forms to the Vice President for Business Affairs. The form requires the requestor to include justification of the budget item and an indication of how the item relates to the strategic plan. The requestor is encouraged to include metrics to demonstrate the need for the requested budget allocation. The VCSU Cabinet reviews all budget requests and estimated revenue; makes a determination about which budget requests will advance the institution's strategic initiatives; and allocates available funding or reallocates existing funding to specific budget items. The finalized budget is submitted to the NDUS Chancellor for approval.

Physical Plant

VCSU is fortunate to have an array of beautiful and historically significant buildings. Many of these buildings were built at the turn of the last century or at least during the first half of the 20th Century. They are well-built buildings that have been well-maintained, and have served this campus and thousands of students for many decades. However, with older buildings also come significant challenges with deferred maintenance, efficiency standards, accessibility, life safety, and the usual wear-and-tear that can accompany an older building.

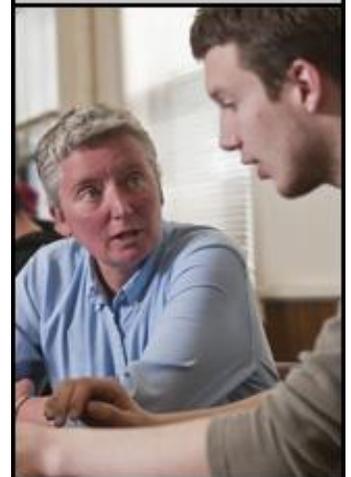
Changes Over the Past Decade

VCSU has been active in upgrading, improving, and refreshing the current physical plant. The major capital improvement projects over the last decade include

- Boiler Upgrade (2002)
- Graichen entry remodel (2003)
- Kolstoe Residence Hall interior renovation (2004)
- Osmon Bleacher Replacement (2005)
- Steamline complete replacement (2008)
- Osmon roof repairs (2009)
- Vangstad Balcony repair (2010)
- Snoeyenbos Residence Hall interior renovation (2011)
- Ellig Field Turf project (2011)

Available funds are typically spent on deferred maintenance, asset preservation, accessibility, and life-safety projects. During the past biennium (2009-2011), over \$2,500,000 has been spent on maintenance needs such as emergency power upgrades, parking lot and sidewalk repair, classroom renovation, tuck-pointing, and roof repair. A complete list of projects can be found in the Campus Master Plan, page 14.

VCSU is fortunate to have an array of beautiful and historically significant buildings.



Plans for the Future

The 2009-10 Master Plan identified space needs for several growth areas in science, where air quality, shared lab spaces, and the need for larger classroom and research areas requires both renovation and expansion. In April 2011, the North Dakota Legislature appropriated \$10.3 million in state general fund dollars for the renovation and expansion of Rhoades Science Center, and work has already begun on this project; groundbreaking may take place as early as October 2011.

The 2009-10 Master Plan also indicated that, while there is adequate classroom space to serve current needs (except in Science), many of these spaces have quality issues that affect enrollment, utilization, and learning experiences. The space utilization study determined that technology availability is good throughout campus, but classroom size, flexibility, appearance, control of light, furnishings, and thermal comfort was adequate to poor.

To make a start, VCSU identified two classrooms on the main floor of McFarland for renovation in Summer 2011. Both these classrooms see heavy use throughout the year, including summer workshops, and are particularly visible to campus visitors. However, the primary focus for future renovation must include two issues: the aging Vangstad Auditorium building, and the needs of the Business & Information Technology Division, currently housed in the basement of McFarland Hall, an unattractive and dated environment for a program that has the potential for significant enrollment growth. VCSU hopes to resolve these two issues by seeking authorization and funding in the next biennium to renovate Vangstad as the new home for the Business & Information Technology Division.

The 2009-10 Master Plan outlines a number of additional areas needing attention or development. Two more of significance are renovation and facility improvement at the Student Center (which has not seen significant change in over 20 years), and Fieldhouse upgrades. Since almost 30% of the student body is involved in athletic programs, the Fieldhouse provides space for an active athletic program, in addition to intramural sports and community activities. The dome structure, recently repaired, is adequate for its intended purpose, but the support wing requires more space—for offices, locker rooms, exercise facilities, and an indoor, multipurpose space. Both these areas will require attention and planning over the next few years.

The VCSU Foundation Office

The personnel of the Foundation Office consist of an Executive Director of University Advancement who focuses on Planned Giving, Major Gifts, and Corporate Relations; the Assistant Director of Alumni Relations, who is responsible for Alumni, Special Events/Activities and Commencement; and a Data Processor and Research Coordinator, who oversees the management of data, donor records, donor research and reporting. An Assistant Director of Annual Giving will be added to the staff in the fall of 2011 to direct the V-500 Scholarship Campaign, coordinate Social Media functions, do research on donor prospects, and assist with a host of other activities and events in the

In April 2011, the North Dakota Legislature appropriated \$10.3 million in state general fund dollars for the renovation and expansion of Rhoades Science Center.



development office. The positions all report directly to the Executive Director of University Advancement.

The Foundation Board of Directors is charged with oversight of the Foundation. The President of the University is a member of the Board. The Board meets quarterly with the annual meeting scheduled for the September/October time period of each calendar year. The minutes of the meetings are on file in the Foundation Office. An Investment Committee is charged with oversight of the assets of the Foundation. The committee meets a minimum of quarterly and makes recommendations to the full Board of Directors of the Foundation.

Achievements of the Foundation

The Foundation will celebrate its 15th anniversary in Fall 2011. Assets of the Foundation have grown from approximately \$1,000,000 in 1996 to nearly \$6,000,000 in 2011. Scholarship support reached a record high of \$757,000 in the 2010-2011 academic year. In addition the Foundation has had successful fund drives to enhance VCSU facilities over the years including the replacement of the fieldhouse floor, a drive to secure funding for stadium seating, planetarium lighting, equipment in the music department, a fieldhouse lighting project, reconstruction of the university track, and a fund drive to bring back the track and cross country programs. During the recently completed 2010-2011 fiscal year, the Foundation led a fund drive to install artificial turf on the football field at Lokken Stadium. That project totaled approximately \$1,000,000.

The Foundation was able to not only sustain scholarship allocations but actually increase those allocations during a time when the markets were very soft and interest earnings were minimal or non-existent. That was accomplished as a result of strong annual fund drives and accessing reserves.

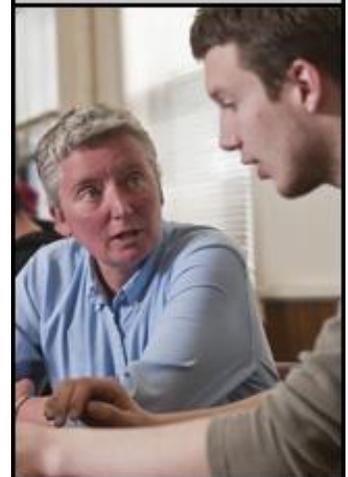
The Foundation is currently in the process of searching for an additional staff member to serve as the assistant Director of Annual giving. This individual will have primary responsibility for the V-500 Scholarship Program. This will be a major enhancement to the staffing and the overall operation of the Foundation in general. The addition of this staff person will free up time for the Executive Director to focus on Planned Giving, Major Gifts and Corporate Relations.

Challenges Facing the Foundation

The ongoing competition for charitable dollars is one of the challenges facing the VCSU Foundation. The local business district is stressed due to record flooding two of the last three years. A significant number of alumni are involved in teaching. Their earning potential is limited which impacts their ability to provide charitable support to their alma mater.

The addition of a staff member will be a significant enhancement to the overall operation of the Foundation. That additional resource will allow for more focus to annual and planned giving and the procurement of major gifts.

The Foundation was able to not only sustain scholarship allocations but actually increase those allocations during a time when the markets were very soft and interest earnings were minimal or non-existent.



The Foundation has expanded outreach activities across the state and region to build relationships with prospective donors and has created a Major Gift Task Force within the Foundation Board of Directors who will focus on the identification, cultivation and solicitation of major gifts.

Evaluation of Core Component 2b

VCSU has the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to support its educational endeavors. Although salaries in general lag about 15% below market averages, the University is aware of this discrepancy and attempts to improve employee wages annually. The physical plant is well-maintained; the University follows a Master Plan in planning for future improvements.

Strengths: VCSU enjoys the longevity of faculty and staff, many of whom have been at VCSU for most of their professional lives. The stability and institutional knowledge this longevity brings, combined with a campus culture of innovation and change, allows the University to make the necessary changes to meet social and economic change while remaining true to its core values and mission.

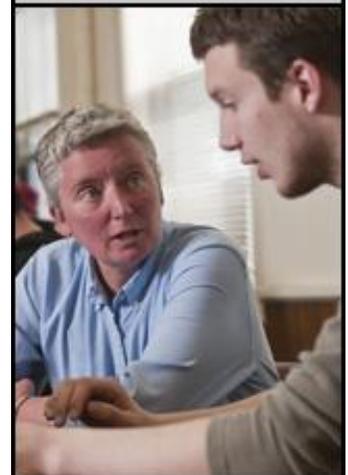
New Initiatives: The addition to Rhoades Science Center is set to begin in Fall 2011; students will be reviewing predesign plans for a Student Center upgrade during the 2011-12 academic year. The state legislature is beginning a discussion of funding models for the NDUS campuses, and there will likely be a change in this area in the next five years.

Challenges: Low starting salaries are a continued challenge, although the current economy has favored recent searches. Maintenance on aging buildings is also a continuing challenge.

Core Component 2c. The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

Prior to 2006-2007, the VCSU assessment system was a collection of spreadsheets and databases managed by a few key individuals in various areas. Since that time, it has been evolving into an integrated and seamless entity with faculty, students, and staff involved as contributors and consumers of informative data. The institution uses data from student, faculty, staff, and employer assessments and evaluations to manage and improve operations and programs. Effective data analysis allows knowledge-based decisions about program strengths and weaknesses. At times, aggregated data indicate successful outcomes and promote staying on course, other times the data necessitates change. The VCSU teacher education program has provided institutional leadership in the academic assessment area and a sound model to emulate, as the last NCATE report demonstrates.

VCSU enjoys the longevity of faculty and staff, many of whom have been at VCSU for most of their professional lives.



As core components of University shared governance, campus committees meet regularly to plan, implement, evaluate, and reflect on decisions related to academic and administrative issues, budgets, staffing, and other matters that are pertinent to their duties and authority. Most have a broad representation that includes faculty, staff, student, and administrative membership. Each decision-making body is open to input from its constituency, and all disseminate information throughout the campus through their connection to the group and by regularly publishing meeting minutes.

The University uses a wealth of data and information services to guide planning, evaluation, and decision-making. Such data often are specialized to suit the needs of a given unit. However, governance structures and a wide commitment to collaboration promote the use of data and information across the University toward evaluating performance, informing sound planning and budgetary processes, formulating strategies for improvement, continued integration of technologies into the learning environment as well as support systems, and implementing positive change. Thus, joint efforts and shared communication contribute to the vitality of the organization in support of both mission and vision.

Underlying the processes is a long-standing commitment to continuous improvement that drives organizational reform, innovation, and advancement, each anchored within the context of vision, mission, purposes, values, institutional abilities, and strategic priorities. The four goals of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, provide a framework for specific goals among various constituents and offices. The following examples provide specific instances to illustrate the ways ongoing assessment process are used to inform strategies for continuous improvement.

Goal 1: Quality and Innovation

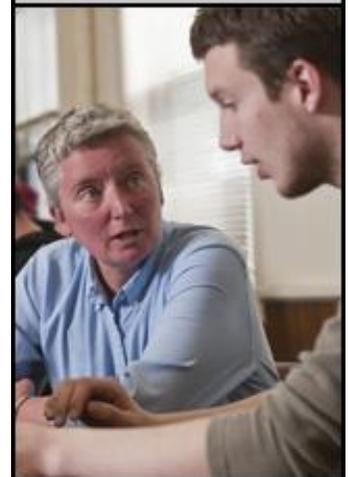
The first goal of the VCSU 2015 strategic plan emphasizes high-quality educational programs and experiences. While some programs are only beginning to gather learner outcome data and use it for classroom and program improvement, many instructional units are productively gathering data and using it to inform academic decisions. Three examples—from three different types of academic structures—provide examples of these uses of assessment.

Teacher Education

The VCSU Teacher Education program has provided institutional leadership in academic assessment and provided a strong model for other programs to emulate. Excerpts from the 2008 NCATE report identify the types and uses of data in the program:

Candidates are evaluated at various transition points on dispositions and field experience successes. Final evaluations provide data for future growth, but formative data such as the student teaching progress evaluations after 3 weeks and 7 weeks are helpful for continuous improvement. Candidates assess their confidence level

The University uses a wealth of data and information services to guide planning, evaluation, and decision-making.



of the three domains, the INTASC standards, the University Abilities and the conceptual framework at three transition points during their undergraduate studies.

Advanced candidates [graduate students] are assessed at key transition points on their perception and confidence level of the NBPTS and VCSU core values. The assessment is used by candidates to improve performance and help them realize how their learning connects with the University's model for teacher preparation as well as NBPTS expectations. The assessment is aggregated and used by the unit to identify the progression of candidates through the program.

Candidates in both initial and advanced programs can monitor their progress toward program completion by accessing their own candidate summary on the unit's Central Assessment System.

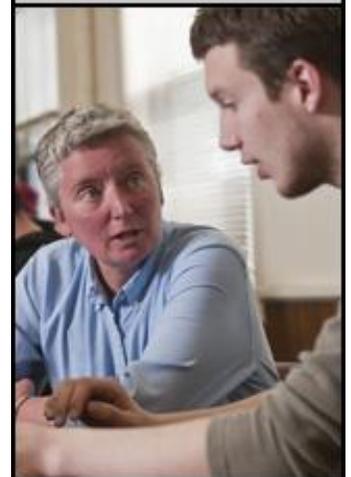
This assessment process allows for program improvement and quality assurance for a program delivered to three different student groups (on VCSU campus, online, and on NDSU campus), as the report indicates:

Assessment data collected on candidate performance in specified preparation programs on the main campus, at off-campus sites, and in distant learning programs suggests that program effectiveness for intended learner outcomes is essentially the same across all three areas of the initial teacher licensure programs. For example, elementary education majors on campus and at the off-campus site experience the same curriculum and same assessments.

Cooperating teacher evaluations of student teachers, PPST, PRAXIS II tests indicate quality outcomes at NDSU (off-campus) as well as VCSU (main campus). The off-campus program is taught primarily by the same faculty members with the same curriculum. The disaggregated data confirms the University's commitment to providing an off-campus program with the same quality as the main campus. Should outcome data demonstrate a deficiency, the unit would need to make adjustments in the curriculum or delivery to ensure quality at both locations. Assessment data at key transition points in the program do not reveal any significant difference in quality performance at the present time.

Unit faculty use data to make knowledge-based decisions about program strengths and weaknesses. At times aggregated data indicates successful outcomes and promotes staying on course, other times the data necessitates change. The unit not only makes decisions based on assessments, but the unit improves its assessments. "Development and Reflection" has been added to the elementary education portfolio to increase candidate reflection on their growth in the teacher preparation experience. Field experience forms have been made more consistent to indicate candidate growth through transition points in the program. The student teaching data

Candidates in both initial and advanced programs can monitor their progress toward program completion by accessing their own candidate summary on the unit's Central Assessment System.



in categories like responsibility and dependability produced almost identical scores on candidates, so the two attributes were combined and additional questions on diversity and the belief that all candidates can learn were added.

The report also describes the process used to initiate change, and lists specific changes informed by this data analysis:

The Assessment Coordinator aggregates data every semester and shares the information with the unit, Teacher Education committee, and stakeholders. The Assessment Coordinator, Dean and various unit faculty members attend focused meetings every semester with area schools and are open to sharing data relevant to the discussions. When university faculty, cooperating teachers, students, or other members of the professional community express concern or desire for change, the unit analyzes its current data or creates an assessment tool to gather new research in order to make a knowledge based decision.

The following data-driven changes have occurred over the past three years:

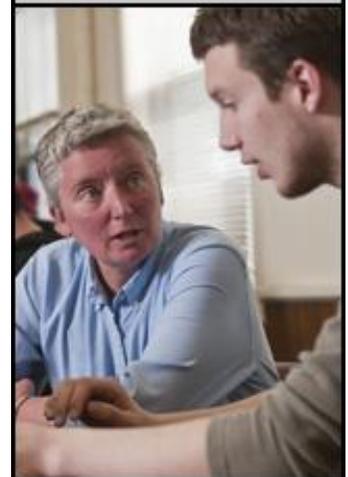
- Discussion toward requiring the Global Awareness Ability
- Efforts to help candidates with Praxis II preparation
- Added one credit to social studies methods to improve candidate global awareness
- Faculty integration of technology and student evaluation feedback has allowed the unit to reduce one credit in the Educational Technology class
- Student teaching increased from 10 weeks to 12 weeks
- Dispositions changed to include fairness and exhibiting high expectations toward the learning of each student
- Added a development and reflection component to candidate's portfolio
- Classroom management component emphasized in more method courses

Business and Information Technology Program Revisions

Faculty in the Business Division have mapped all of their courses to the Department of Labor's *Knowledge Skills and Abilities Profile* for 62 occupations a graduate with a business administration major might fill.

This review has allowed them to test their curriculum against industry expectations, to make certain proper coverage is provided for each area. In addition, they have assessed the divisional abilities against the profile. While the University Abilities match the knowledge and skills required in the workplace, the faculty has determined that they may want to revise their emphasis on global awareness since this is not a primary area in the Department of Labor profile. Discussion of the applications of this analysis are ongoing, as the Division prepares updated materials for the 2012-14 Catalog.

Faculty integration of technology and student evaluation feedback has allowed the unit to reduce one credit in the Educational Technology class.



Chemistry Classroom and Program Assessment

The Chemistry program utilizes a variety of assessments to ensure quality and innovation, but one tool has remained in place since 1983, providing longitudinal data which help faculty understand the changes in the students and the program over time. The nationally standardized examinations published by the American Chemical Society are employed to assess both the chemistry curriculum and student achievement. A summary of the results dating from 1983 is available in the Resource Room. These examinations are given as the final test (they count about 10% of the student's grade) at the completion of the following courses:

1. Ten credit hour Chem 121 and 122 General Chemistry sequence
2. Ten credit hour Chem 341 and 342 Organic Chemistry sequence
3. Eight credit hour Chem 330 and 331 Quantitative Analysis sequence
4. Five credit hour Chem 116 Introduction to Organic and Biochemistry course

In addition to meeting a number of pedagogical purposes, such as review and integration of material and practice in taking standardized exams, this very traditional assessment tool offers the following benefits:

- Students can compare their individual performance to a national standard. The perception that the quality of education at a small school may not prepare one adequately for graduate work is quickly cleared up, and students have a realistic appraisal of how they may perform in a larger arena. For example, the University of North Dakota uses these same ACS tests for qualifying examinations for their Ph.D. program. Students must score in the 60th percentile in their chosen major area of chemistry and 40th percentile in all other areas. Many VCSU students meet the standards.
- The benchmarks set by using such instruments of assessment over time also prove useful in a number of ways. Since the sample number of students is small, caution is advised when drawing conclusions from the data; however, if dramatic changes in the structure of a course are made, decreases or increases in the average percentiles can provide solid feedback about the impact of these changes. For example, three years ago a radically new textbook was adopted in the Chemistry 121/122 course. This text is 200 to 300 pages shorter than the standard text for this course. It was purposely designed to answer the current criticism in the field that textbooks keep growing in size and the concomitant demands upon student learning that grow with them. Although there was a slight dip in performance after the first year of using the text, the second year resulted in a record performance of achievement.
- The results of these exams provide a comparison of performance over time that allows course grade assignments to be made using a larger data base.

The University of North Dakota uses these same ACS tests for qualifying examinations for their Ph.D. program. Students must score in the 60th percentile in their chosen major area of chemistry and 40th percentile in all other areas. Many VCSU students meet the standards.

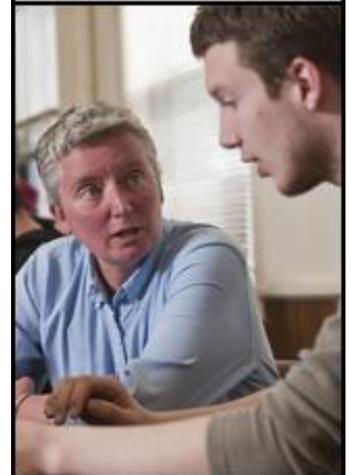


Goal 2: Enrollment and Academic Success

The second goal of the Strategic Plan emphasizes efforts to improved enrollment and student academic success. The use of various tools for program review and unit strategic planning are described in Chapter 6, as is the development of the Learning Center to serve student academic needs, and the development of a successful enrollment plan. Student Affairs makes use of a number of survey tools to improve program offerings, to make better decisions in planning enrollment strategies, and make the University more attractive to prospective and enrolled students alike. For example,

- The 2008 Noel/Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) showed 10 items that students rated as most important. Of those 10 items, two were related to academic advising services. Advisor is Knowledgeable and Advisor is Approachable were very highly rated. As a result, the Student Affairs Division made a special budget request to receive funds to sponsor a consultant to conduct advisor training for faculty at the start of the 2008 school year. In addition, the Director of Student Academic Services began the process of meeting individually with new faculty members to acquaint them with the campus advising process. As a result of these efforts, the 2010 administration of the Noel/Levitz SSI showed significant improvements in student levels of satisfaction with academic advising. Out of a total of 73 programs and services rated by students, two items related to academic advising appeared in the list of top ten highest rated items. Both “My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major” and “My advisor is approachable” were very highly rated and were significantly higher than national averages and the average of the North Dakota University System.
- On the same 2008 Student Satisfaction Inventory, student safety and security were brought into question with lower scores than the 2006 administration of the same survey. As a result, an increased emphasis on campus safety and security took place on many levels. Members of the student body were invited to do a campus safety walk through with university officials. Student Senate formed a student campus security committee, numerous lighting upgrades were made, the topic of student safety was added to both student and parent orientation sessions and the number of security cameras on campus was doubled. As a result, the 2010 Noel/Levitz SSI showed significant improvements in scores related to student safety. Specifically, the largest of any increase of the 73 items was, “This campus is safe and secure for all students.” On a scale of 1 to 7, the 2008 score of 5.68 increased to 6.22 in 2010. In addition, this same item was the third-highest rated item on campus.
- All new students are surveyed at the completion of opening school orientation activities. One of the activities assessed is the computer training sessions for all new students. Survey information showed that students are coming to VCSU with more and more computer skills and experience. The Information Technology staff was able to

Student Affairs makes use of a number of survey tools to improve program offerings, to make better decisions in planning enrollment strategies, and make the University more attractive to prospective and enrolled students alike.



reduce the number of hours and number of trainers needed for computer training.

- By monitoring the rate by which new students sign-up for summer orientation dates, Enrollment Services determined that the earlier sessions (early June) were the first to fill. In 2010, VCSU opened two orientation/registration dates in April; these April dates fill almost immediately, and academic divisions are able to make fall planning decisions earlier because about half the freshmen are enrolled before Spring semester ends.

Goal 3: Fiscal Strategies

The third goal of the strategic plan focuses on strategies for reallocation or development of new financial resources. Since the implementation of the Growth Plan in 2007, every budget request submitted to the Cabinet is directed to include rationale connecting the request to the strategic plan and/or other planning and assessment tools. Departmental budget reviews also demonstrate the thoughtful use of assessment data to make informed decisions.

Information Technology 2008 Budget Review

In 2008, VCSU users discussed a possible reduction in the student technology fee. A comprehensive study of VCSU IT budget trends over the previous five years and a comparison of other institutions using the EDUCAUSE Core Data Survey were used to determine that VCSU should maintain the current level of technology fee. The data gathered was organized, analyzed, and published. The resulting report has been a continued reference and it has guided many additional decisions, including the following:

- The development of a strategy to leverage excess revenues that drastically reduced the cost of leasing laptops,
- The amount of IT executive emphasis to place on management and development of IT staff, as opposed to project development and management, and
- The amount of technology fee revenue versus state appropriations that should be used to fund IT staff salaries.

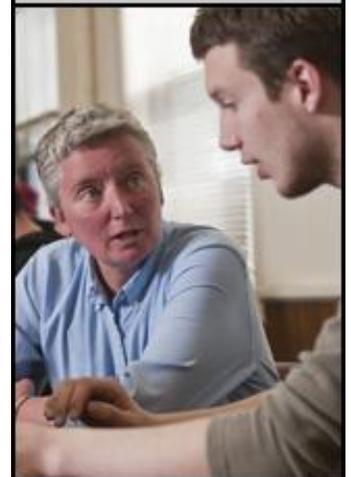
Goal 4: Facility Support of VCSU's Enrollment Initiatives, Program Development, and Student Needs

The fourth goal of the strategic plan recognizes the important role facilities play in attracting and retaining students, in addition to supporting programs and maintaining a safe environment.

The 2009-2010 Master Plan

In Fall 2009, VCSU began a new campus master planning process to analyze current physical campus situation and assess future needs. The planning process, conducted at VCSU by JLG Architects, was funded by the 2009 State Legislature to support VCSU's request for expansion of the Rhoades Science

Since the implementation of the Growth Plan in 2007, every budget request submitted to the Cabinet is directed to include rationale connecting the request to the strategic plan and/or other planning and assessment tools.



Center This review analyzed all phases of the campus physical infrastructure, including academic buildings, athletic facilities, student residence halls, Vangstad Auditorium, landscaping, energy usage, and classroom utilization.

The Master Plan process began with architects visiting all the departments and programs throughout campus. This gave architects an opportunity to interview employees about the current space and structures within which they operate, and explore opportunities for how these areas might be maximized to best serve the needs of current and future students.

Central concerns from the outset were the safety and capacity of the Science areas, renovation of Vangstad Hall, interest in developing capacity for growing athletic programs, a second residence hall renovation, and improved space utilization for all programs.

Recommendations and immediate actions from this planning process include

- Snoeyenbos Residence Hall renovation, completed August 2011
- Addition to Rhoades Science Center, which will provide safety improvements for laboratories, add capacity for biology-based science majors, and strengthen the image and accommodations for STEM-based programs—identified as an immediate need and recommended by the SBHE as its #2 priority to the Legislature in Spring 2011
- Predesign for Vangstad Hall renovation, presented to the SBHE as VCSU's #2 priority, and not included on their list forwarded to the Legislature for funding
- A classroom utilization study which assisted some reorganization of classroom space in 2010-11, to accommodate the enrollment growth in Fall 2010 and the simultaneous development of articulations requiring additional IVN classroom space
- A year-long discussion of student fees in Student Senate, resulting in Spring 2011 with the hire of an architect to prepare some predesign plans of the student center for review
- Ellig Field artificial turf installation, completed Summer 2011

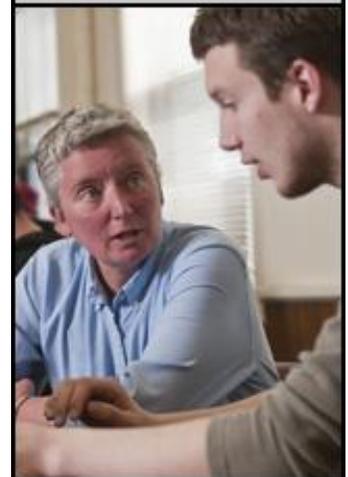
Commitment

VCSU is committed to the use of thoughtful, planned assessment processes to maintain institutional effectiveness, gathering data from internal and external sources to inform planning and budgetary decisions. Together, effective assessment and evaluation processes at all levels represent a critical cornerstone for continuous improvement and student learning.

Evaluation of Core Component 2c

Formerly managed by a few key individuals in various areas, assessment at VCSU has evolved from a collection of spreadsheets and databases into an integrated, effective, and seamless entity with faculty, students, and staff involved as contributors and consumers of informative data. The institution

VCSU is committed to the use of thoughtful, planned assessment processes to maintain institutional effectiveness, gathering data from internal and external sources to inform planning and budgetary decisions.



uses data from student, faculty, staff, and employer assessments and evaluations to manage and improve operations and programs.

Strengths: An academic assessment system is set up and in use by the School of Education; VCSU has a published assessment plan and has been gathering data from portfolios and student projects for a decade; every course syllabus includes an Ability project that may be collected and used for ability assessment. The recently completed Master Plan has identified specific facility upgrades and provided data and recommendations to guide planning.

New initiatives: Processes have been developed that encourage data-gathering and reflection, including Annual Program Updates for academic areas, and required rationales for all budget requests. The Academic Assessment Committee is in its first year, in the early stages of understanding its role in assuring academic quality and innovation.

Challenges: VCSU does not have an Institutional Researcher or an Assessment Office, making reliable and consistent assessment efforts challenging.

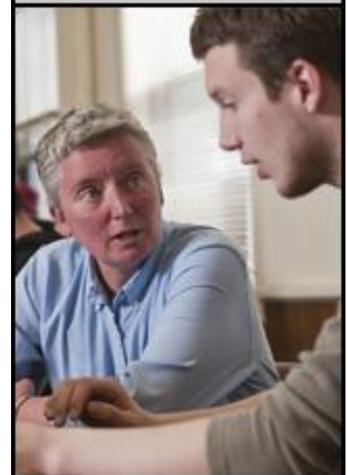
Core Component 2d: All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

A central strategic planning process guides the University to deliver on the mission and vision. The strategic plan is born of the University mission and vision and influenced by the following items: SBHE mission, vision, and broad strategic goals; environmental realities; and university assessment and evaluation processes.

Although the committee and strategic plans have had various name designations during the past decade, Valley City State University has effectively and consistently used a committee with broad representation to guide the development of a central strategic plan. The committee and the plan are documented and widely distributed annually via *Baselines*. This document contains, among other items, the University mission and vision, strategic planning initiatives, University purposes, core values, an organizational chart, and a complete listing of University committees, along with their composition and duties. This scaffolding offers all faculty and staff the opportunity to provide input into major decisions affecting the institution and promotes a broad foundation on which to make them.

Each year the President's Cabinet confers with the Strategic Planning Committee, evaluates the success of the past year's strategic plan, and develops an annual strategic plan draft to further the purposes of the University. This plan indicates the activities the University pursued each year that relate to each purpose, the VCSU office responsible for overseeing the activity, and the progress completed. An annual strategic alignment plan

A central strategic planning process guides the University to deliver on the mission and vision.



provided to the SBHE aligns applicable VCSU initiatives under the four strategic goals of the SBHE.

Every academic program or division on campus has a strategic plan which is updated each spring as part of the Annual Program Update goal-setting activity required of each academic unit. These plans are “cross-walked” with the University’s Strategic Plan, to demonstrate the interrelationship between unit plans and the University plan. In addition, selected administrative and support departments create plans to align with University strategic initiatives, e.g. Information Technology Center project status report or the Library Strategic Plan. Finally, goals within staff annual performance reviews include items that advance University values, unit goals, and strategic initiatives.

Budget Process and Planning

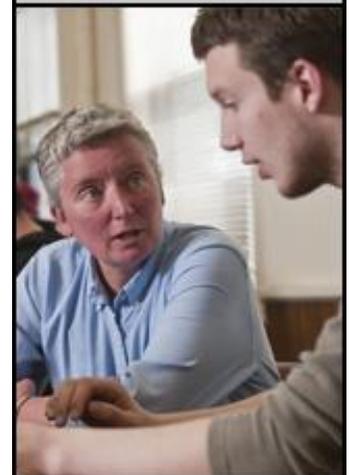
The Valley City State University budget represents a plan for how resources will be used to advance the University’s mission. The budget planning process involves working with the campus and the System to develop a biennial budget request of the state legislature. Tuition and fees are reviewed annually by the SBHE. Locally, the University manages an annual operating budget planning process as a means to respond to changes and opportunities within the biennial period. Major capital projects are budgeted separately from other operating expenses and budgeting is done on a biennial basis.

In developing the initial operating budget proposal, discussion includes changes to programs or services, especially those related to strategic initiatives. In development of the fiscal year 2010 operating budget, a new budget request process was used. A request was given a higher priority ranking for funding if the reason for the proposed initiative related to the 2008-2010 University Growth Plan or was in response to a mandatory increase required by law, regulation, or accreditation. The development of planning and budgeting for FY 2011 and beyond will be based on mission and objectives identified in the VCSU 2015 strategic plan.

On the revenue side, state appropriation, tuition, fees, grants and contracts, and fundraising are taken into consideration. Then, in consultation with the SBHE, a request is made of the legislature for both capital and operating funding. Following legislative action on the appropriation, tuition is set and confirmed or revised by the SBHE. Finally, the overall budget and the timeline for strategic initiatives are revised to reflect the appropriated revenues.

Several recent examples of this budgeting process include state appropriation for support of STEM education, bonding authority for the Snoeyenbos Hall renovation, and state appropriation for the Rhoades Science Center Addition and renovation. In each case, these requests began as part of the University’s strategic planning process, and their funding was either approved (in the case of Snoeyenbos Hall) or appropriated (STEM education and the Rhoades Science Center) by Legislative action.

Every academic program or division on campus has a strategic plan which is updated each spring as part of the Annual Program Update goal-setting activity required of each academic unit.



Implementation of Planning

Valley City State University strategic plans have resulted in significant, intended changes. This is evident in how the campus master plan relates facilities to strategic initiatives, and how it allocates resources to meet the goals of the strategic plan.

VCSU's ability to implement the master's program, add several new undergraduate programs, expand science research in response to needs within the scope of the mission, deliver online programs and services, and partner with other universities to deliver programs in response to community needs has been possible because the University has been able to devote resources needed to achieve these plans. Collectively these new programs have necessitated staffing changes, technology services, library resources, laboratories and equipment. The University has anticipated these needs and has deployed multiple strategies to provide resources, including the following: setting aside new funding, reallocating resources, working cooperatively within the North Dakota University System, and obtaining outside funding.

Flexibility for Reprioritization

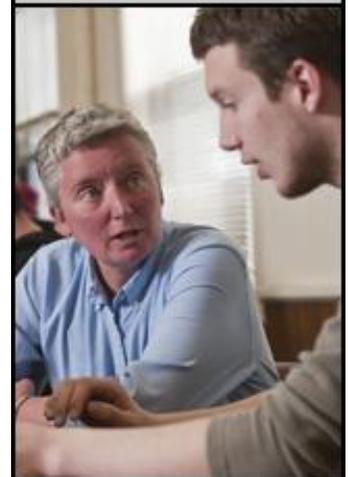
Changes in the University environment have been significant during the past decade, ranging from the anticipated decline in 18–21 year olds in the region to the flood events of 2009. Throughout these changes and many others, Valley City State University has adapted and reprioritized strategic plans in an effort to advance the mission.

The University response to the flood of 2009 provides the best example of the ability to reprioritize goals due to changing environments without losing sight of long range strategic plans. The flood disrupted city sewer service and forced the closure of the main campus in April, 2009. Faculty adapted and modified classes to the extent the University could go online to complete the Spring 2009 semester instead of closing.

The flood led to many positive changes, including the creation of a new IT data center; parking lot paving improvements, accelerated plans to migrate journal and AV content to electronic format; and the expanded use of technology throughout the curriculum. In turn, these changes advanced several of the strategic items within the 2008 -2009 Growth Plan. For instance, the improvements in the data center and migration of library resources to electronic format supported several of the goals related to online learning and graduate degree programs. The ability of the University to save the semester via technology highlighted the value of this strategic asset to prospective students and helped retain current students. Parking lot paving improvements provided a better first impression for students visiting campus. A year after the closure of campus, the University enrollment increased and significant progress has been made toward nearly all of the strategic goals.

The anticipated decline of 18–21 year olds is a significant concern. Many strategies and goals have been implemented and modified in response to this issue, including the following:

The University response to the flood of 2009 provides the best example of the ability to reprioritize goals due to changing environments without losing sight of long range strategic plans.



- A marketing and communications position was created resulting in new approaches, e.g. promoting programs with capacity to add more students, thereby increasing enrollment without adding costs.
- Development of the STARS waiver to attract talented out-of-state students.
- Flexible and convenient course scheduling via online learning.
- A recruiter was hired to concentrate on west-central Minnesota and the Fargo-Morehead area.
- The University changed to per credit tuition to better serve non-traditional, part-time students while simplifying back office business processes.
- Several new articulation agreements were developed, e.g. North Dakota State University for art degrees; Dakota College Bottineau two year program in Fish/Wildlife and an agreement to admit qualified, but underprepared students.
- Several new academic programs, including the Graduate master's degree, and majors in Professional Communication, Psychology, and Health Science.
- Kolstoe Hall was remodeled into 27 suites; Snoeyenbos Hall is currently undergoing similar renovations.
- The implementation of Peoplesoft online student services and more recently Hobson's Connect CRM.
- The addition of new intercollegiate athletic programs, including men's and women's golf and the re-introduction of track and cross country.

The list of items in Table 5.9 (next page) documents additional changes and the University response.

Evaluation of Core Component 2d

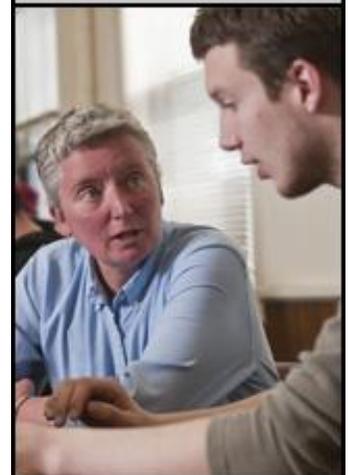
The strategic planning process is central to the University's planning processes, including budgeting, program development, and facilities improvements. The 2009 flood provides evidence that the University is flexible and able to reprioritize without losing sight of long-range goals.

Strengths: VCSU has a strong history of strategic planning; campus processes and decisions are developed on the framework provided by this plan. The campus is flexible in responding to changes in its physical, political, or academic environments.

Ongoing initiatives: A variety of new initiatives demonstrate VCSU's ongoing response to change, including the developing relationship with ZJETP in China, the expansion of the Rhoades Science Center and continued planning for facility upgrades across campus, the addition of collaborative programs and new majors that build on University strengths and researched understanding of constituent needs.

Challenges: The anticipated decline in the 18-21 year old market remains a significant concern. The development of programs to support the needs of

A year after the closure of campus, the University enrollment increased and significant progress has been made toward nearly all of the strategic goals.



an older student market and efforts to increase access and flexibility are continued priorities.

Table 5.9 University Response to Change

Change	University Response
Significance of EA (enterprise applications) in the operation of businesses.	The division of BIT (Business and Information Technology) created a business advisory board in 2009. Program delivery at Jamestown was dropped. BIT re-focused efforts to incorporate EA in the curriculum.
Fieldhouse temporarily closed due to structural concerns.	Graichen Gym was updated for use by the volleyball team and continues to provide an improved environment for classroom and practice use.
Budget constraints and the need to resurface Lokken track.	Cross country and track programs were discontinued in 2002-2003. The track was resurfaced in 2008-2009 with outside funding and a partnership with the local high school. These programs returned to Viking Athletics in 2010-2011.
Continuity of operations threatened by H1N1 virus.	Classroom recording technology is introduced and there is a renewed emphasis on faculty development in the use of online environments, including the learning management system and web conferencing.
Students seeking masters degrees in education are not served in a convenient, flexible manner.	VCSU developed and received approval to offer a Master's of Education with concentrations in identified areas of need (Library, ELL).
The local population is aging and is in need of more nursing professionals.	Recognizing this program is outside the intended scope of the University mission, VCSU cooperated with Dakota College at Bottineau and local healthcare agencies to offer a nursing program on the Valley City campus.
Increasing globalization.	Growing partnership and exchanges with a sister campus in China. Partnerships and exchanges with sister campuses in Mexico. Contract with ISA and CEA study abroad programs facilitating several student experiences.
National demand for STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).	Addition to the Rhoades Science Center as a priority in the 2010 Master Plan. Several successful research grants in science and technology. Technology education program delivered online and positioned as a national niche. Technology Education partnership with the Boston Museum of Science.

The strategic planning process is central to the University's planning processes, including budgeting, program development, and facilities improvements.

