

Chapter 8: Engagement and Service

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Valley City State University's internal and external constituencies are served by programs and activities affiliated with every academic division on the campus. While the most obvious constituents are the University's undergraduate and graduate students and its employees, its external constituents are also influenced by the 1990 North Dakota University System board mandate "for superior small-college preparation of teachers and of small-business personnel for its region" and a statewide mission designation for leadership in the effective use of instructional technology and service to rural areas.

The University's constituents include its students, employees, and the communities in which it operates. As a regional, public institution, its primary service area is the local community and surrounding counties. More broadly, as VCSU fits into the overall mission of the North Dakota University System, its constituents include other campuses with whom it collaborates and those placebound students who receive access to educational programs through its distance education programs. The University understands its mission and capacity and commits itself to meeting the needs and expectations of its constituents.

Core Component 5a: The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

VCSU's mission documents make the University's capacity and commitments clear. VCSU uses surveys, advisory boards and external review, and a variety of communication tools to determine how its programs and services are meeting the needs of its constituencies.

Defining Commitments

VCSU's Defining Commitments—its mission, vision, purposes, and core values—all include reference to service to community and the region:

- Mission: "...in teaching, learning, and service."
- Vision: "...advance quality learning opportunities and economic growth...."
- Purposes (#3): "Serve the best interests of our students, region, and society."
- Values: "We are involved with our local and extended communities."

In addition to these Commitments, the University understands both its historic strengths in teacher education and the new roles it must play in supporting regional economic needs, environmental issues, and rural health care needs.

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This understanding of its capacity and constituents guides the University's planning processes and collaboration decisions. Several examples illustrate the relationship between the understanding of capacity and constituents:

- K-12 teachers in the region have been limited in their ability to access master's level programs because of driving distances. A survey of K-12 teachers in the state demonstrated that those in districts near universities that offered master's degrees were much more likely to complete a master's program. VCSU understood that its historical strength in teacher education provided a strong foundation for the development of an M.Ed. program; by offering it online, VCSU made it accessible to teachers throughout the state who needed access to a quality master's degree. The online Master of Education degree and associated professional development courses allow alumni to reconnect academically with their undergraduate institution. Nearly 60% of VCSU's graduate students are alumni.
- Biology has long been VCSU's strongest science program, with an ongoing focus on water quality research. Over the past decade, this strength has developed in two ways to meet constituent needs: first, the addition of the Fisheries and Wildlife Science major, developed in collaboration with a two year program at DCB, provided students with an in-state pathway to complete a four-year degree. Second, as the related environmental issues of water quality and management have become increasingly important in the state, the establishment of the Prairie Waters Education and Research Center in 2010 provides opportunities for both research and K-12 education.
- Rural health care is a growing need in North Dakota, while access to training programs for potential students is limited by distance. Recognizing that VCSU did not have the capacity—neither the faculty nor program depth—necessary to support a nursing program, the University sought the opportunity to collaborate in the Dakota Nursing Program, allowing DCB to offer the program on the VCSU campus, using VCSU facilities, for students in the Valley City region. In a similar fashion, VCSU has begun a collaboration with the University of North Dakota to provide a medical laboratory science major to interested undergraduates at VCSU who will be able to complete their clinical work in a regional hospital.

In each case, the University worked directly with constituents to identify workable solutions to meet educational needs, either by developing new programs or by organizing collaborations that offer programs not within the scope of the University.

Feedback and Communication

The University uses a variety of formal surveys and informal feedback activities to assess the effectiveness of its programs in meeting the needs of its students, employees, and community constituents.

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Survey tools. The University employs a variety of surveys of students, employees, alumni, and employers to gain insight into its programs' strengths and challenges.

Selected nationally standardized surveys are used to understand the student's campus experience. The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), administered on alternate years since 2002, allows VCSU to assess itself against regional and national scales (see Table 8.1). In 2010, VCSU students reported a significantly smaller gap between the importance and the satisfaction of each of the eleven scales.

Table 8.1 Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory results compared with other National Four-Year Institutions

Valley City State University (SSI) 5/2010			Noel Levitz		
Institutional Summary			Student Satisfaction Survey		
Scale	Valley City State University		National Four-Year Publics		Mean Difference
	Import	Gap	Import	Gap	
Student Centeredness	6.31	0.31	6.11	0.98	*0.87
Campus Life	5.90	0.26	5.75	0.84	*0.73
Instructional Effectiveness	6.39	0.51	6.33	1.05	*0.60
Recruitment and Financial Aid	6.26	0.43	6.16	1.31	*0.98
Campus Support Services	5.98	-0.03	6.07	0.75	*0.69
Academic Advising	6.48	0.58	6.35	1.07	*0.62
Registration Effectiveness	6.27	0.30	6.21	1.21	*0.97
Safety and Security	6.20	0.95	6.32	1.78	*0.71
Concern for the Individual	6.28	0.45	6.13	1.11	*0.81
Service Excellence	6.09	0.20	6.04	1.08	*0.93
Campus Climate	6.25	0.28	6.12	1.02	*0.87

*Significantly Different at .001 Level

The SSI results are reviewed by the Assessment Office and shared with academic divisions through the Assessment Committee; the Executive Summary is shared with Student Affairs Staff, department heads, and Executive Team.

University employees likewise respond biennially to the Noel-Levitz Campus Quality Survey. This instrument was developed by adapting categories used in the prestigious Baldrige Award and the Presidential Award for Quality to fit the educational environment. The survey results (see Table 8.2 for average satisfaction levels) are reviewed by VCSU's Executive Team and areas of weakness are identified and targeted with improvement activities by the Executive Team through the Director of Human Resources.

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In 2010, focus groups were established for employees to voluntarily and confidentially respond to and discuss survey results in specific detail. Since 2002, faculty and staff at VCSU have reported average ratings higher than the NDUS for all eight quality dimensions and in employment satisfaction (exception 2004).

Table 8.2 VCSU average employee satisfaction levels in comparison to NDUS.

Institution	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
VCSU	83%	74%	79%	85%	83%
NDUS	75%	76%	76%	80%	79%

Additional surveys that also inform the University are included in Table 8.3 (page 140), which identifies when each survey is administered and reviewed by appropriate groups on the campus.

The VCSU Foundation Office also solicits feedback on the educational experience of alumni through the administration of the ACT Survey in alternate years to a cohort of alumni three to four years post-graduation. The survey measures satisfaction with programs, services, and academic preparation. Results are shared with academic divisions.

External Communication. The University seeks feedback from its constituents in less formal ways:

- The Foundation Office regularly invites alumni to participate in scheduled activities in North Dakota and in states where alumni numbers are high. Annual events such as Homecoming, the Scholarship Auction, and the Viking Scramble Golf Tournament provide entertainment and interaction while other activities such as socials and lunches provide discussion and information exchange.
- Student Services interacts with parents using an emailed parent newsletter.
- Faculty and staff participate in NDUS committees, councils, and summits that offer opportunities for communication, exchange of ideas, collaboration and planning.
- Program advisory boards provide program feedback (as described in Chapter 7, Core Component 4c).
- VCSU prepares the VCSU Quarterly Update for North Dakota Legislators and other external constituents.
- The President writes a bi-weekly column for the local newspaper, the *Times-Record*, to keep the community apprised of campus activities.

In addition, program-specific accrediting bodies such as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) assist the University in assuring the quality of individual face-to-face and online programs.

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Table 8.3 Other surveys at VCSU

Survey	Purpose	Admin	Reviewed
Comprehensive Institutional Research Program (CIRP)	A standardized, longitudinal study of the nation's new freshmen.	Alternate Years	Full review by Student Affairs Directors. Highlights shared with Exec Team. Information made available for research and planning purposes.
College Student Inventory (CSI)	A retention management tool that is administered to all new freshmen every year.	Yearly	Advisors receive the student's profile. At-risk student list shared with appropriate student services
ACT Withdrawing / Non-Returning Survey	Reports reasons for students leaving the university.	Yearly	Results are shared with Student Affairs Staff and Cabinet.
Noel-Levitz Employer Satisfaction Survey	Measures the level of satisfaction of employers with the preparation of VCSU graduates.	Alternate Years	Reviewed by Career Services and shared with academic program faculty.
Core Alcohol and Drug Survey	Measures student use and abuse of alcohol and controlled substances along with student attitudes toward alcohol and drug use.	Alternate Years	Reviewed by Campus/Community Substance Abuse Task Force. Plans are to share with faculty.
Higher Education Research Institute (HERI)	Provides a comprehensive profile of faculty including questions on institutional priorities, level of satisfaction, and goals for students.	Every 3 years	Results sent to the Cabinet and shared with Faculty Senate.
National Survey of Student Engagement	Measures student engagement at first and senior years; a good fit for VCSU Ability-based assessment process	Alternate years	Reviewed by Assessment office, Assessment Committee and academic and student affairs staff as appropriate.

Evaluation of Core Component 5a

Strengths: The University builds on its strengths to meet the changing needs of its students, alumni, and community, and provides connections to other programs when it does not have sufficient capacity to meet its constituents' needs. The University has a variety of tools in place to solicit feedback, which allows for continuous improvement. Data from surveys indicate that students and employees are satisfied with VCSU programs and campus climate.

New Initiatives: The campus continues to use survey data to understand and meet the needs of its constituencies. Two committees have been established to provide forums for this review, Success 2015 (reviews, documents and assesses implementation of the VCSU 2015 Strategic Plan),

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and the Academic Assessment Committee. In addition, VCSU 2015 (the strategic plan) calls for additional advisory boards for selected academic programs.

Challenges: The institution continues to look for meaningful ways to discuss and disperse assessment data at the departmental and divisional levels. Another challenge is a recent budget decision: the NDUS, which conducts and funds a number of the surveys used by VCSU, will now require that system campuses continue the funding on an individual basis. In the next year, VCSU will need to decide which of the surveys provide the most value to the assessment process and continue to self-support those surveys.

Core Component 5b: *The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.*

Strategic Planning: Building on Areas of Strength

Both the Growth Plan (2007) and VCSU's current strategic plan, VCSU 2015, focus on enrollment growth, to "Identify, promote and support high enrollment programs and opportunities, to increase enrollment in both online and in residential programs" (Goal 2, VCSU 2015). The success of both plans in increasing enrollment can be seen in the approach described in Goal 2—the identification, promotion, and support—all deliberate, planned acts. By selecting programs that provide a distinct market niche—fisheries and wildlife science, or online programs in music, ELL, library science; by identifying programs with academic strength—elementary education, biology, and health sciences; and by using these programs to develop opportunities—a new graduate program, a center for water education and research, a STEM education center—VCSU has successfully developed programs that meet constituent needs.

Similarly, VCSU has been practical in the growth of its distance-delivered programs by building on its academic strengths, its faculty capacity, and its partnerships with other educational entities. The University currently offers affordable, quality, online courses and programs that meet the needs of the distance students it serves. It works with partners who have requested and appreciate the online programs it offers:

- VCSU currently partners with seven community colleges in Wyoming. Through credit transfer, online coursework, and face-to-face summer workshops by VCSU faculty, the University provides Wyoming students with opportunities to complete four-year degrees in Elementary Education, History Education, and English Education. The Wyoming program is assessed in the same way all of VCSU's NCATE accredited teacher education programs are assessed.
- VCSU offers an online major in Music. This online program, accredited by NASM in 2009, builds on the department's strength in music technology and responds to frequent requests from students

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for distance courses in music; the Music Department works with *College Plus!* to identify online student needs in music and build enrollment.

- VCSU added a graduate concentration in Library Information Technologies in 2007, in response to a direct request by the President of the North Dakota Library Association to the NDUS Academic Affairs Council, and survey responses from state educators, who indicated that North Dakota needed an in-state graduate program in library information technologies both for enriching the depth and breadth of expertise in this area and for movement on salary schedules.

Student Engagement with External Communities

The educational programs at VCSU provide students with connections to external communities in their fields of study. These connections include field experiences for pre-service teachers, internships, access to professional business tools, and community service opportunities.

Teacher Education. The University's Teacher Education programs connect students with external community partners through educational field experiences, clinical practice, and academic projects. These partners share in the design, delivery, and evaluation of the field experiences. Partners include the Valley City Public School, other schools in the surrounding areas, schools in the Fargo/Moorhead region, and diverse schools in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Fort Totten, North Dakota. Table 8.4 identifies the types of interactions required and the number of hours completed.

Table 8.4 Field Experiences and Clinical Practice by Program

Program	Field Experiences (Observation and/or Practicum)	Clinical Practice (Student Teaching or Internship)	Total Number of Hours
Initial Programs			
Elementary Education	Three practicum experiences and a minimum of 145 hours	A minimum of 400 hours (changed to 480 hours with 2008-2010 catalog)	Minimum of 545 hours
Secondary Education	Three practicum experiences (75-90 hrs each)	A minimum of 400 hours (changing to 480 hours with 2008-2010 catalog)	Minimum 475 hours
Advanced Program			
Master of Education	Two field experiences Classroom Project and Diverse Field Experience	N/A	N/A

Assessments are collected from external and internal stakeholders for each activity and results are recorded in VCSU's assessment system. Assessments

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are reviewed by department members within Elementary and Secondary education units.

The SAP University Alliance. The Division of Business and Information Technology actively participates in academic programs offered by industry including the SAP University Alliance Program and the Americas' SAP Users' Group (ASUG) University Connection. These programs provide students with opportunities to network and collaborate with individuals in organizations in North Dakota, Minnesota, nationally, and globally. SAP provides the SAP University Alliance Program to support universities teaching advanced technologies and enterprise systems by providing a hands-on learning experience. The ASUG University Connection facilitates the building of relationships between businesses and universities who are part of the SAP University Alliance.

Internships. The Office of Career Services organizes and oversees internships for students in every academic division of the University. Over the past ten years 316 students have interned in over 200 locations inside and outside North Dakota. Many academic majors include internships in their programs: Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, Communication, Psychology, Human Services, and Fisheries & Wildlife Science.

Community Service. Data from the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provides a sense of overall student involvement in community services during their enrollment at VCSU. Of freshmen, 36% and seniors, 57% indicated they had done community service or volunteer work. The 2009 NSSE survey indicators showed freshmen at 50% and seniors at 58%. After the NSSE survey was completed in 2009, the statistical data became a real life experience as the city of Valley City encountered the biggest flood fight in its history. The Sheyenne River crested at 20.69 feet, above its previous 1882 crest of 20 feet. Valley City Mayor Mary Nielson said, "The students, staff, and faculty of VCSU have made a difference in our flood fight. They have been a force at Sandbag Central. Our volunteer firemen have high praise for the students on the lines and building the dikes. The sports teams have been outstanding. We wouldn't want to be without VCSU in this time of need."

University Engagement with the Community

The University also values the participation of its employees in City activities. Many administrators, faculty and staff take leadership and volunteer positions within the local community, serving on various boards, service organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Valley Development Corporation. In addition, the University serves the regional community through extended learning activities.

Dual Credit. Most of the dual credit activities in the state are delivered by two year campuses. Recognizing the training and assessment efforts necessary to deploy a large dual credit program effectively, VCSU has chosen to minimize its dual credit activities except for its relationships with several local school districts, in programs where faculty already have collegial relationships and understand each others' academic expectations. VCSU

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follows NDUS Policy 402.3.2 in managing these relationships, with appropriate course alignment agreements and documentation of assessment processes. The high school faculty teaching the courses are hired as VCSU adjunct faculty and must meet the academic qualifications of adjunct faculty; department chairs meet with these adjunct faculty and review syllabi annually to assure course quality.

Extended Learning @ VCSU. Established in Fall 2006, “Extended Learning @ VCSU” offers non-program graduate credits used by North Dakota teachers for professional development. Approved by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education, the unit provides a flexible framework for programs, courses, and activities that are generally outside the traditional university structure. All courses have the course number 700 and are listed on transcripts as “Continuing Education.” Initially in 2005, VCSU was approved by the Higher Learning Commission for 20, one credit courses of this type, and in 2009 VCSU received approval for unlimited course offerings in professional development for educators. In the summer of 2006, over 200 teachers received non-program graduate credit in the content areas of Education, Library Media, Technology, and Business and Vocational Education. In 2010-11, Extended Learning offered 59 non-program courses to 495 teachers. Courses are offered face-to-face both on and off campus as well as online.

Evaluation of Core Component 5b

Strengths: VCSU has focused its resources on program strengths to meet the needs of its constituencies. Both students and faculty are regularly engaged with external constituents. Commitment to community engagement and service are deeply embedded into the University’s mission and strategic plan.

New Initiatives: VCSU’s undergraduate Elementary Education initiative in Wyoming continues to bring more students into that hybrid program. Growth continues to be at a pace which the School of Education and Graduate Studies (SEGS) can support.

Challenges: The growth of the online Graduate program in Education continues to put some stress on SEGS unit due to advising and the need for flexible scheduling of courses from semester to semester. However, the program has seen steady growth of about 20-30 new students each year. With planning, this growth seems manageable.

Another recent challenge has been meeting the State Authorization requirements of the 34 states in which VCSU has distance students enrolled. A long-term effort is necessary to identify the expectations for each state and determine the “physical presence” definition for the state. VCSU continues to receive support for this activity from the North Dakota University System staff.

Commitment to community engagement and service are deeply embedded into the University’s mission and strategic plan.



Core Component 5c: The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies who depend on it for service.

The North Dakota University System encourages collaboration among its member colleges and universities, and has developed policies and procedures to make these collaborations seamless for students and convenient for office efficiencies. These system-wide measures have encouraged a number of articulations and collaborative agreements between campuses in the state.

Transfer Agreements and Collaborative Enrollment

The North Dakota State Board of Higher Education adopted the "General Education Requirement Transfer Agreement" (GERTA) in 1994, an agreement which helps students transfer easily between institutions in the North Dakota University System. This agreement established common courses at the 100 and 200 level that are accepted by academic discipline groups and are transferable to other campuses as equivalent general education courses. By knowing what general education classes and credits will transfer, students can better plan and make use of their time and money.

SBHE Policy 403.7 additionally provides for "block transfer" of the completed general education program from one campus to another within the NDUS, and authorizes the NDUS to articulate transfer of general education courses as a completed unit with institutions outside the System. The NDUS has complete general education transfer articulations with university systems in seven states: Montana, South Dakota, Minnesota, Washington, California, Oregon, and Wyoming (NDUS Procedures 402.4.1-402.4.7).

Collaborative student enrollment is directed by NDUS Procedure 404, which establishes the enrollment process, billing procedure, and removes the need for students already enrolled in one NDUS campus to complete the admission process at the host campus. This arrangement allows students seamless access to courses across the System.

These NDSU policies and procedures have simplified and encouraged collaboration and articulation between campuses, to the benefit of students who have more convenient access to desired courses and programs.

Articulations and Memorandums of Agreement

VCSU supports nearly thirty articulations and memorandums of agreement with other institutions in North Dakota and other states. These agreements provide students from other academic communities with easy transfer and interaction with VCSU's programs and human resources. Examples of the various types of agreements are described below:

Elementary Education at North Dakota State University (NDSU). For over 15 years, VCSU has provided the elementary education major for students on the NDSU campus. Students in the program double major in Elementary Education (from VCSU) and Child Development (from NDSU), and graduate with degrees from both institutions. VCSU faculty drive to NDSU each week to provide face-to-face courses;

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students receive laptops and complete the same program requirements as students on the VCSU campus. The program enrolls 70-100 students annually. Recently the Art Department at NDSU has discussed expanding the program to include a B.S. Ed. in Art Education.

Elementary Education at Wyoming Community Colleges. VCSU's School of Education and Graduate Studies also supports agreements with seven Wyoming community colleges to provide the Elementary Education program via a combination of online, interactive video, and face-to-face coursework which allows Wyoming students to complete teacher education degrees while remaining in their home communities. Recently several secondary education programs options have been added.

3+1/2+2 Agreements. While VCSU has a number of articulation agreements with community colleges in the state, several stand out because of their responsiveness to constituents' needs. The 3+1 Fisheries and Wildlife Science agreement with DCB provides for shared course delivery by faculty on both campuses (using IVN delivery from both campuses), including a third year on the DCB campus for students who begin their studies there. Students may study on either campus for years 1-3, receiving the same program at either campus, and then all students complete their fourth year on the VCSU campus. This provides increased access for students who would otherwise seek a program out of state, and allows for broader curricular offerings since course delivery is shared by both campuses.

A recent agreement developed with North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS) offers a new approach to a traditional pathway for Career and Technical Education (CTE) students. Typically students completing vocational degrees at NDSCS have sought a four-year degree from VCSU if they wanted to teach in a high school or vocational school. However, NDSCS identified a real-world need for improved professional business knowledge for those students who plan to develop or maintain a small business or move to management positions, and asked VCSU to work with them to develop a non-teaching, four-year degree pathway for these students. The resulting management option in the CTE major provides the requisite training and access to a Bachelor of Science degree. The agreement is the first of its kind in North Dakota and is designed to help non-traditional students realize the benefit of three types of credentials: U.S. Department of Labor approved apprenticeship programs, Associate in Applied Science degrees, and Bachelor of Science degrees.

Access to College Entry and Two Year Programs. VCSU and DCB have collaborated on a series of programs to provide placebound students in the Valley City area with access to educational offerings outside VCSU's identified NDUS mission.

- Students who are not eligible for admission at VCSU but want to attend college, pursue a four-year degree, and remain in

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the Valley City area may apply to the DCB Bridges program. This program allows students to complete 24 credits through DCB while remaining on the VCSU campus. They may then transfer to VCSU and complete a four-year degree. These DCB students are able to fully participate in the student life, housing and dining services, organizations, facility usage and activities (excluding varsity athletics) available to every degree-seeking VCSU student. This program also provides access to developmental courses for any VCSU students requiring additional support.

- The Dakota Nursing Program allows students to remain on the VCSU campus while they complete a nursing program through DCB. VCSU provides the general education coursework, and DCB provides the classroom instruction in nursing via Interactive Video Network (IVN). Clinical practice opportunities for these students are available through local healthcare providers at the Sheyenne Care Center and Mercy Hospital.
- A new collaboration implemented in Fall 2011 will offer residents in the Valley City area three, two-year programs and provide convenient training for entry-level jobs: Medical Assistant, Caregiver Services, and Paraeducation. The program follows the Dakota Nursing Program structure: students will remain on the VCSU campus and take courses from both VCSU and DCB (via IVN and online).

Evaluation of Core Component 5c

Strengths: Valley City State University responds to the needs of its constituents through collaboration and effective communication with other educational organizations. VCSU continues to engage its learners and constituents through improved accessibility and student-friendly policies and procedures that support a mobile society.

VCSU supports a variety of articulations and agreements with other institutions in North Dakota and other states. Some of these have developed into partnerships that serve our local community as well as distant and diverse communities in other states.

New Initiatives: The collaborative ventures with DCB, especially the access to two-year programs, are in early stages of development, and further development of pathways to four-year degrees from VCSU are under discussion.

Challenges: Maintenance of current agreements, so they continue to effectively support student and community needs, requires constant attention. The development of a stronger administrative structure to oversee the development, implementation, and assessment of collaborative activities would increase office and program efficiencies and improve the student experience.

Valley City State University responds to the needs of its constituents through collaboration and effective communication with other educational organizations.



Core Component 5d: Internal and external constituencies value the services the University provides.

Student and employee satisfaction is discussed in Core Component 5a, above; survey details for any of the studies summarized are available for review in the Resource Room. This section, therefore, focuses on interactions with external constituencies. Members of the Valley City community make broad use of campus facilities, and recognize the importance of the University to the community's economy and quality of life. The importance of strong community support was recognized by NDUS Chancellor Goetz in Fall 2007, when he named two community leaders to the VCSU Presidential search committee: the campus and the community are interdependent and mutually supportive.

Access to University Activities and Facilities

The University seeks to interact with the local community in ways that enrich both Valley City and the Institution. VCSU regularly provides cultural vitality to the Valley City community through offerings in the arts, education, and entertainment venues open to the public. Through collaborations between the community and the University, VCSU provides athletic and recreation opportunities that are also open to the public.

VCSU provides multiple educational opportunities for K-12 school programs, including Music contests, Theater performances, Planetarium shows, Science Olympiads, Medicine Wheel events, Science Field Experiences at the Prairie Waters Education and Research Center, Career Fairs, Spanish Day, and Business and Information Day. Ongoing collaborative ventures bring faculty, staff, students, and community members together in such diverse activities as the Valley Voices, the Barnes County Historical Society Lecture Series, the Community Orchestra, water aerobics classes, or an artist's reception at the campus Art Gallery.

University facilities are used by the community on an ongoing basis. These include Vangstad Auditorium, the Student Center with swimming pool, Froemke Auditorium, Music rehearsal rooms, the Allen Memorial Library, W. E. Osmon Fieldhouse, and Ellig Field (football/track). For example,

- The Troubadours (a community men's chorus) holds rehearsals in Foss Music Hall.
- Valley City Area Concert Association presents their annual concert series on campus.
- Over 400 students and community members visit Medicine Wheel Park—a 30 acre park with a Medicine Wheel horizon solar calendar, a Meridian Solar calendar, and Native American burial grounds—each year.
- The VCSU swimming pool is used by the community swim team for practice and meets and 11 communities use it for swimming lessons. It is available for lap swim and aquacise courses daily.

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- The Theater at VCSU presents at least four shows each academic year. Residents of Valley City and the surrounding community support VCSU Theatre events and benefit from a full season of live theatre.
- Each year a number of school districts use the VCSU athletic complex for track and field competitions and basketball tournaments. In addition, VCSU hosts a number of basketball and football camps.
- Valley City State University Community School of the Arts provides instruction in art, music, drama, and writing to students of all ages and levels of ability.

Community Support of the University

Valley City area community leaders and partners value its role and contributions to the region. VCSU's economic impact to the area was highlighted in a 2009 study, "Economic Impact of the North Dakota University System." The study determined that VCSU had a \$55.6 million impact on the area's economy during the 2008 fiscal year. Recognizing the importance of the University and its continued success, a large delegation of Valley City community and business leaders attended VCSU's Senate Appropriations Hearing at the North Dakota Legislature in March 2011, in support of the University's request for the Rhoades Science Center renovation and expansion; they also hosted a reception in Bismarck for legislators during the Session.

The community provides ongoing financial support for the University, as well. Individuals and businesses in the community channel financial donations through the University Foundation. Membership in the Century Club, which raises money for athletic scholarship, and participation in the annual Auction—both through donation and attendance—are primarily drawn from the Valley City community.

The recent success of the Foundation in raising funds for the new track program and the artificial turf project may be largely attributed to the financial support of the community. The City provided a substantial contribution to the turf project through tourism tax dollars. Another funding branch of the City, the Valley Development Corporation, has also assisted in these and many other campus projects, including support for new academic programs (Technology Education, Enterprise Applications, Nursing), marketing initiatives, and a variety of non-cash investments. The Valley Development Corporation built the Regional Technology Center on land leased from VCSU; in Spring 2009, when the University required an emergency location for its servers in an area above the flood plain, the Regional Technology Center immediately opened its doors.

In recognition of the importance VCSU plays in the community after the 2009 flood, the mayor of Valley City proclaimed September 11, 2009, "VCSU Day" with a proclamation detailing the significance of the University to the community, stating "We would not want to be without VCSU in our time of need" (see Resource Room for complete text).

The study determined that VCSU had a \$55.6 million impact on the area's economy during the 2008 fiscal year.



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Accreditation Support of the University Programs

The Music program at VCSU is fully accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), whose most recent visit was just completed in the fall of the 2007-2008 academic year; the next site visit will be in 2017. In June 2010, the NASM Commission voted to grant plan approval for the online music program, with the following commendation:

The Commission commends the institution for thoughtfully and systematically considering critical issues in traditional and online music and pedagogy in order to advance opportunities for students to experience quality music learning experiences delivered via distance learning.

The teacher education program at VCSU is fully accredited by NCATE. Their team report noted,

The visions for the institution and unit align with the conceptual framework. Conceptual framework foundational pillars (plan, implement, evaluate, and reflect) are informed by eight university abilities that guide all faculty and candidates. Since the last visit the conceptual framework has been modified to include the new graduate program.

The knowledge base consists of research, standards, and best practices. The research base is built on studies of the learning process, cognitive development, characteristics of learners, effective teaching, and best practices in the uses of technology. Standards for the knowledge base come from North Dakota state standards, which are organized around INTASC standards and NBPTS standards. Best practices for this knowledge base emerge from the framework referenced to current national reports on what makes an effective teacher.

A commitment to technology is evident by the fact that all candidates receive laptop computers, there are smart classrooms, technological support for faculty and candidates is outstanding, and the development and implementation of an effective unit data gathering system for assessment. The unit assessment system is well summarized and aligned with the conceptual framework, state and national standards (2008 NCATE Board of Examiners Report, page 3).

Both accrediting bodies commend VCSU and the programs reviewed for careful attention to effective teaching and learning, concern for meaningful assessment, and best practices in use of technology.

Evaluation of Core Component 5d

Strengths: Community participation in support of the University and their willingness to make use of the facilities and resources of the institution

In recognition of the importance VCSU plays in the community after the 2009 flood, the mayor of Valley City proclaimed September 11, 2009, "VCSU Day."



CHAPTER 8 ♦ Criterion 5: Engagement and Service

indicate that the local community and region values the University, the service, the culture it provides, and the University's economic impact on the area.

New Initiatives: VCSU has established the Prairie Waters Education and Research Center to provide environmental education and research opportunities for students, teachers, and professionals in North Dakota. In its first year of operation, it has attracted over 1000 visitors.

The addition to the Rhoades Science Center will house the Great Plains STEM Education Center, a state-wide initiative that will lay the foundation for more science, technology, engineering, and math education in North Dakota. The new addition will also provide more classrooms and office space for growing science and health science programs at VCSU. Ground breaking for the addition is scheduled for fall of 2011.

Challenges: Flooding issues continue to concern the campus, the community, and the state, requiring careful planning and resource allocation.

VCSU uses surveys, advisory boards and external review, and a variety of communication tools to determine how its programs and services are meeting the needs of its constituencies.

