# Complete College Georgia (CCG) Status Report
## Valdosta State University

Valdosta State University (VSU) has made observable and measurable progress toward implementing our Complete College Georgia (CCG) plan which was submitted to Governor Deal in 2012.  We have reorganized staff members and redirected resources to maximize the use of our data warehouse to create additional reports and to identify major strategies to address quality completion for Georgia's citizens.  VSU's original plan is located at http://www.valdosta.edu/planning/documents/ccgplan.pdf

**Primary Lessons**.  VSU's CCG leadership team has learned several lessons this past year which we believe could be applicable at all USG institutions.  The three most important lessons were the need to:

1) Centralize certain processes.  The first steps are underway to organize a Centralized Advising Center for ALL incoming first-time students.  VSU is developing an in-take model which will work with these students from summer orientation through approximately the first 30 hours; at that point, students in good standing will move to advising in their major departments.  This will help us to ensure that the tools in the Data Warehouse are being utilized to support first-year student success.  In the first year, the Data Warehouse tools were provided to all faculty, of which only 28% actively used the tools.  Faculty development is also being more centralized through the I.D.E.A. Center (described below in greater detail).

2) Eliminate unnecessary roadblocks to student progression.  We discovered many departments or units were accomplishing tasks related to student recruitment, retention, and graduation, but by unifying these efforts through reorganization and better planning, the result can be more directed and measurable.  For example, we have many departments that apply holds to a student's account to prevent registration over seemingly minuscule issues; many times these holds and the process by which the student must go through to remove holds delay students from registration and require multiple offices' involvement.

3) Work in a clear and comprehensive way.  VSU is realigning its organizational structure to reflect a student success and progression model.  Student services departments are being relocated to a one-stop shop student services environment.  VSU is also working more comprehensively on Strategy 2 by placing its Continuing Education division under its Center for eLearning to create an Office for Extended Learning; this model will provide more learning options for adults that will articulate as credit toward degrees.

## Strategy 1: Partnerships with K-12

**Original Objective: <u>Early College and Joint/Dual Enrollment</u>.**  Complete full implementation of the Valdosta Early College Academy (VECA) and transition students to dual enrollment with VSU in eleventh grade.

**Progress to Date:**  VSU faculty in the Dewar College of Education worked closely with the VECA principal and VECA faculty to facilitate applications to VSU.  Seven (of 20) VECA 11th grade students have been accepted for dual enrollment at VSU for 2013-14. During 2012-13, VECA enrolled 175 students in grades 6-10; an additional 45 will be added in 2013-14 bringing the total enrollment to 220. VECA is on track to achieve full implementation of grades 6-12 in 2014-15.

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:**  Changes in professional standards for educator preparation will require VSU faculty to spend more time in classrooms observing teachers-in-training.

**Original Objective: <u>STEM Partnerships</u>.** Increase the number of students majoring in and retained in STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Strengthen STEM instruction in area K-12 schools.

**Progress to Date:**

1. University-Wide Undergraduate Research Symposium.  The first symposium was held in April 2012.  The second symposium in April 2013 consisted of 123 presentations and posters (48% were in a STEM discipline).

2. Center for Applied Research retention and recruitment for STEM.  Two faculty members participated in a two-day workshop funded by the NIH and HHMI to learn methods to improve STEM teaching; they are now fellows in this program. The Department of Biology submitted a S-STEM Scholarship Proposal to request tuition funding to assist 18

students majoring in Biology.  A new course, Biology Freshman Seminar, was implemented to address retention issues and career planning.

3. Department of Mathematics and Computer Science's Student Learning Enhancement System offered tutoring to 126 students.  The average pass rates in the first four computer science sequence courses increased by 17%.

4. In Summer 2012 and Summer 2013, the Dewar College of Education hosted summer workshops for 137 area math teachers of grades 35, funded by the Georgia Department of Education.

5. On April 30, 2013, VSU hosted a mathematics demonstration and tournament for 220 middle grades students to promote math learning and education.

6. The College of Arts and Sciences routinely hosts planetarium shows, Science Saturdays, Camp Discovery, and Camp Invention for area K-12 students.

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:**
In Fall 2013, the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science and Department of Chemistry will implement placement tests to help better retain freshman in STEM majors and improve degree completion by reducing the incidence of repeating math classes.

**New Objective: <u>Center for Excellence in STEM Education</u>.**  After the relocation of the College of Nursing in 2014, Martin Hall will undergo a $2.5 million renovation to establish a STEM Center (18,373 sq. ft.) for occupancy in FY2015. This will be an interdisciplinary, multi-functional space for expanded efforts in STEM instruction.  Math, science, and technology educators (VSU faculty and superior P-12 STEM teachers) can share this space to model/teach STEM education college classes, as well as to provide training and practice to enhance the skills of P-12 STEM educators in our region.

**New Objective: <u>LEAP Employer-Educator Compact</u>.**
**Progress to Date:**  In April 2013, VSU signed LEAP's Employer-Educator Compact initiative sponsored by AAC&U.  This national movement includes more than 100 college and university presidents, along with business and non-profit leaders that have pledged to work together to ensure that college students have access to a quality liberal education that fully prepares them for work, life, and citizenship.  As part of the Employer-Educator Compact, Valdosta State is partnering with Azalea Health Innovations, South Georgia Medical Center, and the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce to promote the economic value of liberal education and to provide students with more hands-on learning opportunities to connect their campus learning with real-world contexts and problems.

## Strategy 2: Improving access and completion for students traditionally underserved

**Original Objective: <u>Expand online learning opportunities</u>**. This will improve completion of non-traditional students by providing flexible, timely course offerings so that they can achieve their educational goal(s) on time. Year 1 student enrollment is expected to be between 300 and 500 students, contingent upon launching all seven programs.

**Progress to Date:**  VSU was awarded the lead institution designation and appointed a CEO for eMajor.  Currently there are 417 unique students enrolled in eMajor courses which met the Year 1 goals.  Our fully online BS in Organizational Leadership program has 69 majors (Spring 2013), for example.

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:**  During 2012-13, only VSU programs were offered through eMajor. Additional time was spent investigating SACSCOC's policies regarding consortium and collaborative arrangements. Dalton State College is the first eMajor partner institution, beginning Fall 2013.  VSU faculty members are working collaboratively with USG institutions to identify other academic programs with a fit for online learning (i.e., French).

**Original Objective: <u>Student Employment Opportunities</u>.** Increase the number of on-campus student employment opportunities and use a gap metric of unmet need as part of the hiring process. During the 2012-13 year, the data warehouse will have an unmet need indicator built in so that employers can review and consider unmet need as students apply for student employment.

**Progress to Date:** An unmet need indicator was created as a component of student assistant hiring. The number of on campus student assistants increased to 1,044 for 2012-13, consisting of 910 student assistant positions and 134 federal work study positions.

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:** We have learned that we need to refine the student employment process to better match student needs to employment opportunities. By developing a system to identify financially at-risk students, we can proactively recruit freshman to seek on-campus employment. We will also investigate the feasibility of combining Student Employment Services into the Office of Career Opportunities to promote a one-stop opportunity for students seeking employment both on and off-campus. Furthermore, since the Career Opportunities staff provides career counseling, the office can work to ensure that students are pursuing a part-time job that is more aligned with their career goals. The combining of staff would yield additional support for student employment.

**Original Objective: <u>Adult learners and/or military</u>.** To increase the number of enrolled non-traditional, adult, and military students. VSU enrolled 1,475 adult learners (Spring 2012) and plans to increase that number by 3%.

**Progress to Date:** The number of adult learners from Spring 2012 to Spring 2013 decreased by 4%, but VSU is placing intense effort towards achieving goal. A full-time Adult & Military Recruitment Officer was added to the staff, and a Coordinator for Off-Campus & Partner Programs was hired. The Adult & Military Programs Office relocated (November 2012) to a more easily accessible office for off-campus visitors. For the first time, VSU used Georgia411 admissions data to obtain baseline data about current military and veterans attending VSU (599 in Fall 2012).

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:** To provide increased options for adult and military learners, the Langdale College of Business Administration reduced its GPA entrance requirements from a 2.8 to 2.5. The College of Business Administration also placed 12 academic courses online in Summer 2013 to encourage timely degree completion; these courses completely filled during early registration. College faculty members are exploring options to add more online course offerings in business areas.

**Original Objective: <u>Technical college transfers</u>.** Increase the number of transfer students from technical colleges to VSU while making the process as seamless as possible. Identify at least one VSU academic department and technical college which could develop a BAS transfer program and increase the number of BAS tracks by 3. Increase the number of technical college transfers by 60 students.

**Progress to Date:** The Coordinator for Off-Campus Programs worked with area technical colleges to secure six transfer agreements for technical college students to the BAS Technical Studies program or the BS Organizational Leadership program. To make the Technical Studies major more attractive and better align with national trends, in April 2013, the USG system office approved the major's name change to Human Capital Performance. In Fall 2012 and Spring 2013, the number of technical college transfers totaled 68 which was a 1.5% decrease over the 2011-12 year.

**Original Objective: <u>International students</u>.** Continue to diversify the VSU student body by increasing the number of international students by 3.5%. VSU created an international admissions specialist position, housed in the Office of Admissions, to facilitate international applications. VSU will also begin work to identify institutions in Brazil for future exchange agreements.

**Progress to Date:** International enrollment was 198 students or 1.5% in Fall 2011 but increased to 262 or 2.1% in Fall 2012 making progress towards the 3% goal. An additional international admissions counselor was hired in 2012 who will specialize in international relations and transcript evaluation. In March 2013, three representatives from VSU visited China and anticipate growing our Chinese student enrollment between 1.0 to 1.5% in 2013-14.

**Original Objective: <u>Freshmen retention rate</u>**.  Increase the retention rate of first-time freshmen. The three-year goal is to increase the retention rate by 5%.

**Progress to Date:**  The Fall 2011 to Fall 2012 FTFT retention rate increased 0.4% (67.0% to 67.4%) over the prior Fall 2010 cohort.  Although not yet final, we anticipate that the Fall 2012 to Fall 2013 FTFT retention rate will increase by approximately one percent.  We have seen 0.5% increase in Fall 2012 to Spring 2013 retention of freshman over the prior year.

1. Targeted recruitment.  VSU held four interest sessions in the Metro Atlanta region and throughout the state which attracted more than 300 prospective students.  High-achieving students (based on SAT score) were the targeted audience for these events.

2. Data warehouse.  Our data warehouse has significantly expanded in size and scope.  The warehouse now includes an early warning system by which faculty can request an academic advisor or a residence hall assistant to contact students.

3. Freshman Learning Communities (FLC).  The original goal to expand FLC enrollment by 2% of the freshman class was met in Fall 2012 (5% increase).  In Fall 2012, 42.2% of first-year freshman students enrolled in a FLC.

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:**  On August 9, 2013, each VSU academic dean hosted a two-hour mandatory freshman orientation to familiarize students with academic expectations, policies, and opportunities of college.  In the coming year (2013-14), VSU will begin targeted recruitment in northern Florida to residents in Florida border counties who are now eligible to receive out-of-state tuition exemptions.

**Original Objective:  <u>Graduation rate</u>**.  Increase the four-year and six-year graduation rate of VSU students. VSU will expand tracking using the data warehouse so that we can provide information to advisors about students who are part of a cohort. Advisors will be better instructed to utilize DegreeWorks to aid students in progression and timely completion.  We will work to develop further strategies to identify, target, enroll, and graduate students who may be traditionally underserved.

**Progress to Date:**  This is a multiple-year objective which will require several years to see changes.  The four-year graduation rate increased slightly from 16.0% to 16.6%, and the six-year rate decreased from 43.0% to 40.7% (for the most recent graduating cohorts).

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:**  The widespread adoption and use of the Data Warehouse by faculty and staff as well as the new academic orientation are measures that VSU hopes will encourage student persistence and graduation.

**New Objective**.  <u>**Establish new student scholarships.**</u>

**Progress to Date:**  Recognizing that personal finances are the single largest barrier to underserved students, VSU established 10 new scholarship programs in FY2013.  The total raised or pledged to these 10 new scholarships is $1,188,000.  These scholarship funds will assist approximately 10 new VSU students annually with yearly awards of approximately $30,000.  The primary recipients of these new scholarships will be first-time, full-time freshmen who are 1) extremely high academic achievers, or 2) first-generation college students.

## Strategy 3: Shorten Time to Degree

**Original Objective: <u>Better academic advising</u>**.  To improve the academic advising system and process for all students, especially those in an FTFT cohort.

**Progress to Date:**  The campus continues to improve DegreeWorks and encourages use by advisors and students. At the end of Spring 2013, we contacted 549 first-time, full-time freshman who had not yet early registered for Fall 2013; of those, 49 early registered for Fall 2013.  VSU has continued to enforce its Five Course Withdrawal Policy; this has resulted is a decrease of undergraduate course withdrawals by 12.0% from Fall 2011 to Fall 2012 and by 14.8% from Spring 2012 to Spring 2013.  One hundred fifty (150) VSU faculty and staff attended Master Advising training

courses held in Fall 2012 and Spring 2013.  More departments, such as English, are better utilizing social media as a method to contact students about advising.

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:**  We need better coordination for advising, so a centralized advising center for students with 0-30 credits is being planned, and a full-time director was hired in August 2013.  This item will support our goal of building a one-stop center for students.   There is also consideration at our institution about narrowing student choices when they register.  For example, allowing students to register for classes only which are required on their program of study.  National literature reveals that students are less overwhelmed and uncertain if they have 3-5 courses options.

**Original Objective: <u>Prior Learning Assessment</u>**.  Increase the number of students participating in Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). Develop a coding system to track PLA students in Banner. We plan to increase the number of students pursuing PLA by 10 and increase the number of PLA course opportunities by 3 during the 2012-13 year.

**Progress to Date:**  Our goal to develop a system in Banner or our Data Warehouse to track PLA students is in progress.  We have 27 course assessments established and had six (6) students enrolled in PLA in 2012-13, a 50% increase over 2011-12.

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:**  Departmental exams seem to be a more attractive option for students to earn credit on a per course basis.  Efforts to better market/advertise the PLA program will be made in 2013-14.

**Original Objective:  <u>Scheduling for Freshman Learning Communities and others.</u>**  To increase the number of students participating in Freshman Learning Communities (FLC). In Fall 2011, 828 students participated in 42 FLCs, an increase of 5.1% from Fall 2010.  The goal for Fall 2012 was to restructure FLCs to increase participation by 2% of the total freshman class.

**Progress to Date:**  In Fall 2012, 881 students participated in 41 FLCs, which was an increase of 6.4% over Fall 2011. Of the Fall 2012 freshman class, 42% enrolled in an FLC which met our initial goal.

## Strategy 4: Restructuring Instructional Delivery

**Original Objective: <u>Alternative Delivery Methods</u>.** Increase the number of online, hybrid, and distance course offerings. Also, reevaluate the length of current term offerings (i.e., 8-week sessions or 5-week sessions). A traditional 15-week semester creates a barrier for many non-traditional and military students.  VSU will investigate a non-traditional college model (i.e., offering 7-week terms).  Implement an institutional focus on online and distance education. Investigate shorter parts of term and multiple points of entry.

**Progress to Date:**  The number of compressed course sections (5-week, 8-week) held flat at 78 in Fall 2011 and 77 in Fall 2012.  Enrollment in compressed course sections remained level.

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:**  Academic scheduling is a routine process for most departments, so we will emphasize methods to offer more sections of varying lengths (less than 15 weeks).

**Original Objective: <u>Increase Degree Completion</u>**.  Increase degree completions for students by automating and awarding the associate credential upon completion of Areas A-F (60 hours) in our bachelor programs.  Acquire authorization from the Board of Regents to award the A.S. degree.

**Progress to Date:**  Beginning in Fall 2013, VSU will automatically transcribe students with the A.A. or A.S. degree, as appropriate.  We anticipate transcribing 4,000 degrees initially this fall and then between 100-200 each term thereafter as students complete Areas A-F.

**Original Objective: <u>Enhance Course Support</u>**. Increase the number of student support opportunities (i.e., tutoring, supplemental instruction).

**Progress to Date:**  In 2012-13, 15 supplemental instruction leaders were hired to serve in 13 historically-difficult

course sections within our Freshman Learning Communities (FLC) which was a 100% increase over the prior year.  For 2013-14, we anticipate employing 16 supplemental instruction leaders to serve in 11 course sections.

In Fall 2012, VSU examined prior FTFT cohorts to identify student who exhibit academic characteristics which suggest they are at-risk.  A flag was added to our data warehouse to alert faculty of students who may require extra attention in verbal or mathematics areas.

The Division of Athletics piloted an academic mentoring program in Spring 2012 with 22 students.  This program continued in 2012-13 with 50 students (a 127% increase).  Men's basketball increased the team cumulative GPA by 10%, and at-risk freshmen football athletes increased their fall to spring GPA by 48%.

To increase support in our online courses, the VSU Center for eLearning was reorganized and increased staff size with the addition of a director and instructional technology specialist.

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:** In Fall 2013, the College of Business Administration will utilize graduate-level business students to staff tutoring labs for students struggling in ACCT 2101 and ACCT 2102.  VSU also utilizes embedded librarians in online and hybrid courses with 29 sections in Fall 2011 and 18 sections in Fall 2012.

**New Objective:  I.D.E.A. Center (Innovative Designs for Enhancing the Academy).**  In April 2013, VSU opened the I.D.E.A. Center (2,982 sq. ft.) which was the result of three years of work by our Faculty Excellence Initiative.  This facility will consist of a Faculty Fellow-in-Residence and several Faculty Fellows who will encourage collaboration and special initiatives that focus on innovative pedagogy (focusing on increasing learning outcomes), research, teaching, and grant (external funding).  We anticipate a wide variety of topics to emerge including improved use of technology in online instruction.   VSU anticipates selecting up to nine additional faculty fellows.

## Strategy 5: Transforming Remediation

**Original Objective: MyFoundationsLab**.  Provide online software preparation for students prior to taking the COMPASS test to decrease the number of remedial courses needed by non-traditional students.

**Progress to Date:**  In Spring 2012, VSU operated a pilot program with 15 potentially returning adult learners to complete the MyFoundationsLab before taking the COMPASS test.  In this pilot of participating students, the level of improvement needed did not occur.  The Year 1 goal was to negotiate a contract with Pearson to offer the product.

**Modifications/Implications/Lessons Learned:**  Because the results were less than desirable, VSU will not pursue a formal contract with Pearson at this time.  VSU has a small percentage (0.9%) of undergraduate students who require remedial education, so we will explore other methods to support those students.

**Original Objective: Strengthen Partnership with South Georgia State College Entry Program**.  Increase transfer students from the South Georgia State College Entry Program which is located on the VSU campus.

**Progress to Date:**  Initially, VSU would evaluate the MOU for the services VSU provides to South Georgia College Entry Students.  The Office of Admissions directed students to the Entry Program which resulted in an increase of 100 additional students in the Entry Program.

**Original Objective: Summer Bridge Academy.**  Develop a summer bridge program for at-risk freshman students who do not fully meet VSU's admissions requirements.

**Progress to Date:**  The Summer Bridge Academy (SBA) is a program designed for a select group of students who wish to attend Valdosta State University but did not meet the requirements for regular admission. Over a 7 week period, students will take 8 hours of classes which will prepare them for educational success. The Summer Bridge Academy will help students meet the requirements necessary to become a regular student at VSU for the sequential Fall term and will be equipped with the tools to excel in their classes, have confidence in their academic ability, and be excited to get involved around campus, which will contribute to their personal success as well as to the institutional success of Valdosta State University.  Thirty-eight students enrolled for the initial cohort, Summer 2013, of which 79% completed and enrolled full-time for Fall 2013.