# Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating a New Prior Learning Assessment Program for a State University System

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Executive Director Teacher Quality Initiatives
P-16 Initiatives
Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia

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Educational Leadership and Human Services
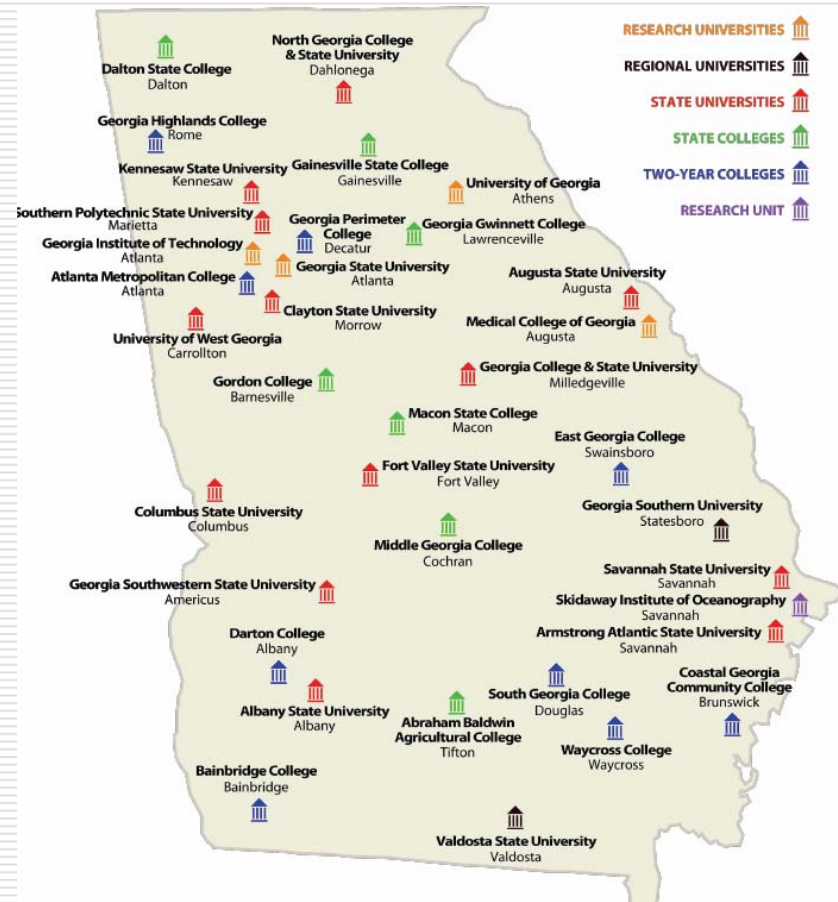Florida A&M University

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Assistant Professor
Political Science/Public Administration
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VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
Building for Our Next Century
1906-2006
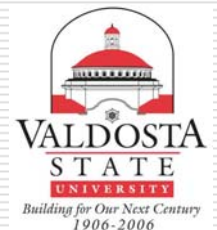
- ☐ The University System of Georgia's Board of Regents oversees 35 public colleges and universities.
    - ■ four research universities,
    - ■ two regional universities,
    - ■ thirteen state universities,
    - ■ seven state colleges,
    - ■ nine two-year colleges.
- ☐ 260,000 students;
- ☐ 11,000 faculty;
- ☐ 28,500 staff.



RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES
REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES
STATE UNIVERSITIES
STATE COLLEGES
TWO-YEAR COLLEGES
RESEARCH UNIT

North Georgia College & State University — Dahlonega
Dalton State College — Dalton
Georgia Highlands College — Rome
Kennesaw State University — Kennesaw
Gainesville State College — Gainesville
University of Georgia — Athens
Southern Polytechnic State University — Marietta
Georgia Perimeter College — Decatur
Georgia Gwinnett College — Lawrenceville
Georgia Institute of Technology — Atlanta
Georgia State University — Atlanta
Atlanta Metropolitan College — Atlanta
Augusta State University — Augusta
Clayton State University — Morrow
Medical College of Georgia — Augusta
University of West Georgia — Carrollton
Georgia College & State University — Milledgeville
Gordon College — Barnesville
Macon State College — Macon
East Georgia College — Swainsboro
Fort Valley State University — Fort Valley
Georgia Southern University — Statesboro
Columbus State University — Columbus
Middle Georgia College — Cochran
Savannah State University — Savannah
Georgia Southwestern State University — Americus
Skidaway Institute of Oceanography — Savannah
Darton College — Albany
Armstrong Atlantic State University — Savannah
Coastal Georgia Community College — Brunswick
South Georgia College — Douglas
Albany State University — Albany
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College — Tifton
Waycross College — Waycross
Bainbridge College — Bainbridge
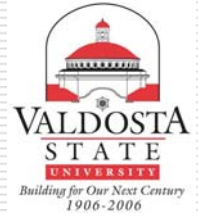Valdosta State University — Valdosta

□ Valdosta State University

■ One of two Regional Universities in the USG

□ Serves 41 Counties in South Georgia
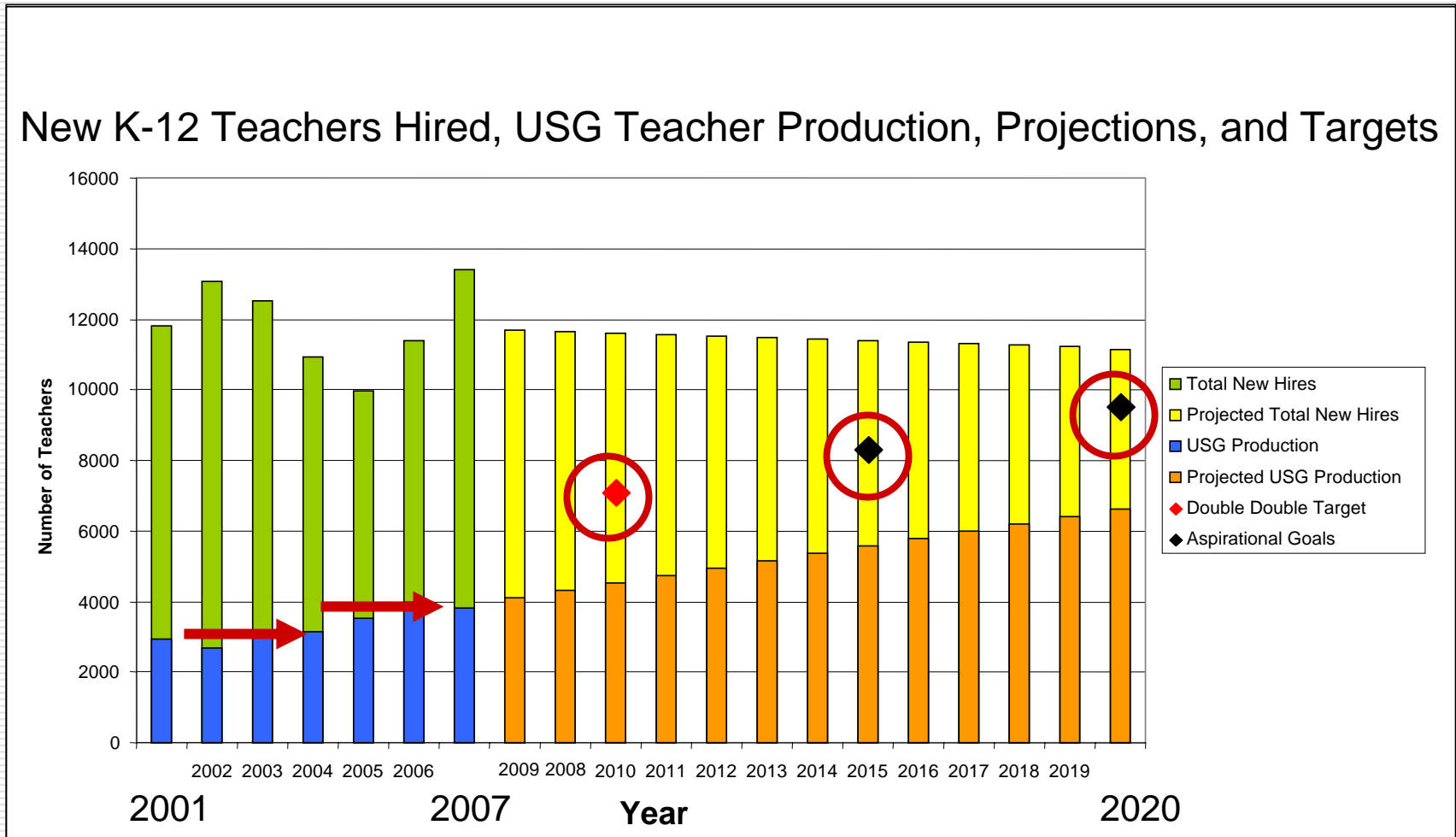
□ 12,000 Students

# System Goal: Increase Teacher Production



New K-12 Teachers Hired, USG Teacher Production, Projections, and Targets
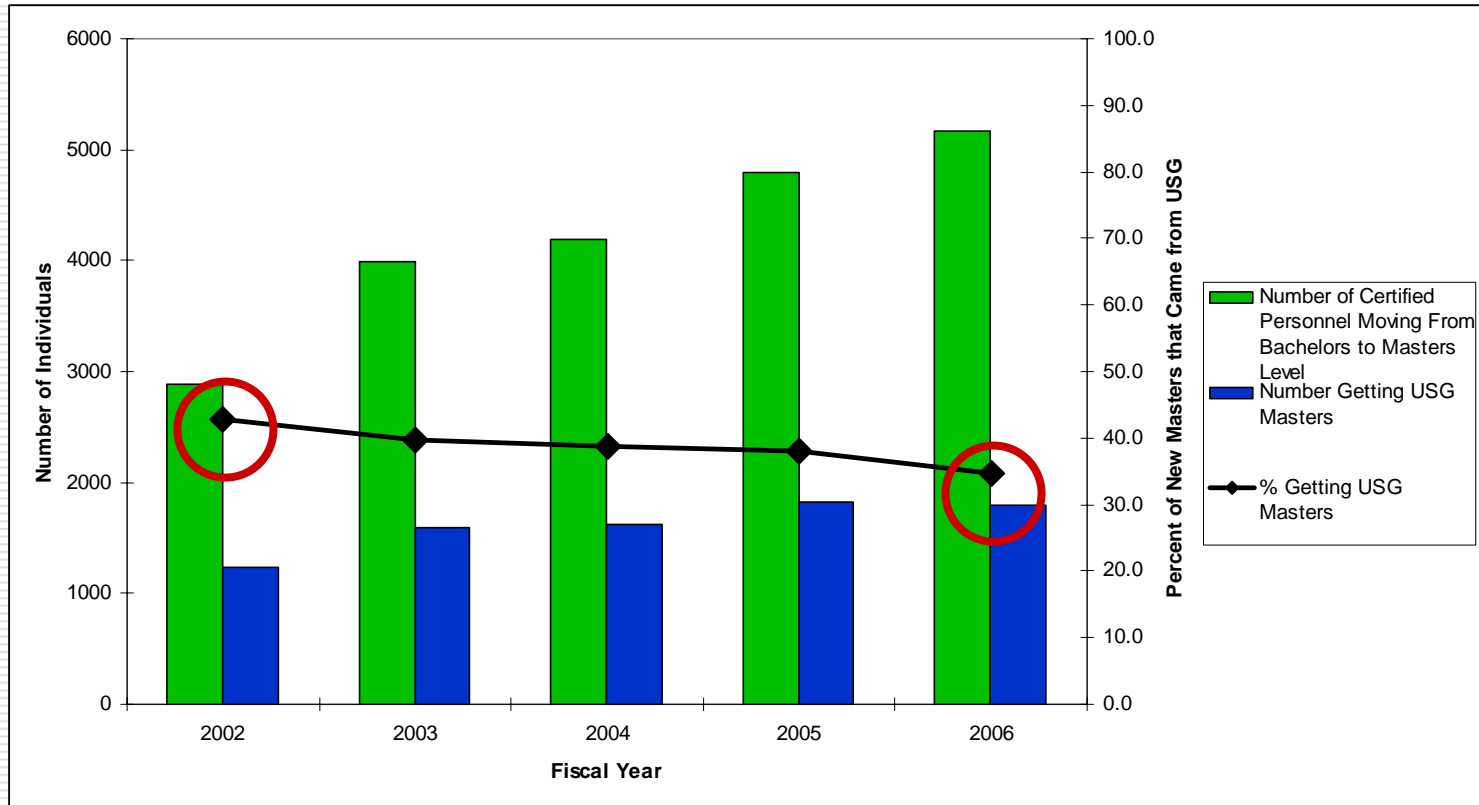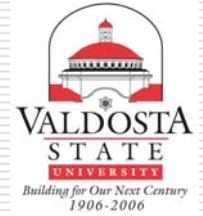
# System Goal: Increase Market Share of M.Ed. Programs
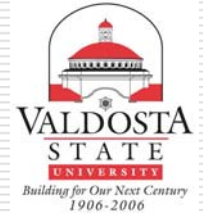
## USG Market Share

# System View: Other Goals

- ☐ Increase graduates in health care professions.
- ☐ Increase retention and graduation rates.
- ☐ Expand capacity by 40%.
- ☐ Create a plan for workforce development.

# PLA as a Tool for Creating a More Educated Georgia

- ☐ Career-changers are a rich source of teachers.

- ☐ More than 40% of students nationally are self-supporting adults age 24 or older. This population brings potentially creditable experience that can accelerate time to graduation.

- ☐ PLA provides a way to build on workers' skills and increase transferability.

# A System View:
# Enablers of Change

- ☐ Fit with goals and strategic plans of both organizations;
- ☐ Move to Outcomes-Based Teaching;
- ☐ Consultants Morry Fiddler and Catherine Marienau;
- ☐ PLA Coursework;
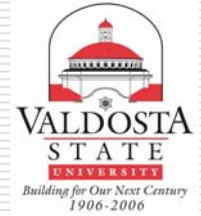- ☐ Grant resources.

# PLA Pilot Project:
# A System View

## Why Valdosta State University (VSU)?

- ☐ Strong partnership between USG and VSU;
- ☐ Track Record of Innovation and Follow-Through in P-16 Work;
- ☐ Outcomes-Based Assessments for Teacher Preparation Developed by VSU
- ☐ Strong Leadership;
- ☐ Committed and Forward-Thinking Faculty;
- ☐ Key Player in Transition to Teaching Grant for preparing career-changers to become teachers.
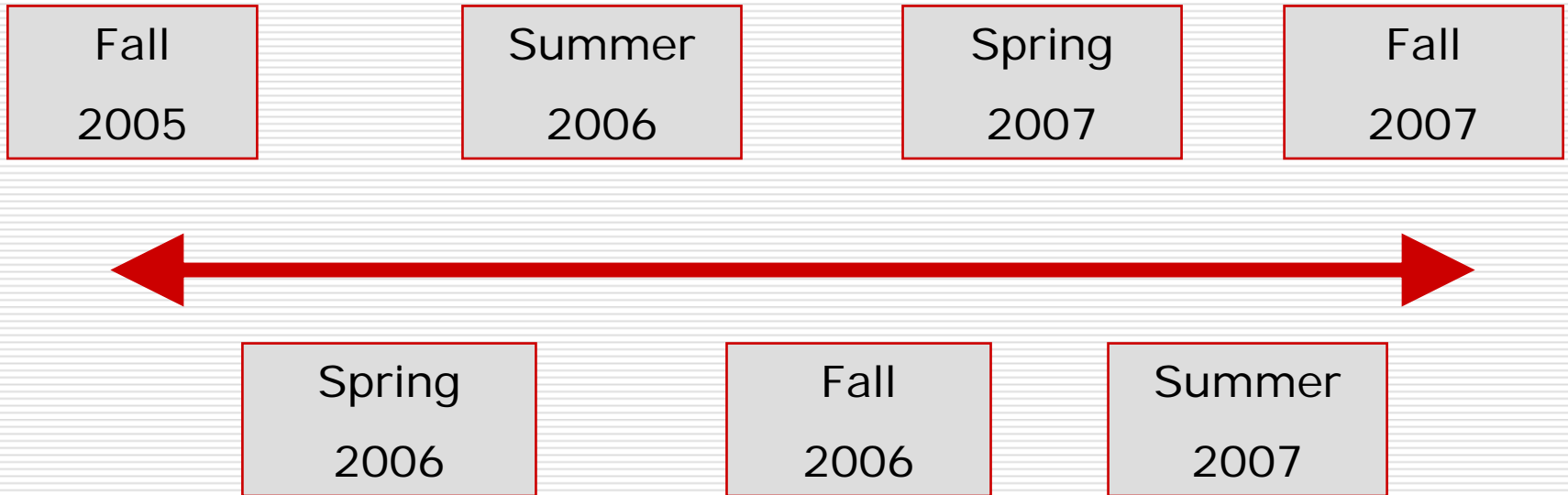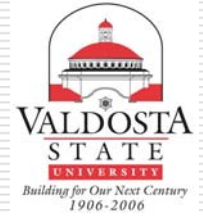
# PLA Fit with VSU Strategic Goals

- From Valdosta State University's Strategic Planning Goals: 5 Goals in 5 Years
  - Enrollment & Retention
    - Assess and implement changes in faculty load, facilities, course offerings & class scheduling to enhance the use of university resources in support of planned growth.
    - Increase number of students seeking certification and licensure renewal.
    - Develop a proposal for programs and program delivery strategies that meet the needs of non-traditional degree seeking students.
  - Financial Support
    - Improve profile in the Valdosta community, by continuing to develop external/community partnerships.
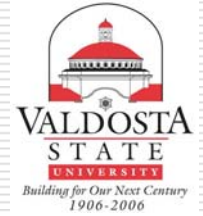
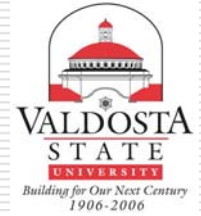# Administrative Implementation of PLA Project at VSU

Sharon Gravett

| Fall 2005 | | Summer 2006 | | Spring 2007 | | Fall 2007 |



| | Spring 2006 | | Fall 2006 | | Summer 2007 | |

# Fall 2005 Activities

- ☐ *PLA Working Group and Supporting Leadership Group Established
- ☐ *Establishment of tentative Action Plan and Timeline.
- ☐ *PLA Workshop I

# Demonstration Project Process

## Working Group

- ☐ Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Chair
- ☐ 4 Arts & Sciences faculty
- ☐ 4 College Of Education faculty
- ☐ Registrar's Representative
- ☐ Board Of Regents Liaison
- ☐ PLA Consultants

## Supporting Leadership Group

President

Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA)

Assistant VPAA

Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences

Dean of the College of Education

Dean of the Graduate School

Dean of Student Affairs

Dean of the College of the Arts

Assistant to the President for Strategic Research & Analysis

Registrar

Director of Admissions

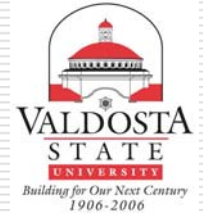Director of the College of Education Advising Center

# Fall 2005 Activities: Setting Objectives

- ☐ Objective #1: Establish purpose, context, definitions, and scope of plan.
- ☐ Objective #2: Develop procedures for students from front door to transcript.
- ☐ Objective #3: Develop policies and procedures.
- ☐ Objective #4: Establish infrastructure to support PLA process.
- ☐ Objective #5: Develop financial model to ensure sustainability
- ☐ Objective #6: Guarantee program quality.
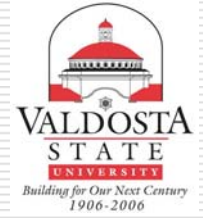- ☐ Objective #7: Project a timeframe.

# Spring 2006 Activities

- ☐ *Continued development of Action Plan
- ☐ *PLA Workshop 2
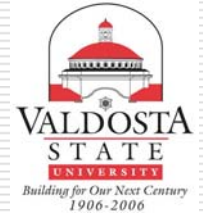- ☐ *Meeting between PLA Working Group and Supporting Leadership Group

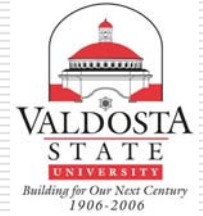# Summer 2006 Activities

☐ *First draft of PLA Handbook

# Fall 2006 Activities

☐ *Continued to share and develop PLA Handbook draft

☐ *Further work on Pilot Project, including PLA 2000, recruitment of faculty assessors, and the PLA Counselor.
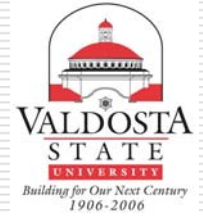
# Spring 2007 Activities

- ☐ *Pilot Project development continued in administration, curriculum, and recruitment.
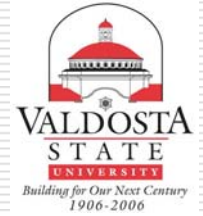
# Summer 2007 Activities

- ☐ *PLA Handbook online.
- ☐ *Initiated course approval process for PLA 2000.
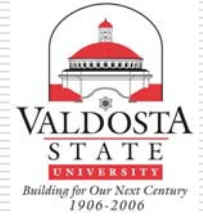- ☐ *Recruitment, both internally and externally

# Fall 2007 Activities

- ☐ *Recruitment activities continued
- ☐ *PLA 2000 course approved; work began to put components online

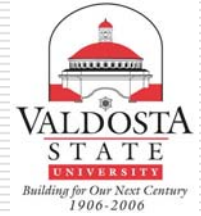# PLA Implementation & Evaluation
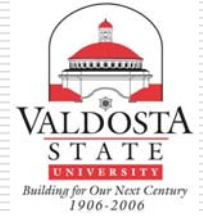## Faculty & Staff Involvement

Ada Burnette

- ☐ Handbook: Policies, Procedures, Definitions
- ☐ Integrating Existing PLA Options (AP, ACE, etc.) with Portfolio
- ☐ Connections Between Objectives > Formative Evaluation
  - ■ Steps in Program Evaluation

# Prior Learning Assessment Action Plan (One Page)

| ACTIVITIES | Start Date | End Date | Status | Responsible Person(s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Designate a PLA Stages Team | | | | VPAA |
| 2 Train VSU Work Team | | | | Consultants |
| 3 Develop Pilot Project<br>  a. Define administrative roles and responsibilities<br>  b. Determine and address potential barriers<br>  c. Decide on recognizing and addressing agreements and disagreements<br>  d. Designate an advisory group<br>  e. Visit Marylhurst University in Oregon to do PLA fact-finding | | | | Working Group |
| 4 Develop VSU PLA Launch Plan | | | | VPAA |
| 5 Develop VSU PLA Expansion Plan | | | | Working Group |

# PLA Pilot Marketing

Gerald Merwin

- ☐ Marketing to colleges & departments, students

- ☐ External marketing – Public Schools in Region, Adults Back to College (ABC), & Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber – other related community efforts

- ☐ Web site development overview

# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Search VSU | search for... | ▶

Select a VSU Department ▼

Text Only

Prospective Students | Current Students | Faculty & Staff | Alumni & Friends | Parents & Visitors | BlazeNet

Home > Academic Affairs > Prior Learning Assessment

## PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AT VSU

**What is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)?**

PLA is a process through which students **identify** areas of relevant learning from their past experiences, **demonstrate** that learning through appropriate documentation, and **submit** their materials so that they can be assessed and possibly awarded academic credit relative to specific course objectives at VSU.

The Council of Adult and Experiential Learning defines PLA as follows: "The recognition of learning gained from experiences that may be granted credit or otherwise certified… The assessment of learning attained through experiences irrespective of the time and place in which they occurred." (*Assessing Learning*, 2nd edition, By Morry Fiddler, Catherine Marienau, and Urban Whitaker p.12)

Valdosta State University is initiating a Prior Learning Assessment pilot program effective Fall Semester 2007. This new initiative will be piloted with selective courses and departments during this beginning year. A handbook is available to provide students, faculty, administrators, and other interested individuals with information needed when seeking credit for prior learning which is related to specific courses at Valdosta State University. The handbook will be revised after Fall Semester 2007 based upon lessons learned from the first semester of the pilot program. See the latest version of the handbook by selecting the link below that best meets your needs for a document format:

PLA Handbook (PDF)
PLA Handbook (Web Version)

For more information contact:

Office: UC 1110 University Center
Phone
Email:

### 2007 Dates

### 2008 Dates

## MAIN MENU

- **PLA Handbook (PDF)**
- **PLA Handbook (Web)**
- **PLA Site Map**

*Links to Sections of the PLA Handbook:*
- **Introduction Section**
- **Description Of Courses**
- **PLA Documentation Course**
- **Tuition and Other Costs**
- **Degrees Included**
- **Resources for Assessment**

## Location

**UC1105 University Center Mailing:**
**1500 North Patterson Street**
**Valdosta, GA 31698-0058**

# PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA) SITE MAP

## PLA Web Site Map

**PLA Site Map**

## Preface, Introduction, Description of Courses

Preface & Acknowledgements (Provides background information on the development of the PLA Program at VSU)

Introduction

- What is prior learning?
- Why has Valdosta State University decided to adopt PLA?
- What is PLA?
- Who is eligible to participate in PLA?
- How should interested students determine if PLA is right for them?
- What are some ways of earning credit for prior learning?
- What are the national criteria for quality assurance in assessing learning for credit?
- What are the advantages of PLA?

Description of Courses

- What kinds of courses are available for PLA credit?
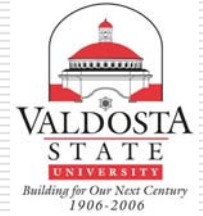- What courses are not available for credit by portfolio?

## Documentation Course

PLA Documentation Course Information

- What is PLA Portfolio development?
- What does the PLA Counselor do?
- How can prior learning be made to match the learning outcomes at Valdosta State University?
- What are the learning outcomes at Valdosta State University?
- How do students registration for the PLA Documentation Course?
- What are the PLA documentation course requirements?
- What are the appropriate PLA Documentation Course enrollment and completion times?
- What should the portfolio for the PLA Documentation Course include?
- How are portfolios evaluated for credit?
- When will students learn what credit they have received?
- Do students get feedback from the portfolio assessors?
- How do students resubmit portfolios?
- How will credit be recorded on students' transcripts?
- PLA Documentation Course Summary

# More on
# Program Evaluation

- ☐ Evaluation of the Portfolio Course:
  - ◼ Kirkpatrick Model – Measure Reaction, Learning, Behavior, & Results
- ☐ Evaluation of the overall effect on adult learners:
  - ◼ Strategic Research & Analysis and Information Management Staff - Tracking Changes Since 2000
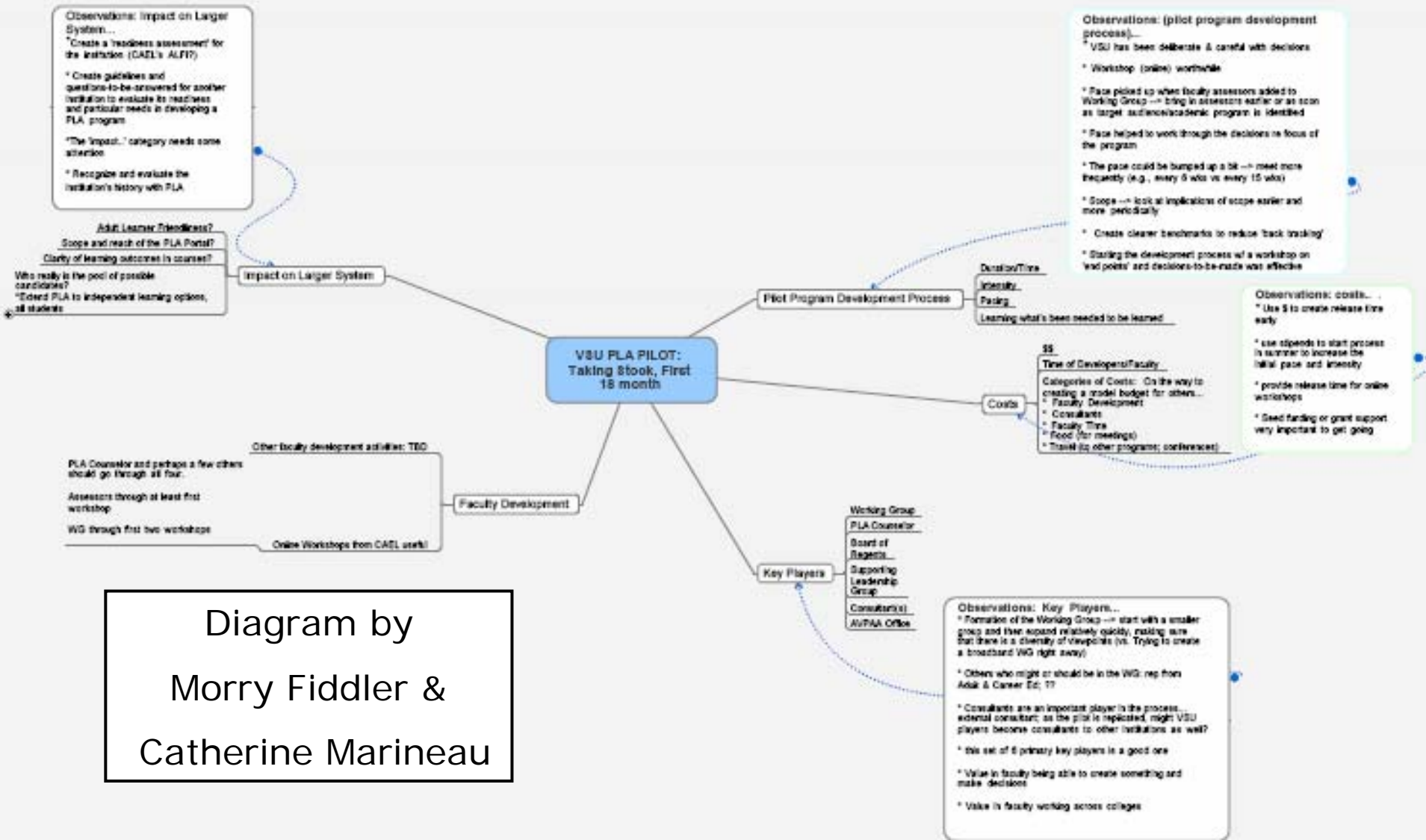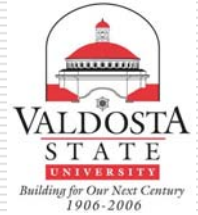- ☐ Discuss Plans for Revisions of PLA Program Based on Pilot Implementation

Diagram by

Morry Fiddler &

Catherine Marineau