



Division of Information Technology

Delivering Innovative, Transformative Solutions

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Who We Are: Our Mission & Vision . . . 3

Executive Summary Report Outline . . . 4

Executive Summary Details

Student Success . . . 6

 Banner Registration . . . 7

 Degree Works Upgrade . . . 8

 Success Portal Upgrade . . . 9

Augmented Academics . . . 11

 Active Learning Spaces . . . 12

 Experiential Learning Opportunities . . . 14

Process Management & Operations . . . 16

 Project Management Office . . . 17

 Pine Hall Renovation . . . 18

 Cloud Storage Solution . . . 20

 Wireless Upgrade & Networking Solutions . . . 22

 Information Security Upgrades . . . 24

Evolution of Technology (*Future Projects*) . . . 26

MyVSU . . . 27

Artificial Intelligence . . . 29

Process Enhancements . . . 31

The Division of Information Technology

Awards & Recognitions . . . 33

What We Do & Division Teams . . . 34

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University landscape, graduation, athletic, and building photos by Paul Leavy, university photographer

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Special thanks to former VSU IT staff Malynda Dorsey for the initial layout

WHO WE ARE: OUR MISSION & VISION

Delivering Technology Solutions and Infrastructure that Foster Academic Excellence and Improve the Student Experience

The Division of Information Technology (IT) manages the majority of Valdosta State University's network communications and computing technologies.

Our purpose is to support the university's mission by expanding access to sound, secure, and sustainable technology infrastructure in terms of business intelligence, instructional technology, information systems, security, networking, and client support.

Learn more about our services by visiting:

www.valdosta.edu/it

To contact us, call 229-245-4357 (HELP) or email solutions@valdosta.edu

Our offices are located in Pine Hall and Oak Street Parking Deck, with supporting staff located throughout campus including Odum Library, and Health Sciences and Business Administration Building.

Mission

Support Valdosta State University's strategic goals through projects that encourage student retention, student success, business continuity, efficiency, and innovation

Vision

Remain a strong, strategic partner in achieving Valdosta State University's goals and objectives by providing transformative technology solutions and direction

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | REPORT OUTLINE

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the Division of Information Technology delivered technology services and solutions that helped the institution further its mission of fueling academic excellence and student success by executing the following projects:

01

STUDENT SUCCESS

Solutions, driven by data and analytics, with a focus on faculty, student, and advisor engagement were enhanced to promote academic success through substantial upgrades to three critical applications: Success Portal, Banner, and Degree Works.

02

AUGMENTED ACADEMICS

A desire to amplify instruction and learning served as the catalyst for improving learning spaces throughout campus and in providing experiential learning opportunities to VSU students through IT internships.

03

PROCESS MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

Both human and capital resources were employed to create a new IT project management office and to renovate Pine Hall. Additionally, the campus wireless network was upgraded; and initial steps were taken to replace a legacy file storage system with Microsoft OneDrive, a more cost effective, cloud-based storage solution. Lastly, providing a more secure work and learning environment was the impetus for the deployment of new security information and event management (SIEM) technology and anti-virus protection software.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY DETAILS

STUDENT SUCCESS

Our top priority.

Information Technology stands on the promise of improving the student experience, which has inspired the enhancement of many existing solutions and services offered at Valdosta State University over the past year.

Specifically, the following comprehensive applications have been enhanced to provide students and their supporting faculty and staff the data, information, and resources needed to not only experience Valdosta State but to succeed:

- Banner
- Degree Works
- Success Portal

01



WE ARE COMMITTED TO
IMPROVING THE STUDENT
EXPERIENCE AND DRIVING
SUCCESS!

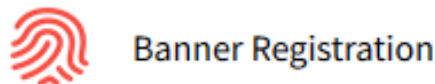
BANNER

Banner is an application that Valdosta State University uses to manage academic information ranging from class registration and scheduling to student financial information and grades. There are two distinct components of the Banner 8 system: Banner web self-service and Banner forms, also known as Banner INB.

Banner web self-service offers unique functionality based on end-user roles. Prospective students are able to check admission status and register for upcoming orientations. Current students are able to add/drop classes, view class schedules, access academic transcripts and view grades, pay fees, and review financial aid.

Faculty members are also granted several privileges within the Banner web self-service system. Those include the ability to view class rosters, the waitlist status, student information, verify attendance, and enter grades.

Banner forms (Banner INB) is a desktop application used by administrators, such as department heads, to perform advanced registration functions.



What's New in Banner - Waitlisting

Waitlisting is a new feature that allows students to place themselves on an electronic waitlist when a class is full and automatically be notified when a seat becomes available. There are a number of benefits to both students and faculty/administrators for enabling the waitlist feature:

- Efficient** {
 - The need to complete manual override forms and seek permission by departments and faculty is removed.
- Simple** {
 - The automatic notification makes the process easier and more user-friendly for students.
- Analytical** {
 - College administrators can track demand for courses and allocate resources based on live data.

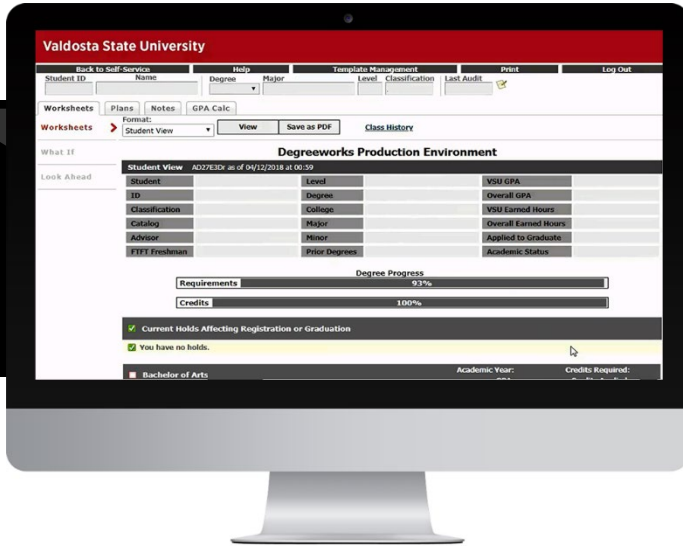
The implemented waitlist feature was a collaborative effort between the Office of the Registrar, IT Applications and Analytics, Data Warehouse, and IT Training & Communication.

LOOKING FORWARD

The division is already preparing for the impending version 9 upgrade. While maintaining a familiar form and function, the upgrade will foster user acceptance by creating a modern look and engaging interface while also introducing new self-service features to facilitate the advising process.

DEGREE WORKS

A Comprehensive Collection of Online Academic Planning Tools



The in-depth software upgrade from version 4.1.2.3 to version 5.0 brought about noticeable changes.

Arming students with the information they need to succeed

A solution to help students know what courses and requirements are needed to graduate in a timely and productive manner



Single Sign-on: Users can now access Degree Works from the MyVSU portal with a single log in. Degree Works is also integrated with Banner and the Success Portal.



Better Management: Several behind-the-scenes changes were applied to ensure better data management and workflow.

Internal processes were streamlined to help students and advisors understand a student's current academic status faster.



New Advisor Tool: Advisors now can utilize the newly designed Plans tool to create academic plans based on a student's future academic goals. Pre-defined plans, or templates for particular programs of study, can be created ahead of time and loaded for student advising.

VSYOU SUCCESS PORTAL

Transferring Data into Success Stories

Since its inception in 2012, the Valdosta State University Success Portal combines early alert flagging with predictive analytics to track and improve student performance – with an overall goal of increasing retention and graduating more students.

Faculty, advisors, and student support staff are able to assess students' academic performance and risk indicators by using the Portal's in-house designed interactive dashboards, academic profiles, and messaging tools.

Within the Portal, faculty who identify students with high-risk factors (i.e., poor attendance or performance) can communicate with supporting offices such as Academic Advising, Academic Support Center, Housing and Residence Life, Counseling Center, and the Access Office in an effort to provide behind-the-scenes

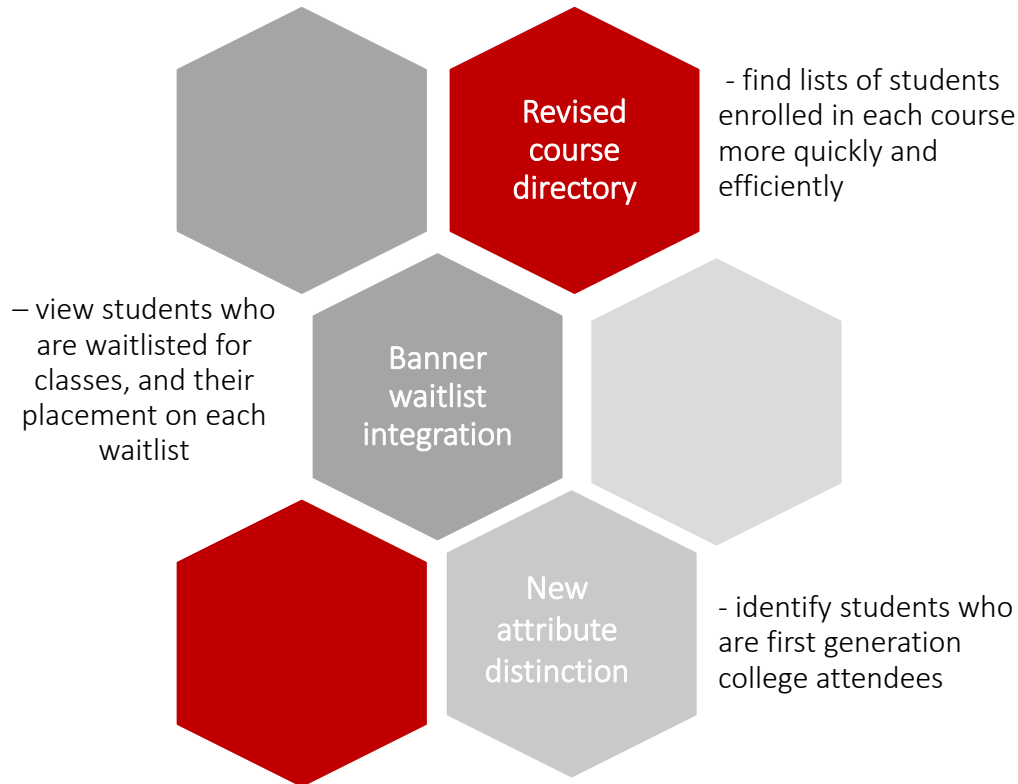
intervention strategies and centralized communications.

The mobile-device friendly and agile system integrates data from commonly-used applications such as Banner and Degree Works; allowing faculty and staff to view and update student information without the need for multiple, separate logins. Practical but dynamic features allow faculty to apply categorizing filters, to create simultaneous alert flags, and to view class rosters in listed or photo flip card view. Furthermore, information from the Portal is used to determine the messages and attribute-driven ads displayed on the MyVSU Student Portal dashboard.

*Faculty who have used the Portal consistently have found it not only contributes to the **improvement of student performance**, but serves as an effective way of building **stronger working relationships with their students**.*



NEW SUCCESS PORTAL FEATURES



“ The portal allows faculty to see they’ve done all they possibly could have to help the student. It allows them to keep track of what they’ve done, and how they may be able to improve.

--Keisha Roberts, data warehouse information analyst ”

A University-Wide Effort

As an initiative of the VSU Student Success Council, implementation of the Success Portal system is a collaborative effort among the Division of Information Technology, the Division of Academic Affairs, the Division of Student Success, and eLearning.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Information Technology is transitioning VSU’s Athletics Department from the GradesFirst system to the Student Success Portal– providing a more streamlined system for viewing student progress. Utilizing the Success Portal will also allow instructors, coaches, and advisors in Athletics to work alongside other university departments to ensure that student athletes are successful.

02

AMPLIFYING INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING THROUGH INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIPS



AUGMENTED ACADEMICS

During the past academic year, Information Technology has responded to the need to support and augment instruction and learning by ensuring classrooms and labs are equipped with technologies needed for innovative and engaged student learning experiences by developing active learning spaces.

Furthermore, the division has partnered with colleges within the university to provide experiential learning opportunities to interested students by providing paid internships; thus allowing students to gain first-hand work and learning experience.

Flexibility. Collaboration. Opportunity.

ACTIVE LEARNING SPACES

Collaboration in the Classroom and Beyond

Active learning spaces promote and enhance collaboration and interaction, while still supporting more traditional teaching styles.

What do you envision when you think of a classroom? Traditionally, people imagine rows of desks with an instructor standing or seated at a larger desk or podium at the front of the room. There may be a projector or a whiteboard where content is displayed and the instructor shares their expertise while students take notes, supplementing what they learned with activities they complete at home. While this is the type of classroom design that is standard for a lecture-based pedagogy, what if a classroom could be this and more? Picture a classroom where an instructor could still position seats into rows for a lecture but could also change the arrangement as-needed into a circle where students and the instructor could feel like equals in a discussion.

Then instructor could assign students to tables where they could work together as a group and then share their group's results, through a projector or series of televisions, with the rest of the class. Later that day, a different instructor may ask learners to individually perform online research using their personal laptops and mobile devices and then may call on volunteers to share their results on a big screen while leading a class discussion.

There are limitless methods and practices for teaching and in the 21st century a classroom that only supports one is inadequate for higher learning. (As a result, VSU adopted an active learning space model and IT is helping to bring that concept to fruition.)

In Fall 2017 and Spring 2018, VSU Division of Information Technology, working closely with faculty from the Department of Communication Arts, designed and built their **first** active learning space classroom on campus.



Augmented Academics

The Communication Arts classroom contains four student hubs, which are tables with attached televisions that can be shared by students. Students can bring their laptops and mobile devices and in just a few clicks wireless project what they see on their device to the television screen. If the instructor wants the whole class to see one group's screen, they can click a button on a remote control that corresponds to that hub, and the image is shared to each hub's television as well as two larger televisions at the front of the room. Each hub also has a whiteboard that students can use to brainstorm. Finally, the classroom has a camera and microphone system to facilitate collaboration with distance learners. Since the chairs, whiteboards, and the instructor's podium are on wheels, the furniture can be moved into an arrangement that supports the faculty member's pedagogy with minimal loss of instructional time.

As a result of IT Classroom Support and Network Services staff's diligence in ensuring a worry-free experience for both instructors and students in the existing active learning classrooms, other VSU departments have now expressed interest in transforming their classrooms and learning spaces.



“ *Technical Support Services is taking a proactive approach towards implementing active classroom environments throughout the VSU academic spaces.*

Our division is committed to applying innovation and diverse learning by allowing students and teachers to collaborate wirelessly through their mobile devices.

--Sterlin Sanders, director of TSS **”**

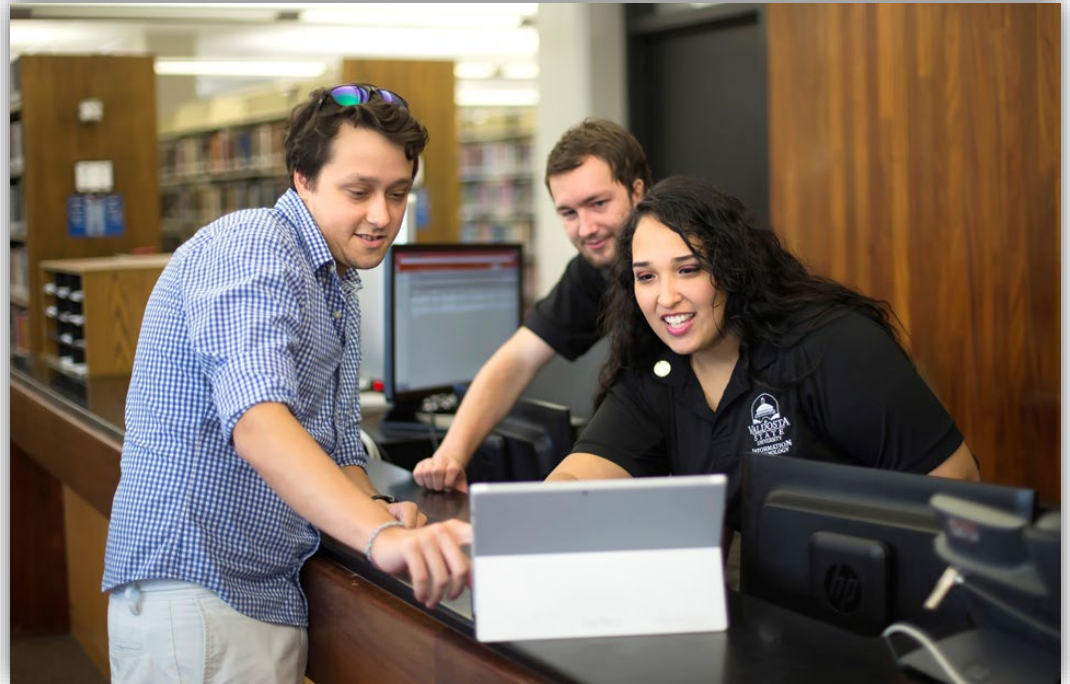
Summer 2018 Upgrades	Fall 2018 Planned Upgrades
10 Active learning spaces	10 Active learning spaces
9 Wireless smart classrooms	25 Wireless smart classrooms
1 Workstation lab	3 All-in-one labs
	51 New teacher workstations

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Established in 2007 as a partnership with the Department of Adult and Career Education, IT has been hosting internships to allow students to pursue experiential learning while simultaneously satisfying academic requirements. These programs emphasize in-field experience, professional project and portfolio development, and collaboration within a community of professionals. While these opportunities have been excellent for students seeking opportunities to improve skills in communications, computer installation and repair, and customer service; some IT careers require more specific skill sets.

Opening doors for professional growth

As a result, we are proud to announce this year, we have partnered with the Department of Computer Science to expand our internship programs and provide opportunities for specialized IT career and professional development. We seek candidates who are self-motivators, strong communicators, and eager to challenge themselves while gaining knowledge and skills that can transfer to their future careers. Meanwhile, students in academic programs with practicum or service learning hours may be able to use the IT internship to fulfill those requirements, with the approval of their academic advisor or Career Opportunities.



We have a number of success stories from our past student development and internship programs; with students joining industry leaders, like IBM and Apple, after graduating. As technology is a field that constantly evolves, we continuously evaluate the employment landscape to help equip our interns with the skills they need to succeed after they graduate. Finally, while we are pleased to share these new offerings with our future IT professionals, we likewise have numerous opportunities for students who are not pursuing IT-specific career paths.

Four new internship programs that will be available at the beginning of this Fall:



PROGRAMMING

Students who wish to enhance classroom learning in the field of programming can apply for our Applications and Analytics Internship. Interns will assist in business process analysis and meet with stakeholders to gather specifications. Based on those specifications, they will design, code, and implement systems that will meet stakeholder needs. They will also develop documentation for both the stakeholders and other programmers on their team.



INFORMATION SECURITY

Students who would like to augment studies in the field of information security can apply for our Information Security Internship. Interns will assist in facilitating the development of information security requirements, policies, and procedures. They will also participate in daily security operations, such as maintenance of our campus firewall and antivirus, while also promoting a safe and secure information technology environment. Finally, depending on their level of prior skill, they may participate in incident response and forensic investigation.



NETWORKING

Students who are interested in service learning hours to complement their course work in the field of networking can apply for our Network Services Internship. Interns will assist in the installation and repair of networking equipment, such as network switches and cabling. They will also provide support for users experiencing difficulties connecting to the network. Finally, they will work closely with both Network Services and Information Security to establish policies on acceptable network use.



WEB DEVELOPMENT

Students who would like to gain practical experience to supplement existing studies in web development and databases can apply for our Web Services Internship position. Interns will assist in the creation and maintenance of custom web applications. They will analyze existing processes to identify areas of improvement and they will work closely with IT staff to integrate data from databases into the university's public website.

PROCESS MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

This past year, the Division of Information Technology maximized personnel, technology, and infrastructure to transform organizational processes, impact the way we make decisions, and elevate functional operations:

- Project Management Office
- Pine Hall Renovation
- Cloud Storage Solution
- Wireless Upgrade & Networking Solutions
- Information Security Upgrades

03



MAXIMIZING RESOURCES
THAT MAXIMIZE THE
UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE!

PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Staffed by Information Technology Certified Project Managers (ITCPM), the mission of the newly created Information Technology Project Management Office (IT-PMO) is to provide a division-wide approach to identifying, prioritizing, and successfully executing a technology portfolio of initiatives and projects that are aligned with the university's strategic goals and vision while encouraging collaboration, standardization, and overall improvement of the academic community.

The IT-PMO handles a number of tasks including but not limited to attending stakeholder meetings, reallocating IT staff and other resources, and maintaining a portfolio of all projects. Documentation of completed projects are archived by the PMO to serve as a reference point for similar future projects and aid in drafting reports to share with university leadership and pertaining colleges and divisions.



- 🔗 Ensure project plans are implemented on schedule, and within scope and budget
- 🔗 Improve reporting and monitoring strategies to ensure intentional alignment
- 🔗 Balance portfolios and manage resource capacities
- 🔗 Mature the project management organizational level to one of strategic execution excellence

Transforming the **Culture** of Information Technology

PINE HALL RENOVATION

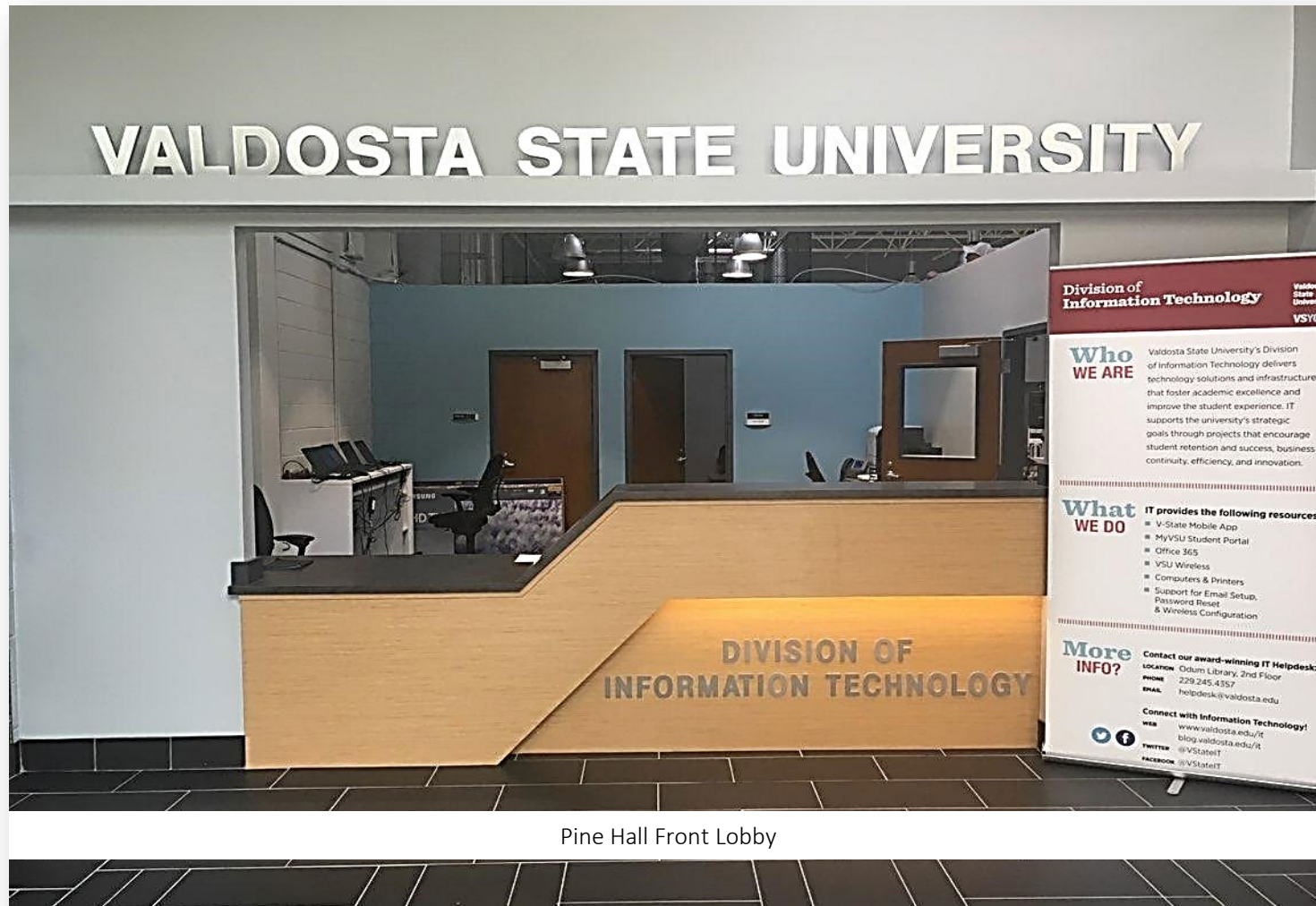
After a nine-month-long extensive renovation that began in June, 2017, the doors of VSU Pine Hall were re-opened in March, 2018. The University celebrated the **newly redesigned home of several IT teams** by hosting a ribbon cutting ceremony on April 9. Honored guests and speakers included President Richard Carvajal and Legislators John LaHood and Jason Shaw as well as Chief Information Officer Brian Haugabrook. Guided by designated IT staff and students assistants, over **100 guests toured the facility** and were given a peek into the inner-workings of those areas of IT that support campus classrooms and office technologies.



Brian Haugabrook, Richard Carvajal, Joseph Newton, Preyah James, John LaHood, Jason Shaw, Rachel Martin, and Sterlin Sanders
(Pictured from left to right)

Process Mgt & Ops

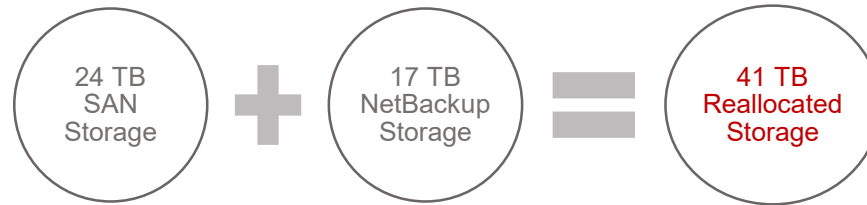
The renovation has allowed Pine Hall to not only be the hub for Information Technology but to also transform into a **center for student and faculty engagement**. A key change was establishing a **collaboration space** where students and instructors can test and discover technology found in active learning spaces. The space allows users to bring their own PC, Mac, Android, and IOS devices to **facilitate their academic success** in a custom setting.



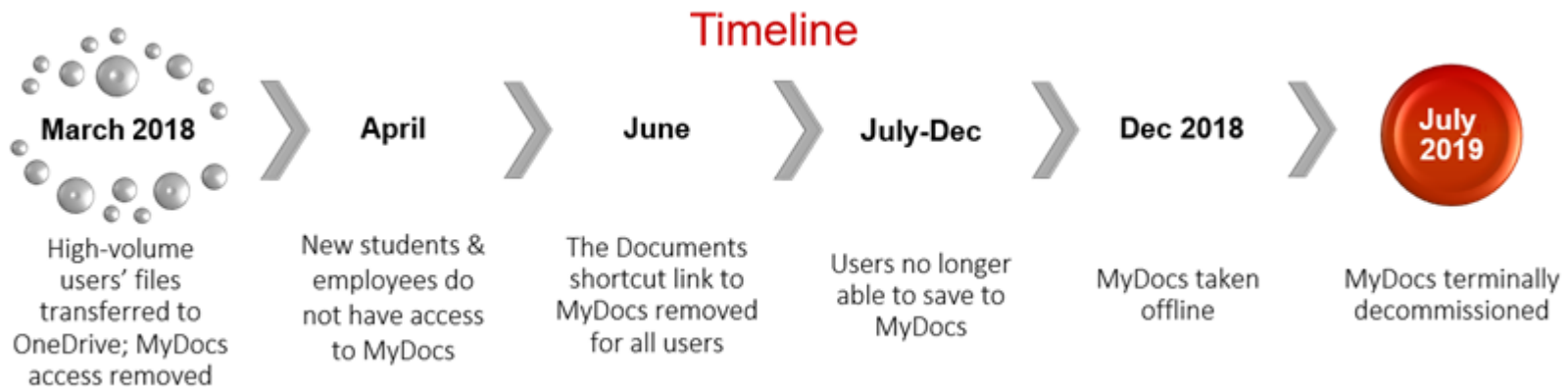
Pine Hall Front Lobby

CLOUD STORAGE SOLUTION

As an ongoing effort to offer effective and dynamic technologies, the Division of Information Technology initiated the process to retire the VSU Network Drive known as v:\mydocs or simply MyDocs. MyDocs is a multifaceted service that provides general file sharing to faculty, staff, and students for “personal VSU data.” It has been in operation for more than 10 years; during which, the system has become increasingly complex by the need to duplicate files and expand on-premise storage space. The amount of data stored is over 20 terabytes (TB) and can only be accessed while on campus. By eliminating the service, we **decrease complexity** of on-campus resources, **redirect staffing** to focus on other file share services used for business and academic purposes and **promote more efficient and cost-effective technologies**.



The decommissioning of MyDocs began in July 2017, with research and analysis and the submission of the plan by the IT Workgroups team. The execution of the project is being performed in phases beginning with the transfer of end-users’ files and concluding with total inaccessibility to the MyDocs folder by December 2018, and termination by July 2019.



Providing solutions that impact performance and function

As an alternative to MyDocs, the University will migrate to using Microsoft OneDrive cloud storage allowing us to implement a more productive and cost-saving storage solution. OneDrive is an existing component of VSU's Microsoft Office 365 that can be accessed through the MyVSU portal and allows users to save and retrieve files on and off campus from almost any device.

The utilization of OneDrive offers the VSU community a number of benefits:

01

- Students, Staff and Faculty can save up to 1TB of data and upload a variety of file formats (i.e., documents, video, music, and photos).

02

- Users can work from anywhere and keep their files up to date by syncing their OneDrive library to their mobile devices and desktop/laptop computers.

03

- Users can share and edit files with others in real time by optimizing Office 365 integrated applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote.

Learn more about the migration project and tips for using OneDrive, by visiting:
www.valdosta.edu/it > [MyDocs to OneDrive Migration](#)

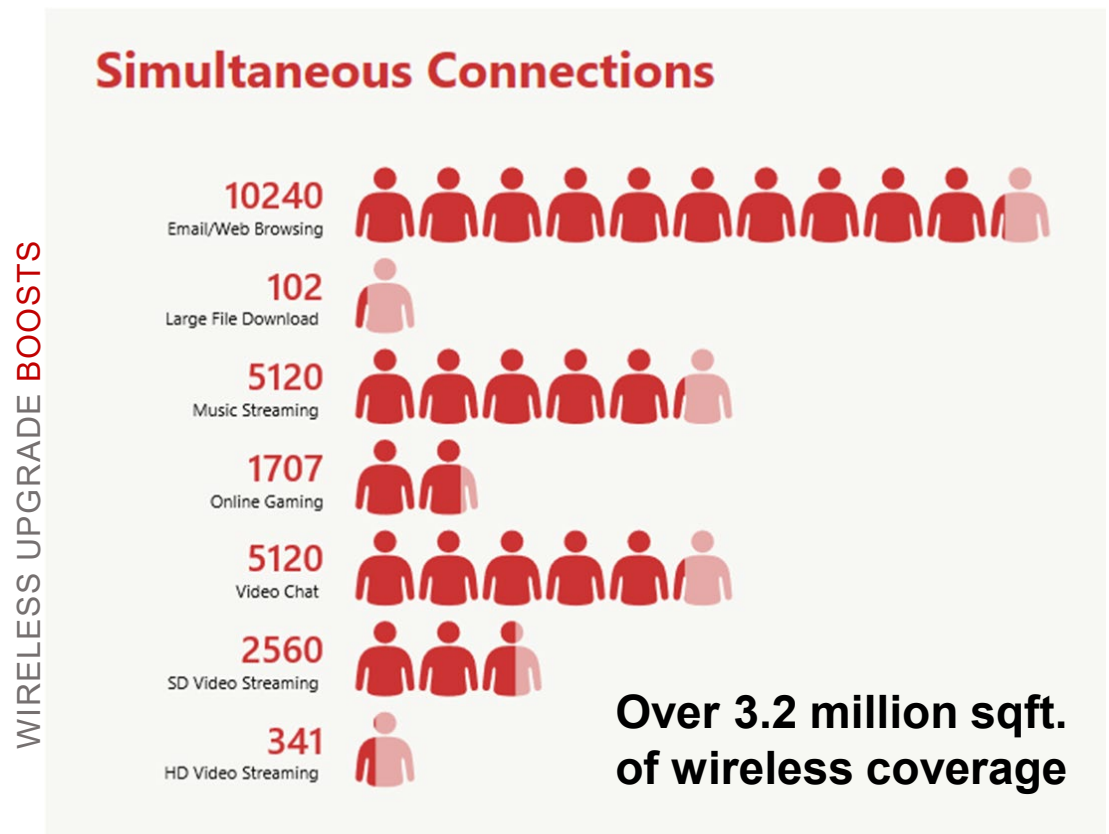
WIRELESS UPGRADE & NETWORKING SOLUTIONS

Wireless Upgrade

Overall, the University's upgraded wireless network provides more users access to a faster and more reliable connectivity throughout the entire campus including all nine residence halls, academic and administrative buildings, auditoriums, and dining spaces. Approximately 1600 access points (AP) are located in high-density usage areas to support over 3.2 million square feet of coverage. Advanced caching capabilities were implemented to support super-fast iOS updates and high-definition (HD) media streaming (i.e. Netflix and YouTube). IT is committed to ensuring that the solutions and services provided met the campus needs.

Being Connected = Being Engaged

We have increased the bandwidth for the campus residential network from 2 gigabits to 5 gigabits—a 150% increase.



Networking Solutions

Going beyond classrooms and offices, Network Services worked closely with local vendors and a national entity to bring the VState experience from the field and court to viewers everywhere



Solutions that excite

Football Stadium Live Broadcasts: Working with a local contractor, IT established a direct connection from the visitors side of the stadium to the home side to live broadcast video captured by our campus Mass Media team and ESPN. The footage was displayed on strategically placed televisions near the home concession stand so spectators would not miss a moment of the action.

Stadium Wireless Coverage Increase: So students could have better access to the Internet during events, additional networking infrastructure was installed to increase wireless coverage at the stadium.

Basketball Broadcasts: Network Services worked with ESPN to setup the globally-recognized sports channel's broadcast truck at the VSU PE Complex in order to stream exciting VState basketball games on the network's channel.

INFORMATION SECURITY UPGRADES

The Technology Behind Achieving Peace of Mind

While safety is a top priority for Valdosta State University, it cannot be pursued on a single front. Cases of identity theft, malware (malicious software), and scam emails are on the rise worldwide. As computing is a field that continues to evolve on a daily basis, hackers are also utilizing new technologies to find more sophisticated ways to deceive users and find avenues to attack computer systems. As a result, it is the goal of our division's Information Security team to stay vigilant against emerging threats.

Two-Factor Authentication

Based on a combination of research, best practices, and changes in technologies and policies, we have implemented a multi-phased plan to provide secure channels for communication and limit exposure to threats. Last year, we implemented two-factor authentication in response to an increased demand from faculty and staff for peace of mind when logging in to their VSU online accounts.

This extra layer of security for access to payroll and other sensitive information has been added through login verification via phone call, text message, or Microsoft's mobile app.



PROTECTING THE
UNIVERSITY'S
DIGITAL
INFORMATION

Security Incident and Event Management

In spring, we also made one of the starkest changes to our campus information security--the deployment of a new Security Incident and Event Management (SIEM) system. This system monitors our campus network for threats on a 24/7 basis and notifies our security administrators when it detects something that is potentially malicious. As a result, this system allows us to act quickly when we discover a compromised computer or account to prevent the spread of infections, protect our users' data and information, and gain an advantage by staying a step ahead of hackers.

- For information on security awareness and scam prevention, visit www.valdosta.edu/it/security
- To report suspicious emails, forward them to abuse@valdosta.edu

Blazer Guardian App

Last year, we worked with University Police to provide the latest in security and alert technology to ensure the overall safety of our students, faculty, and staff. The Blazer Guardian app allows students to create safety profiles that streamline communication with University Police as well as friends, family members, and classmates. The app also features a safety timer (virtual escort) which can be used to alert police when a student has not arrived at his or her destination within a specific amount of time. The Blazer Guardian app also includes a feature called 'Send a Tip', which allows students to send personal or anonymous text messages and photo messages to the UPD if they are in danger or see someone else in danger, but are unable to call and report the incident. Lastly, one of the most important features of the app is a panic button that immediately provides police with the student's profile and location information once the panic button is pressed or the safety timer expires.



Blazer Guardian is available within the VState Mobile App or as a stand-alone app that can be downloaded from iTunes or Google Play.

Anti-Virus Protection Software

This year, we have expanded our focus to enhancing protections for our campus computers as well as the network that connects these machines to critical academic and business resources. In Spring 2018, we began the process of transitioning to a new anti-virus software package for campus computers. Our Desktop Support and Workgroup Services teams led this project, which involved not only replacing the anti-virus software for campus desktop computers, but also coordinating the collection of campus laptops to install the new software. In addition to scanning for and cleaning infected files on a computer, the new anti-virus software has a streamlined, unobtrusive interface to avoid interfering with productivity and can even detect and warn users of websites that contain embedded malicious code.

Despite these advances in technology, the effectiveness of information security still relies heavily on students and employees exercising safe online habits. Some examples include choosing a strong password for accounts, logging off of public computers when leaving a classroom or computer lab, and knowing how to identify if an email is legitimate or just a phishing scam (used to steal passwords). As a result, we are equally thankful to the members of the VSU community for doing their part in protecting our institution.

2018-2019 Academic Year

THE EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY

Future projects that will revolutionize how we provide support and enhance student engagement



MyVSU



MyVSU

MYVSU

The popular MyVSU portal is undergoing a significant facelift to improve performance and customization of the applications that are available to VSU students, staff, and faculty.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

VSU IT will utilize artificial intelligence technology to create a more effective, quick and accessible system for answering frequently asked questions by the VSU community.

PROCESS ENHANCEMENTS

Improvements will be made to fundamental applications and processes: automated forms & digital signatures, student opinion of instruction, system status alerts, and the user support portal.

THE NEW MYVSU

Giving Students Ownership of their Academic Successes

In 2015, Valdosta State University was recognized for our enhanced Student Success Portal, an early alert system with predictive analytics to allow academic departments and advisors to track and improve student performance. With the upcoming deployment of a **new MyVSU portal**, we will be putting the same tools in the hands of the students themselves, allowing them the opportunity to take ownership of their learning and engagement.



While the current MyVSU portal offers them one-stop access to their email, course registration, and online course content, the new MyVSU will feature improvements that includes the following:



ACADEMIC PROGRESS TRACKING

Students will be able to instantly view their academic progress, including credits hours completed and remaining, helping them to stay motivated as they watch their progress bar fill from semester to semester. Students interested in a more detailed roadmap can use Degree Works to see a list of individual courses they still need to complete.



COURSE SCHEDULE/ RESPONSIVE DESIGN

Students can view their daily class schedule, including the location where their classes are held. Since the new MyVSU portal supports responsive design in order to re-size automatically, it is perfect for students who are on the go and looking to view this information on their mobile phones or devices.



MY SUCCESS TEAM

The new MyVSU portal gives every student immediate access to their own personal success team. By clicking on the picture or name of their Academic Advisor, Financial Aid Advisor, Career Counselor, or Faculty Mentor, the student can get in touch through email or over the phone.



MY ENGAGEMENT SCORE

Studies have shown that student engagement is not limited to the classroom, and students can also gain vital experience from participating in campus events and organizations. When students do so and scan their VSU 1Card (ID card), their participation is added to the “My Engagement Score” section of the new MyVSU Portal. Not only is this excellent information for updating a resume after graduation, but it also allows students to compare interests and easily register for events.



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

In addition to the tools found in the current MyVSU portal, the new version will include announcements regarding registration deadlines, midterms and final exam dates, and other key event dates. Students will also receive personalized content and notifications such as their available financial aid and course withdrawal limitations.

The new MyVSU portal will be deployed in Fall 2018. The anticipated changes will provide convenience to students on the go and help build engagement through participation in campus events and organizations. Coupled with a personalized success team, progress tracking and notifications, students will have the tools at their disposal to truly take ownership of their academic progress and success.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Breaking the Boundaries of Superior Customer Service

What is artificial intelligence (AI)? It is the process of using a machine to simulate the natural decision-making processes of humans, such as learning or problem solving. When you think of AI, you may immediately imagine the life-like robots found in popular science fiction movies or technologies that are projected for the future, like self-driving cars. However, what you may not know is that AI is already firmly embedded in some of the technologies we use on a day-to-day basis. For example, when you receive emails, an AI system filters out spam using a simple set of rules, so you don't have to do so yourself. Likewise, if you use a mobile banking app on your phone, it uses AI to decipher the handwriting on checks you may deposit.

AI can be applied a number of ways to provide self-help options or make processes more efficient, and this is no different from the approaches we are looking to achieve with the VSU Solutions Center. Using the IBM Watson platform, we will be implementing a type of AI known as a chatbot, which holds online text conversations with users to try to direct them to the information or steps they need to overcome a technical issue. For example, if you were to type in "How do I connect to VSU's wireless network?", the chatbot could respond, "I would be happy to assist you in connecting to our wireless network. We have some steps on our website at the link below. Can you give them a try?"



VSU AI Development Team and IBM Representatives

1st Row (left to right): Clinton Cauley, Dominique Adkins, Charles Beller (IBM), and Alexander Tonetti (IBM)

2nd Row (left to right): Ralph Gosnell, Tyler Angelier, Jahson Saint-Louis, Ryan Pearson, and David Pulliam

Evolution of Technology

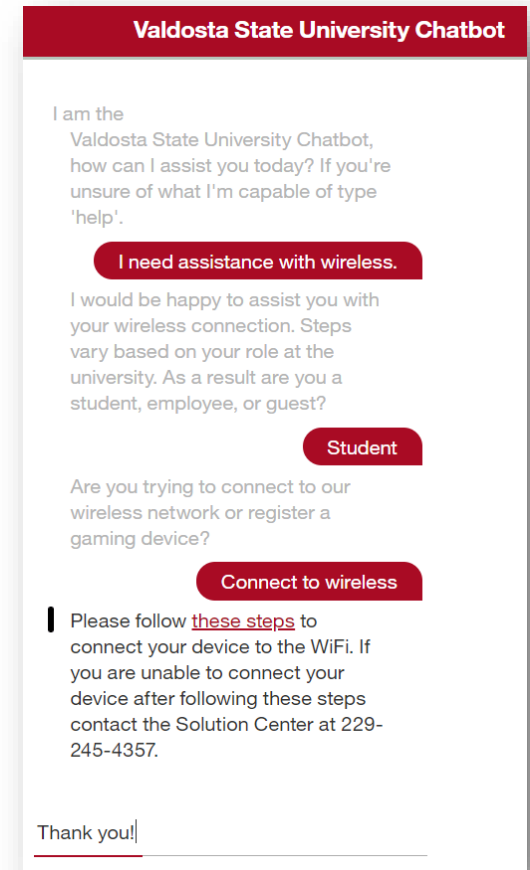
The Solutions Center is open 7 days a week, including evenings and weekends. Each year, their team of 20 members handle over 65 thousand calls and over a thousand service tickets. However, much of the information needed to resolve common technical issues, such as forgotten passwords, can be found on the Information Technology website. As a result, an AI technology that can help users find these articles will provide substantial time savings allowing representatives at the Solutions Center to focus on resolving more complex technical issues. In addition, while it would require a substantial budgetary increase to staff the Solutions Center 24/7, there is very little cost to making the chatbot available around the clock.

The Solutions Center chatbot is a proof-of-concept for a greater long-term goal. If it is successful, the product we have selected can be expanded to aid other departments that receive calls that are low in complexity, but high in volume. While we have a dedicated team of programming developers working on the initial AI chatbot implementation, its final form would not require other departments to do the same.

This is due to a discovery component of the product that allows it to find information that has already been included on VSU websites; for example, frequently asked questions about advising or housing. It can then compose responses based on the information it has found. As a result, if the department is already maintaining up-to-date information on their website, they will not need to invest additional time into getting the chat bot.

Our development team recently attended a highly-focused training session with IBM representatives. They were impressed with the company's ability to not only help our university meet its short-term goals, but also with the technologies needed to support future innovations.

We look forward to sharing more about the Solutions Center AI Chatbot when it arrives this fall.



PROCESS ENHANCEMENTS

SYSTEM STATUS ALERTS

The system will provide real-time status updates on major VSU IT services such as Banner and data networks. Users who visit the site will be able to view critical information about past, present, and future IT service interruptions. Visitors will also be able to subscribe to receive alerts in order to be proactive and adjust their activities around upcoming planned maintenance windows.



STUDENT OPINION OF INSTRUCTION

The new Student Opinion of Instruction system will be designed to allow departments to have more control of and input to the content and types of survey questions they wish to ask their students. The intention is to facilitate departments in their efforts to pursue targeted improvements in their programs by gathering more meaningful data.

AUTOMATED FORMS & DIGITAL SIGNATURES

In an effort to not only be environmentally conscious, but to also streamline document-heavy processes, we are exploring products that will help departments migrate existing paper forms to online electronic versions. For some of the more sensitive documents, these forms can be digitally signed with a user's secured login information in lieu of a physical signature.

USER SUPPORT PORTAL

This enhanced portal will provide an easy-to-use self-service option for end-users to create and check the status of IT help requests and will be accessed through the web or a mobile app. The portal will be beneficial to users who frequently place requests on behalf of their department or are needing to report technology issues outside of the Solutions Center operating hours.

A series of technology solutions to enrich customer relationships and develop multi-step automated communication plans

The Division of Information Technology

Delivering Innovative, Transformative Solutions

A TEAM WITH A PASSION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

VSU Division of Information Technology has established itself as a leader among IT teams nationwide because of its award-winning team of technology experts!

Team Awards & Recognitions

Chancellor's Service Excellence, Gold Award - 2008, 2014
University Business Models of Efficiency – 2013, 2015
Ovum On the Radar Award for Innovation in Analytics and Big Data – 2015
VSU invited to be the keynote presentation for HEUG Asia and HEUG Down Under – 2015
Southeastern Association of Housing Officers Service Award – 2008
CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY- 2014

Individual Awards & Recognitions

119 "I Caught You Caring" Recognitions
Excellence in Service: Classified Staff, Benjamin Li – 2017
VSU Distinguished Alumni Award, Joseph Newton – 2016
Computer World - Premier 100 IT Leaders, Brian Haugabrook – 2015
Employee of the Semester Nominee, Isaac Barton – 2015
Student Employee of the Year Runner Up, Chad Lawson – 2015
USG Service Excellence Award for Individual Service Honorable Mention, Sterlin Sanders – 2014
Employee of the Semester, Adrian Taylor – 2014

WHAT WE DO & DIVISION TEAMS

Deliver innovative and transformative technology solutions, team by team



IT LEADERSHIP

- Strategic planning and direction



APPLICATIONS & ANALYTICS

- Application development, integration, and business intelligence



ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Prioritization and application support



INFORMATION SECURITY AND NETWORKING

- Campus network and safeguards



INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

- Data center and systems



IT PROCUREMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- Technology purchases and phones



IT SERVICES

- First contact and communications



TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

- Classroom and office technologies

IT LEADERSHIP

Under the direction of the CIO, the leadership group lays the foundation for the division through assessing the needs of campus, strategic directives, and coordinating efforts of the various teams found in IT. This team ensures that technology is not only properly implemented and adopted, but also assists in fulfilling the strategic goals of the university.



STAFF

Left to Right:

Brian Haugabrook, Chief Information Officer

Sterlin Sanders, Director of Technical Support Services

Isaac "Ike" Barton, Associate Chief Information Officer

Benjamin Li, Assistant Director of IT Services

Joseph "Joe" Newton, Chief Technology Officer

Jason Gaskins, Director of Applications and Analytics

Gary Miller, Chief Information Security Officer

Not Pictured:

Dwayne Trouille, Assistant Director of Infrastructure Services

Gwendolyn Kyles, Assistant to the Chief Information Officer

Credentials:

Degrees

Master's

Bachelor's

Certifications

Project Managers

Program Manager

Purchasers

Process Improvement

Hardware/Software

Network/Security

APPLICATIONS & ANALYTICS

The Applications and Analytics team is comprised of experts in the areas of programming, database management, software development, and web development. These experts deliver custom applications and dashboards integrated with data sources such as the Banner registration system to provide business intelligence platforms that can be leveraged by university leadership and departments.

STAFF

Left to Right:

Jason Gaskins, Director

Keisha Roberts, Data Warehouse Information Analyst

Nicholas Clinite, Programmer Analyst Specialist

Not Pictured:

Nijah Bryant, Senior Data Science Developer



Credentials

Degrees

Master's

Bachelor's

Certifications

Process Improvement & Database



ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

STAFF

Left to Right:

Isaac Barton, Associate Chief Information Officer
Ellida Stout, Computer Operator I
Pepper Croft, Project Manager
Clint Cauley, Programmer Analyst Associate
Greg Henderson, IT Principal Systems Analyst
David Pulliam, Programmer Analyst Specialist

Not Pictured

Linnie Kinard, Programmer Analyst Associate
Ralph Gosnell, Programmer Analyst Associate

Enterprise Applications and Project Management enhances the business process for university departments by identifying needs, prioritizing related projects in alignment with university goals, and the development and support of enterprise and custom applications to help support these needs.



Credentials:

Degrees

Master's

Bachelor's

Certifications

Certified Project Managers

Process Improvement Certified Staff

Hardware/Software Certified Staff

Data Center/Server Certified Staff



INFORMATION SECURITY & NETWORKING

The Information Security and Networking team works to ensure a safe, protective, and stable flow of information from various critical systems used through the university across both the wired and wireless campus networks. This team also promotes users awareness to strengthen the resilience of the university by limiting security-related threats. This team works closely with University Police to ensure safety campus-wide.



STAFF

Left to Right:

Gary Miller, Chief Information Security Officer
Joshua Bass, Information Security Assistant
Cathy Sowa, Information Security Associate
Rocky Rothwell, Network Services Engineer
Ghufran Ahmed, Network Operations Manager

Not Pictured:

Alfred Reed, Network Services Associate
Dustin Watson, Network Services Engineer

Credentials:

Degrees

Master's

Bachelor's

Certifications

Network/Security Certified Staff

Data Center/Server Certified Staff

Hardware/Software Certified Staff

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Infrastructure Services manages a state-of-the-art data center that houses the university's enterprise and auxiliary systems. This team is comprised of three units: Systems Operations supports hardware for Banner, MyVSU, and Degree Works; Workgroup Systems provides Tier 3 support for Active Directory services, Office 365, and campus file and printer sharing; and Auxiliary Systems provides support for 1Card services, Parking and Transportation applications, vending services and the Persona door lock system.



STAFF

Front Row (left to right)

Dwayne Trouille, Assistant Director
Steve Cline, Asst Director/Auxiliary Sys Manager
Jeremy Scott, Systems Services Manager
Jacob Humes, Computer Operator I
Danny McKee, Lead Database Engineer

Second Row (left to right):

Michael Anderson, Systems Services Associate
Hunter Baxter, Computer Operator I
Grant Sloan, Systems Services Associate
Mike Johns, Database Services Specialist
Jody Hudnall, Systems Services Assistant

Third Row (left to right):

Bobby Wes Duke, Systems Services Associate
Kenneth Gutierrez, Systems Services Specialist
Travis Nolley, Systems Services Specialist

Back Row (left to right):

Clifford Giddens, Systems Services Associate
Brian Truter, Systems Services Associate

Not Pictured

Michael Young, Systems Services Associate

Credentials:

Degrees

Master's
Bachelor's

Certifications

Data Center/Server Certified Staff
Network/Security Certified Staff
Hardware/Software Certified Staff
Customer Service Certified Staff



IT PROCUREMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

This branch of IT advises the campus on technology purchases while handling the receiving and deployment of hardware and software and maintains the University's telecommunications systems.



STAFF

Front Row (left to right):

Joseph "Joe" Newton, Chief Technology Officer
Shawn Gibbons, Telecommunications Support Specialist
Markaysa Robinson, Computer Services Associate

Back Row (left to right):

Ricky Wisenbaker, Network Services Associate
Wade Bugby, Computer Services Specialist
David Golden, Network Services Specialist

Credentials:

Degrees

Master's Degrees
Bachelor's Degrees

Certifications

Certified Purchasers
Network/Security Certified Staff
Hardware/Software Certified Staff
Process Improvement Certified Staff



IT SERVICES

STAFF

Front Row (left to right):

Benjamin Li, Assistant Director

Sheila Hall, Instructional Technology Specialist

Rachel Martin, Computer Services Specialist

Back Row (left to right):

Todd Mitchell, Computer Operator I

Bailey Raffield, Computer Operator I

Quinncy Thomas, Computer Services Coordinator

IT Services is the frontline for inbound and outbound communication, as well as ambassadors and innovators of the customer service experience provided by the division. This area is also the “Voice of the Customer” ensuring that needs are communicated to the appropriate IT branches to resolve technology issues and support upcoming technology initiatives.

Credentials:

Degrees

Master’s

Bachelor’s

Certifications

Customer Service Certified Staff

Certified Project Managers

Hardware/Software Certified Staff

Process Improvement Certified Staff





TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

STAFF

Back Row (left to right):

Sterlin Sanders, Director

Jeff Shipley, Computer Services Specialist

Adrian Taylor, Computer Services Coordinator

Doug Jordan, Computer Services Specialist

Front Row (left to right):

Brian Anderson, Systems Services Coordinator

Bryan Davis, Computer Operator I

Sarah Bring, Computer Services Specialist

Not Pictured:

Wesley Babcock, Computer Services Specialist

Technical Support Services handles first and second tier support services, which include classroom and desktop support as well as helpdesk and technical response. The team is comprised of technicians who deliver immediate end-user support and application managers who specialize in software that can be found on most computers such as Deep Freeze and LANDesk.



Credentials:

Degrees

Master's

Bachelor's

Certifications

Certified Project Manager

Certified Purchasers

Hardware/Software Certified Staff

Classroom/Projector Certified Staff

Network/Security Certified Staff



IT STUDENT ASSISTANTS

Representatives from each area of IT that employs student assistants.

IT student assistants are spread out across all departments of IT and come from many different majors. They often serve as the frontline to clients by completing work orders, assisting their team members, and coming up with fresh ideas to constantly improve our division.



REPRESENTATIVES

First Row (left to right):

Suzanne Smith
Nastassia Sanks

Second Row (left to right):

Dominique Adkins
Tyler Angelier
Ejiro "EJ" Idahosa

Back Row (left to right):

Ryan Pearson
Harlan Harris
Chase Perry



DIVISION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Delivering Innovative, Transformative Solutions

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