



# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

## RESOLUTION 20-04

A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT A DAY OF UNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS AT VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

**AUTHORED BY:** Senator Alejandro Briceno, Senator Bob Greenbaum, Parliamentarian Leo Alexander Sterns, Senator Lauren Vosburgh

**SPONSORED BY:** Senator Justin Bacon, Senator Justin Carter, Senator Cassie Katen, Director Laura Northup, President Pro Tempore Jalen Smith, Senator Ashley Thinnifel, Senator Hailey Wilkinson

**WHEREAS**, it is the responsibility of the Valdosta State University (VSU) Student Government Association (SGA) to determine and state the official position of the Valdosta State University student body on relevant issues;

**WHEREAS**, the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution, ratified on July 9, 1868, states, "...No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws;"

**WHEREAS**, the 15th Amendment of the United States Constitution, ratified on February 26, 1869, states, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude;"

**WHEREAS**, in the late 1940's and early 1960's, the Civil Rights movement occurred in an organized effort by all Americans from different backgrounds to end racial discrimination and gain equal rights under the law;

**WHEREAS**, Valdosta State College (VSC) peacefully and voluntarily joined the desegregation efforts in 1963 under the leadership of Dr. James Ralph Thaxton and with support of various civil groups, amidst the continued difficulties brought by opposing parties;

**WHEREAS**, with the support of the State Highway Patrolman and the Valdosta Police Department, VSC managed to successfully and peacefully achieve this goal;

**WHEREAS**, on Sept. 17, 1963, Valdosta natives Ms. Drewnell Thomas and Mr. Robert Pierce Jr. led the way for integration at VSC as the institution's first African American students;

**WHEREAS**, amidst open animosity, Ms. Drewnell Thomas and Mr. Robert Pierce Jr. managed to successfully graduate from VSC, with graduate degrees and careers in social work and health;

**WHEREAS**, in 2013 the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners and the Mayor of the City of Valdosta created a proclamation honoring the integration of VSU, commemorating a pivotal moment in the history of South Georgia by declaring September 18<sup>th</sup> as VSU Celebration of Inclusion Day in Valdosta-Lowndes County;

**WHEREAS**, VSU's SGA recognizes this 2013 Proclamation on September 18<sup>th</sup> as a celebration of 50 years of integration and a proud moment in the history of our University as it paved the way for the diverse student body for which this organization serves;

**WHEREAS**, VSU's SGA, with representation of a student body of over 12,400, believes to have the responsibility of conserving this history and reaching out to our fellow Blazers to ensure each know how VSU came to be the uniquely diverse campus it is today;

**WHEREAS**, the VSU SGA pledges to uphold the Blazer Creed, which states, "**Civility** – A Blazer shows courtesy and compassion as well as respect for the dignity of every human being. **Integrity** – Each Blazer is responsible for his or her own actions, and our community is stronger when we contemplate the context of our decisions and uphold the principles of trust and honesty. **Citizenship** – Every Blazer has an interest in the well-being of the community, and, therefore, a duty to stay informed, to make positive contributions, and to offer support to those who need help;"

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, in tribute to the efforts made toward equality for all, the SGA recommends VSU annually observes a Celebration of Inclusion on or near September 18<sup>th</sup>, to honor the contributions of Ms. Thomas, Mr. Pierce, and the thousands of diverse graduates that walked the hallowed halls of this outstanding institution;

**THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT**, the VSU SGA urges the collaboration of various organizations and committees, such as, but not limited to, the SGA and the Office of Student Diversity & Inclusion, to ensure the Celebration of Inclusion is observed for current and all future students at Valdosta State.

Primary Mover: *Senator Justin Carter*

Secondary Mover: *Senator William T. Crow*

Date: *September 14, 2020*

APPROVED DENIED VETOED

\_\_\_\_\_, Student Government President