

Blazer Housing News

A Newsletter for Incoming Residence Hall students and their family

Fall 2006

Welcome Parents.



The Housing and Residence Life office wanted to take a minute to establish a clear path of communication for our Blazer parents. This newsletter will be issued on a semesterly basis (the next issue in the Spring) and contain all the important information such as openings and closings, as well as general office updates that affect your son or daughter and their living arrangements. I highly encourage you to contact us via phone, email, fax or regular mail if ever you have questions we might be able to answer for you. Our website is constantly being updated also, so be sure to keep <http://housing.valdosta.edu> bookmarked on your web browser.

Please know that we have dedicated undergraduate student leaders and full-time/graduate professionals in each residence hall to make your student's stay as personally enriching as possible. Now that mid-terms are over, it is time for every student to study hard and do well on their final exams. The

in-hall staff can help to make this a reality. Feel free to ask your son or daughter when was the last time they spoke with their RA. They are there to assist them with their social and intellectual development and know where to turn if your child needs a little extra boost in their study skills.

A few extra resources for parents to be aware of is the Parent's Resource Center at <http://www.valdosta.edu/prc/> and the Parents and Families Association at <http://www.valdosta.edu/pfa/>. Both are part of VSU's ongoing effort to remain connected to the best partners we have, our students "home team".

As we start to enter the holiday season, I hope that your student had a good experience living with us this semester. I look forward to continuing the dialogue in the Spring semester.

Sincerely,
Dr. Thomas W. Hardy
Director, Housing & Residence Life

Housing Info



The Mission of the Office of Housing & Residence Life at Valdosta State

University is to provide affordable quality housing in a safe and secure environment. Our caring and competent staff is committed to serving our students by creating a holistic living and learning community which fosters: education, diversity, civic engagement, recreation, and personal growth through programming and leadership opportunities.

Housing Quick Facts

- Over 2300 students currently reside in nine residence halls. This is the largest resident population in VSU history!
- Approximately 26% of all enrolled undergraduates live in campus housing
- Students from all academic classifications are assigned throughout campus housing

Traditional Residence Halls versus Apartment Style Residence Halls

Traditional Halls – Brown Hall, Georgia Hall, Hopper Hall, Langdale Hall, Lowndes Hall, Patterson Hall, and Reade Hall. These buildings operate on a nine month contract (August – May) and close for Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, and Spring Break

Apartment Style – Centennial Hall and Converse Hall. These buildings operate on a 12 month contract (August – July) and stay open for all holidays and breaks.

Room Selection for the 2007-2008 School Year

Room selection for the next academic year is just around the corner. The Housing and Residence Life Department has made some changes to the room selection process for the 2007-2008 school year. If your student plans to live on campus for the 2007-2008 academic school year there will be a meeting about the process in their current Residence Hall the week of February 26, 2007. Room selection

will begin March 5, 2007 and at this time a \$300 deposit is due. The \$300 deposit is now a one time fee that will be refunded to the student once they decide to not renew their housing contract or upon graduation. The \$300 deposit can be paid in cash, credit card, or check. The student will not be assigned a room unless they pay the \$300 on the designated day for them to select a room. More detailed information will be forthcoming, but if you have any questions feel free to contact the Housing and Residence Life Department at (229) 333-5920.

Parents & Family Members

Would you like to keep up with what is happening with your college student and at Valdosta State University? Join the Valdosta State University Parents & Families Association. Dues are \$25 (for two parents) per year. Your membership dues include 2 membership cards, 2 car decals, a 5% discount at the VSU bookstore, and a quarterly email newsletter. Go to www.valdosta.edu/prc for more information and to print an application form.

Special Programs

Valdosta State University has organized living learning programs to promote leadership and academic success. First year students are encouraged to participate in these opportunities to ease into the transition from high school to college. Freshman Year Experience and the Emerging Leaders programs were developed just for first year students. Each program guides the student in making choices, so the most exciting and rewarding experience is possible at Valdosta State University.



1 The Freshman Year Experience Program, coordinated by the Office of Academic Student Instructional Support, is a year-long student success program designed to maximize every student's potential. Most of the students participating in the Freshman Year Experience Program are students that have not decided on a major. The main program components are the Freshman Seminar, Learning Cohorts, and Learning Assistance and Supplemental Instruction. The Freshman Seminar is a two semester course that students take with an assigned faculty member. Each student is also assigned to a learning cohort that consists of approximately 25 students. This community of peers provides students with a small group of fellow students. Supplemental Instruction is provided by a Freshman Seminar Instructor that is appointed to a student. They work with students one-on-one to help develop study and test-taking skills, and they educate students on the course advisement process and procedures. In addition, they provide accurate information on core curriculum requirements and scheduling and teach students to take an active role in their own advisement. Valdosta State University also believes that a healthy living environment promotes success. Therefore, the participants in this program are housed in Brown Hall. The extra support provided by the program makes the transition from high school to college smoother for the first year student.

2 LeaderQuest is a series of programs coordinated by the Office of Orientation and Leadership Programs at Valdosta State University. Emerging Leaders is just one of three leadership programs in LeaderQuest. The Emerging Leader Program is designed to enhance leadership styles, develop individual leadership potential, and promote personal development. The program provides new students the opportunity to be involved in campus leadership opportunities that will enhance their collegiate experience. Students accepted to Valdosta State University receive a brochure in the mail inviting them to join the Emerging Leader Program. After completing the application a committee selects approximately 100 first year students. The selected students are allowed to move into the residence halls early, attend a pre-semester 2 day retreat, and receive 2 semester credits for a leadership class they will be taking in the Fall semester. Other benefits of program include community service opportunities, dinner with the VSU President, pre-registration of two freshman level core classes, and an on-campus housing assignment in a designated residence hall with other members of the Emerging Leader Program. Applications will also be available at the Leadership website: www.valdosta.edu/leadership.

Move In Day



The “move-in” day experience was a very smooth and well organized event. Everyone was very helpful and kept their smiling faces in spite of the terribly hot temperatures.

On August 9th there were approximately 1500 new students who arrived at Valdosta State to begin their college experience. You could tell some of them had planned, prepared and packed every item they thought they would ever need. However, they may not have put as much thought into moving these items.

The moving of packed items can be a rough and tough job and recognition needs to go out to the countless number of volunteers. These volunteers include a number of students, faculty, and administrators. Over the years the organization of volunteers and the planning of how to assist students and parents on this day has been discussed. As a result there is a Move In Day Committee that meets and attempts to plan the best way to assist new students and parents as they move-in on this day. These plans include a variety of issues concerning parking, traffic flow, assisting students in moving items, removal of



trash, offering of ice water, and much more.

The many hours of planning and volunteering this year proved to be a success. As a matter of fact some of the responses from parents concerning this success include:

“The “move-in” day experience was a very smooth and well organized event. This is our first child to go away to school and it was a pleasant (although emotional) experience. Everyone was very helpful and kept their smiling faces in spite of the terribly hot temperatures.”

“This was our 4th and last child to send off to college and I must say that it was by far the BEST experience we have had without comparison. We arrived at about 8:45 on the 9th and were greeted by a very friendly campus officer. We went in to register, got a room key and were out the door with ZERO wait. As we returned to the car we were greeted by no less than 6 helpers, within minutes the Jeep was empty and I was off to

park at the Oak street lot. I felt very guilty as I didn't carry a single item up to my son's second floor room. I was very impressed with the organized, efficient and friendly reception we received. I can't think of a single suggestion except for maybe a folding chair under a shade tree with a cool glass of sweet tea for the traumatized parents.”

“I have REALLY been impressed with everything I have experienced with my son who is a Freshman. Yesterday as we moved in and had a number of students help to unload and bring things to his room was unexpected and very nice. Also everyone has been very friendly and helpful at all levels – Keep up the great job!”

Recognizing that every one may not feel that Move In Day was a Success -- we welcome feedback and ideas for the future. You may send your ideas in email to housing@valdosta.edu.

Parenting a First-Year Student



Don't Ask Them if They're Homesick

VSU tries to provide several activities for your student to participate in to get to know new people. With all the excitement going on many students don't have the time to think about being homesick, however, this does not mean they do not miss their parents. Bringing the subject up may upset your student. Try to motivate your student to take advantage of the activities on campus.

Write (Even if they don't write back)

There is nothing more depressing than a week of empty mailboxes. Believe it or not students want to hear about family and news from home. Although, your student may not write back as often as you would like continue to update them. There's nothing like receiving a card saying "I love you" or "I am so proud of you."

Ask Questions

Students want to share all the exciting things they have experienced the first few months of college. There is a right and wrong way to get your student to share this information. Do not come on too strong or judgmental. Listening is the key to get your student to share more information with you.

Expect Change

Be Patient. Your student will change (either drastically within the first months, slowly over four years or somewhere in between). You can't stop change, you may not ever understand it, but it is within your power to accept it.

During the next four years students are experiencing new things and trying to find and define themselves in this big world. Just love them and provide support no matter what happens.

Visit (but not too often)

Visits by parents are another part of the first-year experience that students are reluctant to admit liking, but they do! These visits give the student a chance to introduce some of the important people in both of his or her now important worlds (home and school) to each other. Spur-of-the-moment "surprises" are usually not appreciated.

Trust your student

Finding oneself is a difficult enough process without feeling that the people whose opinions you respect most (yes, they respect your opinions) are second-guessing your own second-guessing. First year students look at school as their world away from parents telling them what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. College is the time for the student to learn from their mistakes and value the wisdom of their parents.

Send them something

No one likes the feeling of being the person that never receives a package. Even if the package is school supplies or their favorite snack, it will put a smile on their face. Dropping in a sweet note will put the icing on the cake and brighten up a stressful day of studying and tests. You can visit valdosta.icarekits.com for ideas.

Encourage your student to participate in campus organizations

Students who get involved on campus have greater academic success than students who only study. It may be difficult for your student to find a niche, but persuade them to not give up.

Teach your student how to balance a checkbook and handle financial responsibility

Many first year students fall into the trap of credit card offers and may reach a maximum limit on a credit card before they realize the ramifications of bad credit.

Allow students independence

Don't call them every few hours, do ask them to work out roommate conflicts, etc.

Cited from the NODA Manual.

General Questions

When do the Resident Halls close for the holidays?

If your student lives in one of the traditional halls (Brown, Georgia, Hopper, Langdale, Lowndes, Patterson or Reade) they must be checked out of the room by 5pm, November 21 for the Thanksgiving Break. If your student lives in Converse or Centennial Hall they may stay during the break. The residence halls will reopen on November 26, at 10am. All traditional halls will close December 9, at 4pm for the winter break.

What if my student cannot come home during breaks?

Converse and Centennial Halls will remain open during the Thanksgiving and Winter Break. If your student can not go home they will need to make other arrangements.

During semester breaks, may my student leave his/her belongings in his/her room?

Yes. However, the department of Housing and Residence Life is not responsible for loss or damage to these possessions. Please encourage your student to take home valuables if there is concern.

Can my student break his/her housing contract to move off campus?

The traditional halls contract is for the academic year, while Converse and Centennial Hall contracts are for 12 months. Residents wishing to terminate their residence hall/ apartment contract during the contract period (Fall or Spring only) while remaining enrolled at the University may do so by paying 50% of the remaining value of the contract and forfeiting the \$300 reservation fee. However, first year students are subject to the first year live on requirement. Specific details are available at the Housing and Residence Life Office.

Who is responsible for my student's property?

Your student is responsible for his/her own property. Although precautions are taken to maintain adequate security, the University cannot assume the responsibility for the loss or damage to student possessions. We encourage you to carry appropriate insurance to cover such losses.

Is it possible for my student to work part-time in the residence hall?

Yes. The Housing and Residence Life Department employs students as Resident Assistants and Front Desk Workers.

When are payments due for housing contracts?

A \$300 deposit (instead of prepayment) is due on the student's reserved room selection date in the Spring. Room selection begins March 5, and ends March 9. This fee has been changed from an annual fee that was refundable to a one time payment. The student will receive the \$300 once they no longer live on campus. However, this is only if the student does not have any other fees that must be paid to the university or it will go towards the payment of their outstanding fees.

If I send my student money in the form of a check, will the University cash the check?

Yes. The Bursary will cash checks for a maximum of \$50 with a VSU 1Card (instead of ID) and a drivers license present.

Does Valdosta State University provide a Parent Resource Center web-page?

Yes, it is located online at <http://www.valdosta.edu/prc/>. This web-page was designed to assist parents by providing valuable information and resource contacts on the VSU campus.

Where can my student go for medical attention if he/she gets sick?

Valdosta State offers Farber Health Center for students taking 4 or more semester hours that need medical attention. At Farber there is a full staff of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, two nurse practitioners, a pharmacist and a physician. Students have already paid a fee at the beginning of the semester, so the visit and most medication are provided at no additional charge.





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Important Dates

October 16 and 17 | Fall Break

November 21, 5pm

traditional halls close for Thanksgiving

November 22-24 | Thanksgiving break

November 26, 10am | traditional halls re-open

December 9, 4pm

traditional halls close for winter holiday

December 9 – January 4 | Winter break

January 4, 10am | traditional halls re-open

February 26-March 1,

Residence Halls meet to discuss on campus room selection for the next academic school year

March 5-9,

On campus room selection process and \$300 deposit due (this is a one time fee)

Community Phone Numbers

FD=Front Desk | HD=Hall Director Office

Housing and Residence Life

333-5920 <http://housing.valdosta.edu>

Brown	FD 333-5918	HD 249-4985
Centennial	FD 333-5269	HD 333-5330
Converse	FD 333-5912	HD 245-4364
Georgia	FD 333-5917	HD 333-5530
Hopper	FD 333-5916	HD 333-4983
Langdale	FD 333-5915	HD 249-4982
Lowndes	FD 333-5914	HD 249-4984
Patterson	FD 333-5913	HD 245-3736
Reade	FD 333-5912	HD 333-5405