



**VALLEY CITY**  
**STATE UNIVERSITY**

# **HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENT DIVISION**

**MARCH 14, 2025**

**DR. ALAN LAFAVE, PRESIDENT**

**Testimony to the House Appropriations  
Committee: Education and Environment Division  
March 14, 2025**

Chairman Nathe and members of the committee; I am Dr. Alan LaFave, and I'm proud to be President of Valley City State University.

Thank you for the opportunity to present today.



# Mission

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Valley City State University is a public, regional university offering exceptional programs in an active, learner-centered community that promotes meaningful scholarship, ethical service, and the skilled use of technology.

As an important knowledge resource, the university offers programs and outreach that enrich the quality of life in North Dakota and beyond.

Through flexible, accessible, and innovative baccalaureate and master's programs, VCSU prepares students to succeed as educators, leaders, and engaged citizens in an increasingly complex and diverse society.



## The Mission of Valley City State University

Our mission is three-pronged.

Valley City State University is a public, regional university offering exceptional programs in an active, learner-centered community that promotes meaningful scholarship, ethical service, and the skilled use of technology.

As an important knowledge resource, the university offers programs and outreach that enrich the quality of life in North Dakota and beyond.

Through flexible, accessible, and innovative baccalaureate and master's programs, VCSU prepares students to succeed as educators, leaders, and engaged citizens in an increasingly complex and diverse society.

Our entire team takes this mission very seriously. We have an average of 10.4 years of service across the campus.

I am incredibly proud of the team we have at VCSU. They are dedicated and student focused. You can see the fruits of their labor in our numerous accolades and student satisfaction survey data.

## Our Vision

As an innovative university, we deliver distinctive, learner-centered experiences.

## What Drives Us?

- Student-centered environment
- High-quality, career-ready experience
- Dedicated faculty and staff
- Supportive alumni and community
- Innovative attitude
- The need for continued investment in our people and historic infrastructure



### Our Driving Forces – We All Row

VCSU has a very clear vision.

*As an innovative university, we deliver distinctive, learner-centered experiences.*

*We strive to make our campus, and all learning environments, focused on student success.*

We focus on ensuring every educational experience is of the highest-quality and helps graduates become career ready. This is only possible through the dedication of our high-quality staff and faculty. Faculty and staff help students make multiple connections with the real world, and future employers.

Our success is also a result of a very supportive alumni base. We are incredibly fortunate to have so many engaged and committed alumni who support current students through scholarships, internship locations and being ambassadors for the university.

We have a strong reputation as an innovative campus. From our early days of incorporating a lab school for teacher preparation to being the first in North Dakota to have laptop computers for every student, we strive to stay on the cutting edge.

In fact, we were second in the nation in providing laptops for our students.



# 135 years of quality education

- More than 65 Undergraduate programs and 3 Graduate programs
- 11:1 student-to-faculty ratio
- Ranked "Best Colleges" for 27 consecutive years by U.S. News
- "Most Beautiful Campus in North Dakota" by BuzzFeed
- National Register of Historic Places



## The Work of Valley City State University

VCSU was founded in 1890 as a state normal school in Valley City according to Title 15/Chapter 13 of North Dakota Century Code. We have maintained true to our century code origins and have been known as one of the best teacher preparation schools in the nation.

In addition to our teacher education programs, VCSU has a wide-variety of other programs. From Business to History, Science, Computer Science, Software Engineering, Visual Arts, Communications, Strength and Conditioning, Spanish and Music, we have more than 65 programs for students to choose from.

VCSU also offers multiple graduate degree options for teaching, and a Master of Science degree in Business Information Systems.

VCSU enhances the learning experience for our students by providing every full-time, on-campus students with their own laptop, and classrooms equipped with the latest educational tools. Our student to faculty ratio is 11 to 1, offering a personalized learning experience to help students succeed. Graduates and current students point to this as a highlight of their experience, the close

and meaningful connections they create with faculty and staff.

Our 55-acre campus was listed in 2017 by BuzzFeed as the "most beautiful" college campus in North Dakota. To our south is a forested hillside and the north, the beautiful Sheyenne River. The campus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District.

We are grateful for your support, and we focus our efforts on being good stewards of the resources you entrust to us.



## ➤ Recent Achievements

- Secured largest donation (\$5M) in school history
- Added Co-Ed Shooting Sports to athletic offerings
- Named a 2024-25 STEM School of Excellence (ITEEA)
- Student-athlete Sadie Hansen named national winner of NAIA Champions of Character award



### Recent Achievements

We have had multiple exciting things happen during the past months at VCSU. I will touch on just a few of them this afternoon.

We secured the largest donation in school history, \$5 million from a '67 alumni. This donation is helping jumpstart an expansion project for the W.E. Osmon Fieldhouse. The expansion includes a turfed multi-purpose indoor practice facility, new strength and conditioning areas, and several locker rooms. Spending authority for this project was approved in the 2023 legislative session.

The Co-Ed Shooting Sports was added to the athletic offerings at VCSU in the fall of 2024. This is a traveling team that participates in trap competitions.

We have been named a 2024-25 STEM School of Excellence by the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association. We will be presented the award on April 5th at the ITEEA 2025 Conference. This is a testament of our commitment to numerous initiatives related to STEM Education. This includes the use of our Planetarium, our INSTEM program, our Technology Education department, our Great Plains STEM Education

Center and other STEM initiatives on campus.

One of our student-athletes, Sadie Hansen, was named the national winner of the NAIA Dr. Leroy Walker Champions of Character award. This award recognizes one male athlete and one female athlete who best demonstrate the NAIA Champions of Character values. Sadie is an elementary education major and is a member of the Viking volleyball and track & field squads.



## Hosted First NDUS AI Conference

- Presentations on AI in education, technology, and business
- More than 150 professionals attended

### Hosted First NDUS AI Conference

VCSU also hosted the first NDUS Statewide AI Conference in September last year. There were multiple speakers on many topics including education, technology, and business. Over 150 professionals attended the event on VCSU's campus. VCSU partnered with the University of Mary, Dakota Digital Academy, North Dakota University System, North Dakota Information Technology, and Department of Public Instruction for this first statewide AI conference.



# Accreditations

- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
- Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)
- National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)
- International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE)
  - Site visit complete

## Accreditations

I'd like to highlight our accreditation. With the rising cost of education, it is important that the education our students receive is high quality, valuable, and vetted. We recently received our re-accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. We have several program-specific accreditations as well, including:  
Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)  
National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)

These accreditations confirm that our educational experiences in content area disciplines are of the highest quality. These are typically reviewed every seven to ten years with various reviews and checks within those time frames.

We also had a site visit completed with the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE) this fall and look forward to receiving full accreditation in April.





# National Recognition



**VALLEY CITY**  
STATE UNIVERSITY



- #1 ranked Public Regional College in North Dakota and #2 in the Midwest by U.S. News and World Report for 2025
- Named a 2025 'Hidden Gems of the Great Plains' by College Raptor – 1 of 3 in ND
- Colleges of Distinction award
- #1 Best Value College in ND by Niche.com
- Most Valuable Online Education Degree by Research.com



## Nationally Recognized

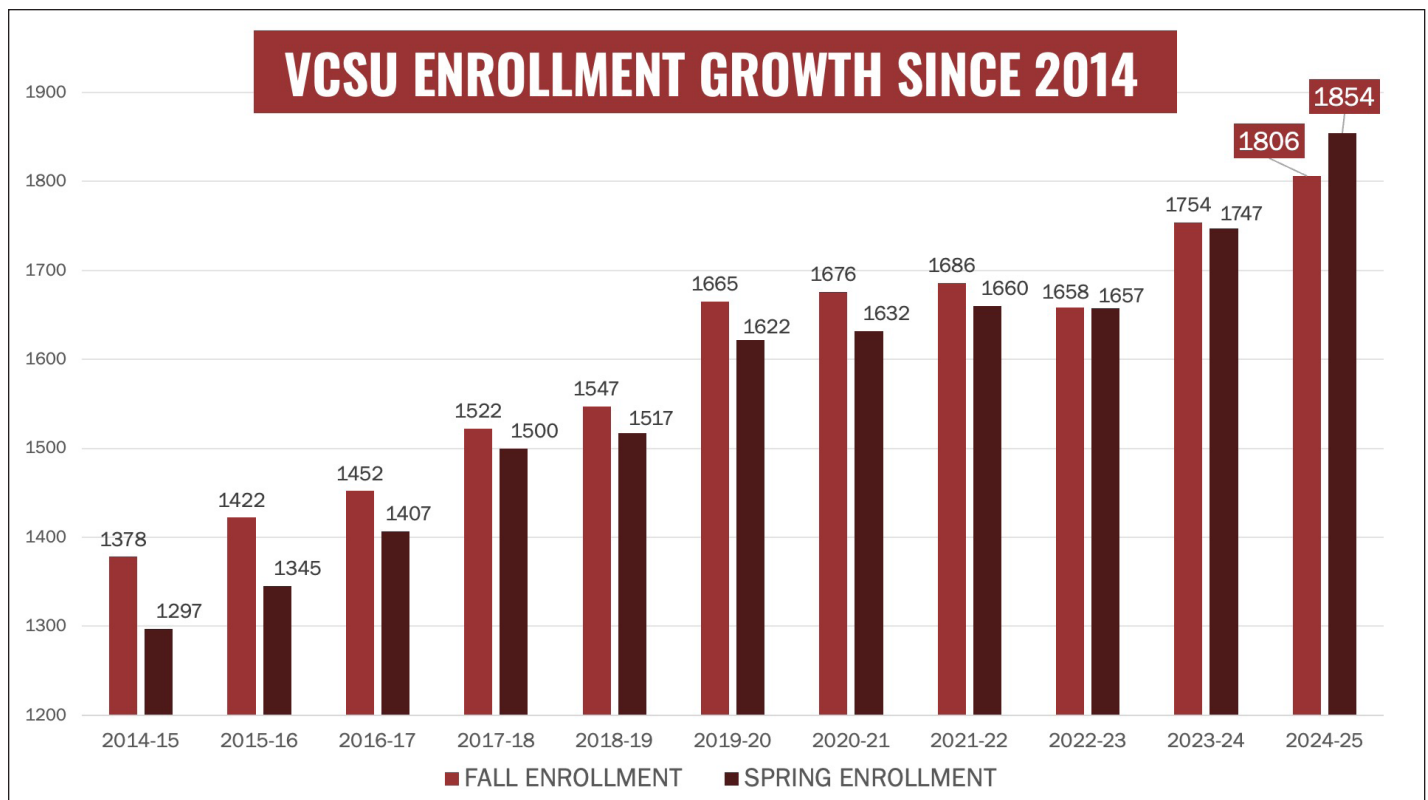
Another mark of quality for VCSU is our 27-year long ranking as a Best College with U.S. News and World Report. This is one of the most reputable college rankings that is published every year. This year we were ranked as the top regional public college in North Dakota and second ranked in the Midwest (a twelve-state region). U.S. News also named us a Veteran-friendly institution and a Best Value School. This ranking continues to attract high-quality students and be an important marker for families as they compare secondary education options.

Our School of Education is a shining jewel in the Midwest and nationally for producing high-quality teachers. Recently we were recognized by Study.com as having the best elementary education program in the nation. We've known our education program is top notch, but we also have the numbers to prove it. Our alumni are working in 346 schools in North Dakota alone and make a difference in the lives of students every day.

We know the education provided at VCSU is high-quality, but it is also noted for being affordable. Niche ranked VCSU as the #1 Best Value College in North Dakota, recognizing our quality

degrees at affordable prices. Our affordability ensures that education is accessible to all learners, regardless of economic background.





## Enrollment Growth

Our enrollment growth has been planned and strategic. Our most recent strategic plan embedded a 3% annual enrollment goal for each academic department and athletics. 7 of the 11 academic programs met or exceeded this goal in the last year. We review the specific enrollment trends continually through weekly meetings with the enrollment management team and once a semester department meetings with the president and vice president for academic affairs. Additionally, the retention task force meets monthly and presents recommendations each semester to the president's cabinet.

Contrary to national trends, our enrollment numbers are growing. Excluding a slight dip in 2022, we continue to grow and set new enrollment records the past two years and 9 of the last 10. We set a new enrollment record with 1,806 students this fall, which was our first time over 1800 students. That momentum continued with an enrollment of 1,854 students this spring. Our team tirelessly recruits quality students who will contribute to the culture of VCSU. You can feel that energy the moment you step on to campus. VCSU has some of the best students I have ever had the privilege of working with during my time in higher education.

Occupancy in residence halls continues to be strong, especially after adjustments were made to rate lock costs (Stay and Save program) for students. We now ensure students who stay on campus, have the option to pay the rate they paid their first year, all four years. This has been an excellent recruiting and retention tool and is a positive cost-saving approach for them as well. Freshmen in 2021 could have saved up to \$1100 over their 4 years using this program.

Enrollment growth has confirmed that we are offering programs students are interested in, and programs with strong post graduation job potential.

### Fall 2024 Enrollment

Headcount: 1806 (3% increase)

FTE: 1184 (6.4% increase)

Graduate Student Headcount: 155 (23% increase)

### Fall 2024 Housing

314 students living on campus

All single rooms are occupied

University Apartment Occupancy Rate: 100%

Overall Occupancy Rate: 81%

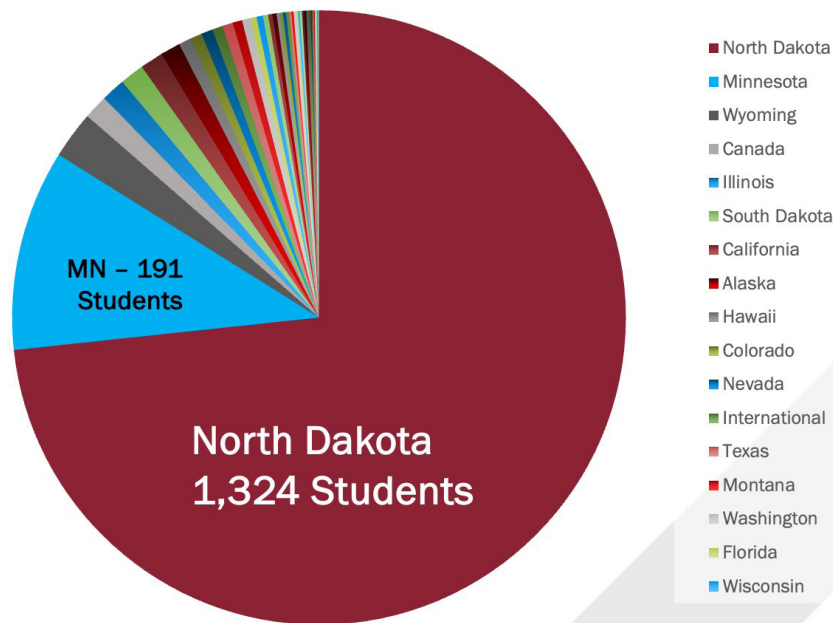
### Spring 2025 Enrollment

Headcount: 1854 (6% increase)

FTE: 1223 (7% increase)

Graduate Students: 146 (23% increase)

# 73% of students from North Dakota



## Serving our State

It's clear from our enrollment that we have an outstanding reputation statewide, and we are meeting a critical need for our state.

Our location on I-94 between Fargo and Bismarck, our small campus size and welcoming community provide students the opportunity to receive a high quality education in a picturesque North Dakota setting. 73% of our students are from across the state of North Dakota. Our campus is a safe, welcoming place for students to thrive socially, athletically and academically. Once they complete their degree, our students typically stay and join the workforce here.

We also have students from 40 states and 9 countries that call VCSU their educational home. Many enjoy the charm of our campus and positive pieces about living in our state. Many who graduate choose to stay and continue living in our state.

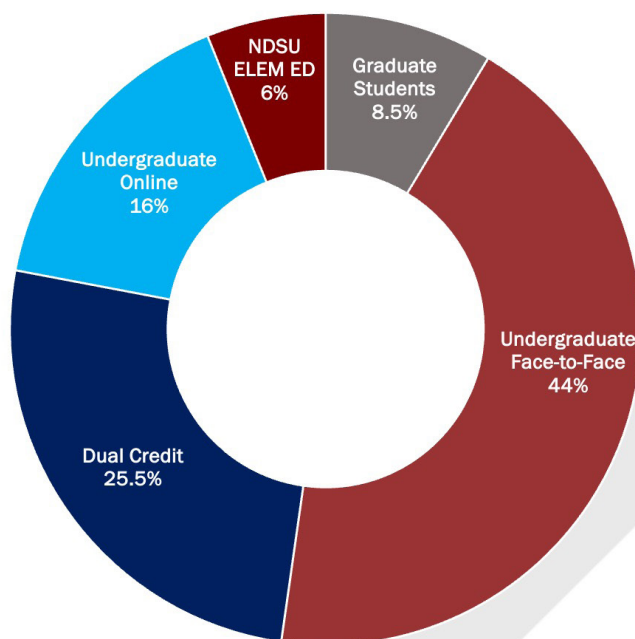


# Fall 2024 Student Profile

**278 undergraduates are student-athletes**

*Fall 2024 Enrollment Overview*

Enrollment Breakdown



## Overview of our Students

Like most universities, we are working hard to respond to student needs and preferences regarding education delivery. As you can see in this chart, the largest demographic of our students are undergraduate face-to-face students (44%). This number reflects the continued desire by many students for a “traditional” college experience including living in residence halls and participating in many on-campus activities. Just over 24% of our students are taking online courses (16% undergraduate, 8.5% graduate).

In addition to our on-campus students, we have seen an increased interest in high school students completing VCSU courses before they receive their high school diploma. Dual credit offerings often help students complete general education courses and allow them to earn those credits early. For some, this means they can complete a bachelor’s degree in three years and join the workforce earlier than would otherwise be possible.

Many of our students are taking their classes in an online environment. I’d like to mention the importance of these offerings, specifically as it pertains to our graduate programs. We offer multiple graduate degrees online that focus on education. We

have a Masters of Education Program with various concentrations including Elementary Education, Library and Information Technologies, Teaching English Language Learners and more. These courses allow individuals who are actively teaching to continue their education, earn a masters degree and move up in salary structures. This is an important offering for training and upskilling the teaching workforce in our state.

## VCSU’s Online Programs serve North Dakota

Undergraduate Online Students: 71% from North Dakota

Graduate Online Students: 81% from North Dakota





# Top Programs

Fall 2024 Enrollment

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM	ENROLLMENT
Elementary Education	343
Business Administration	140
Fisheries & Wildlife Science	66
Music/Music Education	57
History/History Education	49
Exercise Science & Rehab Studies	42
English/English Education	38
Health Sciences	38
Physical Education	30
Sport Leadership & Management	27

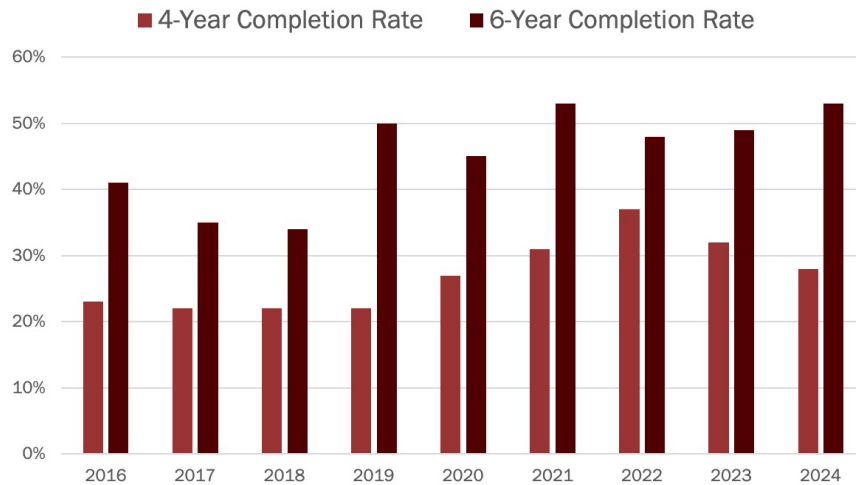
## Top Undergraduate Programs

Here is a snapshot of our largest programs this fall. This includes both on-campus and online enrollment.

Our largest program continues to be Elementary Education with 343 students enrolled this fall. True to our original establishment as a normal school, preparing quality teachers for both elementary (343 students) and secondary education (183 students) continues to be a large focal point of our university.

Some of our other larger programs outside of education include Business Administration, Fisheries and Wildlife Science, Music/Music Education, and Exercise Science.

# Completion Rates and Retention



STUDENT GROUP	2024 RETENTION RATE
First-time, Full-time	71%
First-time, Part-time	47%
Transfer, Full-time	77%
Transfer, Part-time	66%

VCSU leads the 4-year regional institutions in latest reported completion rates

## Completion Rates and Retention

Another metric we are proud of at VCSU is our graduation and placement rate. We lead the regional colleges in North Dakota with our four-year completion rate. Our focus with students is ensuring they have quality advisors who can guide them to complete their degree on time. Planning and advising helps our students get the courses and experience they need while also getting the most out of their entire VCSU experience.

We increased our retention rate by 4% this past year to 71% for first-time, full-time freshmen. That met our Fall 2024 goal. The national average for regional public four-year institutions is about 62%. Despite being above the national average, we still have room for improvement in this area. Our retention task force is meeting monthly to discuss programs and strategies for continued success.



## 3-Year Grads

- About 30 graduates per year (since 2021) complete their degree in less than 4 years

### 3-Year Graduates

Since 2021, we've seen an increase in the number of graduates finishing in less than 4 years. More students are coming to campus with college credits from dual-credit courses they take in high school. Some students even come in as a sophomore standing.

Since 2021, we've had about 25-30 graduates per year that finish in less than 4 years.



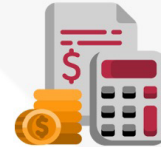
# Maintaining Affordability



**More than \$1.5 Million saved with OER**  
Open Educational Resources allow students to use resources for free



**Room & Board**  
“Stay and Save” housing rate locked at first-year rate and most affordable in NDUS system



**Tuition & Fees**  
\$302.31 per credit for ND residents



## Ensuring Education is Affordable

It is our priority to maintain affordability for our students.

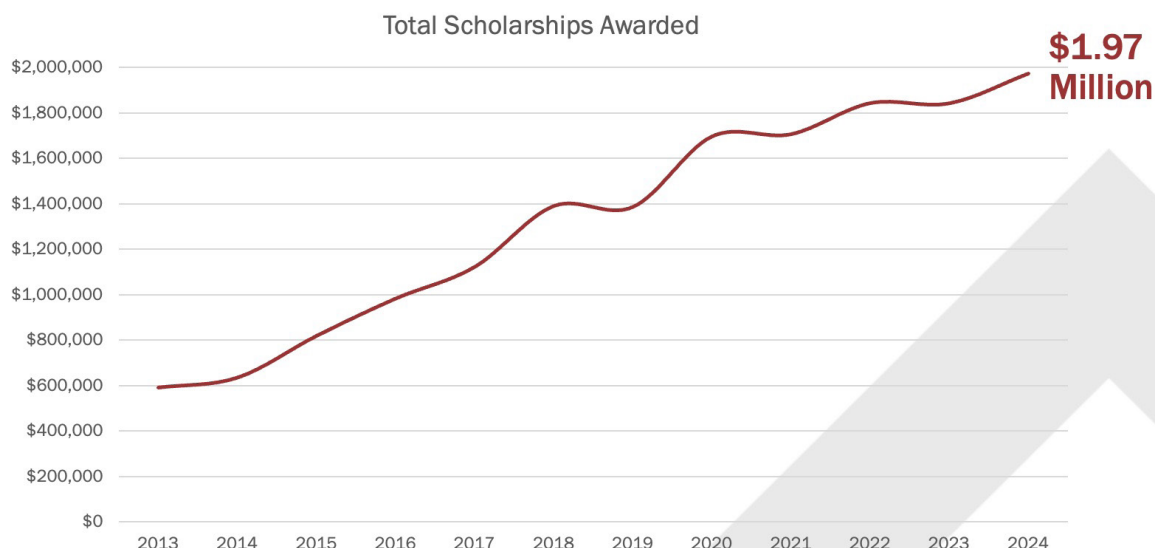
Open Educational Resources is one way we help our students save money. These are online resources that students download including textbooks and learning materials for their courses. Since 2013 we have helped students save more than \$1.5 Million in textbook costs.

Residence Life has implemented its “Stay and Save” program, all incoming Freshman are able to lock in their first-year rate if they choose to continue living in the dorms while finishing their degree. With this program, a freshman in 2021 could have saved up to \$1,100 over their 4 years at VCSU.

VCSU’s North Dakota tuition and fees cost is \$302.31 per credit. (Tuition rate is \$220.62 and mandatory fees are \$81.69/credit (capped at 12 credits). VCSU works closely with student senate on mandatory fees each academic year in any decision to increase fees and we appreciate their voice.



## Scholarship support for students has increased 234% since 2013



### Scholarship Support is Crucial

There is a clear and evident connection between student financial support and our continued growth.

I am often asked how we have continued enrollment success. There is a clear link between scholarship support and enrollment. Our VCSU Foundation has been tremendous in helping our students attain their degrees by providing increasing scholarship support. This year, they allocated \$1.97 million in scholarship assistance, up from \$1.84 million the previous year.

In 2013, we awarded just over \$590,000 in annual scholarships. That number rose to over \$1.9 million this past year. The escalation was due in large measure by increasing our scholarship values to the highest in the region and by making those scholarships renewable to incoming students. That is a 234% percent increase in scholarships over that period with stated goals of growing enrollment through offering 90% of our incoming freshmen a scholarship; offering 80% of those renewable scholarships.

The following points confirm that we are fulfilling our financial commitment to our students:

- Our students graduate accumulating less debt than our regional counterparts, due in large part to the most substantial scholarship program per merit in our region. 52% of our full-time face-to-face students had 100% or more of their tuition covered by scholarships and gift aid.
- We currently offer the most substantial scholarship program per merit in our region.
- In the last 10 years we have substantially grown our scholarship offerings by over 234%.
- Since 2013 we have increased our endowment by \$15 million through the ND Challenge Grant.

The Foundation Office continues their focus on improving our financial position to help VCSU attract and retain a growing population of students while also providing a quality experience for our alumni, friends, campus and community.

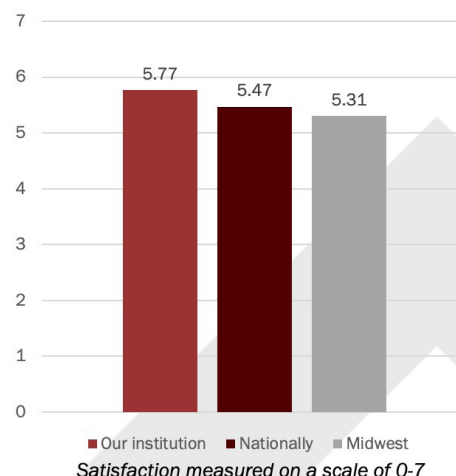


"I love spending time with the students. The joy they have for learning is contagious! I'm honored to be a part of their education journey."

**Jazmine Truax, '24 Elementary Education Major**

## Student Satisfaction

**How satisfied are our students compared with students nationally?**



Data source: 2024 Student Satisfaction Inventory

### Satisfied Students

Regardless of delivery type or location, our primary focus is our students. On this slide, you can see Jazmine Truax of Wahpeton, ND. Jazmine is a shining example of an engaged student. She was involved with band and choir and other student groups while completing her elementary education degree. Jazmine recently completed her student teaching at Eastwood Elementary School in West Fargo and was then immediately hired as a full-time teacher by Eastwood. She began teaching her own Kindergarten classroom on Nov. 4 and is loving the chance to connect and teach our youth.

Jazmine's story helps remind us why our work at VCSU is so important.

Since 2002, VCSU has conducted the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) during even-numbered spring semesters for our face-to-face students. VCSU has consistently been rated positively by our student population, and in 2024 we scored above the other schools nationally and in the Midwest again. We also receive a snapshot from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). In the most recent NSSE report, 90% of our seniors reported that their experience at VCSU contributed to their knowledge, skills and personal develop-

ment in thinking critically and 81% in acquiring job knowledge and skill. When asked if they would attend VCSU again 95% of seniors said that they would.

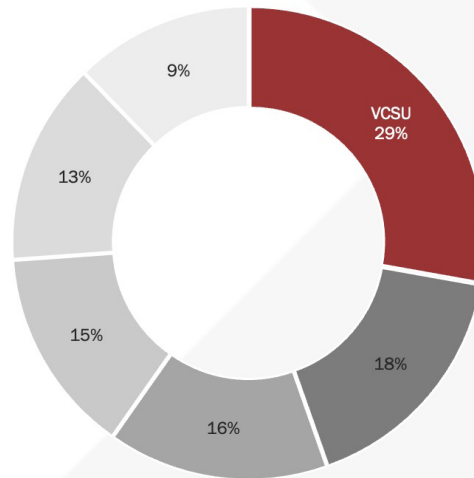


# Leader in Teacher Education

VCSU had 134 education graduates in 2023-24.

That leads all NDUS schools.

Undergraduate teaching degrees conferred by NDUS institutions in 2023-24



## Leading Teacher Education in North Dakota

VCSU's School of Education is an important part of our campus.

Last year, VCSU graduated 134 future teachers, which is 29% of the undergraduate teaching degrees conferred by NDUS institutions.

Our students are not only well-prepared for the classroom but prepared for certification exams as well. Teacher Education candidates are required to complete and pass content and pedagogy examinations for graduation and teacher licensure, such as the Praxis II test. Since Praxis II testing requirements for licensure began in 2006, 95% of all VCSU education graduates have passed the content exams and 96% have passed the pedagogy exams. Recent data released by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) shows that Valley City State University continues to be a leader in preparing the next generation of teachers.

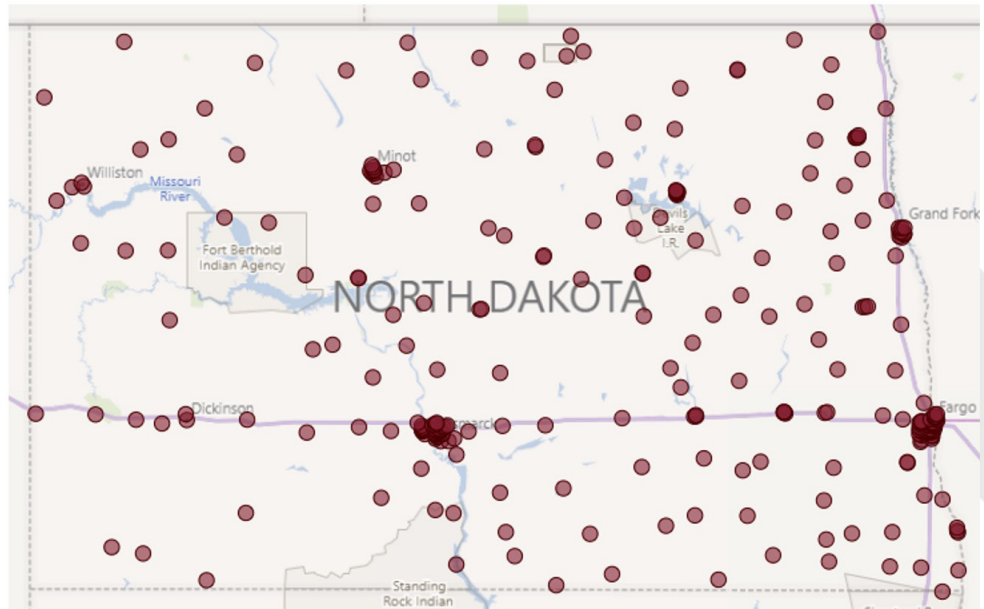
VCSU has helped 67 individuals earn their Master of Arts in teaching since the fall of 2017. These are individuals who were not teachers but working in the field and made the choice to return to school to become a teacher.

# Alumni Teaching Across North Dakota

1,526 VCSU  
alumni in  
346 schools in  
North Dakota

Teachers and  
administrators in  
154 North Dakota  
communities

We have largest  
undergraduate  
education program  
in the state.



## Teaching Alumni Across North Dakota

It is hard to find a North Dakota school that does not have at least one VCSU graduate working with students. From teachers to administrators, coaches, counselors and more, our alumni are making a tremendous difference in the future of North Dakota. Not only are VCSU alumni filling a critical workforce need in our state, but they are also shaping our future workforce.

At latest count, we have 1,526 VCSU alumni teaching in 346 different schools in 154 different communities.

VCSU's educational programs continue to make a significant impact on the teaching workforce of our state.





# Jessica Stoen - Milken Educator



- Jessica Stoen '10 received Milken Educator Award on Feb. 14
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Educator at Northern Cass Elementary
- VCSU Elementary Education graduate
- Only teacher in ND and one of 45 in nation to receive 2025 award



## VCSU Alum Receives 2024-2025 Milken Educator Award

Jessica Stoen, a 2010 elementary education alumni from VCSU, received the Milken Educator Award this February during a surprise celebration at Northern Cass Elementary School. She is the only educator in North Dakota and one of just 45 professionals nationwide to receive the award this year, demonstrating her commitment to her community and her school.

Jessica tailors her teaching strategies to meet her learner's individual pace and needs which is a dynamic and innovative way to teach her second graders at Northern Cass. She has been instrumental in the district's transformation to personalized, competency-based learning.

# McCarthy Hall Update



The future home of VCSU's School of Education and the Department of Technology and STEM Education. Opening Fall 2025



## The Future Home of VCSU's School of Education

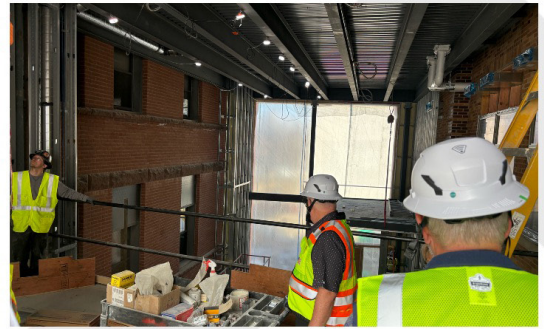
The 2023 legislature appropriated \$11.4 million to renovate McCarthy Hall for the School of Education and Graduate Studies and the department of Technology Education. VCSU provided a \$2 million match in private donations. This is a teacher workforce development project and eliminated more than \$8 million in deferred maintenance. The project is on-time and on-budget with anticipation it will be open for classes in Fall of 2025.

This project renovates existing space and will make this historic building more efficient. VCSU anticipates cost savings for heating, lighting, air conditioning and maintenance having a positive impact on VCSU's long-term utility budget.

This project will enhance the high-quality educational experience students receive at Valley City State University by providing a teaching and learning space commensurate with the quality of the program. The critical need for teachers continues and this will help attract future teachers to the North Dakota workforce.

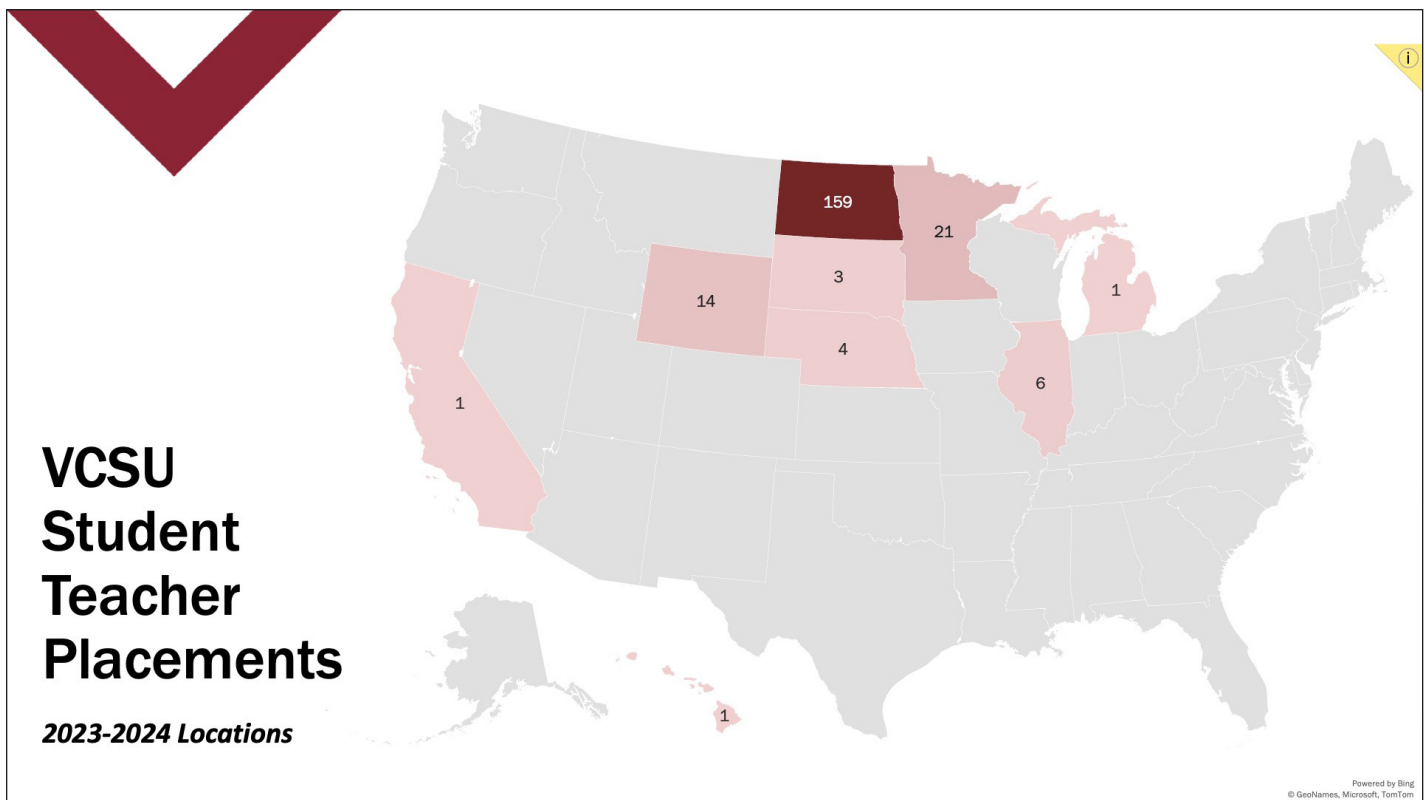


# McCarthy Hall Update



## The Future Home of VCSU's School of Education

Two of these photos were taken on a recent tour for our Foundation Board on March 10, 2025. The upper floors of McCarthy Hall are nearing completion as the project remains on-time and on-budget.



## Student Teaching to Strengthen Success

One of the ways our School of Education ensures graduates are ready for their first day as a teacher is by closely working with students and schools to have great student teaching experiences. Student teaching is an important part of the student experience, and our School of Education faculty and staff ensure candidates are well-prepared and spend adequate time in the classroom gaining practical experience.

One innovative way our School of Education has helped build on this concept is with students in West Fargo Public Schools. VCSU elementary education students, who are also NDSU Human Development and Family Science students, attend college courses taught within an elementary school. This arrangement allows the students to observe classes and quickly make connections between course content and in-classroom usage.

Strengthening the connection between the college courses VCSU offers and real-world, hands-on experiences helps our students but also assists the school. With this structure, students have the opportunity to observe classrooms in the fall and potentially student teach with the same teacher in the spring.

## Students Gaining Experience as Substitute Teachers

In addition to that unique program, VCSU also has a program that allows students to become substitute teachers while pursuing their degree. Students who can work as a substitute teacher earn money to help pay for school and fill a critical need in our state for substitutes. This is a win-win for the students and for our elementary schools.





# Internship locations in 2023-2024

- Anne Carlsen Center
- APOC / Green Dot (2 internships)
- Bank Forward
- Barnes County Sheriff's Office
- Buffalo Bridges Human Service Zone
- Bureau of Criminal Investigation
- Doosan Bobcat (4 internships)
- Doosan Digital Innovation America
- Fargo Moorhead Redhawks
- Hammond – Henry Hospital
- Handy Home & Hardware
- I3G Media
- Interoperability Institute
- James River Correctional Center
- Kid's Therapy Center
- Lakota Farm Services
- ND Autism Center
- ND Highway Patrol
- ND Juvenile Court System
- North Dakota Winter Show
- Northway Academy
- Olson Accounting
- Prairie St. John's
- Rainbow Energy Center
- RE/MAX Realty
- State Farm Insurance, Ryan Kill Agency
- Steffes Auction
- The Contour of Luxury
- Valley City Barnes County Development Corporation (3 internships)
- Valley City Police Department
- Valley Twisters Gymnastics
- VCSU Art Department
- VCSU Business Office
- VCSU Department of Business
- VCSU Marketing & Communication Department (4 internships)
- VCSU Marketing & Sports Information Department (2 internships)
- VCSU Student Affairs

## Internships in Numerous Locations

Internship opportunities continue to expand. Our Career Services department helped match students with many internships. This list is internship locations from this past year alone. Students successfully work as interns with some of the best organizations worldwide, and often, are offered employment after their internship is completed.

Of the more than 50 locations, we consistently hear positive feedback about the high-caliber of the students placed in these spots. Internships are an important tool for students to gain real-world experience. They are also meeting a need of our employers by opening doors to new potential employees. Almost 90 percent of our student interns serve North Dakota employers. Follow-up surveys with the internship providers indicate close to 100% percent of the students would be recommended for full-time employment by their internship supervisor. This is a critical portion of the VCSU experience, and we are proud to have so many students succeed professionally, in part, due to these internships.



## Our Students are Career-Ready

“VCSU has a great subbing program that helps pre-service teachers get a jumpstart on classroom experience through paid subbing in local elementary classrooms.”

*Saige Forseth '24  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher  
Central Cass Schools*

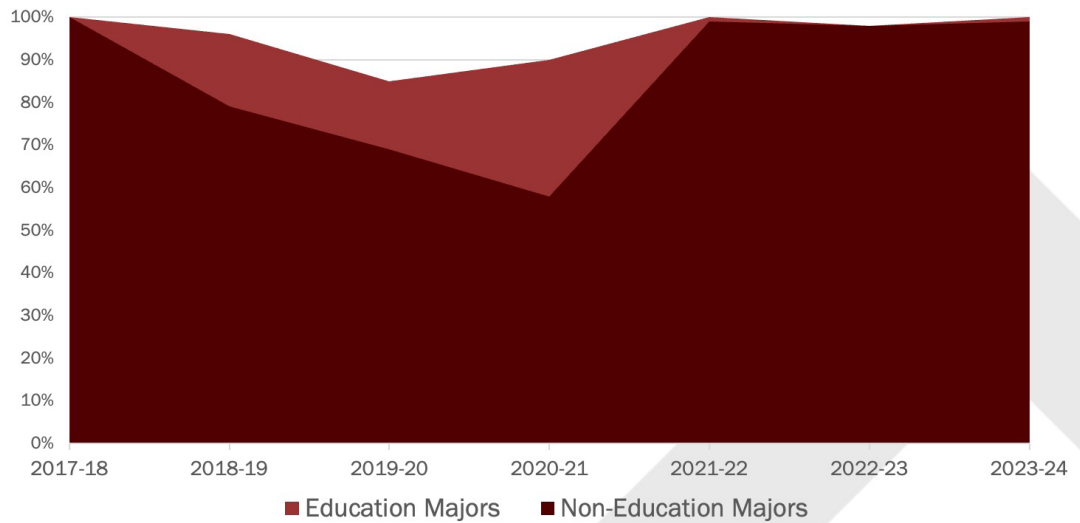
### Preparing a Successful Workforce

Alumni Saige Forseth states this well, VCSU has programs for our students to get involved in the workforce early to get experience. With a hands-on career services office, our students are able to get real world experience and opportunities they may not have had access to prior to coming to VCSU.

# Workforce-Ready Graduates

Education & Non-Education Placement Rates

**99%**  
placement rate  
for 2021-24  
graduates that  
completed  
post-graduation  
survey



## Placement after Graduation

After graduation, we want to make sure our alumni have multiple job opportunities. Last spring, as I was shaking hands with graduates as they walked across the stage at graduation, I was well aware that many already had accepted job offers across our state and nation.

Over the past three years, 99% of our graduates who responded to the post-graduation survey either had a job that fall or had plans to continue their education. Our education department has achieved 100% placement rate for its graduates multiple times in recent years.



## Academic Partnerships and Collaborations

- Nursing with Dakota College at Bottineau
- Elementary Education with NDSU
- 40+ Articulation agreements
- Future partnership with Williston State College



### Partnering with others to Enhance Success

I'd like to share some partnerships and initiatives we have with other NDUS institutions.

VCSU partners with Dakota College at Bottineau to offer one-year Practical Nursing and two-year Associate Degree Nursing programs on the VCSU campus. These programs prepare students to become LPNs and RNs, respectively, and help address the critical shortage of nursing professionals across ND.

We also partner with NDSU to offer a dual degree program. NDSU students study Human Development and Family Science. In, spring semester of their sophomore year, they become VCSU and NDSU students working toward their dual degree in Human Development and Family Science and Elementary Education. This is a successful program that provides students access to two excellent degrees in a unique way. Students in elementary education program are embedded in an actual elementary school in regional schools gaining greater access to real-work experiences and hands-on opportunities, increasing their comfort and familiarity with a school environment.

Our academic programs have 44 different articu-

lation agreements. These allow students greater access to courses and degrees in seamless ways.

VCSU is in the process of partnering with WSC to offer an elementary education program on the WSC campus. If completed, this partnership would allow WSC students to remain in Williston while they complete face-to-face classes and earn a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education. VCSU and WSC are exploring options to offer additional programs through a similar arrangement.





## Academic Partnerships and Collaborations

- ASL Certificate with Lake Region
- Viking Pathways with Minot State
- Northern Information Technology Consortium
  - VCSU, MiSU, DCB, LRSC, TMCC, WSC



### Partnering with others to Enhance Success

We have an American Sign Language (ASL) Certificate with Lake Region State College.

The Viking Pathways program with Minot State University is an inclusive college program serving students with intellectual disabilities. We support students in academics, employment, independent living, social skills, and wellness. We currently have our first student in this program.

I'd like to mention the Northern Information Technology Consortium (NITC). The NITC is a partnership between Valley City State, Williston State, Dakota College at Bottineau, Lake Region State College, Minot State University and Turtle Mountain Community College. This Consortium allows greater access for students for information technology courses.



## Rural School Partner Benefit Program

- Partnership with rural ND schools to help attract and retain teacher workforce
- VCSU reduces tuition rates for teachers pursuing graduate credits for dual-credit certification or master's programs
- Districts provide field experiences, student teacher placements, and assessments for VCSU preservice teachers.
- Program exists in 20 area school districts

### Retaining Teaching Workforce

The Rural School Partner Benefit Program is designed to create a “dynamic and sustained university-school district partnership that will promote collaboration between the University and partner schools with a focus on student learning and educator preparation.” This effort will include both school district and university faculty and teacher candidates.

One of the first schools we partnered with was Lisbon Public Schools. Dr. Stephen Johnson, superintendent of Lisbon Schools at the time, said, “The focus will be on offering our students more dual-credit opportunities and preparing future teachers while updating current LPS staff with graduate credit. We will collaborate to place VCSU graduates in our school while helping them supervise and assess preservice teachers in clinical experiences.”

VCSU offers reduced rates for tuition for teachers seeking Master of Education, Master of Arts in Teaching or Content Area Qualifications.

The districts provide field experiences, student teacher placements, and assessments for VCSU preservice teachers. Districts also assist with teacher preparation through panel discussions,

mock interviews and guest speaker presentations on VCSU's campus

Over the past 2 years, this program has expanded from 8 area school districts to 20 school districts.

Currently VCSU is partnering with 20 districts to offer this program: Barnes County North, Lisbon, Central Cass, Litchville-Marion, Edgeley, Maple Valley Public Schools, Elgin-New Leipzig, Northern Cass, Ellendale, Oak Grove, Enderlin, Oakes, Hillsboro, Valley City, Hope-Page, Sheyenne Valley Career & Technology Center, Kindred, Sargent Central, Larimore, Lidgerwood

# Community Partnerships

- Strong relationships with community
- Est. \$75 million economic impact (2023)
- Summer Vikes on Central



## Partnering in the Valley City and Barnes County community

I'd like to highlight some of the great partnerships VCSU has developed within our local community. We are incredibly fortunate to have entities like the Valley City-Barnes County Development Corporation and its director Jennifer Feist. In partnership with them, we have had the ability to develop a few key programs to meet workforce needs, such as our Master of Business Information Systems which meets needs of Eagle Creek Software Services employees in Valley City. Also, we partnered with the Development Corporation for Summer Vikes on Central this year. Hundreds of our students walked across the historic footbridge into downtown Valley City and were welcomed with open arms. It really was an amazing event.

Based on the 2025 North Dakota University System economic impact study, it is estimated VCSU made a \$74.9M total economic impact in 2023 and a \$103M impact in 2022.

### VCSU Economic Impact in Recent Years

2023: \$74.9 million  
2022: \$103 million  
2021: \$114 million

Our students also make direct contributions to local businesses through the many internships that businesses offer to our students.

Both the Economic Development Corporation and the City of Valley City donated \$500,000 each to our capital campaign, a visible indication of the strong partnerships and value of our campus to the Valley City and Barnes County communities.





# Community Partnerships

- Prairie Waters Education & Research Center
- Marketplace for Kids



## Partnering in the Region

Faculty and staff at VCSU have partnered to create educational opportunities just north of Valley City at the Prairie Waters Education and Research Center. This center specializes in aquatic education and aquatic-related research. Each year, Prairie Waters hosts students, professionals, and other community groups to educate about water resources and the organisms found in water ecosystems. Summer camps, field trips, and research opportunities are some exciting events that take place each summer. Located about 4 miles north of Valley City, Prairie Waters is a beautiful destination for people of all ages.

In early January, we hosted the Marketplace for Kids event. This annual event allows elementary students to participate in a series of workshops designed to help them understand various parts of the economy. It was a highly successful event with over 300 students participating.

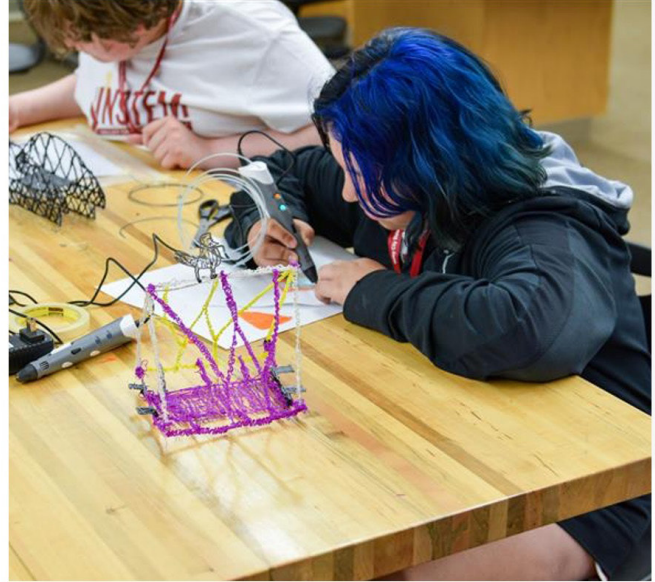
There is also a strong collaboration and partnership with the Valley City Public Schools (VCPS) in several ways including; student teaching placements, substitute teaching, and high school dual credit opportunities. Regular leadership meetings with Superintendent Josh Johnson, Mayor Dave Carlsrud, and President LaFave keep the lines of

communication open and allow for discussion of issues pertinent to all.



# INSTEM Partnership (Indians into STEM)

- Increase awareness and interest in STEM careers among ND Native American K-12 students
- Provide an opportunity to live and study on a college campus
- Increase self-efficacy in STEM academic content and future higher education enrollment
- Participating students can return each year through high school graduation



## Partnering to Create Opportunity for High School Students

Since 2018, the Great Plains STEM Education Center (GPSEC) at Valley City State University has been conducting week-long summer STEM academies for cohorts of North Dakota Native American middle and high school students. In 2020, the program was officially named INSTEM (Indians into STEM). INSTEM's mission is to increase awareness and interest in STEM careers among ND Native American K-12 students, while also providing them with the opportunity to live and study on a college campus to increase self-efficacy in STEM academic content and future higher education enrollment. The cohort model is designed to have participating students return each year through high school graduation.

The program was developed through the hard work of Lisa Lone Flight (senior environmental scientist with the Mandan, Hidatsu and Arikira nation) and Dr. Jamie Wirth (director of the VCSU Great Plains STEM Education Center). VCSU uses our standard operations budget to provide resources to the INSTEM program.

This project is a natural continuation of the Middle School STEM Academy. The intent of this project is

to provide the hands on, highly engaging activities that can be used to help encourage Native Americans to pursue college education and particularly in STEM disciplines, where they are under-represented.





# INSTEM Student Participation

School	Students
Trenton	35
New Town	20
Warwick	6
Bismarck	2
Grand Forks	2
Williston	2
Ft. Yates	1
Mandan	1
Mandaree	1
Minot	1
Home School	1

## Record Numbers

72 participants this summer

## Expanded reach

Previously only served students from New Town and Trenton

## Continued Growth

Projecting 120 participants next summer



## INSTEM Participation

Currently, we are serving students from 11 participating school districts. The program expanded last year from 2 to 11 participating school districts, and we project more growth in 2025.



### **Athletics Facility Upgrade**

The 2023 legislature provided VCSU spending authority to utilize capital campaign donations for an athletic facility upgrade. Once designs are finalized, we plan to go to bid and break ground on this W.E. Osmon Fieldhouse addition in 2025.

In the 2025-2026 academic year we will be moving to a new athletic conference with Dickinson State University, Mayville State University, Bismarck State College, Dakota State University (Madison, S.D.), and Bellevue University (Bellevue, Neb.). The new conference is the Frontier Conference, including institutions from Montana, Idaho, Oregon, California, and Arizona. We are excited to expand our recruiting footprint by being a part of this larger conference, and are identifying strategies to respond to increased travel costs.



# Budget Request Priorities

- McFarland Hall deferred maintenance project
- We support the NDUS needs-based budget request and salary increases
- Employee Compensation
- Inflation Factor budget adjustments

## Key Budget Priorities

I would like to thank you for your past and ongoing support of our institution. We sincerely appreciate the care and effort you put into helping our state run efficiently.

Today we are going to focus on a few key components. I'll provide an overview of our university and some of the most important data points.

I'd like to start with some of the most important take away pieces.

First, VCSU requests one-time funding to address critical deferred maintenance for McFarland Hall. While we have invested nearly \$2M in the building since 2015, the required maintenance far exceeds our capacity to complete utilizing tier funds.

Second, VCSU firmly supports the NDUS needs-based budget request. We have been working closely with the system office to ensure the most critical items facing our campus.

The last two items have been addressed in the NDUS ask, and they include employee compensation and an inflation factor budget adjustment.





# McFarland Deferred Maintenance



McFarland Hall was the first building constructed on the Valley City State campus in 1892.

It currently houses the majority of VCSU's administrative offices, several academic divisions, and many classroom spaces.



## McFarland Hall Maintenance

McFarland Hall is our signature building on campus. It is vital to every VCSU student as it houses the majority of our administrative offices and several academic divisions. 40% of our VCSU staff and faculty are housed in this building.



# McFarland Deferred Maintenance

- \$1,816,000 spent on repairs and renovations since 2015
  - Structural repairs
  - Roof repairs
  - Tuckpointing
  - Bat mitigation
  - Fire alarm upgrade
  - Flooring replacement
  - Clocktower repair



## McFarland Repairs since 2015

It's important to note that we have not neglected this building. It is in functional condition. \$1.8 million has been spent on repairs and renovations over the last 10 years. This list includes: structural repairs, tuckpointing, roof repairs, fire alarm upgrades, classroom remodels, and much more.





### **McFarland Updates since 2021**

The iconic VCSU Clocktower was restored in 2023 you can see here before and after pictures. We have also renovated classrooms and offices all over the building, you can see an example of one of these spaces that was completed in 2021.



# McFarland Deferred Maintenance

- Further repairs needed
  - HVAC upgrades
  - Window replacement (257 windows)
  - Roof repairs
  - Building tuckpoints
- Project Cost Estimate: \$27,300,000
  - \$25,395,000 from General Fund
  - \$1,365,000 from VCSU Match



## McFarland Maintenance Request

VCSU is requesting dollars for a large deferred maintenance project. VCSU has utilized tier and reserve funds in the past to keep this historical building in functional condition. This project would address air quality through upgrading the HVAC system and increase efficiency by replacing 257 windows. It would take years of tier funds and reserves to complete this project in pieces and the cost will continue to rise.

VCSU would match \$1,365,000 from reserves and tier funding to complete this \$27.3 million project. More information is available in the testimony packet.



# Employee Compensation

- VCSU supports annual merit pay increases for each year of biennium
- Salaries continue to trail regional data in many positions
- Important for retaining quality staff and faculty



## Employee Compensation Request

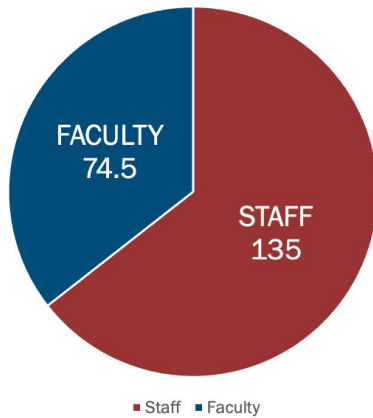
VCSU prioritizes retaining the talented and knowledgeable staff and faculty we have, and it becomes challenging to remain competitive year to year. We are very grateful for the increases and extra market and equity funds we received last biennium. VCSU made positive strides towards raising salaries for employees that were behind market, however national salary data, updated each year, indicates we continue to lag behind the regional data in many positions across campus. We allocated extra resources from our reserves towards this, but our average annual salaries remain on the lower end of the 4-year regional institutions, falling below the salaries at Dickinson State University and Minot State University.

VCSU will continue to prioritize its employees and would appreciate any assistance the legislature can provide.



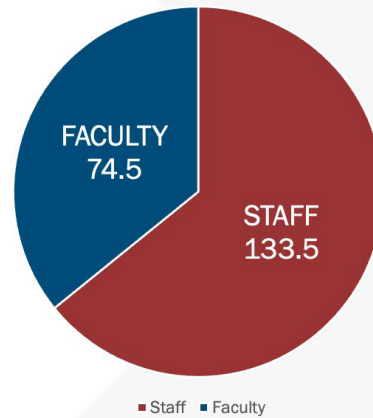
# Employee Information

FY23 – Total Avg Benefitted Employees



EMPLOYEES	TURNOVER	RATE
STAFF	16	11.9%
FACULTY	13	17.5%

FY24 – Total Avg Benefitted Employees



EMPLOYEES	TURNOVER	RATE
STAFF	14	10.5%
FACULTY	18	24.2%



## Employee Retainment

Over the past 2 years, we've had 12 total faculty and staff retirements out of the 61 resignations.

VCSU has been tracking all vacant position salaries including salary savings when hiring new employees. We estimate a \$500,000 savings for the 23-25 biennium which has been earmarked to help with the 25-27 biennium funding formula decrease.





# Inflation Factor Adjustment



## Dramatic cost increases

- Cost for utilities
- Software contracts
- Transportation
  - Academic travel expenses
  - Team travel
- Health Insurance Increase by 14%
- NDPERS Closure Costs
- ND Insurance Reserve Fund Increase by 20%



### Inflation Factor Request

VCSU, like all state agencies, has experienced increases in operating costs. This list shows some examples of increases that we have faced and will continue to face.

Costs for utilities continue to escalate. However, we negotiated with Rainbow Gas to “lock in” our rate on an annual basis.

Software costs and contracts have increased between 20-40%.

Costs for team travel and academic trips have increased significantly, and we project they will continue to increase. The inflationary impact of travel has been significant.

Some of these are mandated increases such as Health Insurance, NDIRF increases, and the ND-PERS Closure (\$150,000 for the 25-27 Biennium) that VCSU would need to increase tuition to fund if an inflationary factor isn't granted.



# VCSU supports NDUS Budget Requests

- NDUS needs-based budget
- Higher Education Stabilization Fund
- Continuation of Challenge Grant Program
  - Funding up to \$50 million
  - Flexibility in program uses
- Statewide AI Request
- Capital Building Funds Program
  - Funding at current or higher levels in Tier II/Tier III



## VCSU Support for NDUS Budget Requests

We support the items that were presented in the NDUS budget request. These are a few priorities from our perspective.

- NDUS needs-based budget
- Higher Education Stabilization Fund
- Continuation of the Challenge Grant Program
- Statewide AI Request
- Capital Building Fund program – funding at current or higher levels in Tier II/Tier III



## General Financial Overview

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- Solid financial standing with a 2024 CFI of 4.93
- No financial audit recommendations
- Undesignated reserves are strong at 7% and total \$1,337,987

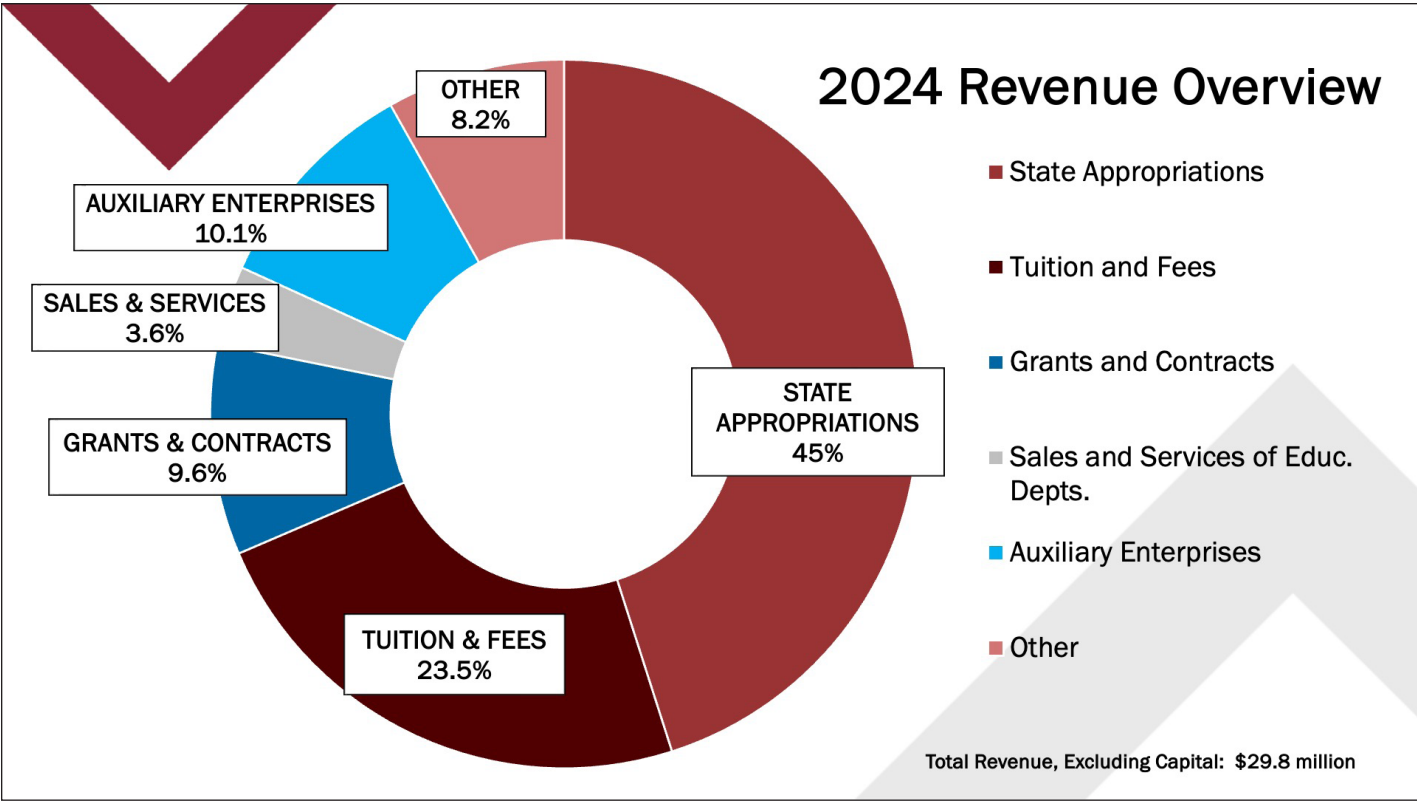


### Strong Financial Standing

VCSU had a solid CFI in 2024 of 4.93.

We had another year of no audit recommendations in our annual financial audit and all prior recommendations in our past operational audits have been implemented and cleared.

Campuses are required to hold in reserves no lower than 5% and up to 7% in undesignated reserves. As of June 30, 2024, VCSU has a strong undesignated reserve of 7%.



**Revenue Overview**

This chart shows VCSU’s revenue sources for fiscal year 2024.

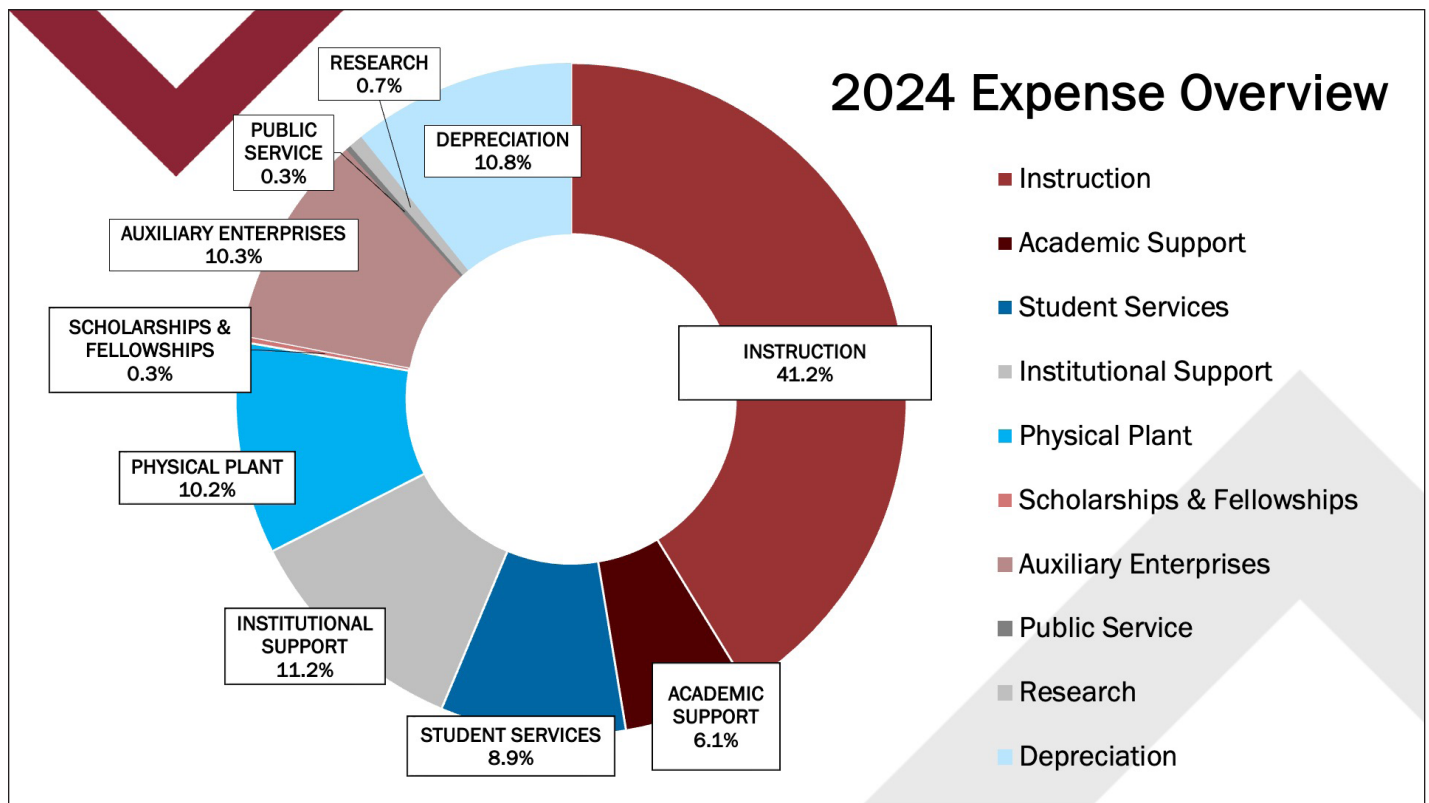
As you can see, the 45% of our revenue is from the appropriation from the State of North Dakota. We are extremely grateful to this body for the continued support and commitment to our students.

The second-largest revenue generator for our campus is Tuition and Fees.

Here is a more detailed breakdown of these revenue numbers.

\$13.43 million (45%)	State Appropriations
\$7.0 million (23.5%)	Tuition and Fees
\$3.0 million(10.1%)	Auxiliary Enterprises
\$2.8 million (9.6%)	Grants and Contracts
\$2.43 million (8.2%)	Other
\$1.07 million (3.6%)	Sales and Services of Educ. Depts.





### Expense Overview

This chart shows an overview of VCSU's 2024 expenses.

Here is a more detailed breakdown of these expense numbers.

\$13.3 million (41.2%)	Instruction
\$3.61 million (11.2%)	Institutional Support
\$3.47 million (10.8%)	Depreciation
\$3.31 million (10.3%)	Auxiliary Enterprises
\$3.3 million (10.2%)	Physical Plant
\$2.88 million (8.9%)	Student Services
\$1.98 million (6.1%)	Academic Support
\$.22 million (0.7%)	Research
\$.1 million (0.3%)	Scholarships and Fellowships
\$.08 million (0.3%)	Public Service



# Extraordinary Repair on Campus

Match Calculation	State Fund	VCSU Match	Total	
1:1 Extraordinary Repair	\$408,319	\$816,638	\$1,224,957	Matched
Tier 2 - 1:1	\$463,705	\$463,705	\$927,410	Matched
Tier 3 - 2:1	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,072,590 Matched
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,372,024</b>	<b>\$2,280,343</b>	<b>\$3,652,367</b>	
<b>Total Matched and Available</b>			<b>\$3,224,957</b>	

Future Project Descriptions	Category	ESTIMATE
McFarland Fire Alarm Upgrade (to complete building upgrade)	LS	\$100,000
Field House Emergency Power	LS	\$60,000
Replace McFarland Fire Escape (East)	LS	\$330,000
Card Access on other buildings	LS	\$100,000
Footbridge Structural Repairs	DM	\$276,500
Campus Tuckpointing	DM	\$2,800,000
McFarland Window Replacement	DM	\$2,454,850
Sidewalk Replacement	DM	\$75,000
Total future planned deferred maintenance		\$6,196,350

## 2023-25 Use

McCarthy Hall Match	\$2,000,000
Classroom Remodels	\$200,000
Fieldhouse Boiler Replacement	\$150,000
Deferred Maintenance – roof repairs, heat plant repairs, elevator repairs, misc small projects	\$440,000



## The Importance of Tier Funding

VCSU is thankful for the Tier funding match change last biennium to a 1:1 match for Tier I. We have a long list of deferred maintenance and life safety projects on our campus and being able to access the tier dollars quicker helps address the needs of VCSU. During the 23-25 biennium, we are projecting to have the required match to access all the tier dollars, this is the first time we will be able to do this. The final match on tier 3 should be matched by April 2025.

During the last biennium, the language for tier 2 and tier 3 was changed to state the funds need to be used specifically for academic and student housing facilities. In prior bienniums we have utilized this funding for infrastructure needs in our other auxiliary buildings. We ask consideration be given to change this language to allow campuses to repair all existing infrastructure. Examples for using these funds would include boilers and chillers. Private donors are less interested in these types of projects yet there is still a need to keep our buildings in functional condition.



# Budget Request Overview

	General Funds	Special Funds
2023-25 Appropriation / Authority	\$ 27,612,092	\$28,062,421
Current Funding Formula Decrease due to Credit Production	-\$1,104,484	
Target Market Equity	\$723,115	\$32,918
NDIT Rate Adj/Employer Retirement Contribution	\$20,709	\$23,818
Inflation Factor Increase	\$817,543	
<b>Total 2025-27 Base Budget Request</b>	<b>\$28,068,975</b>	<b>\$28,119,157</b>
Additional Requests:		
McFarland Deferred Maintenance Project (SBHE Approved)	\$25,935,000	\$1,365,000
<b>Total Request</b>	<b>\$54,003,975</b>	<b>\$29,484,157</b>

## Budget Overview

The VCSU 23-25 Base level state funding is \$27,612,092, of which \$408,319 is set aside for our 1:1 match for capital assets and an additional \$47,204 for equipment purchases on campus.

Our requested adjustments would increase our general fund budget by \$456,883. This amount includes and accounts for the decrease in completed credit production that VCSU experienced during 21-23. We knew this delayed funding formula increase would be impactful and identified specific savings areas and strategies by utilizing salary savings and general tuition revenues that exceeded the original projections to cover this decrease next biennium until our credit production rebounds. We reviewed every open position to see if there could be changes in job descriptions leading to efficiencies and held positions that were temporarily not needed. Next biennium we will see an increase due to the record enrollment that has translated into an increase in completed credit production.

The other items in our base increase are the target market equity funds that were given last biennium, restoring the 3% budget reduction, and inflationary increases that are very important at all campuses.

In our special fund authority, we request an increase of \$56,736 to continue the market equity increase made during 23-25 biennium presentation and the IT Rate adjustment and employer retirement contribution increases.

The other additional requests include \$25,935,000 and authority for a \$1,365,000 match for the McFarland Deferred Maintenance project we previously described.

## VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

### Comparison of 2023-25 Base Budget to 2025-27 SBHE Request and Executive Recommendation

	2023-25 Base Level	Requested Adjustments	2025-27 SBHE Needs-Based Budget	Burgum Executive Recommendation	Armstrong Executive Recommendation	Senate Recommendation	Difference from 2023-25 Base Level	Difference from SBHE Needs-Based Budget
Campus Operations	\$ 55,218,690		\$ 55,218,690	\$ 55,218,690	\$ 55,218,690	\$ 55,218,690	\$ -	\$ -
Target Market Equity Pool	756,033		756,033	756,033	756,033	756,033	\$ -	\$ -
Employer Retirement Contribution/IT Rate Adjustment	34,183		34,183	34,183	34,183	34,183	\$ -	\$ -
Funding Formula Adjustment		(1,104,484)	(1,104,484)	(1,104,484)	(1,104,484)	(1,104,484)	\$ (1,104,484)	\$ -
NDIT Rate Adjustment		10,344	10,344	10,344	10,344	10,241	\$ 10,241	\$ (103)
Inflation Factor Increase		817,543	817,543	-	-	-	\$ -	\$ (817,543)
Governor Burgum's 10% Adjustment				933,501	676,690	-	\$ -	\$ -
4% Increase Funding Rate Increase						1,178,863	\$ 1,178,863	\$ 1,178,863
2023-25 Funding Formula Rate Averaging						4,024	\$ 4,024	
Governor Burgum's Health Insurance/Salary & FB increase - Other Funds				1,413,874	1,413,874	1,410,874	\$ 1,410,874	\$ 1,410,874
<b>Total Campus Operations</b>	<b>\$ 56,008,906</b>	<b>\$ (276,597)</b>	<b>\$ 55,732,309</b>	<b>\$ 57,262,141</b>	<b>\$ 57,005,330</b>	<b>\$ 57,508,424</b>	<b>\$ 1,499,518</b>	<b>\$ 1,772,091</b>
Capital Assets	\$ 455,823		\$ 455,823	\$ 455,823	\$ 455,823	\$ 455,823	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Appropriation</b>	<b>\$ 56,464,729</b>	<b>\$ (276,597)</b>	<b>\$ 56,188,132</b>	<b>\$ 57,717,964</b>	<b>\$ 57,461,153</b>	<b>\$ 57,964,247</b>	<b>\$ 1,499,518</b>	<b>\$ 1,772,091</b>
General Fund	\$ 28,352,813	\$ (283,838)	\$ 28,068,975	\$ 28,184,933	\$ 27,928,122	\$ 28,431,216	\$ 78,403	\$ 362,241
Special Funds	28,111,916	7,241	28,119,157	29,533,031	29,533,031	29,533,031	1,421,115	1,413,874
<b>Total Funding Sources</b>	<b>\$ 56,464,729</b>	<b>\$ (276,597)</b>	<b>\$ 56,188,132</b>	<b>\$ 57,717,964</b>	<b>\$ 57,461,153</b>	<b>\$ 57,964,247</b>	<b>\$ 1,499,518</b>	<b>\$ 1,776,115</b>
FTE	211.94	5.5	217.44	211.94	211.94	217.44	0	0

## Comparison

This chart shows a comparison of our budget request to the Burgum & Armstrong Executive Budgets and to the Senate recommendation. We support any increase we can do for our employees in salary increases. Great strides were made last biennium towards salary goals, however as the market data continues to increase we fall behind again and again. VCSU is thankful to the Senate for putting the minimum amount payable of 96% back into the Governor Armstrong Executive budget recommendation. VCSU asks that the House of Representatives continue to include this as well. We also ask the House of Representatives to consider increasing this to 98%-100%. VCSU planned ahead and using salary savings and increased tuition projects we have saved the 4% decrease in our budget for the next biennium, if a higher percentage is considered we would utilize these reserves to focus on deferred maintenance projects across our campus.

We have included a one-page document with our testimony that highlights what we are asking above the executive recommendation.

In this document you will also see an inflationary factor request. VCSU has seen increased cost

during the last 5 years due to inflation in many areas. Adding the inflationary rate factor would help every department and student across campus as all operational budgets have seen impact of increased costs. If there is no inflationary adjustment and we are allowed to increase tuition, our tuition increases would be utilized to cover increased costs.

FTE counts from last biennium increased slightly. These increases were strategic - two positions were added in Enrollment Services to embed admission counselors within academic departments for more intentional and focused recruiting (one is currently vacant). Mental Health Counseling was increased by 1.01 FTE using the funds allocated last biennium. We also added an Assistant Athletic Trainer and Director for Athletic Development and Game Day Management.





# Forward Together



- Support student success in and out of the classroom
- Improve quality of academic offerings and explore additions of innovative programs
- Provide support for best practices in online teaching/learning and in using AI technologies
- Continue strategic work to positively impact enrollment, retention and completion



## Let's Move Forward Together

Overall, VCSU is in a strong and great position. We are achieving student success on multiple levels and continuing to improve our academic offerings to ensure students are getting the highest-quality education.

Our entire team is working on best practices to offer high-quality teaching and learning.

VCSU is one of the fastest-growing regional schools in the upper Midwest and we continue to have sustained enrollment growth, but that success and growth have helped us realize our current facilities are in need of deferred maintenance attention. McFarland Hall is a prime example. With our Forward Together focus, we are making a monumental effort to propel VCSU into the future.

Thank you for your time today and I look forward to partnering with you to continue supporting North Dakota's future workforce.



**Thank you.**

# **Additional Information**



**VALLEY CITY**  

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**STATE UNIVERSITY**

VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY								
Comparison of 2023-25 Base Budget to 2025-27 SBHE Request and Executive Recommendation								
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Funding Formula Adjustment		(1,104,484)	(1,104,484)	(1,104,484)	(1,104,484)	(1,104,484)	\$ (1,104,484)	\$ -
NDIT Rate Adjustment		10,344	10,344	10,344	10,344	10,241	\$ 10,241	\$ (103)
Inflation Factor Increase		817,543	817,543	-	-	-	\$ -	\$ (817,543)
Governor Burgum's 10% Adjustment				933,501	676,690		\$ -	\$ -
4% Increase Funding Rate Increase						1,178,863	\$ 1,178,863	\$ 1,178,863
2023-25 Funding Formula Rate Averaging						4,024	\$ 4,024	
Governor Burgum's Health Insurance/Salary & FB increase - Other Funds				1,413,874	1,413,874	1,410,874	\$ 1,410,874	\$ 1,410,874
<b>Total Campus Operations</b>	<b>\$ 56,008,906</b>	<b>\$ (276,597)</b>	<b>\$ 55,732,309</b>	<b>\$ 57,262,141</b>	<b>\$ 57,005,330</b>	<b>\$ 57,508,424</b>	<b>\$ 1,499,518</b>	<b>\$ 1,772,091</b>
Capital Assets	\$ 455,823		\$ 455,823	\$ 455,823	\$ 455,823	\$ 455,823	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Appropriation</b>	<b>\$ 56,464,729</b>	<b>\$ (276,597)</b>	<b>\$ 56,188,132</b>	<b>\$ 57,717,964</b>	<b>\$ 57,461,153</b>	<b>\$ 57,964,247</b>	<b>\$ 1,499,518</b>	<b>\$ 1,772,091</b>
General Fund	\$ 28,352,813	\$ (283,838)	\$ 28,068,975	\$ 28,184,933	\$ 27,928,122	\$ 28,431,216	\$ 78,403	\$ 362,241
Special Funds	28,111,916	7,241	28,119,157	29,533,031	29,533,031	29,533,031	1,421,115	1,413,874
<b>Total Funding Sources</b>	<b>\$ 56,464,729</b>	<b>\$ (276,597)</b>	<b>\$ 56,188,132</b>	<b>\$ 57,717,964</b>	<b>\$ 57,461,153</b>	<b>\$ 57,964,247</b>	<b>\$ 1,499,518</b>	<b>\$ 1,776,115</b>
FTE	211.94	5.5	217.44	211.94	211.94	217.44	0	0

## Needs above Executive Recommendation

### Minimum Amounts Payable 96% - \$885,840

VCSU is thankful to the Senate for putting the minimum amount payable of 96% back into the Governor Armstrong Executive budget recommendation. VCSU asks that the House of Representatives continue to include this as well. We also ask the House of Representatives to consider increasing this to 98%-100%. VCSU did plan ahead for this funding decrease. Through salary savings and increased tuition revenue from growth, we have saved the 4% decrease in our budget for the next biennium. If a higher percentage is considered, we would utilize these reserves to focus on deferred maintenance projects across our campus.

NDCC 15-18.2-06.1 provides, "Notwithstanding any calculation required by this chapter, during each biennium an institution may not receive less than ninety-six percent of the state aid to which the institution was entitled under this chapter during the previous biennium."

### Inflationary Rate Factor - \$817,543

VCSU has seen increased costs during the last 5 years due to inflation in many areas. Adding the inflationary rate factor would help every department and student across campus as all operational budgets have seen impacts of increased costs. If there isn't help in this area tuition will need to be increased to cover these costs.

### McFarland Deferred Maintenance Project - \$25,935,000

VCSU is requesting additional dollars for a large, deferred maintenance project. VCSU has utilized tier and reserve funds in the past to keep this historical building in beautiful condition. This project would address air quality through upgrading the HVAC system and increase efficiency by replacing 257 windows. It would take years of tier funds and reserves to attack this project in pieces and the cost will continue to rise. VCSU would match \$1,365,000 from reserves and tier funding to complete this \$27.3 million project.





# VCSU McFarland Hall Deferred Maintenance Request

**PROJECT:** McFarland Renovation

**INSTITUTION:** Valley City State University

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** McFarland Renovation

**PROJECT COST ESTIMATE:** \$27,300,000

Project type based on percentage of cost as per Master Plan section 3.

80% DMP (Deferred Maintenance)

20% LSS (Life Safety)

## Master Plan Alignment

- DMP 1: HVAC upgrades
- DMP 2: Window replacement
- DMP 3: Roof repair/replacement
- DMP 4: Update utility systems
- DMP 7: Building tuckpointing
- LSS 3: Address fire code issues
- LSS 4: Address ADA accessibility issues
- LSS 7: Building tuckpointing

## Project Overview

As the focal point of campus, McFarland Hall houses the majority of the administrative offices, several academic divisions, and many classroom spaces. McFarland Hall is the original and first building to be constructed on the VCSU campus in 1892. Throughout the years, McFarland has seen many changes to meet office and classroom needs. VCSU has spent \$1.81 million on repairs and renovations since 2015, but we need this one-time funding to address the growing list of large deferred maintenance projects.

## Cost Share

**\$25.93**

million

request from ND

**\$1.36**

million

match from VCSU



**VALLEY CITY**  
**STATE UNIVERSITY**



**\$1.81**  
**million**

spent on repairs &  
renovations since 2015

### Projects completed since 2015

Structural/foundation repairs

Roof repairs

Tuckpointing

Bat mitigation

Fire alarm upgrade

Flooring replacement

Clocktower repair

## Scope of Work

### Project Specifications

1. DMP 1 & DMP 4: McFarland Hall: HVAC – full removal and replacement, including air handling units – to include conversion of steam radiation to hot water heat.
2. DMP 2: Window replacement
  - McFarland Hall
  - Circle Hall/Vangstad Auditorium
3. DMP 3: Roof repair/replacement
4. DMP 7: Building tuckpoint
  - McFarland Hall
  - Vangstad Auditorium

### Deferred Maintenance

- Upgrades to the HVAC system would allow for our main building to become more energy efficient through the replacement of outdated, and no longer used air handling units, elimination of window air conditioning units, and reducing annual operating costs.
- Air quality has become a top priority in schools across the country post-pandemic. Upgrading our systems will allow for better air control and provide adequate ventilation with filtration and better thermal control.
- Window replacement is one of the top energy efficiency ROIs. Maintenance of the windows will be reduced, as it currently takes 2 employees 45 minutes to clean each window in McFarland. There are 257 windows in this building alone.
- While tuckpointing doesn't eliminate time towards deferred maintenance, it does ensure a building remains in good structural repair, avoiding more costly repairs down the road.
- VCSU has been making great strides to ensure that all of our roofing systems are inspected, maintained and replaced on a schedule. The cedar shakes on the iconic McFarland roof line are a specialty item and more costly than a regular roof, and therefore are outside of our budget.

### Life Safety Improvements

- LSS 3: The current east fire escape on McFarland Hall is rusting out and may become unsafe to use in the event of a fire on the upper floors of the building. It is imperative that VCSU provides safe escape routes in the event of an emergency.
- LSS 4: The current elevators in McFarland are outdated. We have spent budget to keep them in working condition, but they are at the end of their useful life and parts are becoming difficult to find for repairs.

### Project Timeline

These projects would be completed over the course of 4-5 years, depending on the funding received.



## **Project Cost Estimate**

### **Budget estimates are based on:**

- Site walkthrough completed with PCL Construction and VCSU on 3/21/2022 & 3/22/2022, to review the existing facilities and desired project scopes.
  - Pricing was updated by PCL on 2/2024.

### **Schedule clarifications:**

- These estimates are based on the following schedule milestone dates:
  - Construction start: May 2025
  - Substantial completion: varies based on the project
  - Weather delays not included

### **General clarifications:**

- Costs are estimated in “today’s dollars” for construction to take place during the timeframe noted above. 12% escalation has been included at this time.
- These estimates do include Builder’s Risk.
- These estimates do include the cost for a Performance and Payment Bond.
- These estimates are based upon mutually agreeable terms and conditions.
- 3rd party independent construction and materials testing not included.

## **Project Cost Overview**

<b>McFarland Deferred Maintenance Project – Costs Overview</b>		
<b>Construction Costs</b> (from PCL estimates, breakdown in Appendix A/B/C)		
General, Mechanical, Electrical	\$21,000,000	
<b>Total Construction Costs</b>		<b>\$21,000,000</b>
<b>Soft Costs</b>		
A/E Fees @ 10%	\$2,100,000	
Owner’s Contingency @ 10%	\$2,100,000	
Owner’s Cost @ 10%	\$2,100,000	
<b>Total Soft Costs</b>		<b>\$6,300,000</b>
<b>Project Total</b>		<b>\$27,300,000</b>

<b>Appendix A: Life Safety Costs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>(2) McFarland Elevator Equipment/CAB Upgrades</b></li><li>• <b>East Fire Escape</b></li></ul>	
General Requirements	\$15,782
(2) McFarland Elevator Equipment/CAB Upgrades	\$225,000
McFarland East Fire Escape	\$217,091
Insurances, Bonds, Fees, Escalation & Permits	\$92,938
CMAR Management (General Conditions)	\$94,521
<b>Life Safety Costs Total</b>	<b>\$647,079</b>

## Appendix B: Exterior Envelope Costs

- **McFarland Window Replacement**
- **McFarland Tuckpointing**
- **McFarland Roofing Repairs (cedar shakes & gutters)**
- **Vangstad Auditorium Tuckpointing – East Side**
- **Vangstad/Circle Hall Window Replacement**

General Requirements	\$186,099
McFarland Window Replacement	\$1,824,700
McFarland Tuckpointing	\$2,253,375
McFarland Roofing Repairs (cedar shakes & gutters only)	\$1,225,875
Vangstad Auditorium Tuckpointing - East Side	\$168,000
Vangstad/Circle Hall Window Replacement	\$124,085
Insurance, Bonds, Fees, Escalation & Permits	\$1,119,794
CMAR Management (General Conditions)	\$728,111
<b>Exterior Envelope Costs Total</b>	<b>\$7,630,039</b>

## Appendix C: McFarland Mechanical Upgrades

- **Mechanical HVAC, Plumbing, Steam to Hot Water Conversion**
- **Fire Protection**
- **Plumbing**
- **Ceiling Demo for Mechanical & Fire Protection Work**
- **Ceiling Finishes Replacement**
- **LED Lighting**

General Requirements	\$310,149
Division 09 – Finishes	\$2,023,740
Division 22, 23 & 25 – HVAC, Plumbing & Fire Protection	\$6,832,527
Division 26 – Lighting	\$812,869
Insurance, Bonds, Fees, Escalation & Permits	\$1,870,927
CMAR Management (General Conditions)	\$865,884
<b>McFarland Mechanical Upgrades Total</b>	<b>\$12,716,097</b>





**Future Operating Costs**

Although unknown at this time, given the areas of increased efficiency (HVAC and window replacements), it is expected we will see a decrease in overall operating costs for McFarland Hall, in utilities and manhours.

**Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment**

N/A

**Source of Funds**

- 1. General fund appropriation
- 2. A combination of funds or other funding sources

**Shared Services / Efficiencies / Phasing - Planning**

We would be able to phase this project if full funding is not available.

- Life Safety Projects
- McFarland Mechanical Upgrades
- Exterior Envelope

**Policy/Statute Ranking Criteria Compliance**

15-10-63 (language verbatim from NDCC)

Valley City State University shall identify other funds from gifts, grants, donations, the university system capital building fund, or other local funds for at least five percent of the total estimated cost of a capital project request submitted to the legislative assembly.

Complies   **X**   Does Not Comply                      Not Applicable                     

An institution under the control of the state board of higher education may undertake a facility renovation project only if the project will reduce the deferred maintenance amount of the facility by no less than seventy five percent of the total cost of the renovation. This subsection does not apply to projects undertaken solely to correct building code deficiencies or to installations of infrastructure determined by the board to be essential to the mission of the institution.

Complies   **X**   Does Not Comply                      Not Applicable                     

Facility construction and renovation projects undertaken by an institution under the control of the state board of higher education must conform to campus master plan and space utilization requirements approved by the state board of higher education.

Complies   **X**   Does Not Comply                      Not Applicable

# 2025 Campus Snapshot | Valley City State University

## MISSION

Valley City State University is a public, regional university offering exceptional programs in an active, learner-centered community that promotes meaningful scholarship, ethical service, and the skilled use of technology. As an important knowledge resource, the University offers programs and outreach that enrich the quality of life in North Dakota and beyond. Through flexible, accessible, and innovative baccalaureate and master's programs, VCSU prepares students to succeed as educators, leaders, and engaged citizens in an increasingly complex and diverse society.

## SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

### Teacher Preparation

- 343 students enrolled in elementary education and 183 students enrolled in secondary education majors (Fall 2024)
- 116 students enrolled in online Master of Education (M.Ed.) and Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) (Fall 2024)
- Unique program in which junior/senior elementary education students serve as substitute teachers in Valley City, Fargo, and West Fargo schools
- 1,526 VCSU alumni serve as teachers and school administrators in 346 schools/education units in 154 North Dakota communities (Fall 2023)

### Integration of Open Educational Resources (OER)

- Faculty encouraged to replace expensive textbooks with accessible OER in curricula
- OER have saved VCSU students more than \$1.5 million in textbook costs since spring 2016
- State audit showed VCSU as a leader in OER use

### Three-Year Programs

- 30 students who completed graduation requirements in less than four years were recognized during the 2023-2024 school year.

### Academic Specialties

- Elementary and Secondary Education
- Fisheries and Wildlife Science
- Technology Education
- Health Science
- Music
- Software Engineering

### New Program

- Data Analytics and Visualization

### Academic Centers

- Don Muga Career and Technical Education Leadership Center
- Great Plains STEM Education Center
- Prairie Waters Education and Research Center

## COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

### VCSU and North Dakota State University

- Collaborate on human development and family science/elementary education program
  - VCSU faculty teach elementary education coursework on NDSU campus
  - Students who complete program earn degrees from both institutions
- Articulations Bachelor of Science Degree in Sport Leadership Management (SLM) and Master of Science Degree in Sport Management (MSM)

### Articulation Agreements with Community Colleges

- More than 45 articulation agreements with two-year schools for baccalaureate completion in face-to-face and online programs

### VCSU and Dakota College at Bottineau

- DCB students reside on VCSU campus and participate in DCB two-year degree and certificate programs
- Popular DCB nursing program hosted in Rhoades Science Center on VCSU campus
- DCB delivers developmental courses needed by some VCSU students

### COMPETITIVE POSITION (REGIONAL/NATIONAL)

- Top public regional college in North Dakota as ranked by U.S. News and World Report for 2025
- A U.S. News "Best College" for 27 consecutive years
- #2 public regional college in the Midwest as ranked by U.S. News and World Report for 2025
- VCSU is rated as the #1 "Best Value College" in ND by Niche.com, determined through quality and affordability

### STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

#### Strengths

- Close-knit, personal campus: students and faculty/staff know each other, work closely together
- 28-plus years of leadership in integration of technology in learning, accentuated by laptop campus
- New Center for the Arts building opened in 2022
- Innovative and responsive program offerings
- Strong town-gown relationship
- Highly active, supportive university foundation, allocated \$1.97 million for student scholarship support in 2023-2024
- Long-term history of fiscal responsibility and unqualified audits
- Renowned teacher-preparation programs
- Successful athletic program with true scholar-athletes
- Attractive campus in picturesque community

#### Challenges

- Oldest average-aged buildings of NDUS campuses carry significant deferred maintenance
- Extending prospective student market beyond traditional recruiting region
- Recruitment and retention of faculty and staff
- Adjustments to state budget realities

#### Needs

- Life safety improvements: fire alarm system upgrades, emergency egress and ADA accessibility improvements, emergency power enhancements, card access for academic buildings
- McFarland Hall (main building) tuck-pointing, air-handling systems, classroom renovation, roofing systems
- Student Center renovation/repurposing

#### Priorities

- Providing students with high-quality educational experiences and engaging co-curricular activities
- Student recruitment, retention and completions
- \$25 million capital campaign

## ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

**President:** Alan LaFave

### Leadership Team

- Larry Brooks, VP for Academic Affairs
- Erica Buchholz, VP for Business Affairs
- Mark Nelson, VP for Student Affairs
- Cory Anderson, Executive Director for University Advancement
- Joseph Tykwinski, Chief Information Officer
- Erin Heide, Director for Enrollment Services
- Dennis McCulloch, Director for Athletics
- Anna Bratsch, Assistant Athletic Director
- Mark Potts, Director for Public Relations

### FACULTY/STAFF STATISTICS

- Total faculty/staff FTE: 222
- Tenured faculty: 49.2%
- Full-time faculty with terminal degrees: 51.3%
- Student-to-faculty ratio: 11:1

### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

**Total Undergraduate Students (Fall 2024):** 1,651

- Full-time undergraduates: 884
- Part-time undergraduates: 767

**Total Graduate Students (Fall 2024):** 155

- Full-time graduate students: 10
- Part-time graduate students: 145

**Total Enrollment (Fall 2024):** 1,806

**Online Only (Fall 2024):** 24.5%

**Degrees Conferred in 2023–2024 (455)**

- Master's degrees: 41
- Bachelor's degrees: 231
- Associate's degrees: 6
- Graduate certificates: 25
- Undergraduate certificates: 152

**Student Achievement Measures (SAM)**

**Completion Rates at 6 Years (Starting Fall 2017):**

49% first-time, full-time cohort  
66% full-time, transfer cohort

### FINANCIALS

**FY25 Operating Budget (2024–2025)**

\$14,056,990 State General Fund  
\$ 7,628,302 Tuition & Fees  
\$ 8,500,000 Other Funds  
\$30,185,292 Total

### Special Budget Considerations

- \$408,000 Extraordinary Repair 2:1 Match (match completed)
- \$463,705 Tier 2 Building 1:1 Match (match completed)
- \$500,000 Tier 3 Building 2:1 Match (match completed)

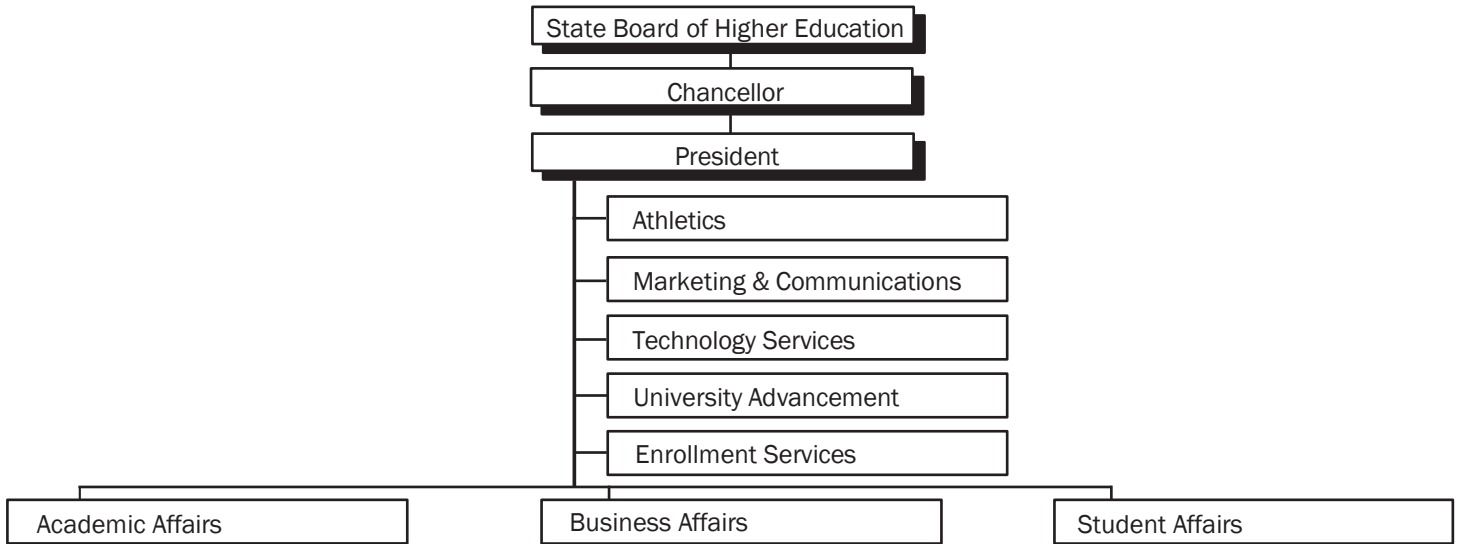
**2023-2024 Completed Student Credit Hours:**  
34,136

**2024–2025 Cost to Attend (Tuition and Fees)**

- In-state: \$6,619
- Out-of-state: \$11,583

# VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

## ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION



## ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS

### Academic Affairs

- 12 Academic Departments
- Centers:
  - Great Plains STEM Education Center
  - Prairie Waters Education and Research Center
  - Don Mugan Career and Technical Education Leadership Center
- Distance Learning and Faculty Development
- Graduate Studies
- Institutional Effectiveness and Planning
- Library
- Registrar
- Retention
- Student Academic Services

### Athletics

- Athletic Administration
- 13 Athletic Programs
- Athletic Training
- Sports Information

### Business Affairs

- Business and Financial Service
- Employee Services
- Facilities Services
- Grants
- Human Resources
- Payroll
- Risk Management

### Marketing & Communications

- Digital Platforms, Social Media, Photography
- University Brand, Graphic Design, Viking Print Services
- Web Content & Design

### Technology Services

- Data Centers and Virtualization
- Enterprise Applications
- Network and IT Security
- Technology Service Desk

### Student Affairs

- Career Services
- Counseling
- Dining Services
- Multicultural Affairs
- Health Services
- Residence Life
- Student Financial Aid
- Student Center
- Student Activities

### University Advancement

- Alumni Relations
- Community Relations
- Government Relations
- VCSU Foundation: Donor Relations and Fundraising