VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Petersburg, Virginia 23836

PART II: 2016 SIX-YEAR PLAN NARRATIVE

A. Institutional Mission

The VSU Mission was revised during the 2013-14 academic year as part of the strategic planning process. The changes were semantic in facilitation of clarity and succinctness, and approved by SCHEV in 2014. The changes became effective 1 August 2014:

Virginia State University, a public, comprehensive 1890 Land Grant institution and historically black college/university, is committed to the preparation of a diverse population of men and women through the advancement of academic programs and services that integrate instruction, research, extension, and outreach. The University endeavors to meet the educational needs of students, graduating lifelong learners who are well equipped to serve their communities as informed citizens, globally competitive leaders, and highly effective, ethical professionals.

B. Six-Year Plan Strategies

1. ***Out in Four Program (OFP)***: The following are the main aims of OFP:

   a. Reduce time to degree from the current 4.8 years to, at most, 4.2 years
   b. Improve retention and graduation rates (currently 64% and 43%, respectively)
   c. Reduce dependence on freshman enrollment.

   OFP represents the catalyst for a cultural change at VSU, specifically, directing student focus toward preparation for their post-baccalaureate endeavors—the world of work or graduate/life-long learning. The implementation strategies below are grounded in this concept.

   Central to the backdrop of preparation for the post-baccalaureate endeavor is that of holistic pedagogical strategies that substantively engage the student beyond the classroom where they spend only approximately 10% of their clock hours in a given week. The Offices of Academic and Student Affairs Student Success and Engagement and will partner to develop co-curricular activities directly related to coursework, among them a new Freshman Studies course. These activities will be administered through the University College.

In order to facilitate shorter time to degree, VSU will provide opportunities for students to earn credit by changing Summer School to a primarily on-line enterprise center and expanding Winter Session, offering low-cost opportunities for students to complete coursework in a shorter timeframe. The online courses feature e-books—most often substantially less expensive than hard copies—further reduce the cost. It is anticipated that, in the 2018-20 and 2020-22 biennial periods Summer School and Winter Session enrollments will experience formidable growth. VSU's Local Open Online Courses (LOOCS) have become extremely popular over the two-year pilot period, enrolling over 650 students in summer 2015—a 100% increase over summer 2014.   While online education is a staple of lifelong learning, and one with which students must be intuitively familiar, courses which are deemed 'high-risk' (i.e., those which have traditionally lower successful completion rates) will be restricted to limited enrollment in facilitation of more 'intrusive' pedagogies.

Given the nature of federal standards for financial aid, academic advising has evolved to a highly technical process that requires a specialized knowledge base. VSU will enhance academic advising, including faculty development through NACADA and a requirement that all new students are advised in the University College before they are formally admitted to their major.

VSU is committed to reducing student debt and decreasing the cost of education. Over 90% of VSU's student body receive some form of financial aid, hence each student will complete a mandatory, comprehensive financial literacy program. For students who have Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) $1,000 or less and a cumulative GPA or 2.8-2.99, VSU will cover this cost through a student work program.

The funding for this strategy is shown in the table below:

#	ITEM	2016-17	2017-18
1	Student Work Program	150,000	350,000
2	Faculty Development for Academic Advising	100,000	150,000
3	**Total**	**250,000**	**500,000**

Virginia State University (VSU) will establish (for the fall semester 2016) a new comprehensive academic-support entity called the **Academic Center for Excellence** (ACE). Conceptually, this initiative is the transformation of the Office of Student Affairs to a co-curricular hub. It is designed to fully centralize and transform academic and student support entity that fully integrates curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities to include the University College (academic advising/counseling, tutoring, and the first-year experience), Career Planning and Placement, the Library/Information Commons, Freshman Orientation, Student Activities, and the new VSU Advance Program in a single facility under the leadership of a Vice President for Student Support and Engagement (formerly the Vice President for Student Affairs).   The main aims of this innovation are the following:

a. Increase retention rates (currently 73%) to at least 80% by fall 2018;
b. Increase graduation (currently 44%) to at least 65% by 2020;
c. Reduce time to degree (currently 4.7 years) to 4.2 years by 2018;
d. Reduce student debt (currently $26,000) by at least 5% by 2020.

ACE evolved from the recent successes of the University College which is the foundation for the advent of the ACE design and implementation. Two central activities comprise the hallmarks of these positive outcomes. First, working closely with all of the academic departments and/or disciplines, the University College (UC) assumed exclusive responsibility for new-student (first-time freshmen and transfer students) academic advisement. UC employed intrusive advising concepts based upon exacting analysis of high school transcripts and numerous data sets on incoming freshman and transfers to determine the most accurate and appropriate course placement. Second, in consultation with the Department of Mathematics, UC developed a special model for placement in 100-level mathematics courses that is finely tailored to address students' strengths with requisite academic support from tutors as well as computer-assisted, competency-based instruction. The immediate, striking result was a one-year eight-percentage point increase in freshman retention—from 64% in 2014 to 73% in 2015.

Highlights of the ACE initiative include the following:

a. The VSU Advance Program which offers students discounted courses in summer ($299 including electronic textbooks) with a $100 rebate for students who successfully complete the courses with a grade of "B" or better.

b. Faculty members (neuroscientists) in the Department of Psychology have piloted a program called Project Knowledge (PK) which is based their grant-funded research and requisite pilot-study data in student development. The undergirding foci of PK are (a) habit formation with regard to the development of academic skill, (b) communal and individual sense of identity, and (c) mitigation of self-handicapping through network mentoring.

Successful implementation of ACE requires a myriad of strategies, principal among them:

a. Significant faculty and development
b. General Education Program review toward a more fully integrated paradigm; and
c. The physical relocation of the units mentioned above to a central location on campus;
d. Faculty and student mentoring
e. Internal/external marketing.

ACE will be supported via reallocated grant funding.

2. **_Distance Education_**: Currently VSU offers several courses online or in hybrid fashion and will establish entire online programs, initially, a BA in Hospitality Management, an MA in Criminal Justice, and a BA in Political Science. In the 2018-20 and 2020-22, it is projected that online

enrollment will grow to as much as 1,000 students. In preparation for this, VSU will immediately strengthen the infrastructure of the current Distance Education Unit with a full-time instructional designer; student services/operations upgrades, and faculty development requirements (i.e., recruiting, registration, payment, add/drop courses, change grades, etc.).   The University will purchase online programs through companies such as Pearson's for delivery by qualified VSU faculty.

The funding for this strategy is shown in the table below:

#	INCREMENTAL FUNDING	2016-17	2017-18
1	Purchase of Online Programs and Services	595,000	300,000
2	Faculty Development	50,000	50,000
3	**Total**	**645,000**	**350,000**

3. ***MS in Mathematics Education Continuation***. Developing mathematics educators is a primary focus at VSU in the STEM and Teacher Education units. Mathematics education has been identified as a primary area of need in the neighboring public school districts and at the University as integral to both the advancement of critical thinking skills and the STEM acumen.

   VSU's MS degree in Mathematics Education did not meet SCHEV productivity standards in FY 2015. VSU has requested continuation of the program and will utilize grant funds and reallocated research dollars (NSF Robert Noyce Grant [$3.2mil] and CCAM, respectively) to increase enrollment and graduation numbers for the MS program in Mathematics and the numbers of highly qualified mathematics educators. Implementation strategies include (a) research apprenticeships/internships with CCAM partners; (b) three-plus-two BS/MS options for mathematics majors; (c) program-to-program articulation agreements with VCCS schools, including a reverse-transfer option.

   To fund this strategy, the College of Engineering and Technology will reallocate CCAM funding for student research in mathematics. Additional incremental funding for $150,000 would go to graduate assistantships.

4. ***Workforce-Credential Certificate Programs***: In partnership with the Professional Climbing Instructor's Association (PCIA), Warriors for Wireless (W4W), and Richard Bland College (RBC), VSU has procured a US Department of Labor *Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training* (TAACCCT) grant of $3.25million to train technicians to upgrade cell towers. This 16-credit hour certificate is a credential which VSU will also imbed into the BS degree program in Electronic Engineering Technology. The program will produce approximately 60 completers per year, and, based upon data from similar programs in the US, the employment rate for graduates is above 90%.

The need for Social Work professionals has been identified as one of some urgency in Southside Virginia. VSU is preparing to offer a Social Work Certificate. This certificate will be offered for persons who hold an earned bachelor's degree, those who wish to concurrently earn the certification with the BSW at VSU, as well as students who have a high school diploma. The certification prepares students for entry-level jobs at social services organizations. Incremental funding for this strategy is for hiring an additional faculty member.

5. ***Military Affairs Program***. VSU's ROTC program is one of the most highly rated in the nation. Currently, four VSU ROTC alumni are General Officer in the US Army—one a four-star General. VSU's proximity to Ft. Lee and expansive military network will be utilized to more effectively provide educational opportunities for service members and their families. In order to deliver these opportunities, VSU will expand the services currently provided by Military Affairs Office to include one-stop enrollment management services (e.g., academic advising, student accounts, registration, etc.), on-site coursework, academic programs, and other partnerships. ~~Two current full-time faculty members with highly specialized military and content expertise will be reassigned (funding reallocated) to the unit to implement this strategy. Incremental funding will cover two faculty positions to replace these individuals in their respective departments, and a non-personal services budget for the unit (see below). The University deems this program a major catalyst for non-traditional student enrollment that transcends state borders, hence a substantial amount of travel and recruiting are necessary.~~ The existing Director of Military Affairs posit will be responsible for the implementation of this initiative; an hourly position will be allocated ($46,000) to provide clerical support.

#	INCREMENTAL FUNDING	2016-17	2017-18
1	Two Faculty Lines	~~200,000~~ 40,000	~~200,000~~ 0
2	~~Non-personal Services Budget for the Military Affairs Unit~~	~~70,000~~ 0	~~70,000~~ 0
3	**Total**	~~270,000~~ **$46,000**	~~270,000~~ **$46,000**

6. ***VSU Experiential Learning Program (ELP)***. In facilitation of student focus upon post-baccalaureate endeavors, VSU will require every student to participate in an experiential learning program through general education or in the major (e.g., practicum, student teaching, internships, service learning, junior-year apprenticeship, research, study abroad, etc.). Internships in higher education have evolved to become more like job auditions. Students must now become career-centered much earlier in their college careers, and this focus is a VSU key to student persistence and graduation and employment rates for graduates. Incremental funding (see table below) for this strategy will establish the Office of Experiential Learning, responsible for centralized monitoring, tracking, and coordinating assessment of all experiential learning activities in consultation with the college coordinators. This initiative will be administered by the respective academic units.

#	INCREMENTAL FUNDING	2016-17	2017-18
1	~~Two Faculty/Administrator Positions~~	~~200,000~~	~~200,000~~
2	~~Non-Personal Service Budget for the ELP Unit~~	~~50,000~~	~~50,000~~
3	**~~Total~~**	**~~250,000~~**	**~~250,000~~**

7. *New Graduate/Professional Programs*. One of VSU's student achievement goals is the increase of graduate students who are enrolled full time (currently only 37%). Recently, the University has eliminated master's degree programs in English, History, Career and Technical Studies, and Plant Science. As a result of ongoing program review, the University will shift toward offering more professional master's degree programs targeted at workforce advancement, initially a Master of Interdisciplinary Studies (with a Public Affairs concentration), a Master of Business Administration, and Doctor of Philosophy in Logistics. These programs target student audiences at Ft. Lee and the Southside Virginia region.

   Incremental funding ($220,000) shown in Part I will cover the cost of two faculty lines—one each in Logistics and Business. Current University resources are adequate for the Public Affairs concentration.

8. *Develop New Baccalaureate Degree Programs*. In order to be responsive to the University's mission and 1890 Land Grant imperatives, VSU will complete the research necessary and establish funding sources for new undergraduate programs in (a) Nursing (initially RN to BSN); (b) *Career Switchers* for teacher education; and (c) Public and Community Health.

   The University will also offer several three-year bachelor's degrees in English, Political Science, Criminal Justice, Sociology, and History. Initially, these will be offered to honor students and expanded to utilize summer and winter terms.

   Incremental funding shown in Part I will cover the cost of two nursing faculty lines in 2017-18.

9. *Establish a Language Institute*. VSU will establish a language institute to house its English as a Second Language (ESL) program in facilitation of increasing international-student enrollment by 50% per year (35 international students were enrolled in 2014-15). This is a method by which VSU seeks to become a more diverse, global institution in fulfillment of the bequest which funds the University's Dr. George H. Bennett Center for International Education. Additionally, the University received a grant from the American Council on Education to become a model institution for international studies; the language institute one of the grant initiatives.

   The University has established relationships with educational institutions in Brazil, Kenya, and Nigeria, and is in the process of completing articulation agreements with Saudi Arabia and China. Students will enroll in a cadre of language courses comprising the ESL program for a period of at least one semester. After successful completion of a summative assessment, students can be admitted into degree programs.

The University will reallocate funding for a faculty/administrator—Director of the Language Institute to administer and teach in the Institute. Incremental funding is shown in Part I to cover the addition of an administrative professional to assist with operation of the Institute, a language instructor/tutor for student support, and a non-personal service budget (see below):

#	INCREMENTAL FUNDING	2016-17	2017-18
1	Administrative Assistant	42,000	42,000
2	Instructor/Tutor	68,000	68,000
2	Non-Personal Services Budget	30,000	30,000
3	**Total**	**140,000**	**140,000**

10. **Operational Efficiency**: Among the values listed in the VSU Strategic Plan is VSU's emphasis on customer service, based upon survey data. The need for increased student support was also evident in the most recent JLARC report. One facet of enhancing service to stakeholders is leveraging information technology to decrease operational and administrative expenditures. Specifically the following are key software products: (a) Banner 9 to power data-driven decisions and external reporting; (b) Workflow for paperless routine operations in procurement, human resources, etc.; (c) Degree Works for automated degree auditing; (d) Course Signals for early intervention to support students who encounter academic challenges; (e) Canvas, replacing Blackboard course management system; and (f) Recruiter, and Ellucian product for admissions/enrollment management. Ultimately, VSU looks toward entirely paperless operations for which students will be required to matriculate with a device for access to the University's cloud environment.   The incremental funding in Part I would partially fund the upgrade to Banner 9.

C. Financial Aid

Financial Aid Offices, businesses and families have been similarly hit by the economic downturn of the last five years.   Unfortunately, the income of many families has decreased, but, the change in average net price at public institutions has increased.

Virginia State University (VSU) is losing too many lower-income college students because they do not have the funds to attend college. VSU's students pay a higher cost in student debt even though their parents are among Virginia's least able to pay. 56% of families have expected contributions of $0-$1,000, meaning they have no means of contributing to their children's education. 32% of the students come from families with incomes below the poverty level as determined by the Department of Health and Human Services. 92% receive some type of student financial aid and 73% receive Pell Grants. About 70% of the students whose parents applied for PLUS loans did not qualify.

The barriers that low income and minority students face in financing a postsecondary education is monumental. To mitigate the impact of tuition and fee increases on our low-income and middle-income students and their families, VSU offers the following tuition generated financial aid: University In-state Grant (based on income), STEM Scholarships, Institutional Work-study Program and the Low Income Families with Talented Students (LIFTS) Program.

To qualify for the LIFTS Program, a student's family income must be below the federal poverty level and based on family size. The program is offered to our Presidential, Provost and University Scholars with a cumulative 3.00 GPA or higher. This proposed financial aid program would meet 100% of a student's demonstrated financial need with scholarship and grant assistance and limit debt to 25% of Virginia State University's in-state cost of attendance over four years.

D. Evaluation of Previous Six-Year Plan

1. **Distance Education**: Convert selected degree programs into distance education programs. Fully establish Distance Education Unit with instructional designer. Automate proceACEs necessary to establishing distance education programs (registration, payment, add/drop courses, change grades, etc.)

   The University established an Office of Distance Education, appointing a full-time Director and hourly student workers. An instructional designer was not hired, however, the University issued an RFP for fully developed online courses and will select a vendor in fall 2015. No degree programs have been converted to fully online programs. A substantive change request to do so will be submitted to SACS for approval at the June 2015 meeting.

   There are currently 32 faculty Slocan-C certified faculty approved to teach online, including 15 who were part of the 2013 online certification cohort. This translated into a significant rise in the percentage of faculty teaching online courses. Specifically, those who have completed the certification program and taught online has risen from 66% in fall of 2013 to 88% in summer 2014.

   Student enrollment in online courses has continued to rise from the base academic year of 2011-2012, although the number of online courses dropped this academic year. The reduced number of courses offered during spring and summer of 2013-2014 is consistent with enrollment declines for those two terms. However, online enrollments climbed 9.2% from the previous academic year (AY). Enrollments for the summer 2014 AY climbed 39.2%, largely based on the increase in the number of LOOCs from 4 in the previous AY to 10 this AY. Out of the 507 online enrollments for the term, 430 of these enrollments were for LOOC courses.

Year/Term	Courses	% Change	Enrollment	% Change
2011-2012	**63**		**1682**	
Fall 2011	22		*664*	
Spring 2012	25		*850*	
Summer 2012	16		*168*	
2012-2013	**72**	**14.30%**	**1903**	**13.10**
Fall 2012	27	22.7%	816	22.90
Spring 2013	27	08.00%	723	(15.00%)
Summer 2013	18	12.50%	364	117.00
2013-2014	**69**	**(4.2%)**	**2078**	**9.20**
Fall 2013	30	9.72%	914	12.01
Spring 2014	22	(18.52%)	657	(9.13%)
Summer 2014	17	(6%)	507	39.29

2. **Articulation Agreements**: Execute articulation agreements with area colleges and universities for no-cost exchange of available upper-level course seats in selected majors as available, particularly in under-enrolled courses.   Increase program-to-program articulation agreements with community colleges and RBC (particularly in STEM disciplines).

No articulation agreements with area colleges were executed for no-cost exchange of available upper-level course seats in selected majors. Two-plus-two program-to-program agreements were completed as follows:

   - Criminal Justice – John Tyler Community College
   - Accounting – J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

3. **LOOC** Program: Expand low-cost *Local Open On-line Course* (LOOC) Program to a year-round entity.

The 2014-15 LOOC program (still in its pilot phase) was expanded, yielding a $36,000 profit for this summer, up approximately $12,000 from 2013-14. In summer 2015, LOOCs represented over 60% of all summer enrollments (see table below).

| Year/Term	Courses	% Change	Enrollment	% Change
Summer 2013	4		301	
Summer 2014	10	250.00%	434	44.19%
Summer 2015 (2)	18	80.00%	729	67.97%

Based on information reported in the student evaluations, over 71% of those students were upperclassmen.
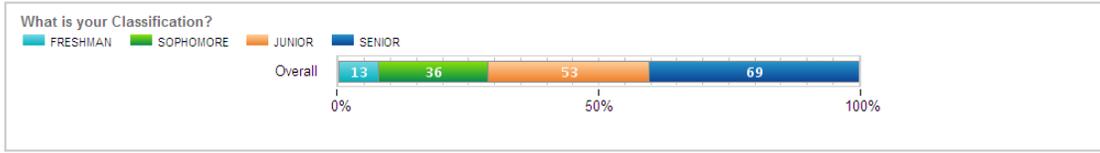
Over 78% of the students had GPA's of over 2.5 and 33% had GPA's above 3.0
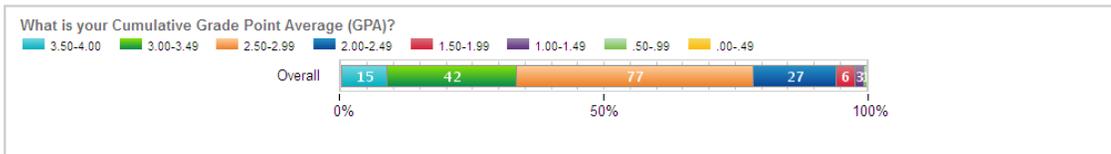
To date, 171 course evaluations have been submitted for the first summer session. Of those reported, 93% of the responses were either positive or neutral to a set of questions concerning instruction, course organization and course environment.
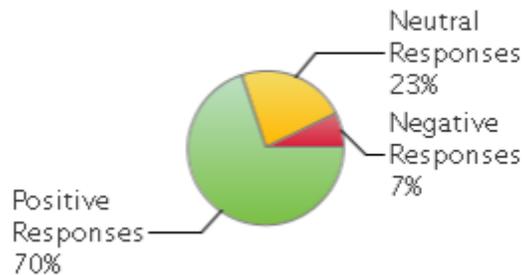
LOOCS will continue as summer and winter term offerings with consideration given to continuing education terms in accordance with the local and regional markets.

4. **Continuing Education**: Expand continuing education offerings that meet the needs of non-traditional degree-seeking students.

This strategy was not implemented, a result of University-wide enrollment shortfalls and accordant lack of funding available.

5. **Space Utilization**: Create a hybrid trimester system (a third semester during the summer) open to all students to expand undergraduate offerings to community college and

traditional resident students. Recast the fall calendar to end earlier to create a winter on-line term open to all students.

The hybrid summer term was not created as a result the elimination of summer PELL grants which drastically diminished student interest.

The University academic calendar was recast to end earlier in the fall term to create a winter online term. This was a pilot project implemented in fall 2014. The project yielded virtually no positive results, and winter term for 2014 was suspended. The fall 2015 academic calendar will return to the traditional 16-week paradigm.

6. **New Programs**: Develop new professional master's degree programs targeted at workforce advancement: MS in Project Management, MA in Public Affairs, and BS in Engineering with SAP emphasis.

These programs were not created as faculty resources were not available due to enrollment shortfalls between FY 2012 and 2015.

7. **Community College Transfers:** Develop two-plus-two $30,000 degree programs for local commuter students via articulation agreements with Richard Bland College and VCCS institutions. Offer guaranteed admission to the nursing program for RBC students and to VCCS and other RBC graduates.

A special group of two-plus-two program-to-program agreements between VSU and Richard Bland College (RBC) and VSU were implemented in 2014. This agreement establishes a dual admission degree program between Richard Bland College and Virginia State University. Students selected for admission to this program will, upon completion of the prescribed sequence of courses leading to an associate degree from Richard Bland College, continue their studies at Virginia State University with the understanding that they may complete all requirements in the designated baccalaureate degree program at Virginia State University. The following are the disciplines:

- Agriculture
- Business
- Criminal Justice
- Economics
- Math
- Political Sciences
- Psychology
- Public Administration
- Social Work

- Sociology

Full-time, degree-seeking, dual-admission degree students in eligible degree programs as outlined in this agreement will matriculate at VSU with and be eligible for participation in a *Guaranteed Tuition Program* through which students in the program pay a fixed price over the two year period; this opportunity applies only to the programs shown above, and certain standards of achievement apply in order for students to remain in the program.

8. **Faculty Development**: Implement a productivity-centered faculty development program which facilitates increased translational research activity and has an instructional focus.

   This program was not created as General Fund assistance was not available.

9. **Dual Enrollment and Certificate Programs**: Implement an aggressive dual-enrollment program with private high schools and VCCS institutions. Offer selected certificate programs, primarily through distance education.

   The VSU Dual Enrollment Program was suspended in January 2015 for compliance with SCHEV's Dual Enrollment Policy.

10. **Research Collaborations**: Fully establish CCALS and expand its scope. Establish a University-Wide translational research agenda.

    CCALS is an applied research center focused on accelerating the development and commercialization of logistics systems solutions. The focus of the CCALS research program is to provide the foundation for transformational step changes in logistics systems. As an expected result, CCALS Industry Members:

    - Become part of a collaborative research community that sets the direction of future technology developments for logistics systems.
    - Become integrally involved with the leading technology developments in logistics systems; and receive a right to a non-exclusive, royalty-free license to all intellectual property developed through the membership supported generic research program.
    - Are able to direct the work of CCALS research staff in directed research projects and own the intellectual property that results from directed research.
    - Have access to academic faculty as well as their students who will be future employees in the logistics industry.

    Over the 2014-16 biennium, VSU's translational research agenda (relative to CCALS) has become largely focused on the field of Enterprise Systems (ES), utilizing Systems, Applications and Products (SAP) software. The University has secured the services of Dr.

Raymond Boykin as a faculty member. Dr. Boykin is widely regarded as one of the nation's leading experts in the field.   As a result of his work, the University now offers ES programs at Ft. Lee and for personnel in the County of Chesterfield.

The ES/SAP research agenda has attracted ORBIS America, a company which will enter into a two-year agreement to research and develop the "Internet of Things' (the network of objects with embedded sensors (or other electronics and/or software) which give these objects the connectivity for the exchange of data with business and industry. ORBIS will provide the OMPS software, installation, initial training of Dr. Boykin's team, and on-going technical support and software enhancements as they are released.   ORBIS will be involved with the SAP/OMPS component of the lab, assuming that VSU is responsible for the technical aspects selecting and setting up the equipment and machines in the lab.

11. **Accelerated Programs:** Increase the number of three-year bachelor's degree and four-year bachelor's-master's degree programs.

    This program was not created as General Fund assistance was not available.

12. **Health Care Related Programs**: Establish a BS degree in Food and Nutrition Sciences

    The BS Program in Food and Nutrition Science was approved, however funding to offer the program during the 2014-16 biennium was not available. The program will be revisited for implementation in fall 2016.

13. **Social Work Program**: Create the Department of Social Work in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The new department will be established as a result of successful accreditation.

    The Social Work Department has been fully established as of 2015 following its successful accreditation by CSWE.

E. Capital Outlay

    There will not be any capital projects over the six-year period that may have a significant impact on strategies, funding or student charges.