



VALLEY CITY
STATE UNIVERSITY

THE BULLETIN

A Publication for Alumni & Friends of Valley City State University

ISSUE 071670 | AUGUST 2025

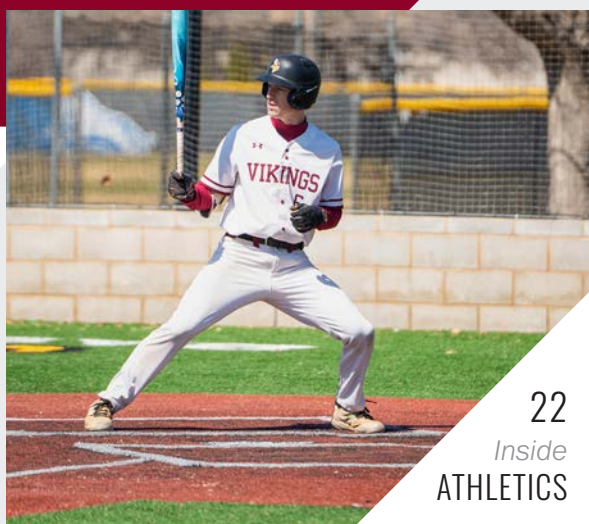


From Dream to Reality

VCSU breaks ground on Tharaldson Family Athletic Center, a long-envisioned athletic facility expansion - PAGE 10

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Learn more at vcsualumni.org
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VCSU to Shine on National Stage

Upcoming Episode of “The College Tour” TV Show featuring VCSU

Dr. Alan LaFave, President, Valley City State University

Dear VCSU Alumni,

For the past several years, VCSU has enjoyed outstanding growth in the size, scope, and quality of our institution. In fact, the past three semesters in a row we have seen record-breaking enrollment. We will soon be re-opening McCarthy Hall, which was renovated to house the School of Education and Technical Education programs. We recently completed the installation of new turf at Dacotah Bank Field and are now in the construction process of the Tharaldson Family Athletic Center – funded by private donations.

I am thrilled to share more incredible news that will put Valley City State University in the national spotlight this fall. From September 8-12, VCSU will host a film crew from The College Tour, a hit television series available on Amazon Prime Video and other major streaming platforms. This is an extraordinary opportunity for our campus, and we want our entire Viking family—past and present—to share in the excitement.

The College Tour showcases campuses across the country through the voices and stories of their students. And this September, it's our story that will be told.

The Amazon Prime TV series was brought to life by some of Hollywood's most renowned producers. Created by Alex Boylan, a former winner of The Amazing Race, the series was inspired by his niece's journey to find the perfect college. Our episode will showcase Valley City State University's story through the genuine perspectives of our students. The College Tour is available to stream for free



LaFave

on The College Tour app and website, which reaches over 60,000 high school counselors nationwide.

This initiative represents much more than a moment in the limelight. It's a strategic and powerful marketing effort that will introduce VCSU to prospective students and families around the world. The College Tour reaches tens of thousands of high school counselors and is streamed by students, parents, and educators searching for the right college. There is no better time to share the magic of our university—our academic excellence, our strong sense of community, our recent campus facility transformations, and the unique programs and people that set us apart.

The series will feature about 10 students and recent graduates to serve as the storytellers of this episode. These individuals will be featured on screen, sharing personal insights and experiences about everything from campus life and athletics to academic programs and fine arts. I can't think of a more authentic and inspiring way to tell the VCSU story than through the voices of those who live it every day. We look forward to sharing real stories from our students and alumni that reflect the spirit and excellence of Valley City State University.

As the President of Valley City State University—and a proud Viking myself—I know how much this community means to all of us. Now, we have a chance to let the world see it too.

Let's seize this moment together.



First Community Credit Union
VCSU AG BOWL
VS. AUGSBURG | THURSDAY, SEPT. 4 - 6 P.M.

Breaking Ground and Opening Doors

A Legacy You Can Join

Cory Anderson '89 | Executive Director for University Advancement

This June, a decades-long dream officially broke ground at Valley City State University. More than 250 people gathered for the ceremonial groundbreaking of the Tharaldson Family Athletic Center—a moment that brought to life years of vision, planning, and unwavering Viking pride.



Anderson

This project has been imagined in many forms over the years. For decades, the idea of expanding our athletic facilities was more hope than reality—sketched, discussed, and revised time and again. But four years ago, the dream took form with the launch of the *Forward Together Capital Campaign*. And now, thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our donors, construction is officially underway.

“This is about more than turf and walls,” I shared at the event. “It’s about legacy. It’s about Viking pride. And it’s a win for every Viking—past, present, and future.”

President Alan LaFave called it a transformation of our campus, noting the facility will change how our student-athletes train, develop, and compete. “It underscores our university’s dedication to providing first-rate athletic and competition opportunities,” he said.

The new facility will span 69,000 square feet, featuring a 55,000 sq. ft. indoor turf practice field, an integrated Strength and Performance Center, athletic training room, locker rooms, and team spaces. A mezzanine level will add another 14,000 square feet for team rooms, batting cages, and bullpens, giving the space flexibility and capacity for future growth. The building—topping out at 73 feet high—will allow for full-scale fastpitch softball games and year-round multi-sport training.

The center will connect directly to the W.E. Osmon Fieldhouse, blending tradition with progress and forming a unified athletic

complex. Designed by ICON Architectural Group and built by Legacy Building Solutions, the building’s primary phase is estimated at nearly \$11 million—funded by private gifts. Chief among those is the lead \$5 million donation from VCSU alum Gary Tharaldson, Class of 1967. Gary and his family’s generosity and presence at the event marked the strong tradition of alumni stepping up to shape our future.

This groundbreaking represents more than just the start of construction—it marks the beginning of our next chapter.

We will also be kicking off a secondary fundraising phase of the project that will focus on finishing key spaces—but more importantly, it’s where everyone can find their place in this legacy. This effort will be driven by a grassroots approach that invites every Viking to leave their mark on the project.

There are unique opportunities for every budget and interest level. Whether it’s naming rights for a locker room or equipment, placing your name on the **Viking Pride Stone**, or purchasing a commemorative **Viking Oar** (only 100 available) or **Viking Shield** (20 available) this is your chance to be part of the legacy. The oars and shields celebrate both the opening of the facility and the 100th year of Viking Athletics—symbolizing that “Nobody rides this ship. We all row.”

This grassroots effort isn’t just about dollars. It’s about connection. It allows alumni and friends from every generation to say, “I helped make this happen.” Whether you suited up as a Viking, coached from the sidelines, cheered from the stands, or supported from afar—this is your moment to row with us.

As we move forward, I invite you to join us. We are building more than a facility. We’re building a future filled with opportunity, pride, and a lasting Viking legacy.

Let’s finish strong. Let’s have a conversation. Let’s finish together.

ROW WITH US | WAYS TO LEAVE YOUR MARK



FOUNDATION • ALUMNI
VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

ONE-TIME IMPACT GIFTS

Make a bold statement with your name on key features inside our new facility



Major-Naming Rights (\$100,000-\$250,000 gift)

Weight Room, Locker Room, Legacy Wall, Entry Plaza, Mezzanine



Room & Equipment Naming (\$10,000-\$25,000 gift)

Batting Cages, Team Rooms, Turtle Backstop, Weight Racks, Gator, Portable Scoreboard



Viking Centennial Shield – Limited to 20 Donors

\$25,000+ Gift/Pledge = Custom Shield in Hall of Champions

Perfect for families with a deep Viking tradition



Viking Commemorative Oar – Limited to 100 Donors

\$5,000 Gift/Pledge = Personalized Oar displayed in facility

Celebrate the centennial with this iconic rowing symbol



Viking Pride Stone – Total Pledge \$1,000 (payment options)

Engrave your name on the stone every athlete touches

SUSTAINABLE GIVING

Renewable Support that powers Viking Athletics long-term



Locker Recognition Program – \$25/month for 5 years

Your Name on a Viking locker and name on commemorative Viking oar



Outfield fence Panel Sponsorship – \$25/month for 5 years

Your Name and Number or Logo on an Outfield Fence Panel



All gifts help support the new facility, scholarships and the next generation of Vikings.



vcsu.news/voyage
701-845-7203

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Erica Buchholz, *ex officio*



Business Department Earns IACBE Accreditation

The VCSU Department of Business has gained accreditation for its business administration program from the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE).

The IACBE Board of Commissioners granted first-time specialized business accreditation to VCSU for its Bachelor of Science program with a major in Business Administration. The VCSU business administration major currently offers concentrations in four areas: Agribusiness, Human Resource and Management, Managerial Accounting and Finance, and Marketing.

"This accreditation confirms our business department provides a high-quality education and prepares our graduates for the workforce," said President Alan LaFave. "Congratulations to department chair Tammy Katuin and the entire business department on earning this prestigious recognition. It is validation of the excellence displayed by our business faculty, staff and students."

The accreditation is good through April 2032 and was earned after VCSU demonstrated compliance with the IACBE Accreditation Principles through a rigorous process of self-evaluation and independent peer review.

"We are incredibly proud to receive this accreditation from the IACBE," said Tammy Katuin, Chair of the VCSU Department of Business. "It reflects our commitment to providing a top-tier education that equips students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the business world. This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff, and students."

Students & Faculty prepare free tax returns

VCSU business students and faculty provided free tax return preparation for community members this year, helping to prepare 50 tax returns free of charge.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program was offered for low-to-moderate income taxpayers. The average cost to prepare a federal return runs nearly \$200, meaning the VITA program was estimated to save community members up to \$10,000 total.

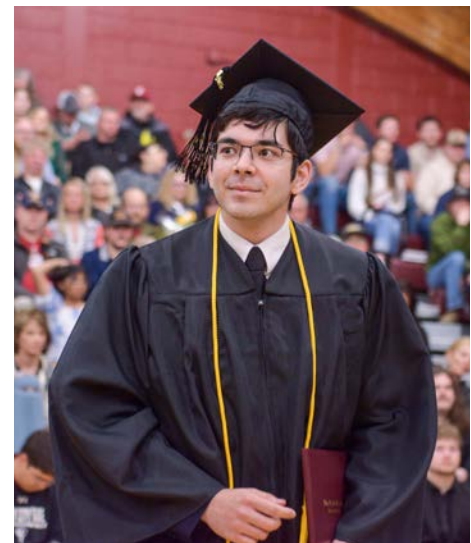
"We had three students who participated and helped run the site this year," said Wesley Wright, assistant professor and organizer for this year's VITA program. "Without them, we would not have been able to help the community like we did. Along with helping the community, these clinics give our students the opportunity to develop strong leadership, tax law knowledge, and communication skills."

Every student volunteer working in the clinic has passed a tax preparation and code of standards exam to ensure returns are prepared accurately, maintain privacy, and ensure all personal information is secure.

2025 Spring Commencement

Valley City State University recognized more than 300 graduates during our annual Spring Commencement ceremony held Saturday, May 17 at the W.E. Osmon Fieldhouse. Grant Larson (Leeds, N.D.) delivered the undergraduate reflection, and Dr. Nick Galt gave the faculty reflection.





VCSU offering Unmanned Aerial Vehicle certificate

Valley City State University is launching a new certificate that prepares students to fly unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV).

Starting in the Fall 2025 semester, the VCSU Social Science Department is offering an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle/Unmanned Aerial Systems program. The 7-credit certificate of completion includes three classes and can be completed in one academic year. Students will learn about the use of UAVs in private and public sectors, safe operation of UAVs, as well as real flight experience with various UAVs.

The coursework prepares students to take the FAA Part 107 Unmanned Aircraft General – Small (UAG) exam. Successful completion of the exam allows students to commercially fly UAVs and have the background for more specialized training in the field of their choosing.

The courses will be taught by VCSU assistant professor Jacob Clauson, who is a certified commercial UAV pilot with five years of flying experience.



“By maintaining a broad and adaptable curriculum, we ensure that participants gain relevant, real-world skills that align with current industry needs,” said Clauson. “This flexibility allows students to integrate UAV expertise seamlessly into their careers, whether in agriculture, construction, photography, or other emerging fields. Regardless of a student’s prior experience, this certificate program will enhance their confidence in operating various UAV systems and fully prepare them for the exam required to become a commercial UAV pilot.”

VCSU named a 2024-25 College of Distinction

Valley City State University is proud to announce its recognition as a 2024-2025 College of Distinction, an honor that highlights its commitment to providing an exceptional undergraduate education.

Since its founding in 2000, Colleges of Distinction has awarded schools for their successful implementation of high-impact educational practices and hands-on learning. The award reflects VCSU’s dedication to hands-on learning, strong student-faculty relationships, an active campus community, and successful student outcomes.

“A college degree opens the door to many opportunities,” said Tyson Schritter, Chief Operating Officer at Colleges of Distinction. “But a truly worthwhile education prepares students to thrive once they walk through that door. VCSU’s curriculum encourages meaningful student-faculty

collaboration through experiential learning that is relevant and applicable to the real world.”

In addition to being recognized as a “Best College” by Colleges of Distinction, VCSU was also recognized for its excellence in four specific areas: education degrees, business degrees, career development and affordability.

“Valley City State University strives to offer high-quality experiences for all students who attend VCSU,” said VCSU President Alan LaFave. “Being named a College of Distinction confirms what we see every day: students who choose to call VCSU home have a great experience and leave with a trusted degree at a reasonable price.”





VCSU Music Ensembles Complete Successful Spring Tour

Ensembles from the Valley City State University Department of Music recently completed a successful concert tour across North Dakota and South Dakota, performing nine concerts from May 2–9, 2025.

The tour showcased the talents of more than 40 VCSU students, who performed a wide range of vocal and instrumental selections. Featured ensembles included the Concert Band, Concert Choir, University Singers, Woodwind Ensemble, and Brass Ensemble.

The tour began with performances in several North Dakota communities, including Jamestown, Medina, New Salem, Hebron/Glen Ullin, Richardton, and Dickinson. The trip culminated in South Dakota with a final performance at the iconic Mount Rushmore Amphitheater on May 9.

"This tour was an incredible opportunity for our students to share their music with audiences across the region," said Jerrold Heide, VCSU Band Director. "Performing at Mount Rushmore was a truly memorable experience and a fitting conclusion to a week of outstanding music-making."



The VCSU Music Tour not only highlighted the university's commitment to musical excellence but also served as a meaningful outreach effort, encouraging students to continue their education at VCSU and participate in ensembles.

For more information about the VCSU Department of Music and upcoming performances, [visit www.vcsu.edu/departments/music/](http://www.vcsu.edu/departments/music/)



Multiply your gift with the Challenge Grant



Submit gift by December 1, 2026 to make every dollar given go twice as far.

NORTH DAKOTA CHALLENGE FUND MAKES YOUR GIFT GO FURTHER

Matching dollar pledges are allowed over a seven year period. Leveraging a portion of an estate to receive matching dollars is also available.

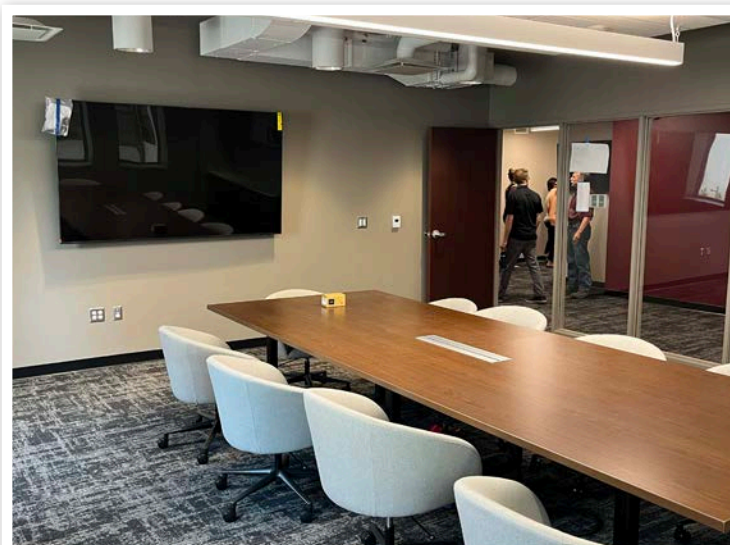
With a minimum \$5,000 endowment gift to VCSU through the VCSU Foundation, you may benefit from a North Dakota income tax credit equal to 40% of the charitable gift AND also qualify for your donation to be matched \$1 for every \$2 you give.

Bill '87 and Michele (Bischoff) '86 Trader



McCarthy Hall Nears Completion

The complete renovation of McCarthy Hall is winding down as crews have moved on to cleanup, final inspections and outdoor landscaping. NDUS Interim Chancellor Brent Sanford, below left, recently toured the construction with VCSU President Alan LaFave, below center. The building will be the new home for VCSU's School of Education, and the Department of Technology and STEM Education. The project remains on schedule with the building expected to open for classes in August 2025. VCSU will hold a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for McCarthy Hall during the fall semester.



Employee Recognition

➤ Faculty Excellence Awards

Valley City State University faculty named Nicholas Galt, Ph.D. and Benjamin Noteboom, Ph.D. as the recipients of the 2024-25 VCSU Faculty Excellence Awards. Galt received the Senior Faculty Excellence Award, and Noteboom was honored with the Junior Faculty Excellence Award. The awards are nominated and voted on by fellow faculty members.



Dr. Nicholas Galt is pictured with VCSU administrators and employees from the science department.



Dr. Ben Noteboom is pictured with VCSU administrators along with faculty and students from the math department.

➤ Retirees

VCSU recognized and thanked six individuals who retired in the past year. All combined, the six employees dedicated more than 120 years to working at VCSU.



Pictured, from left: President Alan LaFave with retirees Tim Michaelson, Julee Russell and Kim Knodle. Not pictured: Teresa Stauffer, Diane Olson and Diane Burr.

➤ Student Senate Awards

The Valley City State University Student Senate presented its Student Advocate of the Year award to Brittany Nathan, assistant director for resident life. Student Senate also named Dr. Nicholas Galt, associate professor of science, as its Teacher of the Year.



Pictured, from left: President Alan LaFave, Dr. Nicholas Galt and Brittany Nathan '19.

NOMINATE OUTSTANDING ALUMNI



Valley City State University is proud of its alumni and the tremendous impact they have and are continuing to make across the nation. All nominations will be forwarded to the appropriate screening committees and will receive full consideration.

See our website at vcsualumni.org and click on Awards & Recognition where you will find award descriptions along with nomination forms. Send nominations to: Kim Hesch, VCSU Foundation, 701-845-7403 | E-Mail: kim.hesch@vcsu.edu

VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

A Dream Decades in the Making

Groundbreaking of Tharaldson Family Athletic Center marks the future of Viking Athletics

VALLEY CITY (VCSU) – A decades old dream is about to become reality for Valley City State University.

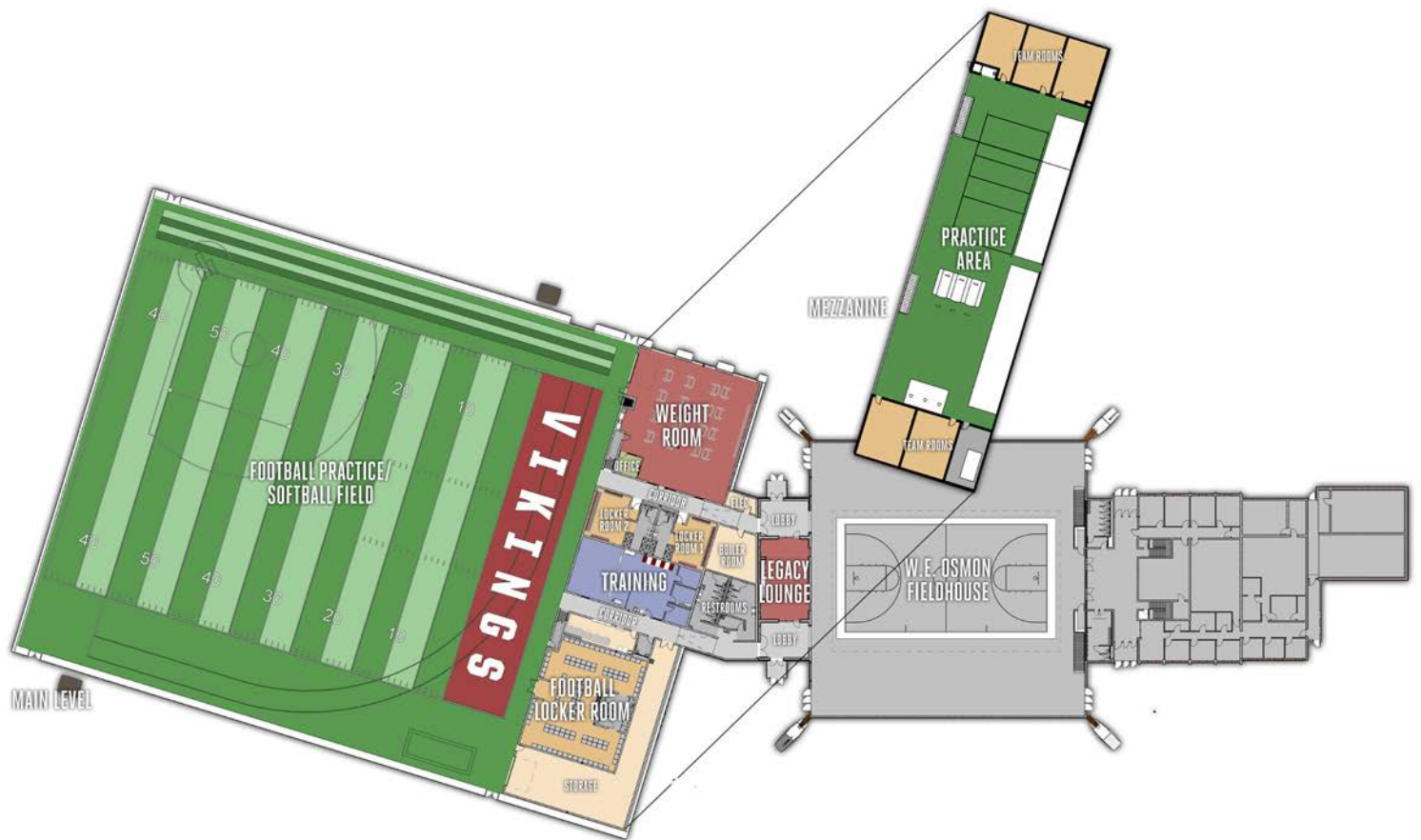
More than 250 people were on hand June 12 to celebrate groundbreaking for the Tharaldson Family Athletic Center, a project that will transform the future of Viking athletics. Showing their enthusiasm for the project and appreciation for the private donors who helped make it possible, the large crowd received a preview of the first-class facility that should be open to student-athletes within the next 12 months.

“We truly are transforming our campus,” said VCSU President Alan LaFave. “This groundbreaking event marks that culmination of many years of planning and fundraising, underscoring our university’s dedication to providing first-rate athletic and competition opportunities. This will change how our student-athletes train, develop and compete.”

An expansion to the athletic facility has been envisioned for decades with numerous variations drafted and discussed at various levels of seriousness over the years. About four years ago, that vision became a tangible dream with the official kickoff of the Forward Together Capital Campaign. On June 12, that dream became a reality as the first shovels of dirt were ceremoniously removed from the ground to start the construction process. Actual construction is slated to begin this summer.

“This moment has been decades in the making,” said Cory Anderson, executive director for university advancement. “It was a dream of Mr. Bill Osmon from way back when, and to see it finally come to fruition is something I think a lot of us still pinch ourselves about. This is more than about turf and walls. It’s about legacy. It’s about Viking Pride. And it’s a win for every Viking past, present and future.”

Continued on page 12.



Take a video tour
of the new facility!





Continued from page 10.

When finished, the primary building will be 69,000 square feet on the main level and house a multi-purpose indoor turf practice facility, a new weight room and training room, and several new locker rooms and team rooms. A total of 55,000 square feet is for the turfed practice area, while the remaining 14,000 feet houses the other features. The building also includes a mezzanine level with an additional 14,000 square feet. Initial plans have the mezzanine marked as a future site for baseball and softball batting cages and bullpens.

The primary building is a custom tension fabric building from Legacy Building Solutions. ICON Architectural Group is the project architect. Located just south of the W.E. Osmon Fieldhouse, the new building measures 230 feet by 300 feet and is 73 feet high at the tallest point. It will be large enough to play indoor fastpitch softball games and will also include 60-meter sprinting lanes.

Additionally, a mechanical room and garages currently attached to the south end of the W.E. Osmon Fieldhouse will be remodeled and connected to the new building, allowing pass-through access from the Fieldhouse into the Tharaldson Family Athletic Center. That area will feature public lobbies, new restrooms and the Legacy Lounge for donors and alumni.

"We truly are transforming our campus... This will change how our student-athletes train, develop and compete."

President Alan LaFave

The primary phase of construction is estimated to cost about \$11 million. The secondary phase, which includes finishing out some of the interior rooms and the mezzanine level,

comes with an estimated price tag of about \$2 million. The project is being funded primarily by private donations, which includes the lead donation of \$5 million by the Gary Tharaldson family. Tharaldson is a 1967 graduate of Valley City State and was on hand for the groundbreaking with members of his family.



"I am excited for the new athletic facility as it will provide us athletes with opportunities not everyone has been exposed to before. The upgraded weight room and indoor turf will allow us to train at a higher level and give us more flexibility with what we do within our in-season and offseason workouts."

Gavin Gerhardt, Junior
VCSU Football



"I believe the new facility is exactly what our Viking Student-Athletes need. I'm looking forward to utilizing all that it offers — from the improved athletic training room and new weight room to the updated locker rooms and training spaces. This facility will be a valuable asset that will help our athletes train and perform at their best and take our programs to the next level."

Delaney Cotton, Junior
VCSU Basketball and Track & Field



Speakers at the event included Cory Anderson, Executive Director for University Advancement; Alan LaFave, President of VCSU; Larry Robinson, chair of the Forward Together Capital Campaign; Gary Tharaldson, lead donor; and Dennis McCulloch, VCSU athletic director and head football coach.

McCulloch highlighted the opportunity the facility provides for student-athletes to compete and grow year-round, along with the “wow factor” that the new building will provide in recruiting talented student-athletes.

“It’s a great opportunity for us,” said McCulloch. “Great facilities will attract kids here, they will come and look. But it will still be the great people we have on campus that will get them to sign and be here. We have a great community and great people, and we truly appreciate this opportunity to move Viking athletics forward.”



BY THE NUMBERS

83,000

TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE

55,000

TURFED PRACTICE AREA SQUARE FOOTAGE

73 Feet

HEIGHT OF THE NEW FACILITY

38 Feet

HEIGHT OF W.E. OSMON FIELDHOUSE

\$11-13 Million

TOTAL ANTICIPATED COST OF THE PROJECT

\$5 Million

LEAD GIFT FROM GARY THARALDSON FAMILY



Alumni Anecdotes



Kyle Smith '95

Kyle Smith is the current owner of Summit Physical Therapy and Sports Performance, PC in Carrington, N.D. He is a 1995 graduate of VCSU, studying Pre-Med with a minor in business administration.

A 4-year member of the VCSU football team playing for Coach Jim Dew, Kyle later attended University of North Dakota to obtain a degree in physical therapy. He purchased his clinic in Carrington in 1997 and has been the owner and operator since then. He has also been the head football coach for Carrington High School for the last 10 years.

Kyle married Layne (Holcomb) '92 and they have three children. Brady '19 is also a VCSU and UND physical therapy grad and currently works in the clinic with Kyle. Brady is engaged to VCSU grad Maara Nelson '21. Kyle's son, Payton, is currently in physical therapy school at the University of Jamestown. Kyle's daughter, Brynn, will be attending VCSU this fall to study elementary education.

Kyle fondly remembers the close-knit, family feel of VCSU, the life lessons learned from Coach Dew, the success of the Viking Football during his time and the friendships made that still exist today.



Derek Bear '24 completed an internship with DRN ReadTech while attending VCSU.

VCSU Graduates Boast 99% Success Rate

Valley City State University graduates during the 2023-24 academic year had a 99% success rate according to VCSU's Career Outcomes Report.

Compiled by the VCSU Career Services Office, the report details the success of recent graduates in finding work or continuing their education at a higher level.

Students who received an undergraduate degree from VCSU in 2023-24 had a 99% success rate, meaning they are either employed, continuing their education or not currently seeking employment. Students who earned a master's degree in 2023-24 boasted a 100% success rate.

Of the reporting graduates, 66% are employed in North Dakota. VCSU students also completed 40 internships in the 2023-24 academic year, with 83% of those located in North Dakota.

"My time at VCSU was instrumental in shaping my career as an IT Coordinator," said Derek Bear, a 2024 Computer Information Systems graduate who is now employed as an IT professional in North Dakota. "Through my internship at DRN ReadTech, I gained invaluable real-world experience in IT operations and customer service. Additionally, my involvement with the VCSU IT Department allowed me to work hands-on with innovative technologies while collaborating with a dedicated team."

3 VCSU Students Compete at DECA Nationals

Three Valley City State University students qualified for and competed at the Collegiate DECA national competition in California.

Senior Jalynn Anderson, sophomore Matt Belgarde and junior Sarah Monilaws all represented VCSU in competitive events at the Collegiate DECA International Career Development Conference, held April 5-8 in San Francisco.

Anderson and Belgarde both medaled (Top 10) for top exam in the Restaurant and Food Service category at the national event. The students also took part in professional development and networking opportunities as part of the conference.

The trio qualified for nationals with Top 3 performances at the North Dakota state competition in February. Anderson placed 1st and Belgarde took 2nd at state in the Restaurant and Food Services category. Monilaws placed 2nd at state in Hotel and Lodging, and she was also voted North Dakota DECA Vice President.



From left: Sarah Monilaws, Jalynn Anderson, Matt Belgarde and VCSU DECA advisor Wesley Wright.

VCSU senior donates stem cells through match program

Valley City State University senior Loke Iese recently had the chance to make a life-changing stem cell donation, and it all started with a simple cheek swab on campus.

The National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) – formerly known as Be the Match – focuses on cell and marrow therapies in an effort to save lives. The Viking football program has worked with NMDP over the last several years to help find donors for patients in need. Iese, a linebacker for the Vikings, chose to register as a donor through a simple cheek swab as a way to give back to the community. When he received the call about matching with someone in need, he didn't think twice. He immediately boarded a plane and flew to Phoenix, Ariz., ready to undergo the procedure and make a life-changing impact.

Iese recalls the donation being a fun and painless process. After completing his final lab work, the doctors wasted no time getting Iese ready for the donation procedure. Donating peripheral blood stem cells is similar to donating blood, as opposed to the traditional bone marrow extraction.

"Once we started, it didn't take long for my lab work to come back to know how long I was going to be donating," said Iese. "My donation only took about 2 hours."

Viking assistant head football coach Gregg Horner hopes Iese's story inspires others to register to be a donor.

"I think it's important (to be a donor) because if you had a child, friend, parent or family member that was in need of a donation, you would want somebody to step up and do it for you too," said Horner.



VCSU senior Loke Iese is pictured with the medical team that helped with his stem cell donation.

Currently 70% of patients don't have matches and 12,000 whose only hope for a cure is a transplant from an unrelated donor. When donors sign up, they increase the chances of saving someone's life. After seeing the impact his own experience could make, Iese would like to encourage more people to register.

"It offers a unique opportunity to save a life," said Iese. "While the donation process may require some time and minor discomfort, the impact is life changing. The sacrifice is small compared to what patients endure, and your decision to donate could give someone years of life with their loved ones."

Viking Pilot Awards Presented

Six Valley City State University students have been honored with the 2025 Viking Pilot Award in recognition of their substantial contributions to campus. Grant Larson (Leeds, N.D.), Beth Mehus (Finley, N.D.), LilyBeth Townsend (Wahpeton, N.D.), Grace Reep (Dawson, Minn.), Tara Dahl (Hazelton, N.D.) and Grace Mueller (Wimbledon, N.D.) received the award, which is presented by VCSU Student Senate and selected by a joint committee of VCSU students, faculty and staff. The Viking Pilot Award was founded in 1931 and remains a prestigious honor. The award is annually presented to upper class campus leaders who have made substantial contributions to the campus during their time at VCSU.



From left: Grant Larson, Beth Mehus, LilyBeth Townsend, Grace Reep, Tara Dahl, Grace Mueller

ALUMNI CORNER

Kim Svenningsen-Hesch, '91
Asst. Director for University Advancement and Alumni Relations

Exciting news for our alumni! Valley City State University's Foundation and Alumni office is kicking off a new project, and all alumni are invited to participate for free by contributing their own stories of campus history. Our office has partnered with Publishing Concepts (PCI) to create an Oral History of Valley City State University that will record our shared connections. With more than 12,000 alumni and so many inspiring professors through the years, what better way to recognize our impact as a community than to share our personal narratives.



Svenningsen-Hesch

Over the next six months, alumni will have the opportunity to add their stories to a collection of Valley City State memories for a new hardbound book, *Viking Memories: An Oral History Publication for Valley City State University*. Alumni may be contacted by Publishing Concepts (PCI) regarding the Oral History Project.

Please know that this is not spam or fraudulent, but rather a legitimate point of contact – one authorized by us. Alumni will be asked to update contact information and share their stories; however, alumni may opt out of sharing any information they do not feel comfortable sharing.

The book, crafted into hardcover and digital versions, will be available to alumni for purchase at the end of the project.

Here's a little more information on what the Oral History Project is all about, and how Valley City State University will be using your stories:

What to expect

Soon you will be receiving email and postcard communications from the PCI team with instructions on how to participate. We'd like to invite you to share one of your stories with us and take part in this project to honor the experiences and voices of our alumni. The PCI team will collect stories until February 2026. After that, they will enter a post-production phase editing the data. We hope to have the book distributed in September 2026.

Update your information

As part of this project, we are also taking this opportunity to help make it easier for you to stay connected to Valley City State University. PCI will help us collect updated contact information from those of you who may have moved and inadvertently lost touch.

Share your story

What Valley City State memory will you tell?

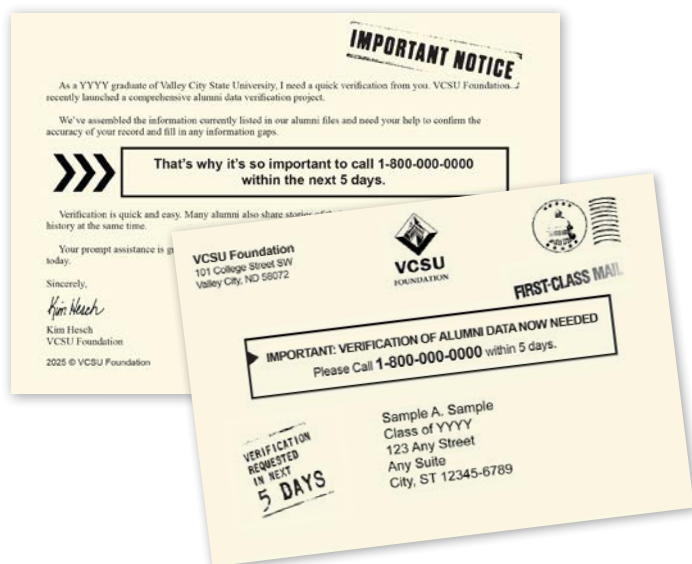
- Did a special faculty or staff member have a profound impact on your life?
- Did you meet your significant other at VCSU?
- Can you trace your career path back to a defining moment at Valley City State?
- Have connections you made on campus turned into lifelong friendships?
- Were you on campus during a historical moment?
- Were you part of a fraternity or sorority?

Does the VCSU Foundation & Alumni office benefit from this at all?

Yes, in a couple different ways:

- Updated Information – allows us to effectively communicate with and engage alumni
- Legacy – sharing and collecting stories preserves the history of our school. These stories will also be shared on our website, social media and future issues of The Bulletin

No matter how big or small, we'd love to hear about your time at VCSU. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our *Viking Memories: An Oral History Publication for Valley City State University*, please contact Kim Hesch at kim.hesch@vcsu.edu.



VCSU Foundation Recognizes Donors



Platinum Level, From left: Jeff Nathan, Foundation Board Chair; Matt Klabo and Nikka Swenson representing FEI, Inc.; Trish Lueck and Amanda Rowh representing First Community Credit Union; President Alan LaFave



Gold Level, Seated, from left: Brian Ringdahl, Kathy Marquette and Steve Ringdahl representing Gerald and Judy Ringdahl. Standing, from left: Jeff Nathan, Foundation Board Chair; Tony Lam and Lisa Rush representing Leever's Foods; Wade and Kim Hesch; President Alan LaFave; Carole and Mark Richman



Regents Level, Seated, from left: Patty Klein, Megan Zarbano representing Handy Hardware; Kristine Anderson. Standing, from left: Jeff Nathan, Foundation Board Chair; Dan Klein (also representing Valley City Kiwanis Club); Cory Anderson; President Alan LaFave

The Valley City State University Foundation recognized donors who hit new levels of giving this year during a Donor Recognition Luncheon, held June 16 on campus. Donors who reached new levels of lifetime giving at \$25,000 or above were recognized during the ceremony.

"VCSU has so many great supporters, whether it is local businesses, alumni or community members," said Kim Hesch, Assistant Director for Advancement and Alumni Relations. "It's always a pleasure when we can recognize our donors in person and thank them for their support of VCSU and our students."

VCSU Foundation donors who reached new levels of giving this year are listed below.

Clocktower II Level (\$2,000,000–\$2,999,999)

- Richard and Karen Monson
- Gary and Connie Tharaldson

Platinum Level (\$250,000 - \$499,999)

- FEI, Inc.
- First Community Credit Union

Diamond Level (\$100,000 - \$249,999)

- Ellen Kienitz
- Tisa and Bill Mason

Gold Level (\$50,000 - \$99,999)

- BIFROST CJMJJ Charitable Trust
- Steven and Mary Fike
- Kim and Wade Hesch
- J.T. and Maryellen Homan
- Leever's Foods
- Missouri River Energy Services
- Puklich Chevrolet GMC
- Mark and Carole Richman
- Gerald and Judy Ringdahl
- Harvey and Diane Schilling
- Gerald and Cindy Urlaub

Regents Level (\$25,000 - \$49,999)

- Cory and Kristine Anderson
- Handy Hardware
- Dan and Patty Klein
- Myron Loberg
- Patricia Moug
- Valley City Kiwanis Club

Adventure Awaits – A Night Full of Treasure!

The VCSU Scholarship Auction raised \$125,000 for student scholarships during the annual event held Friday, April 11, at the Valley City Eagles Club.

“The support and generosity from our community is greatly appreciated,” said Kim Hesch, assistant director for university advancement. “Thank you to everyone that donated items, attended the auction, and purchased items.”

The VCSU Foundation sold 329 tickets for this year’s auction and raised a total of \$125,000 through ticket sales, the silent auction and the live auction. The Scholarship Auction is the largest annual fundraiser for the VCSU Foundation

and supports both academic and athletic scholarships for VCSU students.

Save the date for the 2026 Auction – April 17!

Help us continue to grow our event by giving serious consideration in making a donation to the auction. Popular items include: tools, artwork, outdoor/summer items, gift certificates for food or experience packages, tickets for concerts or sporting events, condo stays or donate cash and the auction committee will purchase an item. Contact Kim Hesch for more information – kim.hesch@vcsu.edu or 701-845-7403.





Andrew Coe, Dan Catizone, Clay Mannie, Peder Gjovik, and Lisa Krumwiede accepted the ITEEA STEM School of Excellence for their respective schools.

VCSU Faculty and Graduates Receive ITEEA Awards

Valley City State University was well represented at the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA) annual conference in April as VCSU faculty and graduates received numerous awards.

VCSU personnel attending were Dr. James Boe '91, Dr. Peder Gjovik '77, Lisa Krumwiede '17, and Clay Mannie '16.

The conference provides an unparalleled opportunity for technology and engineering educators to gain comprehensive professional development and networking experiences. Dr. Boe '91 was honored with the ITEEA's highest honor, induction into the Academy of Fellows (read more on Page 20).

Gjovik, Krumwiede and Mannie accepted a banner designating VCSU as a STEM School of Excellence, along with Purdue University and Oswego State University. Two VCSU graduates, Dan Catizone '24 and Andrew Coe '22, received a STEM School of Excellence award for Mahweh Township Public Schools in New Jersey.

VCSU Department of Technology faculty members Lisa Krumwiede and Clayton Mannie co-chaired the ITEEA Teacher Excellence Awards. North Dakota teachers recognized were Byron Borgen, Keely Heidel, and VCSU alum Dan Houston BS '94

Schools from across the United States received Program Excellence Awards recognizing outstanding schools in technology and engineering education. VCSU alumnus Annette Beattie '08 was recognized for her outstanding middle school program at Valley City Public Schools. The Secondary Program Excellence award was awarded to the Bismarck Career Academy and accepted by alumni Dalon Grimm '16, Baron Blanchard '11, Michael Crouse '13, and Brenden Horner '21.

Clay Mannie was recognized as one of eight recipients

of the Outstanding ITEEA State Champions for his work organizing activities of the ITEEA within the state of North Dakota. Clay also set up a table during the STEM Showcase which offered Clay the opportunity to show a design challenge high school teachers could use to deliver lessons on design and tool making.

A Maley Outstanding Graduate Student Citation was awarded to Krista Little '24. Krista's capstone research was titled A

Review of Methods to Increase Female Engagement and Enrollment in Technology and Engineering Education Classes.

Blaire Thrasher, MEd '10, VCSU adjunct instructor and ITEEA Teacher Effectiveness Coach (TEC) and an ITEEA Engineering by Design (EbD) curriculum writer, delivered several EbD workshops at the conference.

Peder Gjovik and Val Moses, VCSU Illinois Program Representative/Advisor manned the ND Technology Education booth and shared program information with interested participants. VCSU personnel met with College of DuPage Vice President April Zawlocki along with several Technology and Engineering Education (TEE) students from Illinois who will be transferring into the VCSU online program through the COD/VCSU articulation agreement.



Dan Houston '84 received a ITEEA Teacher Excellence Award.

VCSU's Dr. James Boe Receives ITEEA's Highest Award

Dr. James Boe, Dean of Graduate Studies and Extended Learning at VCSU, was awarded with Academy of Fellows Membership at the annual International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA) national conference April 3 in St. Louis, Mo.

The ITEEA Academy of Fellows Membership is the highest recognition bestowed by the ITEEA and is determined by a committee of expert peer reviewers. To be selected for the award, individuals must have gained prominence in and brought honor to the profession of technology and engineering education.

Boe was previously a faculty member and department chair for VCSU Technology Education. He has also held several leadership roles in ITEEA.

"Dr. Boe has been a driving force behind VCSU's ascension to a program recognized internationally by the

technology and engineering education fraternity," said Dr. Peder Gjovik, chair of VCSU's department of technology and STEM education. "This award is well-deserved due to his tireless work for VCSU and the technology and engineering education profession throughout his career."

Valley City State University was also recognized as a STEM School of Excellence during the ITEEA conference, in recognition of a wide range of STEM-related initiatives the university leads or collaborates on.

Boe earned his bachelor's degree in technology education (Tech Ed) from VCSU in 1991. He taught in North Dakota and Texas public schools and served on the VCSU Tech Ed advisory committee for two years from 1998-1999. In 2000, he came back to VCSU to join the Technology Education program as a faculty member. He completed his M.Ed. in Educational Leadership in 2001 from the University of North Dakota.

Boe was a significant contributor to the adoption of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum and activities to support training teacher candidates in the ITEEA's Standards for Technological Literacy. Along with embedding STEM in Tech Ed courses, several STEM-based certificate options and graduate degrees were developed at the elementary and secondary levels. He became the chair of the program in 2009 and during that time also completed his doctoral degree in occupational and adult education at NDSU in 2010. In 2014 he became the director of graduate studies at VCSU. He later became the dean of graduate studies and extended learning in 2019 and continues to serve in that capacity.



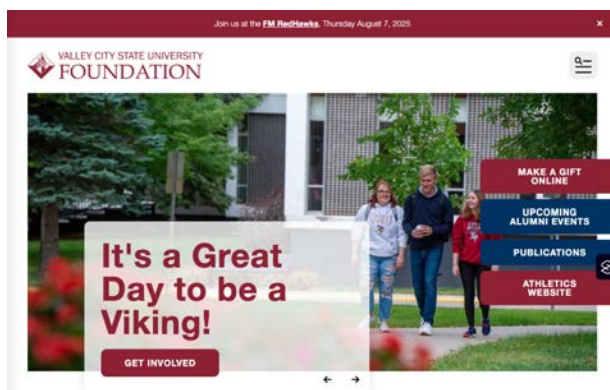
Dr. James Boe, center, is pictured with wife Natalie and VCSU faculty members. From left: Clayton Mannie, Natalie Boe, James Boe, Lisa Krumwiede and Peder Gjovik.

VCSU Foundation Launches New Website

VALLEY CITY (VCSU) – The Valley City State University Foundation has launched a new and improved website at www.vcsualumni.org, making it even easier for VCSU alumni to stay connected.

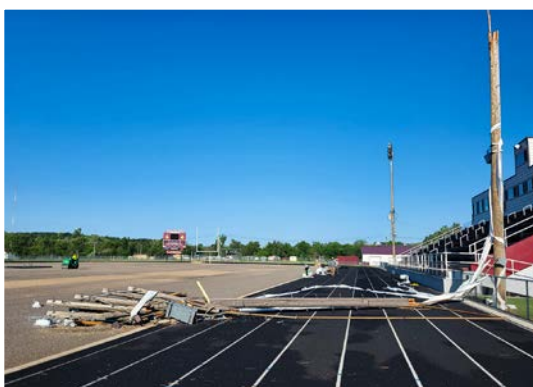
Through a more user-friendly interface on www.vcsualumni.org, VCSU graduates can share major life events with Foundation staff, donate to scholarships or other VCSU causes, or nominate fellow alumni for awards. They can also stay up to date on news, upcoming events and featured Alumni spotlights.

The new site features a cleaner, newer look and a simplified design. It is also more accessible, making it easier for people to navigate the website with screen readers or other digital accessibility tools.



Strong Winds Damage Campus

In the early morning hours of June 21, Valley City and numerous areas in southeast North Dakota were struck by strong thunderstorms that produced numerous tornadoes and straight-line winds approaching 90 miles per hour. The strong winds that whipped through Valley City caused large amounts of tree damage to the VCSU campus, along with some isolated areas of damage to roofs, windows and outdoor athletic facilities. The winds snapped or cracked numerous trees throughout campus, including the large elm tree – estimated to be 100 years old – that stood directly out front of McFarland Hall. While VCSU laments the loss of the historic trees, the iconic VCSU Clocktower is now much more visible to campus visitors and members of the Valley City community.





I N S I D E ATHLETICS

vcsuvikings.com



[vcsuvikings](#)

Vikings for 100 Years — and Still Rowing

Steve Olson, Assistant Athletics Director

In 2025, Valley City State University proudly celebrates 100 years of being the Vikings. A century of competition, tradition, and unwavering school spirit—all tied to a single word that has come to define who we are.

It all started in early 1925, when faculty and students at what was then the State Teachers College decided it was time to give their athletic teams an identity. A school-wide contest was announced, offering a \$5 prize to the student who could suggest the best name. Over 150 submissions poured in, but one stood out—a name that was bold, meaningful, and completely unique to the region.

That name was Vikings, submitted by student Mabel Geritz.

Geritz didn't give it much thought at the time. She and her housemates each jotted down a suggestion over the lunch hour as they had just discussed Norse explorers in a North Dakota history class that morning. The idea struck her—strong, fearless voyagers who faced adversity with determination. She wrote it down and went on with her day. Days later, when the winner was announced, she'd already forgotten what she'd submitted.

But the impact of her idea would shape our identity for generations.

From the moment the name was adopted, the Viking spirit became more than just a label for athletic teams—it became a symbol of who we are as a university. As the Teachers College Budget described it in 1925:

"The word Viking brings to mind those of courage and quality, who were brave, competent, able to remove obstacles and willing to try new things... Such are our teams composed of today, and such all the teams we want to carry on for S.T.C."



Olson

The first game played under the new Viking banner was a basketball contest at Jamestown College. Since then, that name has traveled far—from dusty fields and small gymnasiums to national championship tournaments and halls of fame. It has represented our athletes, our students, and our community with pride.

Over the past 100 years, we've seen incredible transformation. Facilities have evolved, programs have grown, and champions—on and off the field—have been made. Our student-athletes have worn the red and blue with distinction, and our alumni have carried the Viking name into their careers, communities, and families.

In 1962, the city of Valley City made it official—renaming Seventh Street Southwest, which connects our fieldhouse to campus, Viking Drive. It was a fitting tribute to a name that had become so deeply woven into the identity of VCSU.

As we celebrate this centennial, we're honoring that identity. We're remembering the athletes who gave their all, the coaches who inspired generations, and the alumni and fans who kept the Viking spirit alive through the decades.

This 100-year celebration isn't just a look back—it's a launching point. With the upcoming opening of the Tharaldson Family Athletic Center for Sports, Health, and Innovative Performance, we're writing the next chapter of Viking Athletics. It's a chance to invest in the future, to continue building champions, and to make sure that the next 100 years are as bold and meaningful as the first.

To all our alumni: thank you. Whether you competed, cheered, volunteered, or supported from afar, you are part of this Viking legacy. And we hope you'll join us as we celebrate 100 years of tradition, pride, and progress.

We are the Vikings. We've been rowing together for a century. And we're just getting started.

2025 FALL SCHEDULES

FOOTBALL

DATE	GAME	SCHOOL	CITY
August 28	Away	Dickinson State University (N.D.)	Dickinson, ND
September 4	Home	Augsburg University	Valley City
September 20	Away	Eastern Oregon University	La Grande, OR
September 27	Home	Simpson University (Calif.)	Valley City
October 4	Home	Rocky Mountain College (Mont.)	Valley City, N.D.
October 11	Home	Mayville State University	Valley City, N.D.
October 18	Away	Dakota State University	Madison, SD
October 25	Home	Dickinson State University (N.D.)	Valley City, N.D.
November 8	Away	Montana State University-Northern	Havre, Mont.
November 15	Away	Montana Tech	Butte, Mont.

VOLLEYBALL

DATE	TIME*	GAME	SCHOOL	CITY
August 16	11:00 AM	Home	Dakota Wesleyan University	Valley City
August 21	6:00 PM	Away	Morningside University	Sioux City, Iowa
August 22	9:00 AM	Neutral	Missouri Valley College	Sioux City, Iowa
August 22	2:00 PM	Neutral	Doane University	Sioux City, Iowa
August 23	10:30 AM	Neutral	Oklahoma Wesleyan University	Sioux City, Iowa
August 23	1:00 PM	Neutral	Northwestern College (Iowa)	Sioux City, Iowa
September 3	7:00 PM	Home	Mayville State University	Valley City
September 5	7:00 PM	Home	Montana Western	Valley City
September 6	11:00 AM	Home	Montana Tech	Valley City
September 12	8:00 PM	Away	Montana State University Northern	Havre, Mont.
September 13	3:00 PM	Away	University of Providence	Great Falls, Mont.
September 17	7:00 PM	Away	Rocky Mountain College	Billings, Mont.
September 18	7:00 PM	Away	Carroll College	Helena, Mont.
September 24	7:00 PM	Home	University of Jamestown (JV)	Valley City
September 25	7:00 PM	Home	Bismarck State College	Valley City
September 26	7:00 PM	Home	Dickinson State University	Valley City
October 1	6:00 PM	Away	Dakota State University	Madison, S.D.
October 2	6:00 PM	Away	Bellevue University	Bellevue, Neb.
October 10	8:00 PM	Away	Montana Tech	Butte, Mont.
October 11	11:00 AM	Away	Montana Western	Dillon, Mont.
October 15	7:00 PM	Away	Mayville State University	Mayville
October 17	7:00 PM	Home	University of Providence	Valley City
October 18	2:00 PM	Home	Montana State University Northern	Valley City
October 24	7:00 PM	Home	Carroll College	Valley City
October 25	7:00 PM	Home	Rocky Mountain College	Valley City
October 30	7:00 PM	Away	Dickinson State University	Dickinson
October 31	6:00 PM	Away	Bismarck State College	Bismarck
November 7	7:00 PM	Home	Bellevue University	Valley City
November 8	2:00 PM	Home	Dakota State University	Valley City
November 13		Neutral	Frontier Conference Tournament	Helena, Mont.

*All times in Central Time

For cross country, golf and other sports schedules, visit www.vcsuivikings.com

Alumni Anecdotes



Mark Zinke '16

Mark Zinke was recently named a Scheels Hidden Hometown Hero in Youth Sports for the Bismarck-Mandan area. Mark was noted for his work with youth as “one of the most beloved physical education teachers in the area.”

Mark just finished his 7th year at Roosevelt Elementary in Mandan teaching K-5 physical education. He also volunteer coaches youth basketball, flag football and t-ball.

“As far as what I thought teaching was going to be and what it is now, honestly, it’s kind of blown me out of the water. It’s not really a job, I’m pretty lucky,” Mark says. “I get to go to school and have fun with the kids and build relationships and there’s even some days where I’m like ‘I really get paid to do this?’”

Mark also owns two small businesses: Up Here Gear which is a North Dakota apparel brand and 701 Party Rentals where they rent out a commercial ice cream machine and slushy machine.

He majored in health and physical education at VCSU while also playing on the Viking football team. Mark and his wife Steph (Pederson) '15 have two sons: Liam and Brody.

SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

Baseball Battles in Final NSAA Season

The Valley City State University baseball team finished the 2025 season with a 20-32 overall record and a 4-16 conference mark in the final season of the North Star Athletic Association.

In the postseason, the Vikings entered as the No. 8 seed where they faced off against No. 1 Bellevue University. The Vikings fell to Bellevue and then were knocked out by No. 5 seed Dakota State University in a hard-fought 5-4 game.

Viking Baseball started their season on Jan. 30 at Dakota Wesleyan University, playing the first ever Viking Baseball game in January in the Dakotas. The Vikings went on to sweep the two games, starting the season 2-0.

VCSU's spring trip was to Orlando, Fla., where they played in the RussMatt Invitational. While in the sunshine state the Vikings went 8-7 against their non-conference

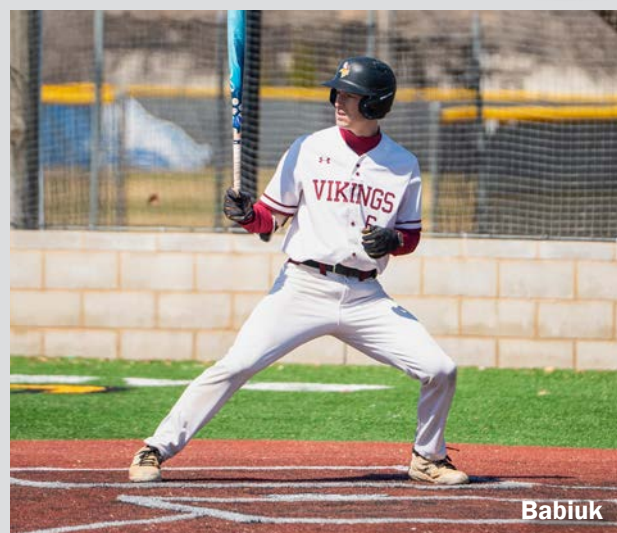
competitors. Due to some untimely heavy rains, the Vikings were unable to play their first home game until April 11-12, where they took one win from the (RV) University of Jamestown.

Viking Senior Jaden Babiuk concluded the season with 63 hits after 189 at bats. He started in 46 games, had a career high 35 runs and 26 RBIs. Babiuk was a four-year starter at VCSU and finished his career batting .331 with 224 hits. He finishes his career second all-time in hits at VCSU, just one behind Brady Anderson with 225.

Valley City State University baseball had two Second Team All-Conference selections in Jamel Chabot (sophomore) and Alexis Velasco (freshman). Velasco was also named the North Star Athletic Association Freshman-of-the-Year and Takao Cookson (sophomore) earned Honorable Mention All-Conference.



Chabot



Babiuk

3 Golfers earn Honorable Mention All-Conference

The Valley City State University golf teams competed in four tournaments this spring, culminating with the NSAA Conference Championships at Woodland Hills Golf Course in Eagle, Neb.

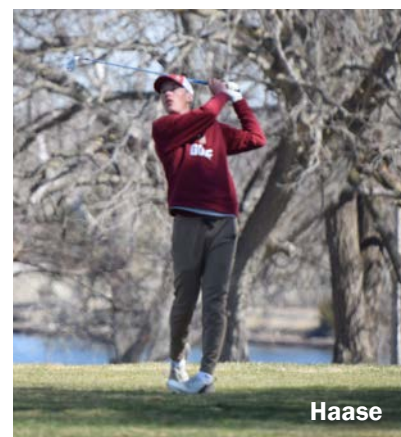
The Vikings had three Honorable Mention All-Conference golfers in Sydney Carlson, Kathleen Vetter, and Owen Haase.

Carlson finished in ninth place overall at the NSAA Championships after carding a 329 (83-82-83-81), marking her third straight All-Conference finish.

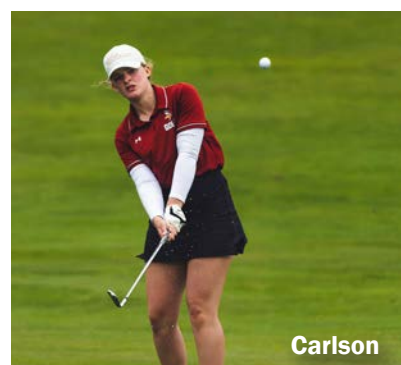
Vetter finished in 13th place with a 348 (80-77-95-96) total. Vetter has earned her second straight Honorable Mention All-Conference honor after placing ninth in the conference last season.

Haase finished in 10th place at the NSAA Championships to earn his first career Honorable Mention All-Conference honor. Haase fired a 308 (75-73-80-80) including a career-best 73 in the second round of the tournament.

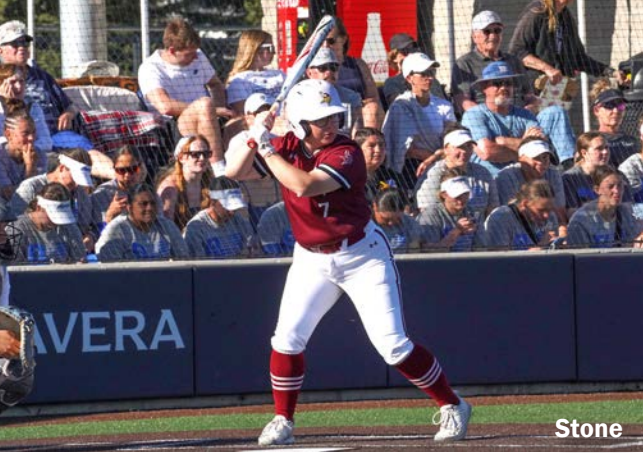
Vetter and St. Aubin were also recognized as VCSU's Champions of Character which is presented to the student-athlete who best exemplifies the five core values of the NAIA Champions of Character program: respect, integrity, servant leadership, sportsmanship and responsibility.



Haase



Carlson



Softball takes 2nd at NSAA Tournament

Valley City State University softball took second place in the NSAA Softball Tournament after a successful 26-23 season. The Vikings were 11-9 in NSAA conference games.

The Vikings entered the double elimination NSAA Postseason Tournament as the No. 4 seed. They took down No. 5 Mayville State, 8-5 in eight innings remaining in the winner's bracket. They then faced off against the No. 1 seed University of Jamestown where the Vikings fell 8-0 moving to loser-out play.

VCSU Softball went on to run the table in elimination games. The Vikings defeated No. 6 Dakota State University by a score of 5-2, knocked out Mayville State 17-3 in six innings, and then defeated No. 2 seed Dickinson State University 3-2 in eight innings to make it to the NSAA Championship. In the championship against top seed Jamestown, the Vikings fell 7-0 taking second in the conference.

VCSU's Logan Gronberg, Makenzee Stone and Ashlyn Diemert each earned 1st Team All-Conference while Kylee Banerd, Maddy Zander and Madison Hazelton earned 2nd Team All-Conference. Gronberg was named to the 2025 NSAA Gold Glove team, and Diemert was named VCSU's Champion of Character.

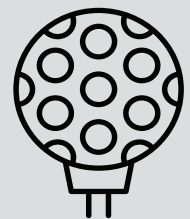
Gronberg, a junior, led the North Star with a .492 batting average, a .541 on-base percentage, and a .795 slugging percentage this season. Stone, a senior, totaled a .362 batting average including 42 hits, three doubles, one triple and one home run this season. Diemert, a senior, finished the season with a .363 batting average with 37 hits, nine doubles, two triples and four home runs.

As a team the Vikings tallied 430 hits, 272 RBIs, batted .315, and slugged .481 leading the conference. VCSU also led the conference with 44 home runs. Viking pitchers led the conference with 6.55 K/7 innings and posted a 4.88 ERA.



Viking Scramble Recap

The annual Viking Golf Scramble was held June 13 with 17 teams and 68 golfers competing at the Valley City Town & Country Club. All proceeds benefit the VCSU Viking Booster Club and VCSU athletics.



Championship Flight Winners: (10-under, 60) From left – Austin, Mike, Mark, and Collin Hoss



Viking Flight Winners: (10-under, 60) From left – Jaxon Kriewald, Megan Beck, Lane Ulmer, Justin Tabor



Odegard



Backus

Odegard takes 2nd at Nationals

VCSU's Kendra Odegard and Olivia Backus both punched their ticket to the NAIA Outdoor Track & Field National Championships during the 2025 outdoor season.

Odegard – a senior from Lisbon, N.D. – placed second in the nation amongst a field of 27 throwers at the NAIA women's javelin. Her national meet throw of 44.55 meters earned NAIA All-American honors for the third time in her career. Odegard finished her career as a 3-time conference champion in javelin and qualified for nationals in all four years as a Viking.

Backus – a sophomore from Draper, Utah – qualified for nationals in the high jump but was unsuccessful in clearing the national meet opening mark of 1.61 meters. Backus qualified for nationals for the first time in her Viking career by clearing 1.66 meters at the NSAA Conference Championships.

At the conference level, the Vikings won four individual conference titles where junior Karly Just took home the 1500, 5000 and 10000-meter races. Viking freshman Jordan Mount earned his first conference title in the 400 meters after running 48.94.

The Vikings had eight different NSAA All-Conference athletes in Karly Just, Olivia Backus, Kendra Odegard, Emma Muggli, Jordan Mount, Tayshaun Robinson, Cameron Champagnie, and Zeke Barnick.



SIMPLE WAYS TO GIVE BACK

Your gift, no matter the size, can make all the difference to a student in need. In supporting student scholarships, you are creating a lasting impact.



PLEDGE: A pledge of \$1,500 or \$3,000 over four years provides a scholarship in that value for a deserving student. You choose the frequency of fulfilling your pledge.



RECURRING GIFT: Monthly gifts, spread out over the year, make a BIG impact and are a convenient, affordable, and flexible way of supporting VCSU.



ONE TIME GIFT: Cash, gifts of grain, commodities, marketable stocks, bonds, or mutual fund shares have an immediate impact on VCSU and for you. Contact the Foundation office if this is your preference.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT VCSU STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS?



GIVE ONLINE: Fast, easy and secure. Use our online form at give.vcsu.edu to make your gift of choice or scan the QR code above.



MAIL YOUR GIFT to the VCSU Foundation at 101 College St SW, Valley City, ND 58072 or call our office at 701-845-7203 to make a donation over the phone.

Alumni Anecdotes



Jacob Gottenborg '22

Jacob Gottenborg recently relocated to Bozeman, Montana, where he opened the Bozeman office for Ascend Financial and serves as the company relationship manager at that location.

A 2022 VCSU graduate, Gottenborg played football throughout his Viking career while earning a degree in business administration. His journey with Ascend Financial began in 2023 when Kyler Harder, another VCSU alum, reached out to VCSU head football coach Dennis McCulloch looking for a recent graduate to fill a paraplanner position.

Harder and Gottenborg connected and eventually Gottenborg moved to Minneapolis where he worked as a paraplanner for Ascend Financial. About one year later his responsibility had grown to encompass the majority of the financial planning process. When Harder made the decision to expand to Bozeman, Gottenborg volunteered to make the move and opened the office in December, 2024.



The VCSU Trap Shooting Team, from left: McCoy Muhl, Kelby Gjovik, Brooke Gaudry, Nick Deschamp, Kasey Odegaard, Grant Larson, Tyler Johnson, Ty Awender, Quentin Glueckert, Logan Heen, Madi Wilhelmi, Jake Hennings, Cali Steffan, Cooper Monilaws (not pictured).

VCSU wins Collegiate Trap Shooting State Championship

The Valley City State University Trap Team won a state championship at the 2025 North Dakota Collegiate State Trap Tournament on April 26, taking home its second state title in the team division of American Trap over the last three years.

VCSU defeated North Dakota State College of Science in a one-person shoot-off after they finished the team division competition tied with a score of 456. Ty Awender was selected to represent VCSU in the shoot-off and secured the team division state championship by breaking 9 out of 10 targets. The NDSCS competitor broke 8 targets.

"I've been on both ends of winning and losing shoot-offs, and while I was ready to embrace either outcome, I'm glad I was able to take home the win for the team," said Awender.

VCSU's top five competitors posted a combined score of 456 out of 500

during the team division competition. That tied VCSU with NDSCS for first place, setting the stage for the exciting shoot-off.

With the victory, VCSU claimed the 2025 North Dakota Collegiate Trap Championship in the team division, marking their second team title in three years. VCSU previously won the team division title in 2023. The Vikings had an individual division champion in 2024.

The 2025 State Tournament was held in Jamestown, N.D., and included teams from VCSU, Bismarck State College, University of Jamestown, NDSCS, University of Mary, Dakota College at Bottineau, Dickinson State University, and North Dakota State University competing in various events. The overall state championship was claimed by NDSCS.

VCSU adds Skeet Team

VCSU Shooting Sports added a skeet shooting team to its competitive offerings this year.

While trap shooting involves a single airborne target moving away from the competitors, skeet shooting ups the stakes with two airborne targets crossing their field of view.

The new skeet shooting team was recognized by the USA College Clay

Target League and took second place this spring in Conference 1 – finishing just behind Lindenwood University. VCSU freshman Ty Awender topped the individual conference standings and Kasey Odegaard was third.

For more information about the VCSU Shooting Sports team, contact Dr. Nick Galt at nicholas.galt@vcsu.edu.



VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

HOMECOMING 2025

The VCSU Alumni Association invites you to join alumni and friends of VCSU for many of the activities we have planned for Homecoming this fall. These are just a few of the events planned. Watch our website at vcsualumni.org as we add more events.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

43rd Annual Bill Osmon Fun Run | 4 p.m. | Lokken Stadium

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Viking Volleyball vs. Bismark State | 7 p.m. | Graichen Gym

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Alumni Welcome Back Ice Cream Social | 1:30 p.m. | Student Center – Upper Lounge

VCSU Bookstore Open | 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. | Student Center

Hall of Fame Social | 5 p.m. | Valley City Eagles

Hall of Fame Banquet & Ceremony | 6 p.m. | Valley City Eagles

Viking Volleyball vs. Dickinson | 7 p.m. | Graichen Gym

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Alumni Honors Breakfast | 8:30 a.m. | Student Center Cafeteria

VCSU Bookstore Open | 8 a.m. – noon | Student Center

Homecoming Parade | 10:30 a.m. | Central Ave

Viking Tailgating | 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. | Lokken Stadium

Vikings vs. Simpson University (Calif.) | 2 p.m. | Shelly Ellig Field

Postgame and All-Alumni Social | 5 p.m. | Valley City Eagles

College Student and Alumni Dance | 9:00 p.m. | Valley City Eagles

For up-to-date schedules
and more information,
visit www.vcsualumni.org
or call 701-845-7203.



Just Married



Send us your wedding photo so we can include it in the next issue of **The Bulletin**. Email the photo and short description to alumni@vcsu.edu or scan the QR code and fill out the Weddings Form.



1 - Joey Demers '17 and Jade Olson were married May 10, 2025.



2 - Nissa Johnson '21 and **Jorun Hamre '22** were married May 17, 2025.



3 - Alaina Gleason '23 and **Troy Dietz '24** were married June 14, 2025

Not Pictured

Hope Rohrbeck '25 & Easton Ogren, October 26, 2024

Madison Kemnitz '25 & Peyton Zaun '25, March 15, 2025

Hayley Jensen '24 & Tyler Spurgeon, September 24, 2024

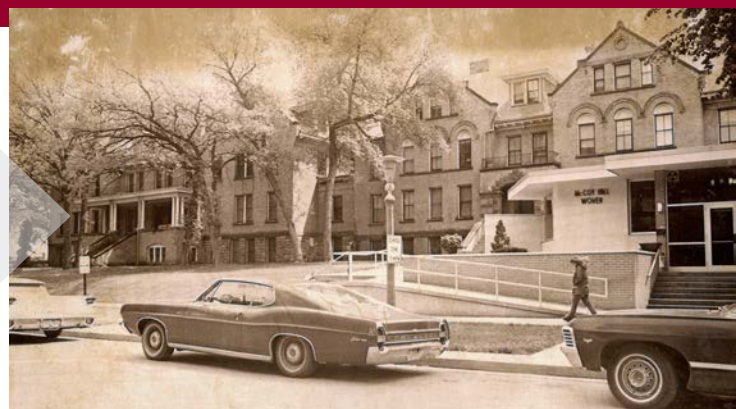
Hannah Miller '20 & Drew Fosse, April 12, 2025

Hannah S. Anderson '21 & Tyler Kliniske '21, June 13, 2025

Madison Taylor '18 & Michael Myhre, June 14, 2025

Continuing the Connection

If you know the address of any of these individuals, please contact the VCSU Foundation Office at 1-701-845-7203 or email alumni@vcsu.edu.



1957

Mary (Grotberg) Billing
Clara Buchfink
Shirley Dahl
Gail Fitzpatrick
Nellie Giles
Kent Heaton
Arthur Keller
Dwane Meyer
JoAnne Monson
Patricia Renault

Verlyn Ricketts
Beryl Ulven

1958

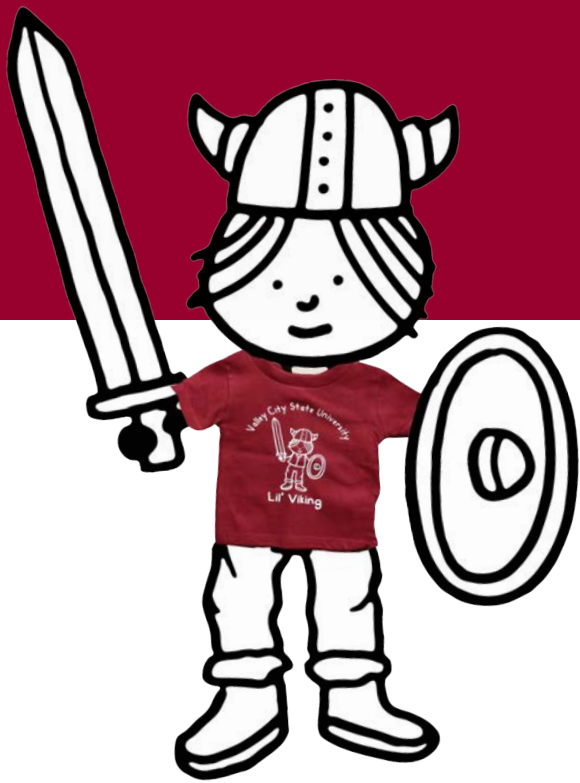
Kathleen (Butler) Abraham
Betty Braa
Donavon Coleman
Mark Cory
Arlene (Walberg) Fail
Jeanette Haskell
Cleo Johnson

Gertrude Keller
Sandra (Shockman) Meyer
Sonja Miller
Allene (Grady) Mueller
Lois Nagel
Jean (Keeling) Rose
Lila Shyde

1959

Dayananda Abeywickrama
Marlene Bodell

Bernard Collins
Carol Halvorson
Violet Johnson
Richard Johnson
Anna Johnson
Marlyce (Widener) Miller
Beverly Smith
Lilly Swenson
Cara Thompson
Betty Walby



Lil' Vikings



Have you had an addition to your family?

Share your good news with the Viking family!

Contact Kim Hesch at kim.hesch@vcsu.edu or scan the QR code and fill out the form to receive a free t-shirt for your new Lil' Viking. Include your baby's name and birth date. After you have your Lil' Viking shirt, send a photo to kim.hesch@vcsu.edu so we can include it in the next issue of **The Bulletin**.



Kennedy Sonja Race

March 12, 2025
4 lbs. 8 oz., 17 in.

Maren (Horner) '22 and
Maxwell Race

Grandparents: Gregg '90
and Kathleen Horner



Wesson John Trosen

November 27, 2024
6 lbs. 12 oz., 19 in.

Sibling: Scarlett (3)

Elisabeth (Rzaszutak) '12
& Nathan Trosen



Lincoln Praus

February 10, 2024
1 lb. 12 oz., 12.99 in.

Zoe (Alvarez) '20 and
Dillon Praus '20



Elaina Rian Gleason

November 30, 2024
8 lbs. 7 oz., 21.75 in.

Joslyn (Hoyt) '21 and
Daniel Gleason





Kaleb Coleman

February 8, 2025
8 lbs. 9 oz., 21 in.

Drs. Kendall M.Ed. '21
and Djuana Coleman



Kendall Coleman Jr.

May 24, 2023
9 lbs. 3 oz, 22 inches

Drs. Kendall M.Ed. '21
and Djuana Coleman



Wyatt Henry Dinkel

December 12, 2024
8 lbs., 20.25 in.

Michael '14 and Andrea
(Swartz) '14, M.Ed. '19
Dinkel



Everly Signe Rambow

October 21, 2024
8 lbs., 21 in.

Jacob '17 and Taylor
(Balkan) '18 Rambow



Weston Huffman

March 28, 2024
5 lbs. 3 oz., 19.25 in.

Dylan '22 & Kendra
Huffman



Cameron Paul Ripplinger

November 26, 2024
7 lbs. 11 oz., 20.5 in.

Joins big sister, Charli
Ripplinger

Stephanie (Fittig) '15 and
Dylan Ripplinger



Alivia Thomas

April 8, 2025
5 lbs. 11 oz., 19 in.

Tiffani (Velure) '18 and
Dillon '18 Thomas



Lainey Ann Bitter

July 24, 2024
7 lbs. 12 oz., 20.75 in.

Joined brother Owen (3)

Katherine (Gerntholz), '16
and Alex Bitter



Alumni Anecdotes



Wendy Birhanzel '98

Dr. Wendy Birhanzel, a 1998 graduate of VCSU, was recognized for her dedication to public education with the 2025 Women in School Leadership Award at the yearly AASA National Conference on Education in New Orleans, Louisiana, on March 7.

AASA is a professional organization comprising more than 13,000 educational leaders in the United States and worldwide, formerly known as the American Association of School Administrators. Birhanzel is currently the superintendent for Harrison School District 2, located in Colorado Springs, Colo. She is the first Colorado superintendent to receive this award, which is designed to recognize the exceptional leadership of active, front-line female leaders who are making a difference in the lives of students every day.

Birhanzel earned an elementary education degree from VCSU in 1998. She was honored with the VCSU Alumni Association's Young Alumni Achievement Award in 2015. She earned higher degrees from California State University at Dominguez Hills and University of Southern California. Birhanzel has been recognized with numerous awards during her 20+ years of experience in public education, including being named the 2023 Colorado Superintendent of the Year.

Vikings on the Move

Submit your latest news to
alumni@ycsu.edu

CLASS OF 1940s

Mary (Reinke) Stein '49 celebrated the 75th anniversary of receiving her teaching degree and graduation from VCSU in 2024. Then in February 2025 she celebrated her 97th birthday. Mary says she is a proud VCSU alum!

CLASS OF 1950s

Al Dosch '55 still plays golf at the Linton Golf Course 2-3 times per week in his peak age of 92. Al taught for 46 years in the Strasburg schools then he and his wife, Judy, spent 10 years wintering in Mesa, Ariz. Judy passed away five years ago and Al still enjoys three winter months with his daughter and son-in-law, Linda and Hugh. Attending the VCSU gathering in Arizona in February is always a highlight for him.

CLASS OF 1970s

Kathy (Shape) '74 and Boyd Sussex '75 are still living the good life. They are blessed with good health, except for a few aches and pains. Kathy and Boyd keep busy following their two grandkids and are thankful they are able to attend most of their activities. The grandkids live in Grand Forks so the interstate is well-traveled.

CLASS OF 1990s

Barb (Preston) '90 and Dean '92 Schmit are still in Minnesota. Dean is a production manager for Dakota Growers/8th Ave Foods in New Hope. Barb continues to be a special education assistant for ISD 728 where she has been for 26 years. They are Nana and Papp to eight grandkids and enjoy traveling to see their kids and grandkids. Dean and Barb hope all their VCSU friends are doing well.

CLASS OF 2000s

Venessa (Cross) '00 and Joe Sinness '99 still live in Sebring, Florida. They are in their 25th year as teachers. Venessa teaches honors and IB Chemistry, and Joe is a Dean of Students. Their daughter, Jade, graduated from Troy in 2024 with a master's in accounting. Daughter, Jordan, graduated from Auburn in 2024 with a Bachelors in Exercise Science.

Nathan Brown '02 works for Montana Dakota Utilities as a journeyman distribution welder for the last 5 1/2 years. He is one of two welders in the Badlands Dickinson District.

CLASS OF 2020s

Hayley Jensen '24 and Tyler Spurgeon were married September 24, 2024. Hayley and Tyler live in Valley City ND with Hayley's two children (Kaydence and Emmett), two dogs (Arch and Fen) and cat (Luna). Hayley has been teaching music at Barnes County North Public School since 2023 while she finished her degree in December 2024. Hayley also works part time at Epworth playing piano for services.

In Remembrance

Vera (Swartout) Aalgaard '44, Merced, Calif.
Herdis (Stalvik) Iverson '44, Fargo, N.D.
Norma (Monk) Svoboda '49, Grand Forks, N.D.
Helen (Doolittle) Rothfusz '51, Ashley, N.D.
Phyllis (Ussatis) Johnson '57, Burnesville, Minn.
Curtis Olson '62, Ivins, Utah
James Eaton '63, Moorhead, Minn.
Mary Lou (Semler) Krogh '63, McVillie, N.D.
Adeline (Mattern Schwab) Pelster '63, Bismarck, N.D.
Neil Dardis '64, Fargo, N.D.
June (Stompro) Larson '64, Moorhead, Minn.
Nancy (Foley) Kjelgaard '65, Surprise, Ariz.
Gary Justesen, Fargo, N.D.
Sharon (Hardke) Sandness '65, Fingal, N.D.
James L. Johnson, Bismarck, N.D.
LeeAnn (Craft) Carlson, Grand Forks, N.D.
Robert Gilbert '66, Mora, Minn.

Sheryl (Lemley) Umsted '67, Fargo, N.D.
Daniel Janisch '69, Saint Paul, Minn.
Loren A. Johnson '69, Great Falls, Mont.
Marlene (Martinson) Ensrud '71, Mapleton, N.D.
Kenneth Carlson '72, Langdon, N.D.
Arlyce (Monson) Chadwick '72, Jamestown, N.D.
Charlie Skeel '72, Jamestown, N.D.
Richard Monson '74, Valley City
Kathy (Martin) Ward '74, Fargo, N.D.
Elizabeth (Muscha) Kiser '79, Fargo, N.D.
Victoria (Mazone) Duncan '83, Denver, Colo.
Loren Hillstrom '91, Jamestown, N.D.
Michael Hager, Grand Rapids, Minn.

Former Faculty & Staff

Robert Horne '59, Fargo, N.D.

Robert (Bob) Milton Horne '59



Robert (Bob) Milton Horne, 87, passed away on March 16, 2025, in Mesa, AZ, surrounded by family and friends. He was born January 24, 1938, in Devils Lake, ND, to Caroline and Harold Horne. The oldest of four boys, he lived his first 14 years on the family farm near Penn, ND, and attended Dry Lake #1 for his first eight grades.

The family moved to Edmore, ND where he completed high school and met his wife, Deanne Roseth. They were married in 1955 and just recently celebrated 70 years of marriage. They had three sons-Daniel Jay, David Kay (deceased) and Richard Dale.

In 1959 Bob completed his Bachelor of Science at Valley City State College and began teaching at Eckelson, N.D., then moved to Havre, Mont., during which time he completed his master's in American history at the University of North Dakota. After several years teaching at St. Cloud State University, he pursued his Doctorate at the University of Montana. Bob completed his doctorate degree in Western American History and Educational Administration in 1971 and accepted a position in the history department at Valley City State University. After a few years teaching history, he accepted the position of Vice President for

College Relations for VCSU.

Bob's career took a shift in 1975 when he was appointed Director of North Dakota State Parks and Recreation. He served in that capacity until 1981 when he was afforded the opportunity to direct the Cross Ranch Project for the Nature Conservancy.

In 1983 Bob accepted the position as Manager of the Minot office of Verendrye Electric Cooperative where he worked until his retirement in 2004. While in Minot, he served on numerous city boards and committees.

Throughout his many work experiences, Bob was always civic minded and a steward of the land. His committee work not only revolved around his work but also his church and state. Bob's faith guided his life and he was actively involved in the Methodist Church whether it be in Edmore, Valley City, Mandan, Minot or Fargo. He found great satisfaction serving on the Valley City State Foundation Board and the North Dakota State Historical Foundation.

Although Bob valued his work activities, he was truly a family man. His sons and their families brought him great joy throughout his life. He loved family gatherings. As his children got older weekly telephone conversations were a must. Bob will be remembered as a loving husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, uncle, friend and a kind thoughtful person with a great sense of dry humor.

For those who would like to honor Bob's memory with a memorial gift, some suggested ideas are: North Dakota State Historical Foundation, the Valley City State University Foundation, the Fargo First United Methodist Church, or a cancer research fund.



Valley City State University
Alumni Association
101 College Street SW
Valley City, ND 58072

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PARENTS: If this issue is addressed to your son or daughter who no longer lives at this address, please share an updated address by scanning the QR code or contacting our office.

Thank you for your help in keeping our records current.

Know a high school junior
or senior who could be a
future Viking?
[VCSU.edu/visit](https://vcsu.edu/visit)

