Georgia Southern University

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

MISSION

Georgia Southern University is classified as a doctoral/research institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. With an emphasis on academic distinction, excellent teaching, research, and student success, the University offers a comprehensive array of baccalaureate degrees and selected master's and doctoral programs. The University's hallmark is a culture of engagement that bridges theory with practice, extends the learning environment beyond the classroom, promotes student growth and life success, and prepares the student population for leadership and service as world citizens. Georgia Southern accomplishes its mission, in part, through its focus on providing a student-centered environment enhanced by technology, transcultural experiences, public/private partnerships, and stewardship of a safe, residential campus. Moreover, the University fosters access to its educational programs and enhances the quality of life in the region through collaborative relationships supporting education, health care and human services, cultural experiences, scientific and technological advancement, athletics, and regional economic development.

FALL 2016 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE

As evidenced by fall 2016 student demographic data, Georgia Southern University enrolls a primarily full-time, residential, undergraduate population. Of 20,673 students enrolled in fall 2016, 18,005 (87%) were undergraduates and 17,122 (83%) were full-time. With a freshman on-campus residence requirement, the University housed 91% of beginning freshmen on campus. Consistent with its mission as a University System of Georgia institution, 94% of undergraduates were state of Georgia residents. The University enrolled 51% (n=9,126) undergraduate female students and 49% (n=8,879) undergraduate male students. Minorities accounted for 36% of the total University enrollment. Only 6% (n=1,114) of undergraduates were transfer students with most of these coming from other System state colleges.

Georgia Southern's first-year retention rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen who entered in fall 2015 (and returned in fall 2016) was 81%. The six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen who entered in fall 2010 and completed a bachelor's degree was 51%. Approximately, 15% of this cohort completed their degree at another institution of higher education, representing a total degree completion rate of 66%.

EVIDENCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS

REGULAR ADMISSION

While not a "highly selective" institution, Georgia Southern University generally enrolls above average freshmen. For fall 2016[1], regular freshman admission at Georgia Southern University still required that students have a total SAT (math and critical reading) score of at least 1010 or have an ACT composite score of at least 21 and meet the Board of Regents minimum requirements for each portion of the SAT/ACT. Students must also have a satisfactory grade point average on the required high school curriculum (2.0 or higher). To be considered for transfer admission, students must be eligible to return to their current school, have a cumulative college GPA of 2.0 or higher on all work attempted, and have a minimum of 30 transferable semester hours or 45 transferable quarter hours.

Table 1 depicts the average SAT composite scores of beginning freshmen compared to those at other institutions in the University System of Georgia, the state of Georgia, and the nation for the past six years. The data indicate that the average SAT composite score of Georgia Southern freshmen continues to hold steady at roughly 100 points higher than the national average SAT composite score, slightly higher than the System average SAT composite score, and well above the state average SAT composite score.

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[1] For fall 2017, SAT minimum scores have changed based upon the redesigned exam.

TABLE 1: AVERAGE SAT SCORES OF BEGINNING FRESHMEN COMPARED TO UNIVERSITY SYSTEM, STATE, AND NATIONAL AVERAGES FOR PAST SIX FALL TERMS

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Composite						
Georgia Southern	1112	1115	1112	1113	1112	1113
University System	1096	1110	1111	1065	1052	1056
State Average	972	977	977	973	975	983
National Average	1011	1010	1010	1010	1006	1002

Source: University Fact Book, Office of Strategic Research and Analysis

Table 2 displays the average high school GPA for beginning freshmen for the past six years. Again, the data demonstrate that Georgia Southern University generally admits above average students but would not be categorized as a "highly selective" institution.

TABLE 2: AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL GPA FOR BEGINNING FRESHMEN FOR PAST SIX FALL TERMS

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
3.20	3.21	3.24	3.27	3.29	3.33

Source: University Fact Book, Office of Strategic Research and Analysis

LEARNING SUPPORT ADMITS

Given the higher level of academic preparedness of the average freshman admit at Georgia Southern, the University has established a couple of programs aimed at improving access to students who are less well prepared, but given the opportunity, could most likely succeed in college. One such program aimed at increasing access for students who are not as well prepared academically is Georgia Southern's Learning Support program administered through the Academic Success Center. Students are placed into Learning Support based upon a Mathematics Placement Index (MPI) of less than 1165 (MATH 1001 or 1101) or less than 1265 (MATH 1111) and/or English Placement Index (EPI) of less than 4230 (ENGL 1101). Essentially, learning support provides students who have been admitted with inadequate skills in reading, composition, and/or mathematics with the opportunity to develop those skills to entry-level competency for regular freshman credit hours. Learning Support courses carry institutional credit but do not count in the credits applied toward a degree and are not used in the calculation of GPA (except for Hope scholarship calculations). Students must satisfy Learning Support requirements and cannot accumulate more than 30 hours of degree-credit before Learning Support course completion. Students have a maximum of two semesters to exit Learning Support in English and three semesters to exit Learning Support in Math. A Learning Support student who does not complete requirements for an area in the appropriate number of semesters will be placed on academic dismissal.

Five years of Learning Support data are provided in Table 3. Included are the number of students admitted into each area of Learning Support (math, English, and/or reading); the number and percentage of those that completed; the number and percentage of students who stopped attending the Learning Support classes; and the number and percentage of Learning Support students who were dismissed after not completing the program within the required number of semesters. Also shown is the total number of Learning Support admits and the percentage this number represents of the total freshman enrollment for that year. Over this time span, the total number of Learning Support students has dropped from 93 (2011-12) to 51 (2014-15), rising to 66 (2015-16) but still hovering at about 2% of the total freshman enrollment. More importantly, the data show a general trend toward increasing success in getting Learning Support students through the program with less attrition; however, there was an unexplained downturn this past year.

TABLE 3: LEARNING SUPPORT STUDENTS FOR PAST FIVE YEARS BY TYPE OF LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning Support	Summer 2011-Spring 2012	Summer 2012-Spring 2013	Summer 2013-Spring 2014	Summer 2014-Spring 2015	Summer 2015-Spring 2016
Math					
Total #	57	47	45	33	51
# Completed	24 (42%)	25 (53%)	29 (64%)	23 (70%)	24 (47%)
# Stopped Attending	21 (37%)	16 (34%)	12 (27%)	8 (24%)	20 (39%)
# Dismissed	12 (21%)	6 (13%)	4 (9%)	2 (6%)	7 (14%)
English					
Total #	18	7	6	12	15
# Completed	14 (78%)	5 (71%)	5 (83%)	11 (92%)	10 (67%)
# Stopped Attending	4 (22%)	2 (29%)	1 (17%)	1 (8%)	5 (33%)
# Dismissed	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	*Students are no longer dismissed for English Learning Support.*
Reading					
Total #	18	7	11	6	*USG Learning Support (LS) structure was changed to combine the LS Reading class with LS for English.*
# Completed	12 (67%)	7 (100%)	11 (100%)	6 (100%)	
# Stopped Attending	6 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
# Dismissed	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
Total Learning Support	93	61	62	51	66
% of University Freshmen Enrollment	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%

Source: Academic Success Center

Given the current structure and resources of the Academic Success Center (which are dedicated primarily to the Learning Support Program), the Center is unable to serve all students who fall into academic difficulty (at-risk students) during the course of their academic studies. While advisors can flag these students, the Academic Success Center does not have the resources to serve effectively all of their needs. Georgia Southern seeks to address this deficiency through this plan.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES (PREFACE)

Since the implementation of the Complete College Georgia initiative, Georgia Southern University has set forth an overarching goal of increasing first-year retention, progression, and graduation (RPG) by one percentage point each year. As noted in the University's 2015 Complete College Georgia (CCG) Status Report, the institution was successful in increasing first-year retention from 80% to 81%; the retention rate remained stable for 2016. Less attention has been paid to progression rates, but the data demonstrate a need for such a focus. Table 4 displays retention rates for first-time freshmen and transfer freshmen by cohort for the past six years. Historically, and as affirmed by these more recent data, the institution has witnessed the greatest attrition in first-time freshmen and in transfer freshmen between the junior and senior year. Less surprising is the higher rate of attrition of transfer freshmen compared to first-time freshmen between the sophomore and junior year, suggesting that these students may be transferring out.

Although Table 4 shows the largest attrition rate between the junior and senior year, it can be argued that this result is a consequence of students experiencing difficulties in their sophomore year. For instance, students whose grades fall and who get into academic difficulties during the sophomore year may eventually give up or transfer out by their senior year. Other students who encounter financial aid issues may elect to work more hours and attend class less or spend less time on class work. Greater investigation of sophomore students is needed to understand what is happening with this student population, identify potential barriers, and alleviate barriers where possible to help students return for successful junior and senior years.

Goals I and II of the 2016-2017 CCG plan continue the focus on progression of sophomores to juniors, established in last year's CCG plan.

TABLE 4: RETENTION RATES OF IPEDS FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME, DEGREE-SEEKING FRESHMEN AND TRANSFER FRESHMEN

FALL 2010 THROUGH FALL 2015 COHORTS

	1st year	2nd year retention:	3rd year retention:	4th year retention:

	retention: Fall 2011	Fall 2012 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2013 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2014 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2010 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	79.6%	64.8% (-14.8)	56.7% (-8.1)	29.1% (-27.6)
Transfer Freshmen	68.6%	53.9% (-14.7)	37.3% (-16.6)	15.7% (-21.6)
	Fall 2012	Fall 2013 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2014 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2015 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2011 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	77.2%	61.9% (-15.3)	56.0% (-5.9)	27.5% (-28.4)
Transfer Freshmen	73.7%	55.8% (-17.9)	43.2% (-12.6)	21.1% (-22.1)
	Fall 2013	Fall 2014 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2015 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2016 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2012 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	80.5%	65.8% (-14.7)	58.8% (-7)	28.7% (-30.1)
Transfer Freshmen	60.6%	54.9% (-5.7)	38.0% (-16.9)	14.1% (-23.9)
	Fall 2014	Fall 2015 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2016 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2017 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2013 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	80.6%	64.9% (-15.7)	58.0% (-6.9)	
Transfer Freshmen	65.7%	57.1% (-8.6)	44.3% (-12.9)	
	Fall 2015	Fall 2016 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2017 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2018 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2014 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	81.5%	67.6% (-13.9)		
Transfer Freshmen	76.3%	62.5% (-13.8)		
	Fall 2016	Fall 2017 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2018 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2019 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2015 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	80.8%			
Transfer Freshmen	71.2%			

Source: Office of Strategic Research and Analysis

Another population that needs attention are Georgia Southern's at-risk students (defined inclusively as students at academic and financial risk). While the Academic Success Center tracks the progress of learning support students in developmental math and English courses, it does not appear that the institution tracks the subsequent performance, progression, and graduation rates of these students nor can the Academic Success Center (with its current resources) handle the need for additional services for students who fall into at-risk status during the course of their academic studies. By far, the larger group of students who fail to register for the subsequent semester are those who experience registration and academic success issues. Therefore, goal III of the 2016-2017 CCG plan is to reduce the percentage of students in an academic warning category (operationalized as any category other than good standing) by five percentage points by spring 2021 through transforming the way that remediation is accomplished.

EAGLE INCENTIVE PROGRAM AND PROVISIONAL ADMITS

For summer/fall 2016, the University continued to offer the Eagle Incentive Program (EIP) which provides students who are provisionally accepted for fall admission with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to succeed at college level work in

the summer. Students who pass all summer courses and earn at least a 2.0 GPA with no "F" or "W" grades can enroll under regular admission for the fall semester. To be eligible for the Eagle Incentive Program, students must have a 920-1000 SAT (math and critical reading) score or a 20 ACT composite score and meet the Board of Regents minimum requirements for each portion of the SAT/ACT; have a high school academic GPA of 2.0 or higher; and have completed the required high school curriculum. Students take three college level academic courses and earn eight hours of academic credit during the summer. These are not remedial courses and count toward their degree.

Over the past ten years, the Eagle Incentive Program has averaged 513 admits each summer. For fall 2016, 45.7% (n=211/461) of fall enrolled EIP students were Pell-grant eligible; 39.4% (n=182/461) were first generation. Table 5 displays the number of freshmen admitted each summer into the Eagle Incentive Program since summer 2007; the percentage this number represents of the total freshman enrollment for that year; the percentage of EIP students retained the subsequent fall; and the percentage of EIP students retained the following fall compared to the percentage of non-EIP students retained that same fall. As shown, the University has a strong track record of converting these provisional admit students to regular admission and retaining them the following fall.

TABLE 5: EAGLE INCENTIVE PROGRAM ADMITS AND RETENTION RATES SINCE ITS INCEPTION

Year	# Admitted Summer (% of IPEDS Freshman Enrollment)	% Retained Subsequent Fall	% Retained Next Fall (% Non-EIP Retained)
2007	435 (14%)	92%	78% (81%)
2008	484 (16%)	90%	81% (81%)
2009	492 (14%)	92%	80% (79%)
2010	476 (13%)	90%	82% (79%)
2011	505 (14%)	90%	83% (76%)
2012	529 (15%)	90%	81% (80%)
2013	582 (16%)	94%	76% (81%)
2014	572 (16%)	88%	81% (82%)
2015	547 (16%)	91%	80% (84%)
2016	508 (14%)	91%	
Ten Year Average	513 (15%)		

Source: Eagle Incentive Program (EIP), Non-EIP, and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) First-time Freshmen: Retention, Graduation, Demographic, and Academic Comparisons: Summer and Fall 2007 through Fall 2016 Cohorts, Office of Strategic Research and Analysis

Table 6 documents the six-year graduation rates of EIP students versus non-EIP students from 2005 to 2010. The data shows mostly an upward trajectory for EIP student graduation success, culminating in a comparable six-year graduation rate to that of non-EIP students. There was a slight dip in 2010, but the program does demonstrate success at getting EIP students to graduation.

TABLE 6: SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATES: EIP VERSUS NON-EIP

Fall Cohort	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
EIP	40%	45%	46%	51%	51%	48%
Non-EIP	47%	50%	51%	51%	50%	52%

Source: Eagle Incentive Program (EIP), Non-EIP, and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) First-time Freshmen: Retention, Graduation, Demographic, and Academic Comparisons: Summer and Fall 2005 through Fall 2015 Cohorts, Office of Strategic Research and Analysis

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES (MATRIX)

HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY
Improve academic alert communications and expand to all students in area A-E core courses along with other key courses as designated by departments.

RELATED GOAL
Increase the sophomore to junior progression rate from 64.9% (fall 2015) to 70% by fall 2020.

DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT
Historically, and as affirmed by the data in Table 4, the institution has witnessed the greatest attrition in the first-time freshman cohort between the junior and senior years; however, it can be argued that this attrition is a consequence of students experiencing academic difficulties in their sophomore year. For instance, students whose experience academic

difficulties during the sophomore year may eventually give up or transfer out by their senior year. Other students who encounter financial aid issues may elect to work more hours and attend class less or spend less time on class work. Greater investigation of sophomore students is needed to understand what is happening with this student population, identify potential barriers, and alleviate barriers where possible to retain students for successful junior and senior years. A more robust academic alert system, communicated more effectively and open to more students, will address these issues

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT FOR THIS ACTIVITY
Name: Dr. Christopher Caplinger
Title: Director of the First-Year Experience Program
Email: caplinca@georgiasouthern.edu

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES
In 2016-2017, the CCG team successfully navigated a revised Academic Alert Policy through the institutional approval process, culminating in Faculty Senate and presidential approval. Under this revised policy, which becomes effective fall 2017, academic alerts are expanded from the freshman population to all students enrolled in core courses in areas A-E as well as in other key courses as designated by departments. Academic alerts were also renamed from early alerts to emphasize that they are not midterm grades, but rather indications that students are not performing satisfactory work in one of several categories (i.e., grades, attendance, participation, missed assignments, or some combination of these categories). Faculty are encouraged to submit academic alerts as early as possible to allow more time for students to make improvements and, in some cases, for academic advisors to intervene. Faculty may submit academic alerts as early as the first day of the term, but must submit no later than the 34th day of classes during the fall and spring semesters (the calendar varies for the summer term). Faculty submit "no alert/satisfactory" for all students in the course who are performing satisfactorily at that point in the semester. Faculty may change academic alerts prior to the deadline as additional assessment occurs.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

METRIC/DATA ELEMENT:
Fall Term Retention and Graduation Rates Table produced by the Office of Strategic Research and Analysis, Georgia Southern University annual *Fact Book*. For each fall term, the table reports the entering cohort number, the retention rate cohort number, 1st year retention, 2nd year retention, 3rd year retention, and 4th year retention along with graduation data. For this goal, focus will be placed on the retention rate reported under 2nd year retention.

BASELINE MEASURE:
Fall 2015: 64.9%

INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS:
Fall 2016 *(before revised Academic Alert Policy implemented)*: 67.6%

Fall 2017 *(post implementation)*:

It is anticipated that faculty will submit approximately 75% more academic alerts under the new policy. Of this number, 71% of academic alerts will come from courses in A-E of the core, while 29% will come from courses that departments have asked to be included under the academic alert policy. Academic alerts still cover the majority of classes freshmen take (86%), and these freshman alerts comprise almost half of all academic alerts (49%) given. Thirty percent of alerts are given to sophomores, representing 67% of the classes they take. Another 13% of alerts are to juniors (33% of classes they take) and 7% to seniors (16% of the classes they take).

Fall 2018: 69%

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:
Fall 2020: 70%

LESSONS LEARNED
One of the problems with early alerts was that faculty were not aware when they had some students classified as freshmen in their course and, therefore, were supposed to submit an early alert. Under this new policy, the total number of alerts will increase, however, the number of courses for which faculty will submit academic alerts falls from 367 to 187.

HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY
SOAR in 4 campaign.

RELATED GOAL

Increase the percentage of sophomore students enrolling in 15 or more credit hours per semester from 39.8% (fall 2015) to 45% by fall 2020 and junior students from 43.5% (fall 2015) to 50% by fall 2020.

DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT
The study, "Redefining Full-Time in College: Evidence on 15-Credit Strategies" (Klempin, 2014), documents the benefits of a 15-credit course load per semester. A minimum full-time load is not sufficient to allow students to graduate on time. **The study examines different strategies, including expanding flat tuition to cover 12 to 20 credits, which resulted in an increase in credits attempted per semester**. Given Georgia Southern's primarily traditional, full-time undergraduate population, encouraging students to register for a 15-credit hour load per semester has considerable potential to reduce time to degree.

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT FOR THIS ACTIVITY
Name: Dr. Christopher Caplinger
Title: Director of the First-Year Experience Program
Email: caplinca@georgiasouthern.edu

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES
By the end of spring 2016, a SOAR in 4 teaser video had been created and distributed on campus. A splash video for SOAR in 4 was distributed at summer 2016 orientation. Both videos have three objectives: (1) promote graduation in four years by telling students that the data show they are more likely to graduate if they complete 15-17 hours per semester; (2) boost GPAs by informing students that students completing more than 15 hours per semester are more likely to have higher GPAs than those who take fewer hours; and (3) save students money by telling them that taking a 12 credit hour load per semester puts them on track to graduate in 5 years which will cost students an additional $15,000+. In spring 2017, the University expanded its SOAR in 4 marketing efforts to include social media placement, bus advertisements, yard signs, door decals, and posters. Promotion continues through orientation for fall with an updated video shown to students and parents and an advertisement in the new student "Our House" publication.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

METRIC/DATA ELEMENT:
Percentage of sophomores registered for 15 or more credit hours; percentage of juniors registered for 15 or more credit hours each fall semester. Report produced by the Office of First-Year Experience.

BASELINE MEASURE:
Fall 2015 Sophomores: 39.8% registered for 15 or more credit hours

Fall 2015 Juniors: 43.5% registered for 15 or more credit hours

INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS:
The CCG team met its interim measure of progress (41% of sophomores registered for 15 credits or more and 45% of juniors registered for 15 credits or more) for fall 2016.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS BY CLASSIFICATION WHO ENROLLED IN 15 OR MORE CREDIT HOURS

Classification	Fall 2015 (at census date)	Fall 2016 (at census date)
Freshmen	55.5%	62.7%
Sophomores	39.7%	42.3%
Juniors	43.4%	45.2%
Seniors	41.0%	41.4%

Fall 2017 Sophomores: Targeting 45% registered for 15 or more credit hours

Fall 2017 Juniors: Targeting 47% registered for 15 or more credit hours

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:
Fall 2020 Sophomores: 50.0% registered for 15 or more credit hours

Fall 2020 Juniors: 50.0% registered for 15 or more credit hours

LESSONS LEARNED
Although data show that students who complete 15-17 credit hours per semester are more likely to graduate, in many cases, it is important to recognize that for certain majors, it is in the best interest of students to take advantage of specific opportunities (i.e., internships, co-ops) which may prolong their time to graduation, but better prepare them for their careers.

HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY

Revise Georgia Southern University's Academic Standing Policy and develop a limited Grade Forgiveness Policy. (*See lessons learned.*)

RELATED GOAL

Reduce the percentage of students in an academic warning category (operationalized as any category other than good standing) by five percentage points by spring 2021 through a review and revision of institutional academic policies which may impede a student's ability to progress academically <u>and</u> through transforming the way that remediation is accomplished.

DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT

Each semester, a number of students fail to register for the subsequent semester. While many of these students have valid reasons for not registering (such as graduating or transferring), others do not register due to difficulties experienced with registration or academic success issues. In fall 2016, 16,319 undergraduates were eligible to register for spring 2017. As of January 18, 2017, 692 (4.24%) were still not registered for spring 2017. The reasons why undergraduate students were still not registered for spring 2017 as of January 18, 2017 are shown Table 5. These data were collected from the survey portion of the injection pages (with a 48% response rate). Of the 335 responding undergraduate students, 33 noted reasons that are under the control of Academic Affairs (i.e., financial, academic, and courses unavailable), representing 9.9% of the total respondents.

TABLE 5: REASONS FOR NOT REGISTERING FOR SPRING 2017 FOR STUDENTS WHO RESPONDED TO SURVEY

Reason	Number of Students Listing as Reason
Transferring	169
Personal	66
Financial	18
Military	14
Academic	12
Internship	11
Graduating	10
Family	8
Courses Unavailable	3
Other	24
Total	335

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT FOR THIS ACTIVITY
Name: Dr. Christine Ludowise
Title: Interim Vice Provost
Email: ludowise@georgiasouthern.edu

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The strategies for this goal (revision and development of academic standing and grade forgiveness policies) are still under active development. Interim measures were continuing to collect data on the number/percentage of students who are not registered and their current academic standing along with data for students on academic standing and current GPA. These benchmarking data allow progress to be tracked once policy changes have been fully implemented. Additionally, getting students to register is the first step in enabling them to progress and graduate.

Each semester, more than 3,500 undergraduate students fail to register during their scheduled registration period. To encourage them to register, the Assistant Provost for Academic Advisement administers an electronic survey (commonly referred to as the injection pages) to unregistered students twice each semester. The first injection page is sent the day after registration begins for that particular group of students. The page is sent via My.GeorgiaSouthern to any student who has not registered for the subsequent semester. The injection page asks whether the student plans on registering for the following semester. If the student replies "no," then the injection page asks for the reasons why: academic reasons; courses unavailable; family issues; financial issues; graduating; internships; military duties; personal reasons; transferring to another college; or other. Some of these reasons (like internships, graduating, transferring, military duties) are valid and do not require any further action. Others (academic reasons, courses unavailable, financial issues) are more within the control of the University and are the areas where our efforts are most likely to result in conversions from unregistered to registered status. If the student replies "yes," then the injection page inquires as to why they have not registered. The second injection page is sent towards the end of classes for that semester. This page is sent to all students who originally indicated that they plan to register, but have still not done so. The injection page asks whether they plan to register and the reasons why they will not register or have not registered thus far.

To convert 'not registered' students in areas within our control, the following activities are employed:

Current data on each college's 'not registered' student population is shared by the Assistant Provost for Academic Advisement with the applicable college dean's office and academic advisement coordinators. Academic advisors use the information to reach out to 'not registered' students (through letters to the parents, emails, and phone calls) to assist students in getting registered before the end of the semester.

Beginning in fall 2016, a Student Dashboard through My.GeorgiaSouthern was implemented. Student Dashboard is another tool for communicating with students to ensure that they are aware of critical deadlines and other alerts that could affect their registration and academic progression. For this initial phase, the alerts will focus on tuition and fees, financial aid, and registration and advising. Alerts will be time-bound and triggered throughout the semester so students will receive personalized, timely communications as needed. For example, a student with an outstanding balance will receive a student account balance pop-up immediately after logging into My.GeorgiaSouthern. Clicking on the "view details" routes the student to the Student Dashboard where the student can find additional information on how to resolve the problem.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

METRIC/DATA ELEMENT:
The percentage of 'not registered' undergraduate students in spring term (n = number of 'not registered' undergraduate students as of the Wednesday in January after the end of drop/add divided by the number of prior fall semester 'eligible to register' undergraduate students.) The goal is to reduce by 5% with the understanding that the baseline changes each year.

BASELINE MEASURE:
Baseline measure is the number of 'eligible to register' undergraduate students in the fall semester. While this number will vary each fall term, the objective is to reduce by 5% by the end of drop/add the following spring semester. The baseline measure (fall 2016 eligible to register students) was 16,319.

INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS:
The strategies for this goal (review of academic standing and grade forgiveness policies) are still under active development. Measures of progress will be continuing to collect data on the number/percentage of students who are not registered and their current academic standing along with data for students on academic standing and current GPA. These benchmarking data will allow progress to be tracked once changes have been fully implemented.

Of the 1,456 undergraduate students who began the spring 2017 semester in academic warning (W1, P1, W2, or P2), 340 (23%) earned spring 2017 grades to convert them to good academic standing. See Table 6.

TABLE 6: ACADEMIC STANDING AT END OF SPRING 2017 FOR STUDENTS WHO BEGAN SPRING 2017 NOT IN GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING

Academic Standing Entering Spring 2017 Semester for Students Not in Good Standing	Academic Standing End of Spring 2017 Semester for Students Who Began Semester Not in Good Standing							
	GS	W1	P1	E1	W2	P2	E2	Total
W1	232	30	717					979
P1	55	1	15	166				237
W2	31	1			7	112		151
P2	22	2				4	61	89
Total	340	34	732	166	7	116	61	1,456

Of the 1,456 undergraduate students who began the spring 2017 semester on academic warning, 681 (47%) earned a spring 2017 term GPA of 2.0 or better; but still ended the semester in academic warning and in danger of being excluded despite a successful spring 2017 semester. See Table 7.

TABLE 7: NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY ACADEMIC WARNING STATUS AND GPA RANGE AT END OF SPRING 2017 SEMESTER

Spring 2017 Term GPA Range	Spring 2017 Academic Standing Classification				
	W1	P1	W2	P2	Total
4.0-3.0	103	41	31	15	190
2.99-2.5	144	37	31	16	228
2.49-2.25	76	21	15	5	117
2.24-2.0	110	18	11	7	146
Below 2.0	546	120	63	46	775
Total	979	237	151	89	1,456

MEASURES OF SUCCESS:
Reducing the spring percentage of 'not registered' students by 5% from the prior fall semester. By the end of spring 2017, we successfully converted 23% of students who ended fall 2016 in academic warning to good standing status.

LESSONS LEARNED
During FY 2016, an unsuccessful effort was made to revise the Academic Standing Policy—the revision was not approved by the Academic Standing Committee. It became clear that more work needed to be done to garner the necessary support; hence, the Interim Provost (FY 2016) planned a series of campus-wide student success workshops which were designed for deans, associate deans, department chairs, and, most importantly, faculty. Unfortunately, due to transition in the leadership within the Provost's Office, these student success workshops were not held during 2016-2017, resulting in no movement on revising the Academic Standing Policy nor developing a Grade Forgiveness Policy.

The institution now hopes to achieve both of these goals through consolidation with Armstrong State University. At the July 12th CIC meeting, a recommendation was put forward to develop an Academic Standing Policy that holds students accountable without imposing excessively punitive requirements for continued enrollment at the institution. For instance, students struggle academically for many reasons and some stumble spectacularly during their academic careers. An academic standing policy should both hold students accountable and provide them with a safety net of support, resources, and opportunities. It should also reward, not continue to punish, movement in the right direction (i.e., term GPAs above 2.25). Consolidation provides the opportunity for the institution to articulate the standards we expect of students, outline the consequences of failing to meet those standards, and clearly explain both the pathways to success and the tools, resources, and support a student can reasonably expect to receive as they strive for academic excellence.

Through consolidation, Georgia Southern also hopes to establish a limited Grade Forgiveness Policy. Not having a grade forgiveness policy means that missteps in the transition from high school to college are often punitive rather than instructional and transformative. In addition, many students who end up in poor academic standing require additional semesters to bring their GPAs up to 2.0. These students end up with anywhere from 10% to 40% more credit hours than required for graduation alone. Limited grade replacement policies tend to (a) require an application from the student; (b) limit both the number of retake attempts and the number of grade replacements; (c) limit the grade forgiveness to courses in which a D or an F was earned; and (d) limit the type of course for which a student can apply for grade forgiveness (e.g., lower division or CORE courses).

HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY
Reduce barriers to degree completion via participation in Gateways to Completion® and lowering DFW rates in high-enrollment foundational courses.

RELATED GOAL
Increase the first-time freshmen six-year graduation rate from 50.4% (fall 2009 first-time freshman cohort) to 55% by 2020.

DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT
Gateways to Completion® is a faculty-led self-study process "designed to create and implement an evidence-based plan for improving teaching, learning, and success in historically high-failure rate courses."[2] "Success in foundation level courses, such as: accounting, math, chemistry, biology, and writing and rhetoric, is a direct predictor of retention."[3] The John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Excellence lists outcomes of Gateways to Completion® as: "increases in first-to-second term retention rates; decreases in number of students in poor academic standing; increases in A, B, and C grades; decreases in D, F, W, and I grades; lower course repetition rates; and high performance in the next course in the sequence."[4] Getting students through these foundational courses successfully the first-time will alleviate one barrier to degree completion and enable students to proceed smoothly along their program of study.

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT FOR THIS ACTIVITY
Name: Dr. Christopher Caplinger
Title: Director of the First-Year Experience Program
Email: caplinca@georgiasouthern.edu

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES
In the 2016-2017 academic year, Georgia Southern identified Calculus I (MATH 1441) as a high-enrollment course in which students often struggle, with a DFW rate often approaching 40% in a given semester. Lack of success in MATH 1441 is a major

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[2] www.jngi.org/g2c/, retrieved 7/13/2017

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

stumbling block to degree completion for many students in the STEM fields, and especially engineering, computer science, and physics. The College of Engineering and Information Technology and the College of Science and Mathematics together account for over 1/3 of the first-year entering student population for fall 2017; therefore, improving student learning in MATH 1441 could have a major impact on overall retention and on-time graduation rates. The self-study process has led faculty to recommend piloting ALEKS Adaptive Technology in fall 2017. Data have shown that students weak in algebra and trigonometry perform very poorly in MATH 1441. To prepare students for the rigor of Calculus I, all new students placed in a Calculus I class are expected to complete an online review of prerequisite algebra and trigonometry skills utilizing ALEKS Adaptive Technology. Students are asked to practice each topic in ALEKS until a 70% proficiency of the subject matter is achieved. While ALEKS is the major initiative for fall 2017, other, smaller projects are in the works as well. Two faculty are working on course re-design, and we are also bringing in Dr. Saundra McGuire, a nationally renown expert on metacognition, to speak to students, faculty, and academic advisors (in separate settings) about promotion of student success. For the coming year, Georgia Southern will be assessing ALEKS for possible implementation as part of the formal curriculum in MATH 1441 and will continue to focus on course re-design and other efforts to improve student learning in MATH 1441, including the possibility of learning assistants in the classroom.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

METRIC/DATA ELEMENT:
We will measure progress toward the overall goal using the Fall Term Retention and Graduation Rates Table produced by the Office of Strategic Research and Analysis, Georgia Southern University annual *Fact Book*. For each fall term, the table reports retention data along with the following graduation data: graduation rate cohort number, percentage who graduated in 4 years or less, percentage who graduated in 5 years or less, and percentage who graduated in 6 years or less. For this goal, focus will be placed on the percentage of students who graduate in 6 years or less.

BASELINE MEASURE:
The goal baseline graduation rate will be the fall 2009 first-time freshman cohort: 50.4%

INTERIM MEASURE OF PROGRESS:
The interim measure of progress will be measuring the high impact strategy, seeking DFW rates consistently below 30% for MATH 1441. In this case, we will use DFW rates for Calculus I, comparing fall 2017 (post-implementation) DFW rates to the prior three years.

COMPARISON OF DFW RATES IN MATH 1441 (CALCULUS I) FOR PAST THREE YEARS

Semester	% of DWFs	Total Enrollment
Fall 2016	30%	926
Fall 2015	36%	778
Fall 2014	36%	768

LESSONS LEARNED
While the work of Gateways to Completion® is intensive, its focus on student learning is rewarding to faculty involved. Georgia Southern will need to think strategically about expanding the Gateways process to other courses in ways that will have the most impact on student success.

OBSERVATIONS

In January 2017, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents voted to consolidate Armstrong State University and Georgia Southern University. The resulting 27,000-student university will have campuses in Savannah, Statesboro, and Hinesville with the expected timeline for the first entering class in fall 2018. An Operational Working Group has been tasked with reviewing the Complete College Georgia Plans for each institution and writing a new plan based upon the demographics and needs of the consolidated institution. This work will occur during fall 2017 and will most likely result in new goals and high-impact strategies.