



# Georgia Southwestern State University's

## **INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY**

Georgia Southwestern State University's (GSW) mission is,

Georgia Southwestern State University is a comprehensive university serving a diverse population of students, offering a range of strong undergraduate and graduate programs in a vibrant learning environment. The University is a collegial community that values collaboration and community engagement with an emphasis on faculty, staff, and student interactions. An active student body and state-of-the-art amenities enhance the learning experience on a visually appealing campus located in historic Americus, Georgia.

The primary service region of Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW) consists of Sumter County and the seven counties contiguous with it: Crisp, Dooly, Lee, Macon, Marion, Schley, Terrell, and Webster counties. The majority of these counties are among the poorest counties in the state of Georgia. Therefore, the majority of GSW's student body are Pell eligible or First-Generation college students. Our focus is on cultivating growth in these high-risk student groups specifically, while improving retention, progression, and graduation rates for all GSW students. The strategies GSW is currently pursuing to achieve the goals of Complete College Georgia have changed somewhat over the last year as changes in administration have occurred. The strategies were chosen to cultivate excellence and persistence in all GSW students.

GSW's total enrollment in fall 2017 was 3052. At that time, the gender distribution of the student population was 66.3% women and 33.7% men. The ethnicity of the fall 2017 student population was 63.8% White, 25.7% Black, 2.9% Asian and Pacific Islander, 5.2% Hispanic, 1.9% Multiracial, 0.1% Native American and 0.3% Unknown. Approximately 40% of GSW undergraduates receive Pell Grants; 49% are First-Generation college students (no parent/guardian with bachelor degree or higher); 18% began college for the first-time as adults (25 years old or older); and 24% are age 25 or older. The majority of our undergraduates (68.3%) are classified as full-time (taking 12 or more hours); 32% live on campus; 51% are enrolled in one or more online classes; and 24% are enrolled exclusively in online classes. These populations are also representative of our recent graduates. Out of the undergraduates who were awarded bachelor's degrees in FY18, 54% had received the Pell grant while enrolled at GSW, 52% were first-generation students, and 29% were 29 or older at the time of graduation.

## **INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS, HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES**

This past year, GSW has undergone administrative and organizational changes that have in some cases confirmed our previous High-Impact Strategies and Activities, and in other cases provoked change. The Hurricane Jumpstart Academy, summer bridge program, the expansion of our participation in Gateways to Completion, and Financial Literacy education are strategies that we will continue. We will continue to use the Beacon Early Warning System, but it will become part of a larger strategy to overhaul our Advising mission and its delivery. We will also continue our Windows to the World program, but we will devote more resources and energy to improving and expanding Faculty and Staff Development. All these strategies are intended to improve student engagement and success for all our students, but are also likely to achieve the greatest gains among First Generation students, Pell Eligible students, and students in traditionally underrepresented groups.

### **HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY #1: HURRICANE JUMPSTART ACADEMY**

The Hurricane Jumpstart Academy (HJA) is a summer bridge program designed to help students admitted as presidential exceptions to our admissions standards transition from high school to GSW as smoothly as possible.

#### COMPLETION GOAL

The institutional goal for this program is to make access a meaningful opportunity for students who might not otherwise start at a four-year university by not only giving them access, but also giving them the additional support they need to thrive.

#### DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY OR IMPACT

GSW staged its first summer bridge program just prior to orientation in fall 2014, and our retention rate for the fall 2014 cohort was higher than it has been for any cohort since 2007. While we are not asserting that this program was the sole cause of the 2014 retention rate, we believe it was a contributing factor. Lack of a summer bridge program may have been responsible in part for the less impressive numbers for the 2015 and 2016 cohorts.

#### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The 2014 summer bridge program was presented as a one-week academic skills and engagement “boot camp.” This program was apparently successful in improving retention but was funded through a grant and was not a sustainable model. In 2017 GSW developed and implemented a more traditional summer bridge program similar to those used by several USG institutions. Students admitted as presidential exceptions were invited to participate. All students enrolled in two courses (ENGL 1101 and SOSC 1101) during a five-week summer semester. Students were encouraged to live on campus and all residential students were housed on the same floor. Students were also presented with a variety of academic skills classes and were required to attend tutoring for both courses. There were also a variety of activities on and off campus to help encourage engagement with the campus community. Each week of the program students also participated in a service learning activity in the Americus area.

#### MEASURES OF SUCCESS AND PROGRESS

Six students enrolled in the 2017 Hurricane Jumpstart Academy although one withdrew immediately owing to medical issues. The remaining five students all successfully completed the two courses presented as part of this program. All five enrolled for the fall semester. Four of those students returned for the spring 2018 semester. Three completed the spring semester in good academic standing and two re-enrolled for fall 2018.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

Although the enrollment in the 2017 HJA was very small, early indications are that it had a beneficial impact on the retention and success of the students who participated. Plans were developed to repeat the program for 2018 with minor changes based on feedback from participants, staff, and faculty. However, enrollment continued to be voluntary and the response from incoming students was distinctly disappointing. Owing to the very small number of students indicating interest in the HJA the decision was made to cancel the program for 2018. Because there is evidence from GSW and other institutions that a bridge program can improve retention and student success, this year we will be reviewing results from past years considering the overall structure of the program and ways that we might increase participation.

#### POINT OF CONTACT

J. Kelly McCoy, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

#### **HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY #2: GATEWAY TO COMPLETION REDESIGN OF ADDITIONAL CLASSES BEYOND MATH 1111**

MATH 1111 College Algebra will be completing the third year of the G2C in 2018-19. In addition, GSW will begin the process in 2018-19 for three courses: ENGL 1101 Composition I, POLS 1101 American Government, and SOCI 1101 Introduction to Sociology.

#### COMPLETION GOAL

Since the redesigned MATH 1111 is ready for full implementation in fall 2018 and spring 2019, GSW will turn its attention to redesigning other important courses that affect the retention and persistence of the majority of students.

#### DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY OR IMPACT

MATH 1111 College Algebra is a gateway course for many STEM majors, especially the more unprepared students, so this redesign may affect the timely progression of significant numbers of our STEM major candidates and therefore increase degree productivity in some of GSW's lower producing programs. In addition all incoming GSW students without transfer or dual enrollment credit must take ENGL 1101 and POLS 1101, while a significant percentage of students take SOCI 1101 in Area E of the Core. In addition, the academic units that house these courses also teach other Core courses to which the G2C redesign principles could be applied, such as ENGL 1102, American and World History and PSYC 1101.

#### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

2018-19 will be the third year of the redesign process for MATH 1111, so we will continue to administer the Student Learning Gains Survey to monitor the success of the redesign implementation. As we begin the redesign process for additional courses, we also intend to bring Stephanie Foote to campus to introduce the course-level committee members and new steering committee members to the process. We will also seek her guidance in conducting effective synthesis meetings, since synthesis meetings were less productive, if not unnecessary, when redesigning one course.

#### MEASURE OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

GSW's primary measures of success for this strategy continues to be the overall DFWI rate for MATH 1111, as well as the success rate of first year students in the course, defined as percentage of student receiving an A, B, or C in the course during fall term. We intend to apply the same measures to the other three courses that being redesign this year.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

Since our primary lesson learned from last year, that GSW needs to devote more resources to faculty development, we intend to continue upping the ante on Faculty Development by making it one of our High Impact Practices (see High Impact Practice #5). We also learned from the MATH 1111 redesign that involving as many faculty members as possible in the redesign process makes the scaling process smoother and more effective. We will apply this lesson to the redesign processes beginning in 2018-19.

#### POINT OF CONTACT

Suzanne R. Smith, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

### **HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY #3: FINANCIAL LITERACY COURSE**

The GSW Office of Career Services provided a financial literacy course for the fourth year that was a non-credit and voluntary course. Participating students learn the importance of managing their financial resources well and completing college while learning basic personal finance concepts.

#### COMPLETION GOALS

Increased financial literacy among all students will result in increased persistence and progression towards degrees since financial difficulties are a major cause of students stopping out of college. Financial literacy also aligns with GSW strategic plan goal of "expanding high-impact teaching and learning experiences" in and out of the classroom.

#### DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY OR IMPACT

Forty-two percent of GSW's fall 2016 students were Pell Grant recipients, 51 percent were First-Generation students, and 26 percent were non-traditional students. All students, not just those students identified by both CCG and GSW as critical to the success of our efforts, should benefit from a higher level of financial literacy. Offering the course to the entire student body in a broad-based manner will remove the stigmas that may prevent students from seeking help as recommended in the CCG-BFA resource, and may have a significant impact on all students.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

In 2017-18, GSW's Career Services Office purchased an annual site license for the third year for the *Foundations in Personal Finance*. Career Services introduced the topic of financial literacy in all class and group presentations, and at each Preview Day, as well as at Storm Day orientations for fall term 2018. Career Services offered the program in the evenings, as well as by appointment in the fall semester. The program was offered by appointment only in the spring.

**MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS**

Tracking student attendance and administering a pre- and post-test at each presentation are interim measures of success. Tracking progression and graduation of students who attended presentations for comparison with those who did not are long-term measures of success.

During 2017-18, 10 students attended, or watched independently, at least one session. While the site license allowed for on-campus showing only, 4 online students requested and were given links to the first chapter, which is available online. Career Services provided a class presentation on personal finances for the UNIV 1000 section for 56 business majors. This was scheduled late in the semester on November 1, which was too late for recording for other sections of the class. The "College Student Essentials" chapter was presented at a residence hall workshop with 6 students attending and engaging with questions. Another presentation on Budgeting was given for the AKA Sorority. The students and their advisor were very engaged, and used the information they learned to teach the group of high school girls that they mentor. The average score of the *pre-test* was *52.67/100*. However, no post-tests were given for the 12-chapter series, because no students completed the full 12 chapters.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

Students rarely make time for something that is not required. For 2018-2019 UNIV 1000 students will be required to complete Chapter 3, Debt. Career Services will work with a new Adulting Seminar Series to provide 2-3 workshops and encourage attendance at more. Additionally, Career Services will work with student organizations and advisors to encourage more participation. New this year, the first three chapters are available for online students.

**POINT OF CONTACT**

Sandra Fowler, Director of Career Services

**HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY #4: ACADEMIC ADVISING**

GSW is re-examining our approach to academic advising due to its critical function to student persistence and completion.

**COMPLETION GOALS**

The university uses a nationally recognized academic advising model that provides students consistent academic guidance and coaching resources. The revised approach to academic advising contributes to increasing student persistence by increasing credit hour enrollment and completion.

**DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY OR IMPACT**

Effective academic advising is the cornerstone of GSW's implementation of its Momentum Year plan. In addition, the institution is committed to creating more effective support structures to help all students carry the momentum created during their first year through to graduation and a productive and fulfilling life after graduation.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

Fall 2018, a university task force representing key stakeholders will begin reviewing current university practices and examining national best practices for academic advising. The task force will make improvement recommendations for adoption in fall 2019.

**MEASURE OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS**

Success will be measured by implementation of a formal university-wide academic advising model. Implemented academic advising processes aligned with the adopted model. Increases in student enrollment,

persistence, and graduation rates are among the measures that will signal the success of revising our advising program.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

Current student enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates suggest that advising could be improved as do the results of our spring 2017 and 2018 advising surveys.

#### POINT OF CONTACT

Laura Boren, Vice President for Student Engagement and Success

### **HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY #5: FACULTY AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

The primary way to ensure all contact with our students is based in a growth mindset model is through the education and training of our faculty and staff. Having university personnel who are trained to better meet the needs of our high-risk populations, while also understanding what can help increase the retention and graduation rates of all of our students, is an important component to our overall success.

#### COMPLETION GOALS

Faculty and staff development increases our awareness of how to be more effective in interactions with students as well as pedagogical techniques which have proven successful which should have a positive effect on retention and progression. This also aligns with GSW's current strategic plan goals to "stimulate academic innovation," and to "Encourage and enable staff to contribute to the education and scholarship missions of the University to advance their expertise and advance in their individual careers."

#### DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY OR IMPACT

Providing opportunities for faculty and staff development that they find interesting and that will contribute to the advancement of our community are a priority for this academic year. Making funding available for these activities is one indication of its priority on this campus. Impact will be assessed as we follow-up on the implementation of strategies learning in trainings or during professional development.

#### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES TO TAKE PLACE

During the 2018-2019 academic year we plan to implement a variety of professional development opportunities. First, we started our year by having the Co-Directors of Motivate Labs on campus conducting large group and small group trainings on the importance of a growth mind set and some strategies for implementation. We plan to bring them back in January for more small group work. Faculty and staff will be invited to implement one of the strategies learned during spring semester, write a summary of how it worked and what they would change next time, and then get together with others and discuss their results. We have multiple Teaching Circles taking place on campus, a newly development Faculty Development Committee as a part of the Faculty Senate, and a Center for Teaching and Learning with many ideas to take place this academic year.

#### MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

Success will be measured by the level of attendance at professional development trainings and events, feedback from those who participate in these events, and, when appropriate, feedback from the students who are impacted by what was learned.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

The initial results of our Comprehensive Administrative Review report indicate that faculty would like more training and development in order to continue to offer a high quality education. The positive response to the Motivate Lab visit to GSW on August 9 confirms the initial CAR results and provides direction for future planning.

#### POINT OF CONTACT

Suzanne R. Smith, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

## **MOMENTUM YEAR 90 DAY UPDATE**

<b>Element Description</b>	<b>90 Day Progress and Prospect</b>
1 a.) Each student is guided into an academic focus area or program that best aligns with that student's aspirations, aptitudes, and potential for success.	All students were placed in a Focus Area during registration based upon either their responses after viewing our Video explaining the Focus Areas or the results of the Focus 2 assessment.
2 a.) Degree programs are aligned into academic focus areas that have common first year courses.	This part of the plan is complete.
2 b.) Each focus area and program of study has an established default curricular (program) map that provides term-by-term course requirements and structured choice for appropriate electives.	Degree Pathways for all programs and Focus Areas in draft and under review by Office of Academic Affairs. The Pathways will be introduced to all new students in UNIV 1000, GSW's First-Year Experience Course, during the weeks leading up to registration for spring semester.
2 c.) Students are provided with a default program map that is sequenced with critical courses and other milestones clearly indicated and advised and counseled to build a personal course schedule that includes core English and mathematics by the end of their first academic year.	All incoming first-year students who did not already have credit for ENGL 1101 Composition I were registered for that class fall term as were the majority who did not have credit for an Area A2 Mathematics course. Seats will be blocked in the spring semester schedule for first-year students needing an Area A2 Mathematics course.
2 d.) Students are provided with a default program map that is sequenced with critical courses and other milestones clearly indicated and advised and counseled to build a personal course schedule that includes three courses related to a student's academic focus area in the first year.	All incoming first-year students were placed in block schedules that included one course in their major or focus area. Small block schedules will be arranged for spring semester to include to major or focus area classes and any remaining Area A classes.
2 e.) Students are provided with a default program map that is sequenced with critical courses and other milestones clearly indicated and advised and counseled to build a personal course schedule that incorporates as full a schedule as possible - ideally 30 credit hours - in the first year.	All incoming first-year students were provided with block schedules that include 14-16 credit hours, and they were advised during summer registration that they would need to register for enough hours in spring term to bring their first year total to at least 30 credit hours. Advisors will make this milestone a priority when discussing spring schedules with first-year students.
2 f.) Incorporate within academic pathways co-curricular programming that is intentionally developed and implemented with learning outcomes aimed at enhancing student success.	Due to reorganization following the hiring of a new Provost and a new Vice President of Student Engagement and Success, this part of our implementation is still in the planning stages. GSW's President has made part of our plan a priority for the new Provost and VPSES.
3 a.) All incoming freshmen will be invited to participate in the USG Getting to Know Our Students' Mindset Survey before the first three weeks of the semester.	All incoming first-year students have been asked to complete the USG Getting to Know Our Students' Survey in UNIV 1000, GSW's First-Year Experience course. They have been asked to complete the survey by August 31, 2018, the end of the third week of classes at GSW. (add response rate later)
3 b & c.) All faculty and staff, especially those who work with students in their first year, are oriented toward student engagement and success, and are provided with the training and tools they need to fulfill their roles in this regard.	During the first week of August, all UNIV 1000 instructors were given basic training in encouraging a productive learning mindset to prepare them for the revised curriculum in UNIV 1000 that includes significant emphasis on developing a growth mindset, integrating into the campus community, and acquiring metacognitive skills. During Southwestern Week, the

<b>Element Description</b>	<b>90 Day Progress and Prospect</b>
Faculty training and support in growth mindset and belonging.	week prior to the beginning of classes, Chris Hulleman and Yoi Tibbetts of Motivate Lab were on campus for an entire day of training in simple practices to promote a productive learning mindset. In addition to a plenary session to which all staff, faculty, and peer instructors were invited, Chris and Yoi did small group sessions with the President’s cabinet, staff who have regular contact with students, faculty, and the UNIV 1000 along with the Storm Spotters (peer instructors) for this year. As you will note in section of this report, GSW plans to continue our training partnership with Motivate Lab into the spring semester and beyond.
3 d.) Using connections through Alumni Affairs and the GSW Foundation, increase student participation in internships and work-based learning experiences by 25%, as the number of opportunities offered increases, especially in the areas of Arts and Sciences, Exercise Science, and Computing and Mathematics.	The Office of Academic Affairs has secured a High Impact Practice Opportunity grant from the GSW Foundation and located a student with the skills to develop our web resources. Alumni Affairs and Career Services continue to develop GSW’s capacity to provide internships to all students who want to participate.
3 e.) Improve resilience of students who have relatively low resilience scores on the Student Strengths Inventory at the beginning of the fall term.	The Student Strengths Inventory (SSI) data for fall 2018 has been collected. The aggregate results have shown that resilience is an issue with our incoming first-year students as a group. In anticipation that this cohort of students would reproduce similar results resilience as in previous years, the redesign of UNIV 1000 incorporated lessons to encourage and develop resilience in academics. In addition, UNIV 1000 Faculty and Storm Spotters were trained in interpreting individual SSI results to identify students with particularly low resilience scores, so they discuss the sources of these results with students individually. Utilizing results of the SSI results and other metrics, staff within the Office of First Year Experiences meets with every new student at the beginning of each semester to incorporate institutional services, aimed at enhancing resilience, into students’ educational success plans.
3 f.) Improve Social Integration of First-Year Students	Storm Spotters have been tasked to use SSI data on campus engagement and social comfort to identify students for special attention. In addition, the new VPSES transformed the first-year student orientation program, which take place on the Sunday before the beginning of classes, into an event designed to begin the process of integrating students into the campus community both socially and academically. The Division of Student Engagement and Success also expanded Welcome Week programming into two weeks instead of one to enhance new student social integration on campus.
3 g.) As a part of assisting students in making a purposeful choice, we will reestablish the common reading program for students to be implemented	Members of the Task Force that redesigned the UNIV 1000 curriculum over the summer of 2018 chose <i>A Hope in the Unseen</i> by Ron Suskind as our

<b>Element Description</b>	<b>90 Day Progress and Prospect</b>
<p>through the UNIV 1000: The GSW Experience course. This program will equip students with critical thinking and discussion skills needed to be successful at the post-secondary level.</p>	<p>common reading for 2018. The book tells the story of Cedric Jennings’s journey from Southwest Washington DC to Brown University. The book concentrates upon Cedric’s last year of high school and his first year of college. Funding was secured from the GSW Foundation to provide the book free of charge to all UNIV 1000 students to allow us to run two pilots this academic year. In one pilot involving three section of the course, the students will discuss the book on 6-8 occasions throughout the term on a variety of issues the book brings up. In the other involving the rest of the sections, students will have two focused discussions, one on Cedric’s experience of social integration and one on his mindset. In all sections the students will be encouraged to consider how Cedric’s experiences compare to theirs.</p>
<p>3 h.) Hold first annual Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors Symposium. Our students have presented their research at other campuses but their achievements have never been celebrated</p>	<p>The first GSW Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors Symposium was held on April 13, 2018, and was considered such a success that faculty have already begun planning for the second symposium in 2019.</p>
<p>3 i.) This academic year, GSW initiated a symposium entitled “Engaged Teaching for Engaged Learning” through the Center for Teaching and Learning. Next academic year, the symposium series will be centered on Academic Mindset with speakers and activities scheduled that will cultivate a renewed productive mindset for faculty and staff leading to enhanced student success.</p>	<p>As noted above, Chris Hulleman and Yoi Tibbetts of Motivate Lab have already been to campus this year. We are also planning to have Stephanie Foote present to a general faculty session on metacognition as framing for active learning when she visits campus to consult with our G2C Steering Committee, probably in early October. The first home grown Engaged Teaching Symposium will occur during the week of September 12 when Sociology Professor, M.C. Whitlovck will resent on Inclusive Pedagogy. Unlike last year, when the advertising for these development opportunities only went to the faculty listserv, this year’s announcements will go to the faculty-staff listserv.</p>