



# University of West Georgia

## **INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE**

The University of West Georgia, a charter member of the University System of Georgia, is a comprehensive, residential institution providing selectively focused undergraduate and graduate education primarily to the people of West Georgia. The University is also committed to regional outreach through a collaborative network of external degree centers, course offerings at off-campus sites, and an extensive program of continuing education for personal and professional development. Opportunities for intellectual and personal development are provided through quality teaching, scholarly inquiry, creative endeavor, and service for the public good.

The University of West Georgia has 90 active programs of study, including 44 at the bachelor's level, 30 at the master's and specialist levels, five at the doctoral level, and 11 at the advanced certificate level. The university conferred 2,659 degrees and awards in fiscal year 2018. This is a 1.8% increase over the number awarded in fiscal year 2017 (2,612) and a 24% increase over the number awarded in fiscal year 2012 (2,136), which is the baseline year for the Complete College Georgia initiative.

There were 13,520 students enrolled in Fall 2017: 11,229 at the undergraduate level and 2,291 at the graduate level. Overall enrollment at UWG has grown 20% since the Fall 2008 semester. UWG has a diverse student population: 51.2% Caucasian, 36.4% African-American/Black American, 5.8% Hispanic, 3.3% two or more races, 1.4% Asian, 1.7% did not declare any race, 0.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Ninety-one percent of the student body was from Georgia and represented 42 different counties. Carroll, Gwinnett, Coweta, Douglas, and Cobb were the five counties with the largest numbers of students at UWG. There were 896 out-of-state students representing 37 of the 49 remaining states. Alabama, Florida, New York, Illinois, Tennessee, New Jersey, and Mississippi were the top states sending students to UWG. Additionally, there were 331 students from 72 countries. Canada, China, India, Jamaica, Niger, Nigeria, Comoros, and Ghana were the top countries sending students to UWG.

The number of students eligible for the Pell grant has decreased slightly in the past five years. In Fall 2013, the percentage of students who were Pell eligible was 55.2%. The percentage of Pell eligible students decreased slightly to 53.6% in Fall 2014 and 51.9% in Fall 2015. The Pell eligible student percentage further decreased to 50.4% in Fall 2016. In Fall 2017, the percentage increased slightly to 51.6%.

The University of West Georgia has long been committed to providing access to college for students in the western region of the state, as well as students from across the state of Georgia and the nation. Our Mission and our Strategic Plan both point to our commitment to student success. In particular, the first Strategic Imperative - Student Success: Enhanced Learning, Access, Progression, and Development - focuses on the importance of retention, progression, and graduation (RPG); access; and student engagement. The second imperative focuses on Academic Success: Academic Programming and Faculty Support. The commitment to our Strategic Plan has helped the university identify and implement three high impact strategies to help our students successfully obtain a degree. These high impact strategies are discussed in Section 2 of this report.

Tables 1 through 4 provide supporting data for the strategies discussed in Section 2 and are found in the Appendix at the end of this document.

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

### **HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY 1: THREE TO SUCCEED.**

Increase student use of services offered by the Center for Academic Success: Tutoring, Peer Academic Coaching, and Supplemental Instruction.

### **RELATED GOAL**

CCG GOAL 2. Increase the number of degrees that are earned on time.

CCG GOAL 3. Decrease excess credits earned on the path to getting a degree.

**DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT**

This high impact strategy is aligned with two of UWG's Student Success strategic imperative goals:

- Goal A. Increase student persistence and timely progression to degree attainment. See Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the Appendix.
- Goal A, Action 2: Increase student academic performance through focused classroom strategies, support programs, and enhancements to policies and procedures.

**PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT**

Ms. Carrie Ziglar, Interim Director, Center for Academic Success, [cziglar@westga.edu](mailto:cziglar@westga.edu)

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

The Center for Academic Success offers academic support services to students through peer tutoring, academic coaching and supplemental instruction.

**MEASURE OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS****Measure, Metric, or Data Element**

- Number of students using each service
- Retention of students using services
- Number of students that successfully completed courses for which they received tutoring
- Term GPA of students using services

**Baseline Measures****2016-2017**

Academic year 2016-2017

*Tutoring*

- 1,328 students attended one or more tutoring sessions.
- 92% of students using tutoring services in Fall 2016 were retained to Spring 2017.
- 1,044 of the 1,328 students (79%) who attended one or more tutoring sessions successfully completed the courses for which they received tutoring with grades of A, B, C, or S.

*Peer Academic Coaching*

- 457 students attended one or more Academic Coaching Sessions.
- 82% of students attending coaching for 2016-2017 were retained to Fall 2017.
- Students who attended four or more sessions had an average GPA of 2.63 for the academic year.

*Supplemental Instruction*

- 2,273 students attended one or more Supplemental Instruction Sessions.
- 89% of students who attended SI in Fall 2016 were retained for Spring 2017.
- Students who attended six or more SI sessions had a term GPA 0.66 points higher than students who attended no SI sessions.

**Interim Measures of Progress****2017-2018**

Academic Year 2017-2018

*Tutoring:*

- 1,269 students attended one or more tutoring sessions.
- 87% of students using tutoring services in the Fall 2017 were retained to Spring 2018.
- 976 of the 1,269 students (77%) who attended one or more tutoring sessions successfully completed the courses for which they received tutoring with grades of A, B, C, or S.

*Peer Academic Coaching:*

- 898 students attended one or more Academic Coaching Sessions (51% increase from 2016-2017).
- 84% of students using coaching services in the Fall 2017 were retained to Spring 2018.
- Students who attended four or more sessions had an average GPA of 2.43 for the academic year. In essence, while our coaching numbers increased in 2017-2018, the GPAs decreased in comparison to last year. However, our coaches worked with a much higher percentage of students who were in deeper academic success than were those last year. Students achieved academic success in both years, which is the goal of Peer Academic Coaching.



*Supplemental Instruction (SI):*

- 1,955 students attended one or more Supplemental Instruction Sessions.
- 92% of students who attended SI in the Fall 2017 returned for the Spring 2018 semester.
- Students who attended six or more SI sessions had a term GPA of 0.74 points higher than students who attended no SI sessions.

**Measures of Success**

Ultimately, we anticipate that the focused attention on tutoring, peer academic coaching, and supplemental instruction will positively influence graduation rates. The increased effort began on a small scale in 2015-2016. We developed the services more fully in 2016-2017 and strengthened them further in 2017-2018. Four-year graduation rates at the end of FY 2020 should reflect the effect of this initiative.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

Adequate space to host SI sessions continues to be a challenge. In 2017-2018 we carved out three designated SI spaces in the Center for Academic Success to help with access to appropriate space at best times for our students. Due to staffing, we have lost one of those spaces for the upcoming academic year. We are still searching for that dedicated space that will hold between 20 - 25 students. Hopefully, such a space will develop in 2018-2019 as we have some transitions in this facility. Additionally, UWG's new scheduling software will give us more control over finding available space.

We have become very strategic in targeting courses for Supplemental Instruction (SI) using this criterion: courses with at least a 25% or higher DFW rate. This threshold garners strong attendance from UWG students. Indeed, when we began building SI support in 2015-2016, we set a goal that 30% of the students who have access to Supplemental Instruction would actually attend sessions. In Spring 2018 we reached that percentage of attendance.

During the 2017-2018 academic year we focused effort, branding, and promotion on our THREE TO SUCCEED initiative. We set out to get as many students as we could to use all three of our services: tutoring, peer academic coaching, and supplemental instruction. While data confirmed a sharp increase in usage, our analysis revealed that students were more successful if they chose one program and attended it multiple times. Indeed, students who used three services - but only one or two times each - did not show the improvement we hoped for.

We continued onward with the THREE TO SUCCEED initiative into the Spring 2018 semester, but we aligned our focus on students who received an Early Alert from their faculty. We worked with these "Alert" students, encouraging them to use all three services available to them. Of course, we kept in mind that not all of the targeted students had supplemental instruction available to them. At the end of the Spring 2018 semester we reviewed the academic performance of these targeted students. These are the results:

- Target Group (students using all three services). They earned a Semester GPA of 2.36 and an Overall GPA of 2.54.
- Comparison Group (students who did not use ANY of the services, although they received an Early Alert from a faculty member and were encouraged to take advantage of academic support services in the Center for Academic Success). These students earned a Semester GPA of 2.03 and an Overall GPA of 2.31.

**HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY 2: INTRUSIVE ADVISING.**

**Identify at-risk student populations and use intrusive advising strategies to assist them.**

**RELATED GOAL**

CCG GOAL 4. Provide intrusive advising to keep students on track to graduate.

**DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT**

This high priority strategy is aligned with two of UWG's Student Success strategic imperative goals:

- Goal A. Increase student persistence and timely progression to degree attainment. See Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the Appendix.
- Goal D, Action 1: Provide quality academic advising experiences with emphasis on effective academic planning, early identification of a major for undergraduates, and a clear pathway to student accountability and self-sufficiency.

Our partnership with the Education Advisory Board through the SSC-Campus academic advising system supports progress with this goal, as the technology gives advisors critical information to help students exactly when they need it.

**PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT**

Melissa Tarrant, Director of the Advising Center, [mtarrant@westga.edu](mailto:mtarrant@westga.edu)

## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

We first implemented these activities in 2016-2017. We repeated the same activities with our 2017-2018 freshman cohort.

Group 1 (Students admitted on appeal): In early Fall, UWG contacted all students who were admitted to UWG via the appeal process. These students received an email communication from the Admissions offices directing them to go to the Center for Academic Success for academic assistance.

Group 2 (Students with low, but recoverable first semester GPAs): At the end of the Fall term, first-semester students with a term GPA between 1.75 and 1.99 were identified and received email, phone, and text communications and encouragement from their advisors to take advantage of academic support and other campus resources. Students also received a post card at home over the winter break informing them about CAS and academic support programs. Advisors followed up with the students throughout the Spring semester.

## MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

### Measure, metric, or data element

#### *Group 1 (Students admitted on appeal)*

- Number and percentage of students admitted on appeal who used the CAS services
- Term GPAs

#### *Group 2 (Students with low, but recoverable first term GPAs)*

- Number of first-semester students with a GPA between 1.75 and 1.99
- Cumulative GPAs (entire freshman year)

### Baseline measures

#### 2016-2017

In the 2016-2017 Academic Year

Group 1 (Students admitted on appeal). These data refer to Fall 2016 activities.

- 113 students were admitted via appeal and were directed to go to the CAS for assistance.
- 79 of the 113 students (70%) used one or more CAS services such as tutoring, peer academic coaching, and supplemental instruction. This group's average term GPA was 2.45, compared to 2.16 for students who used no CAS services.
- 9 of the 113 students (8%) visited the CAS ten or more times. Their average term GPA was 3.05.

Group 2 (Students with low, but recoverable first term GPAs). These data refer to Spring 2017 activities.

- 93 first-semester students were identified as having a Fall 2016 term GPA between 1.75 and 1.99.
- At the end of Spring 2017, 52% of these 93 students had earned a cumulative GPA above 2.0 (cumulative for entire first year, which means they kept their federal financial aid).

### Interim Measures of Progress

#### 2017-2018

In the 2017-2018 Academic Year

Group 1 (Students admitted on appeal): These data refer to Fall 2017 activities.

- 112 students were admitted via appeal and were directed to go to the CAS for assistance.
- 74 of the 112 students (66%) used one or more CAS services such as tutoring, peer academic coaching, and supplemental instruction. This group's average term GPA was 2.32, compared to 1.60 for students who used no CAS services.
- 20 of the 112 students (18%) used our services at least ten times. Their average term GPA was 2.60.

Group 2 (Students with low, but recoverable first term GPAs): These data refer to Spring 2018 activities.

- 63 first-semester students were identified as having a Fall 2017 term GPA between 1.75 and 1.99.
- At the end of Spring 2018, 47% of these 63 students had earned a cumulative GPA above 2.0 (cumulative for entire first year, which means they kept their federal financial aid).

### Measures of Success

Ultimately, we anticipate that the focused attention on at-risk populations will improve retention and graduation rates. The specific efforts began in 2016-2017. The four-year rates that will be reported at the end of the FY 2020 should reflect the effect of this initiative.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Identifying at-risk students early in their academic career and encouraging them to use academic support had a positive effect on students' academic success. Group 1 students who were admitted on appeal had a substantially higher GPA if they used the services offered by the Center for Academic Success shown in the Interim Measures of Progress above. For the Group 2 students who had a GPA between 1.75 and 1.99 in their first semester, approximately half (52% in 2-17-2017 and 47% in 2017-2018) earned a cumulative GPA above a 2.0, following outreach and encouragement by academic advisors. Our predictive data from EAB indicates that students whose GPA drops below a 2.0 are not retained, so assisting these students with improving their GPA decreases their risk of leaving. We will continue these efforts in 2018-2019.

### **HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY 3: EXPAND ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL ADVISING.**

**Provide Professional Advising in the Advising Center for all College of Social Science majors (i.e., juniors and seniors). Continue Professional Advising for students under 60 credit hours in the College of Arts and Humanities and College of Science and Mathematics.**

#### **RELATED GOAL**

CCG GOAL 4. Provide intentional advising to keep students on track to graduate.

#### **DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT**

This high impact strategy is aligned with two of UWG's Student Success strategic imperative goals:

- Goal 1.A.1: Implement and continually assess evidence-based strategies that improve retention, progression, and graduation rates. See Tables 2, 3, and 4 in the Appendix.
- Goal 1.D.1: Provide quality academic advising experiences with emphasis on effective academic planning, early identification of a major for undergraduates, and a clear pathway to student accountability and self-sufficiency.

#### **PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT**

Melissa Tarrant, Director of the Advising Center [mtarrant@westga.edu](mailto:mtarrant@westga.edu)

#### **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

A mixed model of advising was used in 2017-2018.

- Most students in the College of Arts and Humanities and College of Science and Math were advised by Professional Advisors until they earned up to 60 credit hours. After 60 hours, these students were advised by faculty in their departments.
- Students majoring in Music, Theatre, Art, Geosciences, and Physics were advised by Professional Advisors until they earned 30 credit hours. After 30 hours, these students were advised by faculty in the academic departments.
- All Undeclared majors were advised in the Advising Center.

Prior to 2017-2018, the Advising Center's Professional Advisors worked with the College of Social Sciences (COSS) freshman and sophomores, while faculty advised the majors (juniors and seniors). Beginning in Fall 2017, all COSS undergraduate students were advised by Professional Advisors in the Advising Center. Further, COSS juniors and seniors had the opportunity to meet with faculty members in a mentoring relationship, although the faculty mentoring model is just beginning to develop.

#### **MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS**

##### **Measure, metric, or data element**

Full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students who were advised in the Advising Center:

##### *Baseline and Interim Measures of Progress*

- Percentage of students who return the following year.
- Percentage of students attempting 30+ credit hours in one year (Fall, Spring, Summer).
- Percentage of students earning 30+ credit hours in one year (Fall, Spring, Summer).
- Credit hour completion rate (passing grades)

##### *Measures of Success*

- Reduced excess credits at graduation
- Improved graduation rates

**Baseline measures****2014-2015**

In the 2014-2015 academic year, first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates served by the Advising Center achieved the following results:

- 73% of students were retained Fall 2014 to Fall 2015.
- 46% of students attempted 30+ hours in one year (Fall, Spring, Summer).
- 34% of students earned 30+ hours in one year (Fall, Spring Summer).
- Students completed 90% of total attempted hours (i.e., earned passing grades).

## Interim Measures of Progress

### 2017-2018

In the 2016-2017 academic year, first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates served by the Advising Center achieved the following results:

- 72.4% of students were retained Fall 2016 to Fall 2017
- 44% of students attempted 30+ hours in one year (Fall, Spring, Summer)
- 30% of students earned 30+ hours in one year (Fall, Spring Summer)
- Students completed 86% of total attempted hours (i.e., earned passing grades).

In the 2017-2018 academic year, first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates served by the Advising Center achieved the following results (most data for this section are not available yet):

- X% of students were retained Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 (data available after Fall 2018 Census Date).
- 44% of students attempted 30+ hours in one year (Fall, Spring, Summer)
- X% of students earned 30+ hours in one year (Fall, Spring Summer) (data available at end of Summer 2018)
- Students completed X% of total attempted hours (i.e., earned passing grades). (data available at end of Summer 2018 semester)

### Measures of Success

Ultimately, we anticipate that the improved advising experience will reduce excess credit hours and positively influence graduation rates. The increased effort began in 2014-2015, and intensified these past two years. The four-year rates that will be reported at the end of the FY 2020 should reflect the effect of this initiative.

### LESSONS LEARNED

We were unable to compare student experiences with Professional Advisors in 2017-2018 versus those with faculty advisors prior to 2017-2018, because faculty did not record appointments in the EAB Student Success Collaborative (SSC) platform. However, going forward, more robust data will be collected to identify the effectiveness of professional advising on student progress toward graduation. Further, we will employ a satisfaction survey, which will help us incrementally improve the advising experience over time.

Regarding the expansion of professional advisors in the College of Social Sciences, we were successful in terms of providing those experiences to all undergraduate COSS students. Professional Advisors met with every junior and senior in the College of Social Sciences (N=1,264 unduplicated headcount) twice during 2017-2018: once in Fall and once in Spring. Professional Advisors in the Advising Center continued to serve freshman and sophomores students, as has been the practice before this year. Lastly, the faculty mentoring model for juniors and seniors is just beginning to get off the ground; efforts to deepen this work will continue in 2018-2019. When the Professional Advisors/Faculty Mentor model is refined, we hope to expand it beyond the College of Social Sciences.

## MOMENTUM YEAR UPDATE

Since the initial Momentum Year Summit in February 2018, the University of West Georgia has developed a strategic plan aligned to the major areas of the Momentum Year and has begun work on accomplishing the goals identified in the plan. West Georgia's progress thus far and next steps are described below.

### COREQUISITE LABS

UWG developed new ENGL 1101L and MATH 1111L sections, which were approved by the faculty senate in Spring 2018. These are one-credit hour (two contact hours / per week) corequisite labs. Collaborative work among the two academic departments, Admissions, the Advising Center, the Registrar, and the Provost's office led to the development of criteria for determining placement in the corequisites based on test scores. The core section and the corequisite lab section will be taught by the same faculty member. In Fall 2018, the English department will pilot five sections of ENGL 1101L (60 seats) and the Math department will pilot five sections of MATH 1111L. UWG funded three additional full-time core instructor lines in mathematics to support the implementation of corequisite MATH sections. The Provost's office provided professional development funding over the summer for faculty from English and Math to work on the course design of the corequisite labs and alignment with ENGL 1101 and MATH 1111 respectively. An assessment plan for the corequisite labs is in place for Fall 2018. In Spring 2019, additional sections of ENGL 1101L and MATH 1111L will be offered with plans for full implementation in Fall 2019.

In Spring 2018, sections of MATH 1001L will be scheduled as UWG expands the corequisite lab model. MATH 1001L has already been developed and approved by the faculty senate. UWG also plans to offer one section of ENGL 1101L and MATH 1001L, each fully online, for adult learners who are taking all of their courses online.

## **ACADEMIC FOCUS AREAS OR META-MAJORS**

Utilizing the Administrative Council (a monthly meeting of deans, associate deans, department chairs, and support staff), the leadership team in the Provost's Office worked to coordinate the development of academic focus areas or meta-majors. Since student advising on campus is divided among the Advising Center and the academic college, dialogue and collaboration were essential throughout the process. From this work, nine academic focus areas were identified, created, and approved by the faculty senate: Arts, Business, Education, Health Professions, Humanities, Social Sciences, STEM: Science Focus, STEM: Technology Focus, and Wellness and Sports. Each focus area includes three common courses that students will take in the first year. Collaboration between the colleges, the Advising Center, the Registrar, ITS, and the Provost's office led to the inclusion of the new focus areas in Banner for purposes of admissions and advisement.

UWG is using the focus areas this summer during orientation and all entering students who have not declared a major are being advised and placed into a focus area at that time. Beginning in Fall 2018, UWG will be able to track the progression of students in focus areas, including their progress in the required focus areas courses.

Our plan going forward is—based on assessment—to make refinements to the focus area process as well as the focus areas themselves. There is already conversation among the colleges about the alignment of some majors to the different focus areas—especially those connected to health and wellness professions. UWG will also be working on printed and web-based materials to better describe focus area options and their value to students and parents.

## **ACADEMIC OR PURPOSEFUL MINDSET**

In 2017-2018, the UWG Momentum Year Implementation Team conducted an inventory of all academic and student affairs units of current academic mindset practices. Because work on corequisites and focus areas needed immediate attention for Fall 2018 implementation, UWG did not make much progress developing a campus-wide mindset plan aligned to the inventory. However, in addition to the work going on across campus identified in the inventory, a number of specific initiatives have emerged that will be implemented in 2018-2019.

**Early Alert:** UWG has embedded an electronic early alert notification in all classes for a number of years through a partnership between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. However, the process has been optional. Beginning in 2018-2019, all 1000- and 2000-level courses will be required to use the early alert notification process for students who are not making significant progress in a class (grades, absences, etc.). This requirement emerged from work in UWG's G2C (Gateways to Completion) courses and will now be expanded. There have been some problems with the early alert process in the past (for example, faculty who submit notifications do not always receive any follow-up communication), so Student Affairs and Academic Affairs are working collaboratively to improve the process.

**Academic Mindset Survey:** UWG has worked to improve distribution channels and student response to the USG Academic Mindset Survey. Because of timing in 2017-2018, there was very little coordination or communication about the survey and as a result we saw a fairly low student response. To address this problem, we have implemented the following for 2018-2019:

- Student Affairs and Academic Affairs worked collaboratively to create a more effective strategy for distribution and success. We will model the procedures that UWG used to increase the student response success with the NSSE survey that was administered in Fall 2017.
- We will use our First-Year Seminars and Learning Communities to coordinate and reinforce student access and response to the mindset survey.

Work began this summer to increase faculty awareness and understanding of academic mindset and its influence on student success. Academic mindset was an area of focus at the Provost's Summer Symposium, a two-day event that brought together 40 faculty and staff to work on the next steps in UWG's *LEAP West!* Campus plan. New Faculty Orientation will include a unit on academic mindset that will introduce the concept to new faculty and outline faculty roles in creating a purposeful academic mindset for students. Lastly, academic mindset is being more purposefully integrated into the campus work on High Impact Practices (HIPs) and Guided Pathways.