Complete College Georgia

Georgia's Higher Education Completion Plan 2012

In Brief

The Georgia of the future is a state where a majority of the available jobs are out of reach to a majority of its people.

New employers and new job creation are lost to other parts of the world. Existing employers begin to question the benefit of staying with a workforce that falls near the bottom of states inside a nation that lags behind most other developed countries in terms of education. This future is not distant, but eight years near.

By 2020, it is projected that over 60 percent of jobs in Georgia will require some form of a college education, whether a certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree. Today, only 42 percent of the state's young adults, its burgeoning workforce, qualify. Georgia's level of higher education attainment is not expected to notably increase in this time period.

College completion is an imperative for a prosperous future in Georgia, but will require significant intervention.

To reverse the current path, the state has committed to Complete College America's goal that by 2020, 60 percent of young adults will hold a college certificate or degree. It will take a concerted statewide effort to surpass the likes of Canada and Japan at 56 percent and to reach Korea at 63 percent, assuming other nations stand still, which they will not.

Georgia's Higher Education Completion Plan, a joint effort between the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia, defines a way forward. The two Systems call for cooperation and begin to lay the groundwork in three areas:

1. Create new forms of collaboration and accountability among organizations responsible for or reliant on higher education,
2. Continue to work with the Georgia Department of Education to increase the number of college-ready students graduating from high school, and
3. Reevaluate and envision anew the performance of completion-related aspects of higher education.

This joint report and the work to follow between the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia serve as a strong foundation for the partnerships necessary to improve college completion. The unprecedented articulation agreement between the two Systems outlined in this plan is a significant example of what can be achieved. The agreement will expand opportunities to degree completion and avoid duplication of mission, assuring the most efficient use of state resources.

The University System and the Technical College System encompass 60 institutions. This plan is designed as a framework for action and accountability. Fostering the innovation and creativity of individual campuses is paramount. To that end, the plan outlines a collaborative process between the two Systems and their respective institutions to set goals, metrics, and strategies, while providing support. This planned work will seek new graduates from many sources, traditional and non-traditional:

- Expansion of the direct from high-school population through an improvement in college readiness and an overall increase in the high school graduation rate
- Improvement in overall college completion rates and especially populations with historically low rates
- Part-time students at all age levels
- Adult learners
- Military learners

These new graduates will form a competitive workforce with a mix of certificates, associate's degrees, and bachelor's degrees. They will have the broad base of skills, adaptability, and critical-thinking acquired through quality higher education. Georgia's future depends on improving college completion. **This plan begins the work.**

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Georgia's Future and the Value of Higher Education

The Completion Imperative

For the first time in our nation's history, the current generation of college-aged Americans will be less educated than their parents.[1] The United States, once a world leader in the proportion of young adults holding a college degree, now falls behind 14 other developed nations, including Korea, Ireland, Australia, and Canada.[2] Within the United States, Georgia's degree attainment historically ranks it in the bottom 15 states. Within the South, North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland, are ahead, while Georgia is nearly equal with Florida and South Carolina.[3]

Georgia's level of higher education attainment is not expected to increase without significant intervention. Already, the nationwide unemployment rate for bachelor's degree holders is less than half the rate for those with only a high school education.[4] By 2020, it is projected that over **60 percent of jobs in Georgia will require some form of a college education**.[5] However, currently in Georgia just **42 percent of young adults have a college education**: a certificate, an associate's degree, or a bachelor's degree or higher.[6]

Georgia cannot afford to allow the gap in higher education attainment to widen. The state's current and future competitiveness is at stake. Without a workforce that can fulfill the needs of the economy, the state may risk not only the loss of new employers and new business creation, but also existing jobs to more educated states and countries. To avert this future, Georgia developed the Complete College Georgia initiative. In line with commitments for the Complete College America agenda, by 2020, 60 percent of young adults 25 to 34 years of age should have a college education.[7] Moving from today's 42 percent to a goal of 60 percent requires approximately **250,000 additional graduates**.[8]

Percent Population with a Certificate or Degree [fig. 1]

| Percent	Country
63%	Korea
56%	Canada, Japan
	Ireland
	Norway, New Zealand
45%	United Kingdom, Australia, Denmark
	Luxembourg
	France, Israel
	Belgium, Sweden
	United States
	Netherlands, Switzerland
	Finland
	Spain
	Estonia
	Iceland
35%	Poland, Chile
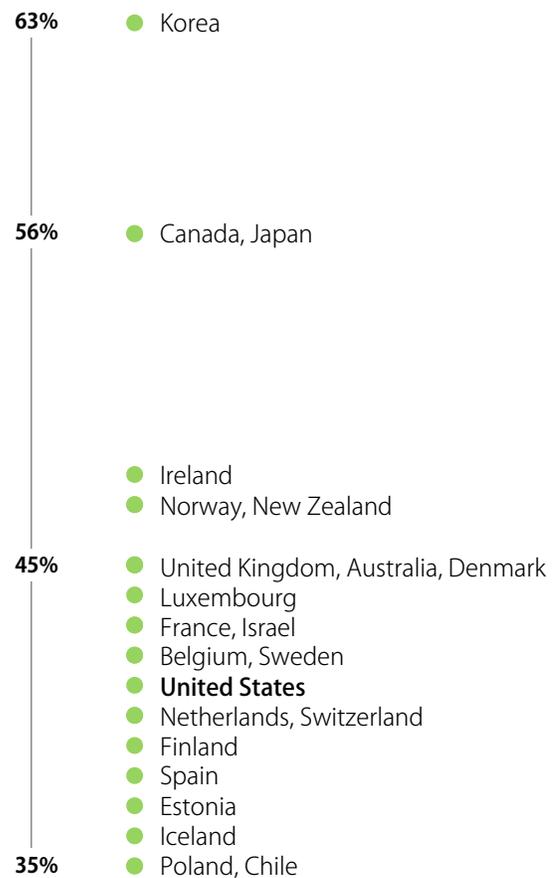
Degree and certificate completion rates must be improved to achieve this goal. Currently in Georgia, 57 percent of students starting a bachelor's degree graduate within six years. Only 11 percent starting an associate's degree in the University System of Georgia graduate within three years. In the Technical College System of Georgia, 20 percent of students starting an associate's degree graduate within three years, and 23 percent of students starting a certificate graduate within two years.

Bachelor's Degree Graduation Rate Within Six Years (%) [fig. 2]

State	Rate
Virginia	72
North Carolina	63
Florida	63
Maryland	62
Georgia (University System)	57
Tennessee	56

Associate's Degree Graduation Rate Within Three Years (%) [fig. 3]

State	Rate
Georgia (Technical System)	20
Tennessee	16
Florida	13
Virginia	12
Georgia (University System)	11
North Carolina	10
Maryland	9
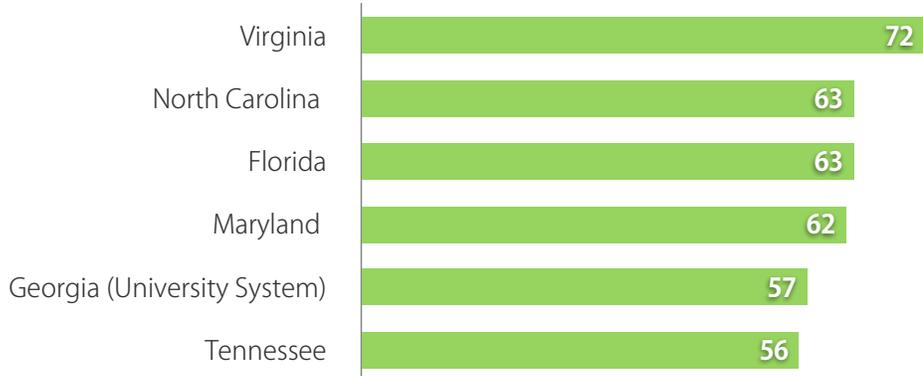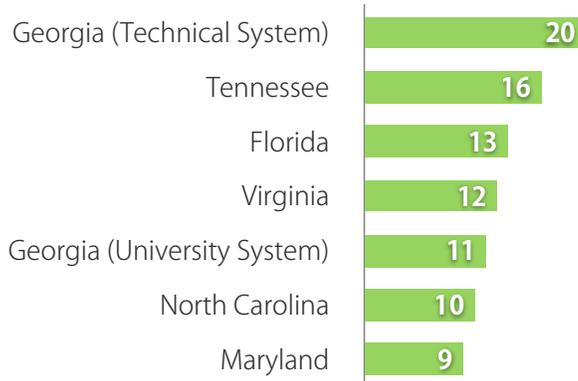
A complex set of issues underlies these rates. Along the pipeline from kindergarten to college, a significant number of students drop out of high school. These individuals lose the chance to enter college, let alone earn a degree. Of those who do graduate from high school, many enter college underprepared and never make it past remediation. Even of the students who enter prepared, a significant number leave during their freshman year, with a trailing number leaving each year thereafter.[9]

College completion rates are even lower for African American, Hispanic, adult, low-income, and part-time students.[10] Furthermore, the "traditional" college student who enters directly from high school on a full-time, residential basis makes up only 25 percent of the nation's student body. Commuter, part-time, and adult learners constitute the majority.[11]

Bachelor's Degree Graduation Rate Within Six Years (%) [fig. 4]

White	60
Hispanic	57
African American	45
25 Years and Over	18
Pell Grant Recipient	45
Part-time	15

Associate's Degree Graduation Rate Within Three Years (%) [fig. 5]

White	16
Hispanic	15
African American	8
25 Years and Over	15
Pell Grant Recipient	11
Part-time	6
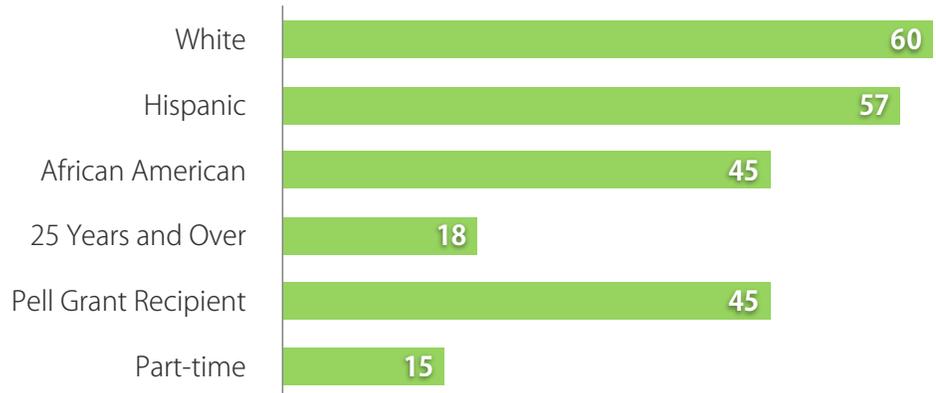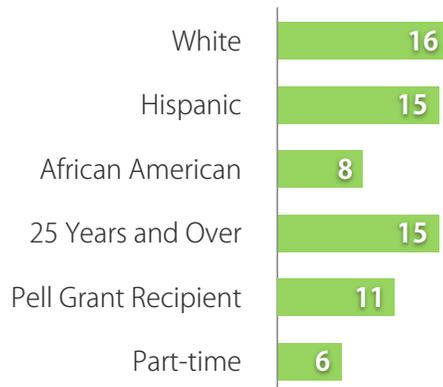
Addressing these many challenges within the larger goal of increasing Georgia's share of workers with a college degree or certificate calls for an unprecedented statewide effort. This document, a joint plan reflecting landmark collaboration between the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia, points to a way forward:

1. Create new forms of collaboration and accountability among organizations responsible for or reliant on higher education
2. Expand the K-12 pipeline and improve college readiness
3. Re-envision and improve performance in completion-related aspects of higher education

In today's fast-paced world, extravagant college completion plans can become obsolete before the writing is finished. This understanding, combined with the urgency that is required to act on college completion, led the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia to create this document, Georgia's Higher Education Completion Plan, as a framework for action and accountability.

With 60 institutions of higher education between the two Systems, the college completion effort must be coordinated, but also allow for the innovation and creativity of each campus to contribute to accomplishing the goal. This plan sets a strong foundation for action and will be continually updated to monitor progress, refine strategies, and adopt new ones as appropriate.

Without intervention, Georgia's higher education attainment is expected to only increase to 43.2 percent by 2020. Reaching 60 percent requires approximately 250,000 additional individuals, on top of normally expected graduation levels, who must complete a certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree over the next eight years.[12]

Meeting this goal requires increased participation from traditional populations, as well as a wider pool of non-traditional populations, including:

- Expansion of the direct from high-school population through an improvement in college readiness and an overall increase in the high school graduation rate
- Targeted improvements in completion rates of existing college student populations with historically low completion rates including remedial, low-income, African American, Hispanic, and students with disabilities
- Part-time students at all age levels
- Adult and military learners, especially those with existing higher education credit

Georgia's Young Workforce with a Certificate or Degree [fig. 6]

60% Complete College Georgia

250,000 additional graduates

42%

43% Current Path

2012

2020
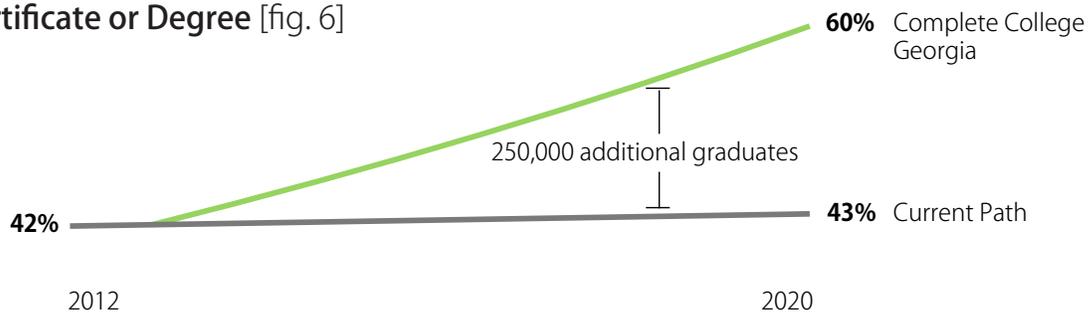
Defining and Measuring Success

Georgia's future depends on a diversity of talents and thinking, and the adaptability and broad base of skills acquired through quality higher education. To properly set plan objectives, an analysis of workforce requirements will be conducted in order to inform completion goals as to the level of degree. System and campus-level goals will then be set and aligned based on participation from target populations and informed by Georgia's workforce requirements.

The metrics setting process will be a continuing cooperative effort among the University System of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, and each system's institutions. Private colleges and universities will also be invited to partner in the effort. Measures of success and allocation of goals will be developed to best suit the mission and capabilities of each System and their campuses. Both Systems will deliver campus-level metrics during early 2012.

Completion by Partnerships

Improving college completion will depend on partnerships, given statewide and cross-agency issues. Partnerships can not only result in coordinated resources, but also new forms of collaboration, improved communication, and a strong focus on accountability. This plan includes work to improve completion by partnerships in three areas: 1) reporting and communications, 2) improving college readiness and access, and 3) improvement in pathways toward a degree through a new articulation agreement between the two Systems.

Reporting and Communications

Both Systems will regularly report to Georgia's Complete College America Council, which includes the Governor's office, the agency heads and board chairs of the University System of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, and the Georgia Department of Education, along with the Georgia Student Finance Commission, and key business, community, and philanthropic leaders. Both Systems will also work with the Governor on needed steps that result from his higher education funding study commission.

The commitment by both Systems that this document be a living plan with accessible updates is one way in which there will be a continuous focus on completion. This plan will be placed on a to-be-created 'Complete College Georgia Website' under the Governor's Office, linked to the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia by Spring 2012. A communications plan will be developed, aligned to the College Access Challenge Grant, that focuses on extending awareness about the importance of postsecondary completion across Georgia by Summer 2012.

Rigorous analytics and transparent reporting are key to the accountability of the state, both Systems, and individual institutions. To that end, the continued work of the state Longitudinal Data System, as part of Race to the Top, is vitally important.

To improve statewide coordination and accountability, the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia propose an early 2012 Complete College Georgia launch event. Led by Governor Deal, the event would include members of the Performance Funding commission, college presidents and vice presidents, legislators, K-12 superintendents, members of boards of both

Systems, and other key leaders. The Launch will include national leaders such as Stan Jones (Complete College America), Jamie Merisotis (Lumina Foundation), David Spence (Southern Regional Education Board), Uri Treisman (Dana Center, University of Texas at Austin), and Dennis Jones (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems). The focus of this event would be on the overall completion agenda, the use of data and metrics, transforming remediation, performance funding, provision of guidance to campuses in development of completion plans, and announcement of the Completion Academy competition.

The University System of Georgia will additionally require each campus to submit its own completion plan aligned with the framework laid in this document and built upon University System of Georgia Progression and Graduation reporting strategies and structures. The University System of Georgia will provide feedback and support to its institutions to complete the plans following the statewide launch. Frameworks will be designed to enable campuses to regularly share data about best practices for improving completion.

The Technical College System of Georgia will require each of its colleges to develop the institution's completion plan as a part of the President's annual assessment and review process. The Technical College System will work with its colleges after the statewide launch to develop local targets for certificates, diplomas, and degrees. The Technical College System will host an annual resource summit for campus and System leadership to share best practices and collaborate on innovative ideas in support of Complete College Georgia.

## Improving College Readiness and Access

Meeting college completion goals will require a substantially larger number of students graduating from high school who are motivated and prepared to apply to and be successful in college. Improvement must be made in three areas: Georgia's high school graduation rate, the academic readiness of students who do graduate, and opportunities for access to college, none of which is possible without effective teachers. To that end, the colleges and universities are committed to producing new highly effective K-12 teachers and to develop and enhance the skills of current teachers.

The K-12 portion of this completion plan focuses on strengthened collaboration with the Georgia Department of Education in the areas of standards and assessments for college readiness and expanded programs to deliver college-level courses and credit while students are in high school.

Expanding the Pipeline from K-12

Georgia's Department of Education reported a 2011 high school graduation rate of 79.5 percent. However, the method to calculate the rate is changing, and states nationwide are adopting a set of new, Federally backed metrics. Significant progress has certainly been made in recent years to increase the graduation rate, but the new cohort-based methodology indicates there is still much work to be done. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems uses a similar cohort method and reports a 58.8 percent graduation rate for Georgia in 2008.[13] This rate is likely lower than the actual rate today, given the lag in the data, but points to the continued need to expand the pipeline coming from K-12. Further, around 30 percent of the high school graduates, as reported by NCHEMS in 2008, did not continue onto college.

9th Grade Students in Public High School Directly Entering College (%) [fig. 7]

State	Percent
Virginia	49
Maryland	46
Tennessee	44
Georgia	41
Florida	35
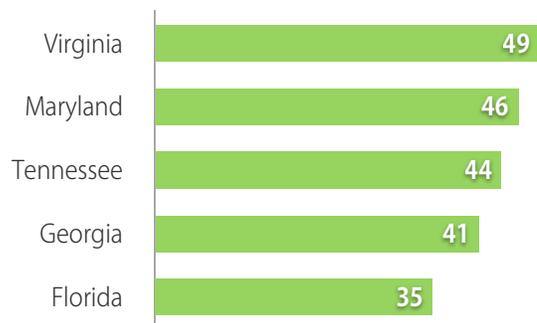
Standards and Assessment
The University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia will continue to work together with the Georgia Department of Education through the Alliance for Education Agency Heads on standards and assessments for college and career readiness. This collaboration is especially important in the vital subject area of mathematics. Changing levels of readiness in mathematics, whether through a mismatch of standards and entrance requirements, or a drop in overall quality, can significantly affect a student's ability to access and successfully complete certificate and degree programs.

The University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia have supported the work of the Common Core standards since the outset. English, mathematics, and teacher education faculty will support the Georgia Department of Education in ensuring dissemination of training in Common Core Georgia Performance Standard to current and future teachers.

The University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia will work with the Georgia Department of Education to implement an assessment

Completion by Partnerships

that can be used in the junior year of high school to judge progress on meeting readiness standards. In the long term, these assessments may be replaced by the in-development PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) assessments. Both Systems have been actively involved in the PARCC Initiative. English and mathematics faculty have worked with representatives from other states to identify key college readiness standards in their respective domains.

Once the PARCC assessments are developed and implemented, the University System of Georgia has agreed to use the college readiness standards and assessments to determine college readiness and to exempt students, who are admitted to institutions, from learning support testing. There will also be continued work with the Georgia Department of Education and the Southern Regional Education Board to develop and deliver 12th grade courses in reading, writing, and mathematics for students who do not meet college readiness levels based on these assessments.

College Courses and Credit During High School
The Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dual Enrollment, Early College, and Career Academies programs are important to the expansion of the K-12 pipeline. These programs can improve the college readiness of high school graduates and potentially shorten the time to a degree once in college, increasing the likelihood of completion. Work is ongoing among the University System of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, and Georgia Department of Education in the area of dual credit courses.

The Technical College System will also begin statewide articulation assessments that will be given in high school. Credit earned under these assessments will be "banked" until a student enrolls in a technical college. As part of this project, a web-based process will be developed for the colleges to collect this data and have it readily accessible to admissions staff.

In the area of College and Career Academies, the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia will work with other partners to establish a joint Office of College and Career Transitions. This new group will create a certification process and support services for academies that expand career-focused dual enrollment and dual credit opportunities.

In the area of Early College, the University System of Georgia will maintain the network of existing schools and share statewide and national best practices that have contributed to school successes. The University System of Georgia will also track Early College graduates based on college retention and completion across all college types (University System of Georgia, Technical College System of Georgia, and other public and private institutions).

College Access

In addition to academic readiness, students need information, encouragement, and hands-on support in order to access, and be successful, in college. These supports are especially important for those populations traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, such as first-generation students, low-income, minority, and students with disabilities. Partnerships among businesses, communities, and state agencies will be leveraged to supply these needs through the College Access Challenge Grant. These include:

- Implement 'Georgia Apply to College' events at more than 200 high schools across the state.
- Develop 'Near Peer' service-learning mentorships where college students assist high-need high school students in preparing for, applying to, and enrolling in postsecondary education.
- Lead collaborative college access efforts
  - Provide centralized resources, including Individual Graduation Plan development, for students, families, and educators through GAcollege411.org
  - Support business, community, and education groups sponsoring college-going events
  - Provide professional development for school counselors both directly and through partnerships with Georgia Student Finance Commission, Georgia Department of Education, and the Technical College System of Georgia
  - Support FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) events in collaboration with the Georgia Student Finance Commission
- Continue and expand recent communications efforts, such as
  - Provide public awareness resources to educators, agencies, and community/business groups
  - Governor's Proclamations for "College Access Month" and "Apply to College Month."
  - Community and business engagement in creating a college-going culture across the state, including "Friday Night, College Lights" events, flyers, and banners and mini-grants for events created by community and business organizations
  - Creation of specialized Public Service Announcements showcasing Georgia students, parents, and business members

Affordability

The University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia acknowledge and call attention to the cost of higher education and its impact on a student's ability to attend and complete college in a timely manner. Effectively addressing rising costs requires a national debate on the value of higher education to society and the appropriate shifts in public policy, especially in the area of funding. This work is beyond the scope of this plan; however, many of the proposed actions can work to enable institutions to be more effective, potentially leading to reduced instruction costs. Where these results can be achieved, the Boards of both Systems will seek to capitalize on cost-savings in ways that benefit students.

Georgia's higher education institutions continue to be, and must remain, a comparatively low cost, high quality opportunity. For the 2011 to 2012 academic year, a recent survey reports average tuition and fees for public four-year institutions in Georgia at $6,808, while the national average was $8,244. Tuition and fees for public two-year institutions averaged $3,078 while the national average was $2,963.[14] It is important that efforts be made to balance the cost of a quality education with the economic conditions of the state and the need to be good stewards of taxpayers' money. The continuation of programs such as HOPE, and the addition of needs-based scholarships as Governor Deal has proposed, are important to the college completion agenda.

Average Tuition and Fees at Public Four-Year Institutions 2011-2012 [fig. 8]

Institution	Amount
Virginia	$9,618
Maryland	$7,993
Tennessee	$7,209
Georgia	$6,808
North Carolina	$5,685
Florida	$5,626
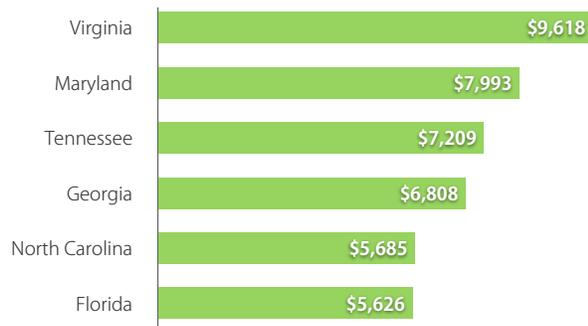
Average Tuition and Fees at Public Two-Year Institutions 2011-2012 [fig. 9]

Institution	Amount
Virginia	$3,968
Maryland	$3,700
Tennessee	$3,551
Georgia	$3,078
Florida	$3,006
North Carolina	$2,075
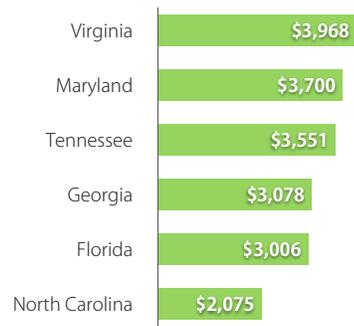
The University System of Georgia will continue to provide book grants, funded through the College Access Challenge Grant, for Early College, Move on When Ready, and GED students to help cover the gap between available funding and the actual cost of books and instructional supplies. The Technical College System of Georgia institutions will continue to assist secondary students and their families enrolled through dual credit opportunities to obtain book grants and to underwrite the non-HOPE covered portions of tuition.

Completion by Partnerships

University System of Georgia and Technical College System of Georgia Articulation Agreement

Today's college students commonly transfer between institutions. Forty-one percent of community college students nationwide transfer to four-year institutions and about one-third of all college seniors have transferred at some point during their college career. Articulation and transfer agreements provide students with important paths for transitioning within and across systems of higher education.

The University System of Georgia has one of the most comprehensive guaranteed agreements for transfer of general education courses between its institutions. However, many students also transfer from the Technical College System of Georgia to the University System of Georgia, and vice versa. While some steps have been taken to ensure general education course transfer between our two Systems, it is important to offer even greater articulation in support of the state's college completion goals.

An unprecedented agreement between the Technical College System and the University of Georgia for a new articulation policy has been developed and will be implemented January 2012. This agreement creates a coherent statewide commitment that supports and sustains continued cooperation among institutions in both Systems over time. Under the agreement, opportunities to degree completion will expand while avoiding duplication of mission, assuring the most efficient use of state resources. The specific articulation agreement can be found in the Appendix of this document. Key points in the agreement include:

- Provides definitions of Associate level degrees and general Technical College System and University System responsibility for these types of program offerings
- Establishes conditions for consideration of proposed expansion of Associate level program offerings by each System
- Sets up processes for review of additional general education courses for guaranteed transfer between the two Systems
- Establishes a joint oversight coordinating council with representatives from both Systems to ensure sustainability of the articulation agreement

Completion by Performance

To improve college completion, aspects of higher education must be redesigned within the context of creating a more effective system. This plan includes work to improve performance in three ways: 1) transforming remediation, 2) shortening the time to degree, and 3) restructuring delivery.

Transforming Remediation

Students admitted to college, but unprepared in mathematics, reading, or writing receive remediation, also known as learning support. These courses, although delivered at a college, do not count toward degree and certificate program credit hours, but serve as an important pathway for students who would otherwise not be given the opportunity to complete college.

The current scale of remediation at Georgia's institutions emphasizes again the importance of including preparation in K-12 as a part of a comprehensive college completion plan. Both of the University System of Georgia's two-year colleges provide remediation to 59 percent of entering students, and its 14 state colleges provide remediation to 48 percent of entering students. All 25 institutions in the Technical College System of Georgia provide remediation to 26 percent of first-time entry students.

Outcome evaluations reveal that current methods of remedial education must be changed to meet college completion goals. For example, students receiving remedial education at the University System of Georgia in bachelor's degree programs have a completion rate of 24 percent within six years. Students receiving remedial education entering associate's degree programs at either the Technical College System or the University System, have a completion rate of 7 percent within three years.

Georgia established a Transforming Remediation Work Group as part of its commitment to Complete College America. The following key recommendations of that taskforce have been incorporated into current efforts and future work:

- Define college readiness and take appropriate actions in K-12 to ensure that graduates are college-ready
- Change assessment and placement policies and practices for students applying to college to clarify what constitutes readiness for success in the first year of college
- Develop alternative pathways for students who are significantly behind
- Restructure traditional remediation using customized pedagogical approaches

Both the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia have taken steps on the recommendation to restructure traditional remediation. This work includes the sharing of best practices through statewide conferences held in 2011 by each System with nationally recognized speakers and institutions.

Through a recent grant from Complete College America, the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia will also work together to transform remediation in line with the Working Group's recommendations. Over the next two years, two institutions from each System will pilot total transformations of remediation and disseminate the work statewide.

Within the University System of Georgia, the focus will be on modularization of courses, creation of alternate paths for those students significantly behind, development of options to work at one's own pace, and integration of support to teach success skills. Pilot projects at the College of Coastal Georgia and Georgia Gwinnett College will begin in 2012. After the grant, beginning around 2013, the work will be expanded statewide. The University System of Georgia has also made changes to its learning support policies, and will continue to review them within the context of transforming remediation for completion, for purposes of aligning them with new methods and the latest evidence.

The Technical College System of Georgia will begin implementation of a redesign of remedial English, math, and reading using proposed recommendations from the Work Group and the President's Council Learning Support Task Force. The focus will be on development of content modules so that a student may progress at his or her own pace. In addition, new diagnostic tools will be developed to pinpoint which modules are required based on a student's needs. The early months of 2012 will focus on curriculum development and logistics, with a pilot program at Athens Technical College and DeKalb Technical College set to begin summer of 2012, with expanded implementation later in 2012.

The more time it takes to graduate, the less likely a student is to complete a certificate or degree. Events and demands outside the classroom can complicate college success, especially for students balancing school, work, and families. Delays increase costs to both the students and the state. By designing clear paths for students to complete certificate and degree programs more efficiently, Georgia can help more students earn degrees and control costs for both students and taxpayers.

Complete College America recommends that states use a variety of strategies to shorten the time to a certificate or degree. These strategies include, among others: reducing unnecessary taking of courses, improving transfer policies, and expanding alternative pathways for students to earn college credits.

Shortening the Time to Degree

The University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia plan to shorten the time to certificates and degrees through three areas of work: 1) expansion of articulation and transfer agreements (see appendix under "Articulation Agreement"), 2) construction of a student-centered transfer portal, and 3) expansion of Prior Learning Assessment.

Student-Centered Transfer Portal

Having robust transfer and articulation agreements in place is important, but delivering accurate and timely information to students to inform their decision-making and ensure the shortest time to a degree is also important. GATRACS, the Georgia Transfer and Articulation Cooperative Services group consists of the University System of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, Georgia Department of Education, and Georgia Student Finance Commission, and is currently funded through the College Access Challenge Grant. The goal of the collaborative is to make transfer easier for Georgia students, potentially leading to increased college completion rates. GATRACS will release a web portal, housed as part of GACollege411, that will enable students to submit their college courses and grades and immediately have access to information showing to which institutions their credits will transfer.

Prior Learning Assessment

Prior Learning Assessment, or PLA, provides a pathway to enable millions of students who have stopped short of a degree, but have acquired knowledge through other means, the chance to complete their education. In terms of spending, 65 percent of postsecondary learning takes place through the workplace and other training.[15] Postsecondary learning is also acquired through informal lifelong learning. Awarding credit where knowledge already exists creates an attractive option for potential students, especially adults, and shortens the time to degree.

The University System of Georgia seeks to expand the use of Prior Learning Assessment and will:
- Increase by 50 percent the number of institutions with PLA-friendly policies and practices by 2013
- Increase by 20 percent the number of credits students receive through PLA, including CLEP, AP, IB, portfolios, challenge exams, and military and business credentials by 2013

Completion by Performance

The Technical College System of Georgia will:
- Increase by 20 percent the number of statewide course assessments by 2015
- Increase by 20 percent the number of credits that students receive through PLA including CLEP, AP, IB, portfolios, exemption exams, military experiences, and business credentials
- Fully implement TCSG policies and practices that are PLA friendly

Restructuring Delivery

A recent report by Complete College America suggests that restructuring not only how education is thought of, but also how it is delivered, can improve college completion and success in a timely manner.[16]

While the characteristics of a "traditional" college student are changing dramatically, certificate and degree programs are still being delivered much as they have for most of the 20th century. To improve low completion rates, Complete College America proposes several approaches, including:

- Redesign course delivery. Courses should be delivered through a mix of blended in-person and online experiences. Scheduling should include non-traditional and block methods, which have been shown to be particularly effective in increasing completion rates for adult and part-time students.
- Maximize the value of long-term student groupings, or cohorts. Students working in cohorts can focus on the same content and learn from and support one another.
- Build support programs into structured course delivery models. Remedial and counseling support should be embedded into courses rather than separate.
- Require low-performing campuses to restructure delivery. Campuses with consistently low completion rates should have the incentive, or be required, to implement new models of delivery.

University System of Georgia—Restructuring Delivery

The University System of Georgia will address the mismatch between the needs of today's students and the current delivery models in five areas: 1) building and sustaining effective teaching, 2) exploring and expanding the use of effective models, 3) distance education, 4) adult and military outreach, and 5) science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) initiatives.

Building and Sustaining Effective Teaching
One key to greater student success and college completion is building and sustaining teaching pedagogies that engage the student learner. The University System of Georgia and its institutions will continue to support and reward

faculty to enhance their teaching strategies to promote student learning that improves college and degree completion. Teaching and learning resources as well as ongoing professional development for faculty will be an integral piece to successfully meeting the goals of this completion plan.

Exploring and Expanding the Use of Effective Models
The University System of Georgia is exploring approaches to restructure delivery in conjunction with institutions and key external partners. These approaches include technology solutions, practice and process changes, institutional efficiencies, and partnerships and collaborations across systems, as well as with nontraditional educational partners. Key in this approach is an understanding of the benefits of technology, but not a sense of determinism that may limit future paths, especially given rapid technology changes. The University System of Georgia will also explore, along with its institutions, opportunities to redefine scheduling, share practices around scheduling, and foster student cohorts.

The articulation agreement between the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia in itself constitutes a restructuring of delivery, providing options for students to earn a degree through coursework outside a single institution or system.

A range of University System of Georgia institutions and centers are exploring different solutions to restructure delivery, including data driven enhancements (Georgia Gwinnett College, Valdosta State University, Georgia State University), educational policy (University of Georgia), and technology (Center for 21st Century Universities at the Georgia Institute of Technology).

The Center for 21st Century Universities, in particular, is exploring a number of technology-driven innovations. Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are a virtual delivery model that allows participation in learning activities at convenient places and times, rather than forcing students into set timeframes. MOOCs, along with blended learning, which combines online and face-to-face interactions, can facilitate widespread, often global collaboration with other students and teams of specialized instructors. Gamification applies game-driven structures and incentives to learning. The Center is also exploring the enhanced use of experience based and group activities, alternative certification of learning objectives, as well as institutional approaches such as "markets" for learning options.

Distance Education
Nearly all University System of Georgia students use online electronic systems for services and learning. The University System of Georgia can better serve students by ramping up the use of technology to provide flexible course and program delivery options, and by fostering efficient development and use of shared resources.

In this focus area to restructure delivery, the University System of Georgia will:

- Increase the array of online programs in traditional, compressed sessions (six to eight week, multiple start-stop dates) and hybrid formats to enable all students, especially working students, adult learners and military personnel to effectively pursue college completion.
- Implement System-level services and technology to support intra-institutional collaborative degree programs and business processes that will improve retention, progression, and graduation by making it easier for students to find, enroll in, and complete courses.
- Expand deployment of eCore™ (Georgia's Core Curriculum Online) and online general education options to ensure that institutions have just-in-time capacity for students' unrestricted progression through the core curriculum.
- Develop online, collaborative, upper division courses and majors designed to complement eCore, associate of science, associate of arts, and associate of applied science degrees to assure articulation with USG and TCSG two-year programs and increase the probability that students can sustain and achieve their educational goals.

Adult and Military Outreach
Nearly 1 million working Georgians, 22 percent of those in the workforce, have already earned some college credit, but have not completed a degree. The University System of Georgia Adult Learning Consortium, with nine participating institutions, has developed policies, practices, models, and programs, which target the needs of adult learners. Planned work includes:

- Increase by 50 percent the number of campuses participating in the Adult Learning Consortium
- Develop collaborative online degree programs for adults with majors/ concentrations in critical need labor fields
- Lead public awareness campaigns to recruit returning adults
- Continue to provide professional development and resources for faculty in best practices for adult college completion, including the recent launch of DiscoverYourGoal.net and other public awareness campaigns targeting adults with some college credits, but no degree

With more than 780,000 veterans in the state, the University System of Georgia will lead expansion of its military-friendly "Soldiers 2 Scholars" program and other statewide efforts to help those in military service make the transition to civilian life by means of a college degree. The Soldiers 2 Scholars program attracts and retains military students while creating campuses that are inviting and friendly to military personnel and veterans. The College Access Challenge Grant funds the University System of Georgia's adult and military outreach efforts.

STEM
Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degree programs have a high rate of students transferring to non-STEM disciplines. The initial semesters of study in the foundational mathematics and science courses are one of the reasons for high transfer rates. Non-STEM majors have difficulty successfully completing STEM courses, as evidenced by higher failure rates and lower grades. Additionally, the necessary sequencing of STEM courses, where knowledge is often required to build from course to course, creates logistical issues that can complicate a student's path to degree completion.

The University System of Georgia will continue its STEM Initiative, this round with seven participating institutions, and provide funds and technical support for programs that improve completion rates of students in STEM degree programs and general success measures in STEM courses. A critical objective of the STEM Initiative is to improve the completion rate in the introductory courses, through a variety of new approaches, which will increase the likelihood of college completion. In Spring 2012, as part of the Initiative, Georgia Southern University will host a Scholarship of STEM Teaching and Learning Conference to disseminate information across University System of Georgia institutions.

Along the lines of STEM literacy for non-STEM majors, the University System of Georgia has approved pilots at South Georgia College, East Georgia College, and Gainesville State College to implement Quantway, an alternative form of remedial mathematics funded by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Technical College System of Georgia—Restructuring Delivery

The Technical College System of Georgia's goal is to initiate systemic change by restructuring the delivery of educational programming and services so that students can earn high demand and high wage credentials in an efficient, integrated, and seamless manner. It is in the best interests of Georgia and its students to create faster, more structured pathways to a degree or certificate. The Technical College System of Georgia's work will focus on two areas: accelerating success, and providing greater structure and clearer pathways to completion.

Accelerating Success
Plans for accelerating success include:

- Increase use of technology for both traditional and online delivery
- Continue to enhance the institutions collaborative efforts on the design, development, and delivery of digital content through the Georgia Virtual Technical Connection (GVTC)
- Design and develop blended models of content delivery based on the

concept of the flipped classroom, (lecture and teaching viewed at home and performance and work completed on- campus) affording students more time on task while having access to their instructor and providing them flexibility around their off-campus schedule

- Increase by 15 percent usage and enhancement of distance education and blended/hybrid courses allowing students more choices and access by 2015
- Redesign basic models of delivery in both traditional, distance education, and blended courses to a more streamlined and modular approach, ensuring full usage of available technology by 2014 (Synchronous video conferencing, webinar environments, virtual office hours, learning object/content repository, etc.)
- Re-establish and enhance the Learning Support Portal page, allowing open access to prospective and current students offering them access to resources for preparation, study, and tutorial based designed content by 2013
- Enhance the System Level Distance Education Student Portal to increase awareness of a student's opportunity to enroll as a transient student with sister institutions
- Develop individual education plans for each student, with strong advising
- Expand seamless education and articulation agreements with the University System of Georgia to reduce unnecessary taking of courses. (See articulation agreement, and GATRACS)
- Work toward a direct transition for students from completion of a GED credential into a technical diploma, certificate or degree program, without the need for remediation
- Developing an Accelerating Opportunity program that will dually enroll adult basic education students in adult education courses and technical certificate programs to assist students in gaining a meaningful career pathway credential

Providing Greater Structure and Clearer Pathways
Plans to provide greater structure and clearer pathways to completion include:

- Develop cohort-based (long-term groups), accelerated programs. Peer cohorts have been noted to significantly improve retention in colleges with accelerated programs. These accelerated programs will be delivered using a cohort model in which learners will attend as a group. Courses will be scheduled during times based on cohort needs for 4-8 hour blocks, depending on the program requirements.
- Facilitate a system-wide effort to implement a uniform assessment, placement, and intake process that will provide consistent college and career ready assessment and placement across the system for incoming adult education students. A uniform intake and advising process will be implemented that ensures students understand their options, and enroll in appropriate career

pathways and have access to financial aid.
- Expand the admissions/intake process to include diagnostic tools to better assess skills deficiencies for placement in the program or appropriate remediation
- Redesign remedial education (see Transforming Remediation section)
- Explain clearly and transparently costs and courses required to earn a degree or certificate by including this information in the advisement and education process
- All TCSG colleges offer block scheduling. By fall 2012, TCSG will restructure the following programs using block scheduling at all 25 institutions:
  - Accounting diploma and associate degree
  - Air conditioning diploma
  - Networking specialist diploma and associate degree
  - Medical assisting diploma
  - Automotive diploma

Value to Georgia

This plan began with the idea that college completion is an imperative for a prosperous economic future in Georgia. In reality, this future is not distant, but sooner than a decade away, requiring an immediate unprecedented effort. The state requires a mix of workers with a college certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree to meet the needs of the changing economy.

At 42 percent of the state's young workers educated to such a level today, it will take a tremendous effort to reach 60 percent by 2020, surpassing Canada and Japan at 56 percent, and coming close to Korea at 63 percent, all assuming other nations stand still, which they will not. Georgia can achieve this goal through recognizing the value of higher education, not just for filling and creating jobs, but also for creating a more civically engaged and free people, improving the quality of life for all in the state. These new graduates will form a competitive workforce with the broad base of skills, adaptability, and critical-thinking acquired through quality higher education.

This joint report and the collaborative work that will follow between the University System and the Technical College System serve as an example of the type of partnerships that will be necessary to improve completion rates. Completion-related aspects of higher education must be reevaluated and envisioned anew to improve performance. While graduation rates at higher education institutions must be increased, this alone is not enough without an expansion of the pipeline from K-12 and an improvement in college readiness.

This is the path forward for Complete College Georgia to be successful and secure Georgia's future.

Appendix

Articulation Agreement

Associate Degrees, Diplomas, & Certificates

Associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates authorized to be awarded by public institutions in Georgia are defined as follows:

1.   Associate of applied science (AAS) degrees are primarily for students who intend to enter specific career fields immediately upon graduation. These degrees are generally awarded through successful completion of a planned program of study at TCSG institutions. In order to minimize duplication of program offerings across the TCSG and USG, the following procedures will be followed for all new associate of applied science degrees.

1.1.   All new associate of applied science degrees proposed for implementation at USG institutions after January 1, 2012 will be submitted through the following process:
- The USG institution submits the degree proposal to the USG System Office. If the degree duplicates an existing AAS degree at a TCSG institution near the proposing USG institution, the proposed degree must have a letter of support signed by the respective TCSG college president.
- USG System Office staff will present the proposal to the TCSG System Office for review by System Office staff.
- If recommended by TCSG System Office staff, the proposal will be reviewed by the TCSG Board.
- The TCSG Board will return the proposal to USG with a recommendation for support or non-support.
- USG System Office staff will share the recommendation from the TCSG Board with the USG Board. The USG Board will take final action on the proposal.

2.   Associate of arts (AA) and associate of science (AS) degrees are primarily for students who intend to transfer to another institution for completion of a four-year degree program. These degrees are generally awarded through successful completion of a planned program of study at USG institutions.

2.1.   TCSG institutions will not offer associate of arts degrees.
2.2.   All new associate of science degrees proposed for implementation at TCSG colleges, regardless of delivery system, after January 1, 2012 will be submitted through the following process:
- The TCSG institution submits the degree proposal to the TCSG System Office. The proposed degree must have an articulation agreement signed by the respective TCSG and USG institutions' presidents.
- TCSG System Office staff will present the proposal to the USG System Office for review by System Office staff.
- If recommended by USG System Office staff, the proposal will be reviewed by the Board of Regents (BOR).
- The BOR will return the proposal to TCSG with a recommendation for support or non-support.
- TCSG System Office staff will share the recommendation from the BOR with the TCSG Board. The TCSG Board will take final action on the proposal.

3.   Technical certificates and diplomas are generally awarded for the successful completion of a planned program of study through the colleges of TCSG. These programs are typically not designed for transfer.
4.   Bachelor's degrees are offered only through USG institutions.

General Education Course Transfer

This policy assures students who transfer between TCSG and USG institutions that they will not be required to repeat the course work approved for transfer that was successfully completed at another institution.

USG institutions and TCSG institutions will accept the following general education courses for transfer between their respective institutions. Courses will only be accepted from institutions accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Both the USG and the TCSG are committed to and responsible for assuring that faculty teaching these courses meet the SACS comprehensive standard for faculty qualifications.

1.   Introduction to Mathematical Modeling - MATH 1101 (USG)/MAT 190 or MATH 1101(TCSG)
2.   College Algebra - MATH 1111 (USG)/MAT 191 or MATH 1111 (TCSG)
3.   Pre-calculus - MATH 1113 (USG)/MAT 194 or MATH 1113 (TCSG)
4.   Composition I - ENGL 1101 (USG)/ENG 191 or ENGL 1101 (TCSG)
5.   Composition II - ENGL 1102 (USG)/ENG 193 or ENGL 1102 (TCSG)
6.   American Literature – ENGL 2130 (USG)/ENGL 2130 (TCSG)
7.   Introduction to Psychology – PSYC 1101 (USG) / Introductory Psychology — PSYC 1101 (TCSG)
8.   Introduction to Economics – ECON 1101 (USG) / Principles of Economics — ECON 1101 (TCSG)
9.   Introduction to Sociology – SOCI 1101 (USG)/SOCI 1101 (TCSG)
10.   Public Speaking – COMM 1201 (USG)/SPCH 1101 (TCSG)

New TCSG general education courses proposed for transfer to USG institutions in Core Curriculum Areas A-E will follow the same review procedure required for new Core Curriculum courses proposed by USG institutions:

- The TCSG System Office staff will present the proposed course(s) to the USG System Office.
- The USG System Office will convene a meeting of the appropriate disciplinary Regents Academic Advisory Committee. Non-voting faculty designated from the TCSG will be invited to participate.
- Course(s) approved by a Regents Academic Advisory Committee for transfer in Areas A-E will be recommended to the USG General Education Council for review.
- Course(s) approved by the USG General Education Council will be reviewed by System Office staff who will submit the courses to the USG Board for final action.

Upon receipt of USG Board approval for the designated course(s), TCSG colleges will clearly publicize the designated approval categories to TCSG students.

Postsecondary Oversight Council

An oversight council comprised of appropriate System Office staff from the TCSG and USG will meet on a regular basis to assure compliance with this articulation agreement, address other articulation issues if they arise, and encourage the development of programs and policies to support Georgia's college completion goals.

Appendix

Notes

1) National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). "Education Attainment by Degree-Level and Age-Group:" http://www.higheredinfo.org/.
2) Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Education at a Glance 2011*: http://www.oecd.org/document/2/0,3746,en_2649_39263238_48634114_1_1_1_1,00.html.
3) See Note 1.
4) Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Sept. 2011 Unemployment Rate:" http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t04.htm.
5) Complete College America. "Time is the Enemy." September 2011: http://www.completecollege.org/docs/Time_Is_the_Enemy.pdf.
6) Based on data analysis of 2009 American Community Survey and Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) certificate awards.
7) Complete College America. http://www.completecollege.org
8) Total graduates here includes USG, TCSG, and growth from private institutions.
9) National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). "Student Pipeline": http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?measure=72.
10) See Note 5.
11) See Note 5.
12) Certificates under the definition employed by Complete College America also includes Georgia's one-year diplomas from the Technical College System.
13) National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). "Public High School Graduation Rates": http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?measure=23.
14) College Board. "Trends in College Pricing 2011": http://trends.collegeboard.org/college_pricing/.
15) Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N. and Strohl, J. "Help wanted: Projections of jobs and education requirements through 2018." Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. June 2010: http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/FullReport.pdf
16) Complete College America, "Restructure Delivery for Today's Students:" http://www.completecollege.org/resources_and_reports/.

Figures

1) Selected countries and the percentage of adults 25 to 34 years of age with tertiary education as of 2009. Source: See. Note 2.
2) Percent students who entered a public bachelor's degree program in Fall 2003 and graduated within six years by Spring 2009. Source: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). "Graduation Rates." http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/?level=nation&mode=map&state=0&submeasure=27.
3) Percent students who entered a public associate's degree program in Fall 2006 and graduated within three years by Spring 2009. USG and TCSG institutions are reported separately. Associate degree rates are lower due to the high rate of transfer to four-year programs. Source: See Fig. 2.
4) Selected populations of students within public institutions (USG and TCSG) in Georgia that graduate from a bachelor's degree program within six years of first enrollment. Pell grant recipient is often used as a proxy to identify low-income populations. Source: USG and TCSG reported data via Complete College America. See Note 5.
5) Associate's degree graduation rates for selected populations, see Fig 4.
6) Projected path based on historical changes in degree attainment compared with the needed growth rate to reach Complete College America's goal by 2020.
7) 9th graders entering public high school in 2004. Rate is a combination of the high school graduation rate and the college-going rate to determine chance that a 9th grader will attend college directly from high school. Source: See Note 9.
8) Average tuition and fees for 2011 to 2012 Academic Year as reported by survey. Source: See Note 14.
9) See Fig. 8.

Appendix

For Further Information

University System of Georgia

www.usg.edu

Technical College System of Georgia

www.tcsg.edu