



Georgia Southern University

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

MISSION

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

FALL 2015 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE

As evidenced by fall 2015 student demographic data, Georgia Southern University enrolls a primarily full-time, residential, undergraduate population. Of a fall 2015 total enrollment of 20,459 students, 17,963 (88%) were undergraduates and 16,904 (83%) were full-time. With a freshman on-campus residence requirement, the University housed 90.8% of beginning freshmen on campus. Consistent with its mission as a University System of Georgia institution, 94.4% of undergraduates were state of Georgia residents. The University enrolled 50.2% (n=9,018) undergraduate female students and 49.8% (n=8,945) undergraduate male students. Minorities accounted for 36.2% of the total University enrollment. Only 6.5% (n=1,168) of undergraduates were new transfer students with most of these coming from other System state colleges.

Georgia Southern's first-year retention rate of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen who entered in fall 2014 (and returned in fall 2015) was 81.5%. The six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen who entered in fall 2009 and completed a bachelor's degree was 50.4%. Approximately, 13.6% of this cohort completed their degree at another institution of higher education, representing a total degree completion rate of 64%.

EVIDENCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS

REGULAR ADMISSION

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

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

Table 1: Average SAT Scores of Beginning Freshmen Compared to University System, State, and National Averages for Past Five Fall Terms

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

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

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

Table 2: Average High School GPA for Beginning Freshmen for Past Five Fall Terms

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
3.20	3.21	3.24	3.27	3.29

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

LEARNING SUPPORT ADMITS

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

Five years of Learning Support data are provided in Table 3. Included are the number of students admitted into each area of Learning Support (math, English, and/or reading); the number and percentage of those that completed; the number and percentage of students who stopped attending the Learning Support classes; and the number and percentage of Learning Support students who were dismissed after not completing the program within the required number of semesters. Also shown is the total number of Learning Support admits and the percentage this number represents of the total freshman enrollment for that year. Over this time span, the total number of Learning Support students has dropped from 159 (2010-11) to 51 (2014-15) and has hovered at about 2% of the total freshman enrollment. More importantly, the data show a general trend toward increasing success in getting Learning Support students through the program with less attrition; however, there is still room for improvement—especially for Learning Support math students.

Table 3: Learning Support Students for Past Five Years by Type of Learning Support

Learning Support	Summer 2010-Spring 2011	Summer 2011-Spring 2012	Summer 2012-Spring 2013	Summer 2013-Spring 2014	Summer 2014-Spring 2015
Math					
Total #	87	57	47	45	33
# Completed	47 (54%)	24 (42%)	25 (53%)	29 (64%)	23 (70%)
# Stopped Attending	32 (37%)	21 (37%)	16 (34%)	12 (27%)	8 (24%)
# Dismissed	8 (9%)	12 (21%)	6 (13%)	4 (9%)	2 (6%)
English					
Total #	37	18	7	6	12
# Completed	28 (76%)	14 (78%)	5 (71%)	5 (83%)	11 (92%)
# Stopped Attending	9 (24%)	4 (22%)	2 (29%)	1 (17%)	1 (8%)
# Dismissed	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Reading					
Total #	35	18	7	11	6
# Completed	30 (86%)	12 (67%)	7 (100%)	11 (100%)	6 (100%)
# Stopped Attending	5 (14%)	6 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
# Dismissed	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total Learning Support	159	93	61	62	51
% of University Freshmen Enrollment	5%	3%	2%	2%	2%

Source: Academic Success Center

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

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES (PREFACE)

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

Complete College Georgia | Campus Plan Updates 2016

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

Goals I and II of the 2015-2016 CCG plan shift the focus from first-year retention rates (which will continue but not as part of this plan) to progression of sophomores to juniors.

Table 4: Retention Rates of IPEDS First-time, Full-time, Degree-Seeking Freshmen and Transfer Freshmen Fall 2010 through Fall 2014 Cohorts

	1st year retention: Fall 2011	2nd year retention: Fall 2012 (percentage point difference from prior year)	3rd year retention: Fall 2013 (percentage point difference from prior year)	
Fall 2010 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	79.6%	64.8% (14.8)	56.7% (8.1)	
Transfer Freshmen	68.6%	53.9% (14.7)	37.3% (16.6)	
	Fall 2012	Fall 2013 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2014 (percentage point difference from prior year)	
Fall 2011 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	77.2%	61.9% (15.3)	55.9% (6.0)	
Transfer Freshmen	73.7%	55.8% (17.9)	43.2% (12.6)	
	Fall 2013	Fall 2014 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2015 (percentage point difference from prior year)	
Fall 2012 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	80.5%	65.8% (14.7)	58.8% (7)	
Transfer Freshmen	60.6%	54.9% (5.7)	38.0% (16.9)	
	Fall 2014	Fall 2015 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2016 (percentage point difference from prior year)	
Fall 2013 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	80.3%	64.9% (15.4)		
Transfer Freshmen	64.3%	57.1% (7.2)		
	Fall 2015	Fall 2016 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2017 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2018 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2014 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	81.5%			
Transfer Freshmen	76.3%			

Source: Office of Strategic Research and Analysis

Another population that needs attention are Georgia Southern's at-risk students (defined inclusively as students at academic and financial risk). While the Academic Success Center tracks the progress of learning support students in developmental math, English, and reading courses, it does not appear that the institution tracks the subsequent performance, progression, and graduation rates of these students nor can the Academic Success Center (with its current resources) handle the need for additional services for students who fall into at-risk status during the course of their academic studies. By far, the larger group of students who fail to register for the subsequent semester are those who experience registration and academic success issues. A mid-semester report of fall 2015 registered students showed 302 students who did not register for spring 2016 by January 27, 2016. Of these 302 unregistered students, 70 or 23% did not register due to registration and academic success issues. These students exhibited a fall 2015 GPA in the 1.78 to 1.94 range, suggesting that they need additional academic support/assistance. Three students (1%) were unable to get the courses they needed. These three students held an average fall 2015 GPA of 2.99. Another 161 students, 53%, were transferring out with an average fall 2015 GPA of 2.88. While advisors can and do refer at-risk students to available campus resources, Academic Affairs is unable to address this need solely on its own. Rather what is needed is a campus-wide academic success plan that identifies the specific needs currently being unmet and the resources required to meet those needs.

Therefore, goal III of the 2015-2016 CCG plan is to reduce the percentage of students in an academic warning category (operationalized as any category other than good standing) by five percentage points by spring 2021 through transforming the way that remediation is accomplished.

EAGLE INCENTIVE PROGRAM AND PROVISIONAL ADMITS

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

Over the past ten years, the Eagle Incentive Program has averaged 476 admits each summer, representing 17% of the total freshman population [\[CC1\]](#). For fall 2015, 51.6% (n=258/500) of EIP students were Pell-grant eligible; 40.8% (n=204/500) were first generation. Table 5 displays the number of freshmen admitted each summer into the Eagle Incentive Program since its inception in summer 2005; the percentage this number represents of the total freshman enrollment for that year; the percentage of EIP students retained the subsequent fall; and the percentage of EIP students retained the following fall compared to the percentage of non-EIP students retained that same fall. As shown, the University has a strong track record of converting these provisional admit students to regular admission and retaining them the following fall.

Table 5: Eagle Incentive Program Admits and Retention Rates Since Its Inception

Year	# Admitted Summer (% of Freshman Enrollment)	% Retained Subsequent Fall	% Retained Next Fall (% Non-EIP Retained)
2006	391 (17%)	98%	82% (78%)
2007	435 (17%)	92%	78% (81%)
2008	484 (19%)	90%	81% (81%)
2009	492 (17%)	92%	80% (79%)
2010	476 (15%)	90%	82% (79%)
2011	505 (17%)	90%	83% (76%)
2012	529 (17%)	90%	81% (80%)
2013	582 (20%)	94%	76% (81%)
2014	572 (20%)	88%	81% (82%)
2015	547 (19%)	91%	
Ten Year Average	501 (18%)		

Source: Eagle Incentive Program (EIP), Non-EIP, and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) First-time Freshmen: Retention, Graduation, Demographic, and Academic Comparisons: Summer and Fall 2005 through Fall 2014 Cohorts, Office of Strategic Research and Analysis

Table 6 documents the six-year graduation rates of EIP students versus non-EIP students from 2005 to 2009. The data show an upward trajectory for EIP student graduation success, culminating in a comparable six-year graduation rate to that of non-EIP students. Clearly, this program demonstrates success at getting EIP students to graduation.

Table 6: Six-Year Graduation Rates: EIP versus Non-EIP

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

Source: Eagle Incentive Program (EIP), Non-EIP, and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) First-time Freshmen: Retention, Graduation, Demographic, and Academic Comparisons: Summer and Fall 2005 through Fall 2014 Cohorts, Office of Strategic Research and Analysis

*This percentage compares to an overall national completion rate of 57.9% for students who enrolled in a four-year public institution in the fall of 2009 and graduated from a four-year public institution (Inside Higher Education, [College Completion Rates Decline More Rapidly](#), November 17, 2015:).

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Please note that since Georgia Southern elected to refine its goals this year, developing a new multi-year plan in response to the BOR feedback received last year, much of what is reported is still in the planning stages. The institution will have more interim measures of progress next year.

High-Impact Strategy	Improve communication around the early alert system and to expand who receive early alerts
Related Goal	Increase the sophomore to junior progression rate from 64.9% (fall 2015) to 70% by fall 2020.
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	Historically, and as affirmed by the data in Table 4, the institution has witnessed the greatest attrition in first-time freshmen between the junior and senior year; however, it can be argued that this result is a consequence of students experiencing difficulties in their sophomore year. For instance, students whose grades fall and who get into academic difficulties during the sophomore year may eventually give up or transfer out by their senior year. Other students who encounter financial aid issues may elect to work more hours and attend class less or spend less time on class work. Greater investigation of sophomore students is needed to understand what is happening with this student population, identify potential barriers, and alleviate where possible to help students return for successful junior and senior years. A more robust early alert system, communicated more effectively and open to more students, will address these issues

<p>Primary Point of Contact for this Activity</p>	<p>Name: Dr. Christopher Caplinger Title: Director of the First-Year Experience Program Email: caplinca@georgiasouthern.edu</p>
<p>Summary of Activities</p>	<p>Recognizing that improving performance measures takes time, Georgia Southern has opted to develop multi-year goals; therefore, most of 2015-2016 was devoted to planning and organizing the applicable action teams. For example, the former Interim Provost launched a series of campus-wide Student Success Workshops, comprised of deans, associate deans, department chairs, and select faculty. This group will continue to meet periodically during the forthcoming academic year. As of the end of spring 2016, two sub-committees had been initiated: (1) to review academic policies and procedures that may act as barriers to student success and progression and propose revisions (addressed in goal 3); and (2) to improve communication around early alerts and to expand who receives early alerts.</p> <p>The sub-committee on early alerts met and made two sets of recommendations. One was to improve communication through the establishment of injection messages which students receive when they log into the campus single sign-on. Previously, students only knew they received early alerts if they 1) actively logged into the system to check their alerts or 2) received an email or phone message from an advisor or other staff member. The committee further customized the messages based on the type of alert the faculty member submits. Therefore, a student who has attendance problems receives a different message than one who has missed assignments or a student who has earned low grades on initial assignments. Previously, students only received the alert abbreviation (for instance: "UA") which they had to use a key to interpret (in the previous example, "Unsatisfactory Attendance"). These changes went into effect Fall 2016.</p> <p>The second set of changes, proposed to go into effect Fall 2017, requires Faculty Senate approval. Presently, the only students who receive early alerts are those classified as freshmen, irrespective of the specific classes they are taking. We propose to change the early alerts based upon specific courses rather than the students' classification. Alerts are most appropriate for introductory courses in which students often struggle and/or which are gateways for progression in the major. The current system does not effectively identify students who may be struggling in these courses. Some students for which faculty wish to submit an early alert are not able to receive alerts (and indeed, a growing number of students enter Georgia Southern as sophomores due to AP or dual enrolled credit and never receive alerts). In other cases, faculty end up with a small number of students classified as freshmen in an upper division course for which early alerts are less appropriate. In this case, they often only find out they need to submit when they receive an injection page or communication from their dean's office. This change will simplify the process and align it with its intended purpose. The proposal is for all students taking classes in Areas A-E of the core curriculum to potentially receive alerts. Departments who oversee courses outside Areas A-E could also opt in to making alerts available for their courses as well.</p> <p>Another proposed change is to remove the option of "Satisfactory," which is not really an early alert, but a remnant of an older system that called early alerts "midterm grades." Too often, faculty still conceive of alerts as midterm grades, often waiting as long as possible to submit because they want to provide the best snapshot of how students are doing at the time of the deadline to submit. This delay defeats the purpose, which is to send an early warning as soon as possible. The proposal is to replace "Satisfactory" with "no alert," thus still requiring faculty to submit, but working toward changing faculty perception of early alerts.</p>
<p>Measures of Progress</p>	<p>Metric/data element:</p> <p>Fall Term Retention and Graduation Rates Table (http://em.georgiasouthern.edu/osra/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/fb1516.pdf, p. 50) produced by the Office of Strategic Research and Analysis, Georgia Southern University annual Fact Book. For each fall term, the table reports the entering cohort number, the retention rate cohort number, 1st year retention, 2nd year retention, 3rd year retention, and 4th year retention along with graduation data. For this goal, focus will be placed on the retention rate reported under 2nd year retention.</p> <p>Baseline measure: Fall 2014: 64.9%</p> <p>Interim measures of progress: Fall 2018: 68%</p> <p>Benchmarking data will continue to be collected on when the largest percentage of unsatisfactory early alert grades are submitted. These trend data will be used to measure the success of expanding</p>

	<p>early alerts if and when implemented in fall 2017. Data will also be collected on the number of unsatisfactory early alerts converted to satisfactory by the end of the semester as well as the number of satisfactory early alerts that became unsatisfactory by the end of the semester.</p> <p>Measures of success: Fall 2020: 70%</p>												
Lessons Learned	<p>Faculty can enter early alerts for freshmen as early as the first day of classes and extending over a seven week period. In spring 2015, 41.2% of unsatisfactory early alerts were submitted during the final week (week 7). For fall 2015, 44.8% of unsatisfactory early alerts were submitted during week 7. During spring 2016, 51.7% of unsatisfactory early alerts were submitted in week 7. Posting early alerts this late in the semester hinders students' ability to get 'back on track' academically. The proposed changes are designed to encourage faculty submission much earlier.</p>												
High-Impact Strategy	Implement Soar in 4 campaign.												
Related Goal	Increase the percentage of sophomore students enrolling in 15 or more credit hours per semester from 39.8% (fall 2015) to 45% by fall 2020 and junior students from 43.5% (fall 2015) to 50% by fall 2020.												
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	In the study, "Redefining Full-Time in College: Evidence on 15-Credit Strategies" (Klempin, 2014), the benefits of a 15-credit course load per semester are documented. A minimum full-time load is not sufficient to allow students to graduate on time. The study examines different strategies, including expanding flat tuition to cover 12 to 20 credits, which resulted in an increase in credits attempted per semester. Given Georgia Southern's primarily traditional, full-time undergraduate population, encouraging students to register for a 15-credit hour load per semester has considerable potential to reduce time to degree.												
Primary Point of Contact for this Activity	Name: Alan Woodrum Title: Assistant Provost Email: alanwoodrum@georgiasouthern.edu												
Summary of Activities	By the end of spring 2016, a SOAR in 4 teaser video had been created and distributed on campus. A splash video for SOAR in 4 was distributed at summer 2016 orientation. Both videos have three objectives: (1) promote graduation in four years by telling students that the data show they are more likely to graduate if they complete 15-17 hours per semester; (2) boost GPAs by informing students that students completing more than 15 hours per semester have higher GPAs than those who take fewer hours; and (3) save students money by telling them that taking a 12 credit hour load per semester puts them on track to graduate in 5 years which will cost students an additional \$10,000.												
Measures of Progress	<p>Metric/data element: Percentage of sophomores registered for 15 or more credit hours; percentage of juniors registered for 15 or more credit hours each fall semester. Report produced by the Office of First-Year Experience.</p> <p>Baseline measure: Fall 2015 Sophomores: 39.8% registered for 15 or more credit hours Fall 2015 Juniors: 43.5% registered for 15 or more credit hours</p> <p>Interim measures of progress: The interim measure of progress will be 41% of sophomores registered for 15 credits or more in fall 2016 and 45% of juniors registered for 15 credits or more in fall 2016.</p> <p>Percentage of Students by Classification Who Enrolled in 15 or More Credit Hours</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Classification</th> <th>Fall 2015 (at census date)</th> <th>Fall 2016 (at census date)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Freshmen</td> <td>55.5%</td> <td>62.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sophomores</td> <td>39.7%</td> <td>42.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Juniors</td> <td>43.4%</td> <td>45.2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Classification	Fall 2015 (at census date)	Fall 2016 (at census date)	Freshmen	55.5%	62.7%	Sophomores	39.7%	42.3%	Juniors	43.4%	45.2%
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	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Seniors</td> <td>41.0%</td> <td>41.4%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Measures of success: Fall 2020 Sophomores: 50.0% registered for 15 or more credit hours Fall 2020 Juniors: 50.0% registered for 15 or more credit hours</p>	Seniors	41.0%	41.4%
Seniors	41.0%	41.4%		
Lessons Learned	Although data show that students who complete 15-17 credit hours per semester are more likely to graduate, in many cases, it is important to recognize that for certain majors, it is in the best interest of students to take advantage of specific opportunities (i.e., internships, co-ops) which may prolong their time to graduation, but better prepare them for their careers.			
High-Impact Strategy	<p>Campus-Wide Academic Success Plan</p> <p>Develop and implement a campus-wide academic success plan that transforms the way in which remediation is accomplished by identifying the specific needs of students on academic warning that are currently being unmet and the resources required to meet those needs. Such a plan would include efforts to identify and revise existing policies which impede students' ability to progress. [Note: the Academic Success Center is housed in the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. As an initial step in re-envisioning the Center, a search was conducted in spring 2016 to replace the outgoing director. Unfortunately, the search did not result in a hire and has now been re-opened. Success of this goal depends, in part, on successful filling of this critical position.]</p>			
Related Goal	Reduce the percentage of students in an academic warning category (operationalized as any category other than good standing) by five percentage points by spring 2021 through a review of institutional academic policies which may impede a student's ability to progress and through transforming the way that remediation is accomplished.			
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	While the Academic Success Center tracks the progress of learning support students in developmental math, English, and reading courses, it does not appear that the institution tracks the subsequent performance, progression, and graduation rates of these students nor can the Academic Success Center (with its current resources) handle the need for additional services for students who fall into at-risk status during the course of their academic studies. By far, the larger group of students who fail to register for the subsequent semester are those who experience registration and academic success issues. A mid-semester report of fall 2015 registered students showed 302 students who did not register for spring 2016 by January 27, 2016. Of these 302 unregistered students, 70 or 23% did not register due to registration and academic success issues. These students exhibited a fall 2015 GPA in the 1.78 to 1.94 range, suggesting that they need additional academic support/assistance. Three students (1%) were unable to get the courses they needed. These three students held an average fall 2015 GPA of 2.99. Another 161 students, 53%, were transferring out with an average fall 2015 GPA of 2.88. While advisors can and do refer at-risk students to available campus resources, Academic Affairs is unable to address this need solely on its own. Rather what is needed is a campus-wide academic success plan that identifies the specific needs currently being unmet and the resources required to meet those needs.			
Primary Point of Contact for this Activity	Name: Alan Woodrum Title: Assistant Provost Email: alanwoodrum@georgiasouthern.edu			
Summary of Activities	<p>Most of 2015-2016 was devoted to planning and organizing the applicable action teams. For example, the former Interim Provost launched a series of campus-wide Student Success Workshops, comprised of deans, associate deans, department chairs, and select faculty. This group will continue to meet periodically during the forthcoming academic year. As of the end of spring 2016, two sub-committees had been initiated: (1) to review academic policies and procedures* that may act as barriers to student success and progression and propose revisions (e.g., current academic standing policy); and (2) to expand the Early Alerts to include key core curriculum classes, incorporate "kudos," and propose 5 and 10 week reporting dates (addressed under goal 1).</p> <p>*The following data helped to identify potential academic standing policies which may be acting as a barrier to student success. A comparison of 'not registered' students from spring 2015 to spring 2016 revealed a total of 79 additional 'not registered' students for spring 2016. Twenty-</p>			

seven of the 79 students who did not register in spring 2016 had a Warning 1 academic standing. An additional 16 were on Probation 1. These two groups alone accounted for 54% of the 79 unregistered students. It is believed that the University's academic standing policy is too punitive, encouraging students to drop-out or transfer before hitting Exclusionary standing. The institution's current policy determines academic standing based upon cumulative GPA and does not account for students who may still be in academic difficulty but have a successful current semester, ending the term with a GPA of over 2.0. While a GPA above 2.0 is good, it may not be sufficient to raise the overall GPA to 2.0 or above, forcing the student into the next stage of academic standing and one step closer to Exclusion, sending negative feedback to the student despite a good academic semester performance.

GPA	Freshmen	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Total
GS	-6	19	2	7	22
G1	0	1	4	-1	4
W1	30	-10	8	-1	27
P1	7	6	5	-2	16
W2	3	8	2	-6	7
P2	1	-5	4	-1	-1
EG	0	3	1	0	4
Total	35	22	26	-4	79

Another policy that needs to be re-visited is the grade forgiveness policy. Again, the current policy mandates that all attempts at a course be included in the GPA. Ideally, a student would be allowed a set number of credits (e.g., 15 credit hours/3 courses) where they could select the higher grade only to apply to their GPA.

Measures of Progress

Metric/data element:

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

Baseline measure:

Baseline measure is the number of 'eligible to register' undergraduate students in the fall semester. While this number will vary each fall term, the objective is to reduce by 5% by the end of drop/add the following spring semester.

Interim measures of progress:

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

	Academic Standing (AS) after Spring 2016							
Spring 2016 AS	GS	W1	P1	E1	W2	P2	E2	Total
W1	212	28	698					938
P1	47		10	188				245
W2	35				4	115		154
P2	24					3	61	88
Total	318	28	708	188	4	118	61	1425
Spr 16 Term GPA Range		Spring 2016 Academic Standing						

	W1	P1	W2	P2	Total
4.0-3.0	119	40	34	22	215
2.99-2.5	116	23	23	13	175
2.49-2.25	79	19	13	10	121
2.24-2.0	94	26	15	6	141
Below 2.0	530	137	69	37	773
Total	938	245	154	88	1425

Lessons Learned	Having returned from attending the University System of Georgia’s workshop on Beyond Financial Aid, we are more cognizant of ways in which we could help students who are unable to register for financial reasons. While the University does provide some financial literacy activities, they are currently offered in a decentralized, ad hoc fashion. It would be worthwhile for us to develop an integrated and centralized message regarding financial literacy that all units could tap into when conducting their individual activities. As part of a financial literacy program, students would be informed of student loan implications and obligations as well as provided with tools for managing those funds to support their education. For example, sharing information with students on the median student loan debt by program, average starting salary in their chosen field, and the amount of time it would take them to pay back the student loan might provide them with incentives for better managing loan resources, reducing the number of students who fall into financial difficulties.
High-Impact Strategy	Reduce barriers to degree completion via participation in Gateways to Completion® and focus on intrusive advising (building relationships) to keep students on track for graduation.
Related Goal	Increase the first-time freshmen six-year graduation rate from 50.4% (fall 2009 first-time freshman cohort) to 55% by 2020.
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	While Georgia Southern has the data to indicate which gateway courses cause students the most difficulty, it is less known what the specific problems are that students have. Through implementation of Gateways to Completion®, the institution will begin to collect the data needed to identify the problems in gateway courses that can be barriers to student success and retention.
Primary Point of Contact for this Activity	Name: Alan Woodrum Title: Assistant Provost Email: alanwoodrum@georgiasouthern.edu
Summary of Activities	During summer 2016, course(s) were selected for piloting Gateways to Completion® during fall 2016. During the pilot phase, opportunities for improvement will be identified. Full implementation of Gateways to Completion® is set for spring 2017. The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) utilizes a model of intrusive advising that has also demonstrated success in converting students, who have been in academic difficulty at one or more points in their academic studies, to graduates. This model was employed to address an unmet need to serve at-risk students. Beginning in fall 2014, whenever a student falls into academic difficulty or is identified by the advisor as at-risk, the student’s regular advisor implements intrusive advising practices. Key among these practices is the use of academic success plans—multiple levels of plans that are assigned based upon the level of the student’s need. Advisors also refer students to campus resources as needed. Of the students who began fall 2013 in academic difficulty, 22 (4%) have now graduated. Of the students in academic difficulty at the start of fall 2014, 28 (4%) have now graduated. Of those in academic difficulty at the start of fall 2015, 28 (5%) have now graduated. Six percent (n=34) of students in academic difficulty at the start of spring 2016 graduated. It is hoped that Gateways to Completion® will allow us to apply similar efforts on a much broader scale.
Measures of Progress	Metric/data element: Fall Term Retention and Graduation Rates Table (http://em.georgiasouthern.edu/osra/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/fb1516.pdf , p. 50) produced by the Office of Strategic Research and Analysis, Georgia Southern University annual Fact Book. For each fall term, the table reports retention data along with the following graduation data: graduation rate cohort number, percentage

	<p>who graduated in 4 years or less, percentage who graduated in 5 years or less, and percentage who graduated in 6 years or less. For this goal, focus will be placed on the percentage of students who graduate in 6 years or less.</p> <p>Baseline measure: Fall 2009 first-time freshman cohort: 50.4%</p> <p>Interim measure of progress: Fall 2013 first-time freshman cohort: 53.0%</p> <p>One interim measure of progress will be successful launching of the Gateways to Completion® by spring 2017.</p> <p>Measures of success: Fall 2015 first-time freshman cohort: 55.0%</p>
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OBSERVATIONS

It is important to note that Georgia Southern University has a new President, Dr. Jaimie Hebert, effective as of July 1, 2016. President Hebert has already spoken about the need to revisit and revise Georgia Southern’s strategic plan. Consequently, the University’s Complete College Georgia plan will be an evolving plan as the new President highlights specific CCG-related student initiatives and/or reallocates resources to that end.

In the interim, it is recognized that ultimate success of these goals relies on campus-wide efforts and “buy-in.” Therefore, much of 2015-2016 was spent establishing faculty and staff action teams with plans to move initiatives forward through Faculty Senate during 2016-2017.

Finally, it is worth re-stating from our 2015 Complete College Georgia plan that offering incentivized tuition rates for students who take 15 credits per semester would be a very useful tool in improving progression rates.