



Savannah State University

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Savannah State University remains committed to its longstanding mission to provide access to a quality education to a diverse student population. More specifically, this mission is as follows:

Savannah State University, the oldest public historically black university in the State of Georgia, develops productive members of a global society through high quality instruction, scholarship, research, service, and community involvement. The University fosters engaged learning and personal growth in a student-centered environment that celebrates the African American legacy while nurturing a diverse student body. Savannah State University offers graduate and undergraduate studies including nationally accredited programs in the liberal arts, the sciences and the professions.

Fulfillment of our mission in the 2015-2016 academic year has meant that we have reaffirmed our vision of Savannah State University as “the institution of choice in our region, where students maximize their potential in a nurturing environment that embraces social and intellectual diversity.”

UNDERPREPARED STUDENTS

With the foregoing in mind, we also have reaffirmed our commitment to offer opportunities for higher education to students across the spectrum of academic preparedness. We enrolled 4,800 in Fall 2015. The larger portion of the student body is comprised of students who are indeed ready for college study. However, we continue to place special emphasis on serving those students in need of developmental education via learning support to ensure that they are college ready. We enroll these students through our University College program and through Limited Admission. The creation of University College (UC) at Savannah State University is predicated on the “access” component of the University’s mission. UC provides comprehensive academic support classes, services and resources specifically designed to enhance student academic achievement and success. Limited Admission refers to the Board of Regents policy (4.2.1.2) that authorizes institutions to enroll a limited number of students who do not meet established standards but do demonstrate special potential for success.

The number of freshmen enrolled in University College courses, for example, increased by almost 28 percent from Fall 2014 to Fall 2015—from 298 to 381 students.

Table 1: Students Registered in University College Courses

2012	2013	2014	2015
95	273	298	381

Our Limited Admission student numbers have varied as noted below:

Table II: Limited Admission Student Enrollment

2012	2013	2014	2015
142	190	98	56

Although students requiring learning support are still maintained at a lower rate than the overall cohort, since 2013 the percentage of UC and Limited Admissions students has steadily risen. Furthermore, the percentage of learning support students in good academic standing has increased as well. We attribute this rise, in part, to more intentional advising, and most recently, the introduction of the co-requisite course approach to learning support, which allows students to enroll simultaneously in a full credit Math or English course and a learning support course.

Table 2: Fall entering class Retention by Academic Status

Cohorts:	SP13	FA13	SP14	FA14	SP15	FA15	SP16
2012 All Frosh	92.2	70.7	62.4	48.3	45.5	39.3	37.7
2012 Univ. College	86.0	67.0	54.0	38.0	25.0	33.0	31.0
2012 Frosh Limited	90.8	74.6	65.5	46.5	43.0	38	36.6
2013 All Frosh			91.2	65.7	58.6	46.5	43.9
2013 Univ. College			94.1	70.1	62.5	52.9	47.8
2013 Frosh Limited			90.4	61.1	50.5	39.5	36.8
2014 All Frosh					89.7	61.2	54.6
2014 Univ. College					92.4	62.0	55.9
2014 Frosh Limited					78.6	50.0	42.9

Table 3: % Fall 2012 Cohorts in Good Academic Standing

	SP13	FA13	SP14	FA14	SP15	FA15	SP16
All Frosh	78.1%	83.9%	84.9%	83.7	84.2	88.4	95.3
University College	54.7%	53.7%	66.7%	52.6	54.3	66.7	90.3
Frosh Limited	73.6%	82.1%	79.6%	81.8	80.3	90.7	94.2

FINANCIAL AID

The student body of the institution continues to consist of first generation learners and students with a high need for financial aid. The percentage of first-year SSU students who received some form of financial aid was 100 percent in Fall 2015, as was the case in Fall 2014. However, 72.4 percent of these students were PELL eligible in 2015 as opposed to 80.4 percent, in 2014, an 8 percent decrease in the number of PELL eligible first-time freshmen.

Table 4: Students on Financial Aid as % of Fall Undergrads

	2012		2013		2014		2015	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Undergrads	4393	100%	4765	100%	4845	100%	4645	100%
Pell	3624	82.5%	3905	82.0%	3897	80.4%	3364	72.4%
Hope	780	17.8%	929	19.5%	987	20.4%	823	17.7%
Federal Loans	4322	98.4%	4625	97.1%	4509	93.1%	3784	92.9%

Summary of Goals, High Impact Strategies, and Activities

We have continued to implement the high impact strategies and activities listed in this section with the long-term goal

High Impact Strategy:	Intrusive advising and graduation coaching for students with 90 or more earned credit hours								
Related Goal:	Goal One: Increase the total number of students applying for graduation each academic year when eligible								
Primary Point of Contact	Danita Townsend Retention Coordinator townsendd@savannahstate.edu								
Summary of Activities	Faculty advisors continued to implement the strategy of more intentional tracking of students with 90 or more credit hours. Strategic meetings between students and faculty advisors were conducted to ensure that students eligible to graduate submitted applications for graduation and resolved any missing requirements.								
Measures of Success	<p>Progress is demonstrated by an Increase in the number of students who participated in strategic advising sessions after earning 90 credit hours or more in a degree program and an increase in the number of applications for graduation that result from targeted meetings between students and faculty advisors.</p> <p>An increase in the number of students who earned degrees over three consecutive academic years, speaks to the successful impact of more intrusive advising.</p> <p>Table 5: Baseline Data- Increase in number of students who are degree complete at the end of the academic year</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>AY 2013-2014</th> <th>AY 2014-2015</th> <th>AY 2015-2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Undergraduate</td> <td>458</td> <td>498</td> <td>521</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		AY 2013-2014	AY 2014-2015	AY 2015-2016	Undergraduate	458	498	521
	AY 2013-2014	AY 2014-2015	AY 2015-2016						
Undergraduate	458	498	521						

of increasing both the actual number of graduates in an academic year and the overall graduation rate. We have enhanced our approach to student advising, mentoring and coaching and expanded our financial literacy initiative. We have also enhanced and expanded online education. We also continue to work to put in place those systems that will facilitate all of our efforts to increase student success and degree completion.

The following goals remain our major focus as pathways to increased matriculation, progression and completion by SSU students: 1. Increase the total number of students applying for graduation each academic year when eligible. 2. Increase the number of students who are able to re-direct a high number of credits in varying subject areas to a four-year degree. 3. Increase first- and second-year retention through high-touch academic advising and mentoring. 4. Increase the number of alternative pathways to earning a baccalaureate degree. 5. Restructure educational delivery to support educational excellence and student support.

High-impact strategy	Continuation of an Interdisciplinary Studies Degree Program
Related Goal	Goal Two: Increase the number of students are able to re-direct a high number of credits in varying subject areas to a four-year degree
Primary Point of Contact	Dr. Andrew Lewis Director, Interdisciplinary Studies Program, Associate Professor of English lewismi@savannahstate.edu
Summary of Activities	We have engaged in more intentional recruitment of students into the Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) bachelor's degree program. The focus is still on enabling primarily those students who have earned a high number of credits from multiple disciplines to apply those credits to one degree program. There is intrusive advisement of students whose profiles align well with this degree program.
Measures of Success	Approximately 70 students potentially will have a decreased time to completion of their bachelor's degree as a result of transitioning to the Interdisciplinary Studies Program from 2013-2014 to 2015-2015. The number of degrees awarded has increased steadily over these three

	academic years—from none in the first year to 10 in 2015-2016.			
	Table 6			
		AY 13-14	AY 14-15	AY 15-16
	Number of students whose time to degree completion is reduced as a result of switch.	11	31	30
	Number of IDS degrees awarded	0	2	10
Lessons Learned	To ensure that IDS students are able to create and experience an intentional, cohesive degree program from a diverse collection of courses, we must offer an introduction to interdisciplinary studies course and a capstone course. In the interim, the director of the program does intentional advisement around graduate school pathways while career services assists with career focus.			

High-impact strategy	Implementation of Co-requisite Learning Support Courses
Related Goal	Goal 7: Increase the likelihood of degree completion by transforming the way remediation is accomplished.
Primary Point of Contact	Mary Ann Goldwire Interim Director - Center for Academic Success goldwire@savannahstate.edu
Summary of Activities	Learning Support courses help students strengthen their skills in reading, writing and math. Students who are placed at the co-requisite level will enroll in the Area A for English (1101) and/or Math (Math 1001, 1101 or 1111), depending on the student's major) along with a required co-requisite support class. Fulfillment of the learning support requirement consists of passing the Area A class with a grade of C or better. The learning support co-requisites for English was piloted in Spring semester of 2015 (with one English 1101/paired with ENG 0099 as the co-requisite). The full implementation of new English and math curriculum with co-requisites and all new policy guidelines was in effect by Fall 2015.
Measures of Progress and Success	By implementing this strategy more students are successful in passing the courses for Area A, which allows more students to progress and thus, shorten the time to degree completion. Assessment metrics include the percentage of students who complete learning support requirements on the first attempt and the success rate for students in the core course paired with the learning support course. Some indication of success is demonstrated by the percentage of learning support students in good academic standing as indicated in Table 3 above.
Lessons Learned	Ongoing training for faculty teaching the core courses and co-requisite courses could increase the success of this initiative. Establishment of summer workshops or programs to increase test preparation and overall college readiness for students would also be beneficial, especially for those students requiring the Accuplacer test for early intervention and placement.

High-impact strategy	Increase First-and-Second-Year Retention Through High-Touch Academic Advising and Mentoring
Related Goal	Goal 4: Provide intentional advising to keep students on track to graduate
Primary Point of Contact	Mary Ann Goldwire Interim Director-Center for Academic Success goldwire@savannahstate.edu
Summary of Activities	<p>Advising is a key dimension as we seek to keep students on track to degree completion. Currently, all students up to 60 earned hours are assigned to professional advisors in the Center for Academic Success (CAS). We have implemented D2L and partially implemented DegreeWorks to facilitate the tracking of the advising process. We are also implementing the EAB Student Success Collaborative to support academic advising.</p> <p>Prior to 2015-2016, implementation of EAB-Student Success Collaborative was in a pilot phase at SSU. Several faculty and professional advisors participated in the pilot. Savannah State University is still in its early stage of implementing this predictive analytics tool to support academic advising and student degree completion. This tool will impact all students, faculty and advisors on campus by providing data about individual student progress and likelihood of completion; course success and risk profiles; and student at-risk information for entire degree programs and colleges. (Full implementation of the Student Success Collaborative will occur during the 2016-2017 academic year.)</p> <p>The Academic Coach program in the Center for Academic Success helps at risk students who develop a personalized plan for maintaining or returning to good academic standing. Each coaching session is determined collaboratively by the student and coach. These coaches also work with the professional advisors and tutorial services to ensure student success.</p> <p>Tutoring plays an integral role in student success at Savannah State University. Peer and professional tutors are provided free of charge for all students enrolled in core curriculum subjects. Tutors for higher level and major courses are also available in Biology, Chemistry, Accounting, Finance and Statistics. Additional courses are added upon request from students and faculty.</p>
Measures of Progress and Success	<p>Of the 1157 first time, full time freshmen who entered Savannah State University in Fall 2015, 798 (68%) had at least one advising session with CAS staff. The aim is to increase the engagement with students through continuous use of the predictive analytic tools we are implementing. Assessment metrics for EAB will include advisor utilization data for the software tool, student recovery data from at risk to not-at-risk status, and degree completion rates for students identified as at risk.</p> <p>Moving forward, assessment metrics include percentage of students who meet with a CAS advisor and retention rates for first-and second-year students who participate in advising (data from Grades First).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student satisfaction survey for academic advising/tutoring/workshops • Sign-In-Log sheets (for academic coaches, professional advisors and tutorial services) • Notes in Grades First to track advisement appointments, coaching appointments and students who are at risk • Final semester grades for students who receive interventions <p>The ultimate measure of success will be an Increase in the percentage of students in good academic standing and retention at end of first and second year. Use of Student Success Collaborative tool will be an indicator of students whose risk level decreases (when fully implemented).</p>
Lessons Learned	Full implementation and use of the advising tools we have acquired require that all relevant stakeholders are immediately informed about the value of the tools and trained in how to use them. Collaboration between professional advisors in CAS and faculty advisors in the departments will ensure that students have a consistent advisement experience throughout and beyond the first two years.

High-impact strategy	Development of a Financial Literacy Program
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Related Goal	Goal 9: Improve access for underserved and/or priority communities
Primary Point of Contact	Christopher Corinthian Financial Literacy Coordinator corinthianc@savannahstate.edu
Summary of Activities	The purpose of this strategy is to assist the high volume of students at risk for dropping out or stopping out of school due to lack of financial resources (after all eligible federal aid applied). Some of the activities underway prior to 2015-2016 were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The integration of a Financial Literacy Portal available for all students; • Requiring First Year Students (through First Year Experience/Freshman Seminar courses) to complete budget creation activities, and applying for a set number of scholarships for an assignment grade. (The Freshman Class has made up nearly 50% of the student body for the past two years.)
Measures of Progress and Success	We are tracking student participation in required First Year Experience Freshman seminar as well as use of all students' use of the Financial Literacy Portal. The use of the Financial Literacy program activities increased from 456 users in 2014-2015 to 907 users in 2015-2016, an increase of 98.9 percent.
Lessons Learned	More on-campus workshops and seminars have been scheduled for the entire campus community. We also need to get buy-in from College Deans and Department Chairs to collaborate with them to offer some type of participation credits for their classes, etc. for the Financial Literacy activities. The Scholly scholarship app is being introduced to students during the 2016-2017 academic year to facilitate their search for financial support.

High-impact strategy	Operations of the Office for Online Education
Related Goal	Goal 8: Restructure instructional delivery to support educational excellence and student success.
Primary Point of Contact	Frank D. Williams Director for Online Education williamsf@savannahstate.edu
Summary of Activities	The Office of Online Education creates a great win/win scenario for Savannah State University. In 2015-2016, students were able to select from over 150 fully and partially online courses as well as over 200 eCore course sections. Launch of eCore courses through official eCore Affiliation: Savannah State University has become an eCore affiliate. eCore is a popular option for our students and faculty with SSU ranking in the upper half or better among eCore affiliates. Launch of the online Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA): There are approximately 40 students enrolled. The BBA online is poised for growth and with some marketing, we know the program number will rise. Launch of Instructional Webinar Training for SSU Faculty to ensure that all online courses are Section 508 Compliant. Our goal is to develop three more fully online degree programs and continue to increase the number of online course offerings.
Measures of Progress and Success	The number of SSU faculty (15) teaching for eCore is increasing. Not only does SSU advertise eCore, but SSU is also listed on the GeorgiaOnMyLine website. Our Learning Management System Administrator is the onsite registrar for eCore and we also have an eCore liaison on campus who provides advisement. The number of SSU fully and partially online courses offered is holding steady; there were over 100 fully and partially online courses offered in all sessions in SPR 2016 and in Fall 2016. SSU students enrolling in eCore courses number 256 students (in 344 eCore sections). Also, Savannah ranks fifth in the State in the number of eCore website hits—over 5,000, a

	number that reveals the level of online interest in our city.
Lessons Learned	To increase the capacity of the Office of Online Education we must hire an instructional designer to lead the development of fully online programs and to offer more intense training sessions. Secondly, we need an administrative support person to respond to calls and emails during the normal work day, and assist with running, monitoring, and troubleshooting work related to USG scripts and reports, maintaining media resources, and corresponding with faculty and students who visit or the Online Office.

OBSERVATIONS

Savannah State University will continue to develop and implement intentional and intrusive programs and activities to help ensure success and completion of degrees by students across the spectrum of preparedness—from our high performing students to those who come to us underprepared academically. Beyond the strategies outlined in this report, SSU will develop a Summer Success Program for students who are especially challenged in meeting admission criteria. Simultaneously, we will enhance our honors program and build more undergraduate research opportunities to further challenge and prepare our high achieving students. We have recently hired a Retention Coordinator to assist in our process of assessing, restructuring and retooling our approach to advising.

We are also committed to boosting the number of high school students taking college level courses at Savannah State through dual enrollment programs *Early College* and *Move on When Ready*. Furthermore, by Fall 2017, we will put in place an initiative that will enable these students to graduate with both a high school diploma and an associate’s degree.