



University of West Georgia

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

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

The University of West Georgia has 85 active programs of study, including 42 at the bachelor's level, 29 at the master's and specialist levels, four at the doctoral level, and 10 at the advanced certificate level. The university awarded 2,442 degrees and awards in fiscal year 2015. The number conferred has risen since fiscal year 2009 when the university awarded 1,895 degrees. This represents an increase of 29%.

There were 12,834 students enrolled in Fall 2015: 10,753 at the undergraduate level and 2,081 at the graduate level. Overall enrollment at UWG has grown 14% since the Fall 2008 semester. UWG has a diverse student population: 53.2% are Caucasian, 36.0% are African-American/Black American, 4.6% are Hispanic, 2.8% are of mixed race, 1.4% are Asian, 1.7% did not declare any race, 0.2% are American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 0.1% are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Ninety-six percent of the student body was from Georgia and represented 42 different counties. Carroll, Cobb, Coweta, Douglas, and Cobb were the five counties with the largest numbers of students at UWG. There were 549 out-of-state students representing 45 of the 49 remaining states. Alabama, Florida, California, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee were the top states sending students to UWG. Additionally, there were 345 students from 71 countries. Canada, China, India, Jamaica, Nigeria, Germany, and Ghana were the top countries sending students to UWG.

The number of students eligible for the Pell grant has steadily increased in the past five years. In the Fall 2009 semester, 44.66% of the undergraduate population was Pell eligible. The fall semester of 2010 saw an increase when 52.16% of UWG students were Pell eligible. The percentage held at 52% in the 2011 and 2012 fall semesters. In Fall 2013, the percentage of students who were Pell eligible rose to 55.24%. Our percentage of Pell eligible students has decreased slightly in the past two years, to 53.6% in Fall 2014 and 51.9% in Fall 2015.

The University of West Georgia has been committed to providing access to college for students in the western region of the state, as well as students from across the state of Georgia and the nation. Given the makeup of our student population and demographic trends in our region and in response to the Complete College Georgia (CCG) imperatives, the university is taking a more directed approach to helping our students with course progression and degree attainment. This commitment to progression and attainment has helped the university identify and implement five high impact strategies to help our students successfully obtain a degree. These high impact strategies are discussed in Section 2 of this report.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS, HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES, & ACTIVITIES

High-impact strategy	Change institutional culture to emphasize taking full-time course-loads (15 or more credits per semester) to earn degrees on-time.
Related Goal	Goal 2. Increase the number of degrees that are earned on time.
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	<p>This high impact strategy is aligned with two of UWG’s Student Success strategic imperative goals:</p> <p>Goal A. Increase student persistence and timely progression to degree attainment.</p> <p>Goal D, Action 1: Provide quality academic advising experiences with emphasis on effective academic planning, early identification of a major for undergraduates, and a clear pathway to student accountability and self-sufficiency.</p>
Primary Point of Contact	John Head, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management jhead@westga.edu
Summary of Activities	<p>Prior to AY 2015-2016, professional advisors in the Advising Center as well as those in the College of Education, Richards College of Business, and School of Nursing advised students in their first and second years to register for 15 or more hours each semester.</p> <p>In AY 15-16, we continued this strategy, and many of our advisors set performance evaluation goals connected to this initiative. Additionally, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs and Enrollment Management collaborated to increase core seat offerings to ensure students are able to take 15 or more hours each semester.</p>
Measures of Progress and Success	
Measure, metric, or data element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of students who enroll in 15+ credit hours each term • Percentage of students who meet 30-60 hour benchmarks • First and Second year retention rates • Four- and six-year graduation rates
Baseline measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Fall 2014, 20.3% of students were enrolled in 15+ credit hours. This percentage has increased steadily since 2011. • At the end of Spring 2015, 18.5% of students earned fewer than 30 hours, 27.7% of students earned 30-59 hours, and 22.1% of students earned 60-89 hours. • Our first year retention rate for Fall 2013 entering students was 74.1% for full-time students. Second year retention for these students was 59.1% • Our 4-year graduation rate for students who entered in Fall 2008 was 15.7%. Their 6-year graduate rate was 40.6%.
Interim Measures of Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the freshman who entered in Fall 2015, 37.3% enrolled in 15 or more hours. This is a huge increase from Fall 2014, when only 20.3% of students were enrolled in 15+ credit hours. • 27.2% met the 30-hour benchmark by the end of Spring 2016 and 22.2% met the 60-hour benchmark. There was a very slight decrease at the 30-hour benchmark and a very slight increase at the 60-hour benchmark.
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our 1st year retention rate dropped slightly, from 74.1% to 72.3%. Our second year retention rate rose from 59.1% to 66.3% • Our 4-year graduation rate was 15.6% (a very slight decrease), and our 6-year graduate rate was 39.0% (a slight decrease) <p>5-Year data on students successfully completing between 15 and 29 and 30+ credit hours in their first year are provided in Appendix Table 1. 5-Year data on 4-year graduation rates are provided in Appendix Table 2.</p>
Lessons Learned	Once we began advising students in the 15-to-finish model, we noticed an uptick in the number of students and parents who were concerned that if a student enrolled in 14 hours in their first Fall term, they would not be on track to graduate on time. Advisors changed their

	<p>strategy to stress the importance of students completing 30 hours during the first academic year rather than completing 15 each term. Also, a high number of UWG students work part- or full-time jobs, making it difficult for them to take a full academic load and be successful while working. Because a large number of our students must work while in school, advisors suggest they also take courses in the summer and work to complete 30 hours per year across the Fall, Spring, and Summer terms.</p> <p>Another lesson learned is that taking 15 hours per semester works for most, but not all, majors, and thus some majors (nursing, for example) require more individualized advising based on programmatic requirements.</p> <p>Finally, while we have been successful in advising a greater number of students to take 15 or more hours per semester, we have not been using this advising method long enough to determine its effect on retention or graduation rates.</p>
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High-impact strategy	Offer block schedules for students in meta-majors or majors for the first semester or first year.
Related Goal	<p>Goal 2. Increase the number of degrees that are earned on time.</p> <p>Goal 3. Decrease excess credits earned on the path to getting a degree.</p>
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	<p>This high impact strategy is aligned with two of UWG’s Student Success strategic imperative goals:</p> <p>Goal A. Increase student persistence and timely progression to degree attainment.</p> <p>Goal D, Action 1: Provide quality academic advising experiences with emphasis on effective academic planning, early identification of a major for undergraduates, and a clear pathway to student accountability and self-sufficiency.</p>
Primary Point of Contact	<p>Elizabeth Kramer, Associate Dean of the College of Arts & Humanities ekramer@westga.edu</p>
Summary of Activities	<p>The ACCESS pilot project received funding for the 2014-2015 academic year as part of the USG CCG Innovation Grant program. That year we had two block programs: one for B.A. majors and one for B.F.A. majors. We intended for the program to increase the number of hours students earned each semester and create a cohort-based course schedule to ensure students had the courses they needed to progress through their majors.</p> <p>During the 2015-2016 year, we ran two ACCESS block, one for BA/BFA majors in Art, and another for students majoring in Theatre.</p>
Measure of Progress and Success	
Measure, metric, or data element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of first-time, first-semester students enrolled in block schedules • Credit hours earned at the end of the 1st and 2nd years • 1st and 2nd year retention rate • Cumulative GPA
Baseline measures	<p>In the 2014-2015 Academic Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14.6% of BA/BFA majors were enrolled in block schedules • Average credit hours earned at the end of the 1st year was 29.5 for BA and 32.0 for BFA students, compared to 27.1 for non-ACCESS BA/BFA students. • Cumulative GPAs were 2.88 for BA and 3.09 for BFA students, compared to 2.93 for non-ACCESS BA/BFA students.
Interim Measures of Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13.0% of BA/BFA majors in Art and Theatre were in an ACCESS block
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Fall 2014 ACCESS students, average credit hours was 56.0 for BA students and 56.8 for BFA students, compared to 53.3 for non-ACCESS BA/BFA students.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2nd year retention rate for students who started ACCESS in Fall 2014 was 58% for BA students and 75% for BFA students, compared to 57% for non-ACCESS BA/BFA students. • For Fall 2015 ACCESS students, average credit hours was 31.3 for BFA/BA-Art students and 28.6 for Theatre students, compared to 24.9 for non-ACCESS students in art and theatre. • The 1st year retention rate for students who started ACCESS in Fall 2015 was 95% for Art and 88% for Theatre, compared to 80% for non-ACCESS BA/BFA students. • Cumulative GPA was 3.21 for BA/BFA Art students and 2.75 for Theatre students, compared to 2.68 to non-ACCESS BA/BFA students. <p>5-Year history data on number of collegiate credits earned at degree conferral for students earning a bachelor’s degree is provided in Appendix Table 3.</p>
Lessons Learned	<p>Although our data clearly show that students in the ACCESS blocks earn more credits than their non-ACCESS peers in similar majors, we continue to struggle to find a sustainable approach to using block scheduling and taking it to scale. It requires a significant amount of planning from various offices on campus to ensure coherence in recruitment, identifying courses, creating schedules, and registering students. Further, the model is most successful when faculty who teach within the cohorts are able to plan together, which requires a significant amount of time and can be hampered when teaching assignments are changed at the last minute.</p>

High-impact strategy	Use SSC-Campus predictive analytics to help identify students who are off track and to help students understand their likelihood of success in particular programs.
Related Goal	Goal 4. Provide intentional advising to keep students on track to graduate.
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	<p>This high priority strategy is aligned with two of UWG’s Student Success strategic imperative goals:</p> <p>Goal A. Increase student persistence and timely progression to degree attainment.</p> <p>Goal D, Action 1: Provide quality academic advising experiences with emphasis on effective academic planning, early identification of a major for undergraduates, and a clear pathway to student accountability and self-sufficiency.</p> <p>We consider this to be a high priority strategy because of the significant investment we have made in the EAB-SSC system.</p>
Primary Point of Contact	<p>John Head, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management jhead@westga.edu</p> <p>Myrna Gantner, Interim Provost mgantner@westga.edu</p>
Summary of Activities	<p>Prior to the 2015-2016 academic year, UWG piloted the EAB Student Success Collaborative with three groups of professional advisors: pre-nursing, business, and the Advising Center.</p> <p>The pilot was scaled up in September 2015, and all professional and faculty advisors were trained to use EAB-SSC. This resulted in full implementation beginning Spring 2016.</p>
Measures of Progress and Success	
Measure, metric, or data element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students who meet 30-60-90 hour benchmarks. • 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year retention rates • Number of hours attempted and earned at graduation • Four- and six-year graduation rates
Baseline measures	<p>In the 2014-2015 Academic Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27.7% of students met the 30-hour benchmark, 22.1% met the 60-hour benchmark, and 17.6% met the 90-hour benchmark.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year retention rates were 71.1%, 56.0%, and 49.6%, respectively. • The number of credit hours attempted and earned at graduation was 134.4. • Our 4-year graduation rate for students who entered in Fall 2008 was 15.7%. Their 6-year graduate rate was 40.6%.
<p>Interim Measures of Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of students who met 60-hour benchmarks was up, but the percentage who met 30- and 90-hour benchmarks was down: • 30-hour benchmark was down very slightly from 27.7% to 27.2% • 60-hour benchmark was up from 22.1% to 22.8% • 90-hour benchmark was down from 17.6% to 16.8%
<p>Measures of Success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year retention rates were 71.8%, 57.0%, and 49.9%, respectively. These are increases from the previous year. • The number of credit hours attempted and earned at graduation was 132.8, down from 134.4 the previous year. • Our 4-year graduation rate was 15.6% (a very slight decrease), and our 6-year graduate rate was 39.0% (a slight decrease) <p>5-Year percentage of credits successfully completed versus attempted in each Fall semester is provided in Appendix Table 4.</p>
<p>Lessons Learned</p>	<p>Our professional advisors are consistently and effectively using SSC-Campus to provide targeted advising to students to keep them on track to graduation. However, we need to ensure that all faculty advisors have received the training they need to successfully use SSC-Campus and that they are expected to use the system so that advising is consistent across all colleges that have their own advising centers.</p> <p>In our Advising Center, we discovered that there are specific campaigns all advisors need to run to retain students. For example, a target group for us is students who are at risk for losing their HOPE scholarship or other financial aid. We now ensure we use SSC-Campus to catch these students, and then we work with them to keep them eligible for financial aid.</p> <p>We are also putting greater effort into using SSC-Campus to work with our “murky middle” students, rather than focus significant time and energy working with students at the very bottom academically who have very little chance of being successful.</p>

High-impact strategy	Participate in dual enrollment or joint enrollment programs for high school students.
Related Goal	Goal 6. Shorten time to degree completion through programs that allow students to earn college credit while still in high school and by awarding credit for prior learning that is verified by appropriate assessment.
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	<p>This high impact strategy is aligned with two of UWG’s Student Success strategic imperative goals:</p> <p>Goal B. Attract students with characteristics consistent with our vision and mission who will choose UWG as a top choice institution.</p> <p>Goal B, Action 2: Create a comprehensive recruitment plan that will serve as a pipeline for all student populations.</p>
Primary Point of Contact	April Wood, Associate Director of Move On When Ready awood@westga.edu
Summary of Activities	<p>Prior to AY 2015-2016, the Carrollton City and Carroll County Education Collaborative (CCEC) partnership was established by UWG, with dual enrollment (DE) as one of its top priorities for our region. A CCEC sub-committee on DE recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DE courses be offered at the Newnan Center (which opened August 2015) • Implementing strategies to increase enrollment (e.g., convenient scheduling for high school students, early planning for course offerings, and hiring a Pre-College Program Coordinator), and • Providing eCore options for high school students. <p>In AY 15-16, we added a new staff member for MOWR by reallocating resources from the Advanced Academy, allowing UWG to expand our reach and serve more high schools. Currently there are two full-time staff for MOWR (an Associate Director and coordinator) and a graduate assistant. We currently offer dual enrollment courses on our Carrollton and Newnan locations, and through eCore.</p>
Measures of Progress and Success	
Measure, metric, or data element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students enrolled in dual enrollment each term at Carrollton, Newnan, and through eCore. • Number of credit hours earned through dual enrollment each term. • Success rates of students in dual enrollment each term (i.e., grades of A, B, and C).
Baseline measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In AY 2014-2015: • 189 students were enrolled in dual enrollment. • Students earned 2,224 credit hours. • 93.6% of dual enrollment students earned an A,B, C, or S in their coursework. <p>Note: MOWR students are able to enroll in 26 out of the 27 eCore classes offered. We currently have 172 enrolled in eCore for the Fall.</p>
Interim Measures of Progress	For 2015-2016, the unduplicated head count for number of students enrolled was 446, a 136% increase from the previous year.
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit hours earned by MOWR students increased from 2,224 to 6,034 (a 171% increase). • 91.2% of students earned an A, B, C, or S in their coursework, a decrease from the previous year. <p>The percentage of students who continued at UWG as full-time freshmen was 56%, up from 52% the previous year.</p>
Lessons Learned	Our biggest challenge in increasing our MOWR numbers relates to the use of the GAfutures funding application. This process requires multiple steps and is tedious and time consuming for all parties. The deadlines can be unrealistic, especially for the Summer term, because high

	<p>school counselors are on summer break. It is also challenging to get the student to check their email and follow the instructions. To deal with this issue at UWG, we have implemented a policy whereby students cannot be advised for the next semester until their funding application has been completed and turned in to UWG. We are also relying on other forms of communication—beyond email—to communicate with students.</p>
<p>High-impact strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award credit based on Advanced Placement scores/exams. • Award credit based on International Baccalaureate scores/exams. • Award credit based on assessment of prior learning via CLEP scores. • Award credit based on departmental exams.
<p>Related Goal</p>	<p>Goal 6. Shorten time to degree completion through programs that allow students to earn college credit while still in high school and by awarding credit for prior learning that is verified by appropriate assessment.</p>
<p>Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact</p>	<p>This high impact strategy is aligned with two of UWG’s Student Success strategic imperative goals:</p> <p><u>Goal B.</u> Attract students with characteristic consistent with our vision and mission who will choose UWG as a top choice institution.</p> <p><u>Goal B, Action 2:</u> Create a comprehensive recruitment plan that will serve as a pipeline for all student populations.</p> <p>This strategy provides students, including adult learners and those with some college credit, to receive credit for prior learning.</p>
<p>Primary Point of Contact</p>	<p>Myrna Gantner, Interim Provost mgantner@westga.edu</p> <p>David Jenks, Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs djenks@westga.edu</p>
<p>Summary of Activities</p>	<p>Prior to the 2015-2016 academic year, UWG had policies in place to award credit for AP, IB, and CLEP exams.</p> <p>In Spring 2016, 13 students enrolled in the PLA portfolio creation course as part of the portfolio assessment pilot project. Eight students submitted portfolios for assessment, and 3 were granted course credit. In Summer 2016, two students submitted portfolios and both were granted credit. In Summer 2016, we concluded the portfolio assessment pilot project, and AVP David Jenks was tasked with expanding portfolio assessment campus-wide. We’ve also begun our initial planning to be able to award credit based on ACE scores.</p>
<p>Measures of Progress and Success</p>	
<p>Measure, metric, or data element</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of credits awarded based on AP, IB, CLEP, and UWG Departmental Exams scores/exams
<p>Baseline measures</p>	<p>For the 2014-2015 academic year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP credits: 1464; IB credits: 60; CLEP credits: 574; UWG Departmental Exam credits: 1592
<p>Interim Measures of Progress</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Measures of Success</p>	<p>For the 2015-2016 academic year:</p> <p>AP credits: 1847 (26% increase from the previous year); IB credits: 75 (25% increase); CLEP credits: 514 (11% decrease); UWG Departmental Exam credits: 1843 (16% increase). Overall, there was a 16% increase from the previous year.</p> <p>5-Year data are provided in Appendix Table 5.</p>
<p>Lessons Learned</p>	<p>Departments are in the process of reviewing courses that are available for prior learning</p>

	<p>assessment (PLA) credit through CLEP, challenge exams, and portfolio. Departmental representatives will provide a list of classes that can be offered under any of these three methods (due date is October 2016). One challenge will be to ensure that each department has multiple certified assessors for portfolio assessment, using options such as DePaul, CAEL, and Kennesaw. Departments will have to determine how best to pay for assessor training. We are also examining ways to create in-house certification rather than rely on outside assessors.</p> <p>We have completed a sample review of veterans' transcripts to identify ACE credit that was awarded or requested but not awarded. We then developed procedural guidelines for all departments to use when they receive requests to review ACE courses for academic credit. Finally, the institution is developing an ACE credit course equivalency chart that will list every ACE course and equivalent UWG course based on review by faculty disciplinary experts.</p>
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OBSERVATIONS

The strategies that were most effective for us were (1) changing the institutional culture to emphasize taking full-time course-loads (15 or more credits per semester) to earn degrees on-time and (2) the use of predictive analytics through SSC-Campus to identify students who are off track and help them understand their likelihood of success in particular programs. We have a larger percentage of students taking full course loads, and we have been able to create targeted advising campaigns, using SSC-Campus, to keep our students on track to graduate, to get them the targeted help they need to be successful, and to help them find a major that is a good fit for them. Based on our lessons learned as described in this report, we have made small modifications to these strategies to better support our students, and we expect these to have a positive effect.

Offering block schedules for students in meta-majors or majors for the first semester or first year has been a successful strategy for us in terms of helping students earn more course credits as well as increasing their academic success in the first year, but the strategy remains challenging to take to scale due to how difficult it is to coordinate such blocks. At this time, we will continue to offer blocks for programs that are willing to invest the time needed to plan, coordinate, and implement the strategy.

This year's report does not include strategies we have reported on in the past, including the use of supplemental instruction (SI) and using alternative delivery models (online learning). We are continuing to grow our online delivery models, including adding new courses and programs. This year we added an online Bachelor of Science with a major in Organizational Leadership as part of the USG eMajor initiative. This affordable program includes flexible 8-week terms and offers a wide array of credit for prior learning as well as transfer credit. We are growing our SI program, which continues to be an effective method for supporting students academically. Our data indicate that students who participate in SI earn higher grades than non-participants, that there is a positive correlation between number of sessions attended and course grade, and that student retention is high for students who take part in SI. Our current challenge is finding space on campus for the number of SI sessions needed.

As we look ahead, one of our priorities is to provide program maps that plot a degree path, reduce choice, and include math pathways. This Fall, these program maps were completed all of our undergraduate programs, and they are available online at https://www.westga.edu/student-services/advising/program_maps.php. Another priority is to examine the ways alternative delivery models such as hybrid and flipped classes and emporium models can be used to support student success. Even more important than the delivery models themselves, however, is incorporating evidence-based teaching practices (regardless of delivery model) that best support active, engaged learning. As part of our campus-wide LEAP and Gateways to Completion (G2C) work, we will continue to focus our energies on course redesign that can best support student success.

We are also working to expand opportunities for students to be awarded credit through portfolio review and through ACE courses. We pilot tested our portfolio creation course last year and awarded credit to five students. We are currently examining ways to create in-house certification for faculty assessors rather than rely on outside assessors for portfolio review. In addition, UWG has developed procedures guidelines for all academic departments for reviewing ACE courses for credit. This year we expect to increase our number of credits earned through portfolio review and ACE courses.