



AUGUSTA
UNIVERSITY

Augusta University

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Founded in 1828, Augusta University (AU) is one of Georgia's four comprehensive research institutions and has the unique designation as the state's only public, academic health center. With its charge to serve the entire state of Georgia, AU offers a broad range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional academic programs in traditional liberal arts, allied health sciences, cyber studies, business, education, nursing, dental medicine, and medicine programs – making AU one of a handful of institutions in the United States with this curricular array. This curricular array and our proximity to NSA Georgia, the U.S. Army Cyber Protection Brigade, the soon-to-be relocated U.S. Army Cyber Command, and the Georgia Cyber Center provide AU a unique opportunity to serve the state of Georgia by providing strong pathways for health and cyber sciences. In its fifth year of institutional transformation, AU has launched a new strategic plan, *Beyond Boundaries*, which places student success at the core of its vision to become a top-tier university that is a destination of choice for education, health care, discovery, creativity, and innovation. AU is leveraging this transformation to attract highly talented students and faculty, and provide students a course to discover their potential.

More than 6,600 faculty and staff members serve over 8,800 undergraduate, graduate and professional students enrolled in 10 schools or colleges. AU delivers 43 undergraduate majors, 51 undergraduate and graduate certificates, and 53 graduate and professional programs and is home to the state's flagship public medical school and only dental school. In fall 2017, Augusta University enrolled 5,290 undergraduate students at the institution, representing an increase of 158 students from fall 2016. The vast majority of our undergraduate students are from the state of Georgia (88% vs. 10% out-of-state and 1% international; 1% undeclared). Most undergraduate students (80%) were enrolled full time, 63% were from the local area, and 67% of the undergraduate student body was female. The ethnic diversity of the student body remained comparable to previous years (45% racial/ethnic minority status), with slight increases in our multiethnic and Asian student populations: 53% White; 24% Black (Non-Hispanic origin); 7% Hispanic; 7% multiracial; 5% Asian; <1% American Indian or Alaska Native; <1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and 2% unknown or non-disclosed. The average age of our undergraduate student body was 22.7 years. The six most popular majors were: Biology/Cell and Molecular Biology, Nursing, Kinesiology, Psychology, Business Administration, and Computer Science. Approximately 76% of the fall 2017 incoming cohort of new freshmen had a freshman index meeting or exceeding the research institution minimum of 2500. To better serve Augusta, we have entered into partnership with East Georgia State College (EGSC) to provide an access point for local students who may not meet AU's admission criteria. As of spring 2018, 252 students have benefited from this partnership by successfully transferring to Augusta from EGSC. These enrollment patterns and demographics of our undergraduate students continue to inform the development of Augusta University's student success initiatives.

INSTITUTIONAL HIGH IMPACT STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES, AND OUTCOMES

Augusta University's completion strategy focuses on increasing the number of degrees and certificates awarded and on improving retention, persistence, and graduation rates for undergraduate students. Our efforts have targeted faculty, academic program development, specific undergraduate populations, and the entire undergraduate population. In 2017-2018, AU continued to prioritize its CCG goals from the previous year:

- Goal 1: Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded,
- Goal 2: Increase the number of degrees that are earned "on-time,"
- Goal 3: Decrease excess credits earned on the path to getting a degree, and
- Goal 4: Provide intrusive advising to keep students on track to graduate.

Our strategies, activities, and outcomes will be summarized below as appropriate for each goal.

GOAL 1: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES AWARDED.

In accordance with CCG's primary aim to "rapidly increase the proportion of young adults with a high quality certificate or degree," Augusta University established a goal to increase the number of degrees awarded per year. The number of degrees and certificates awarded annually continued its upward trend in 2017-2018.

Number of Credentials Awarded per Year by Augusta University

	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018
Degrees	874	980	1011	1019	909	943	988
Certificates	24	17	40	22	39	51	74
Total	898	997	1051	1041	948	994	1062

Our general approach for increasing degrees awarded annually is twofold: 1) to increase the number of students entering Augusta University who are seeking a credential (degree or certificate), and 2) to increase the retention and persistence of students once they enter the university. Specific strategies related to approach #1 are described immediately below. Specific strategies related to approach #2 are described in subsequent sections related to Goals 2, 3, and 4.

STRATEGY 1. INCREASE THE NUMBER AND ACADEMIC PROFILE OF NEW UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.

Augusta University partnered with Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) to target and recruit academically qualified students for Augusta University. RNL uses a three-stage approach (Prospect, Inquiry, and Applicant) for recruiting students to AU. In each stage, they employ a statistical modeling approach to identify pools of students for outreach, focusing on students who appear to be a good fit for the university in terms of likelihood to apply and to enroll. At each stage, they engage in a multifaceted campaign to connect the university with interested students. As a result of these efforts, we have experienced a 20% increase in new freshman since fall 2013 (see table below). During that same period of time, the average Freshman Index increased by 6% (see table below). For the 2017-2018 freshman class, there was an increase of 15% in students entering at an R1 standard for the Freshman Index (≥ 2500), to date, our highest academically qualified freshman class in institutional history. By leveraging predictive analytics and focusing recruitment efforts on qualified prospects and applicants we have been able to increase our yield of a qualified and diverse incoming freshman class, as evidenced in the table below.

Cohort	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017
New Freshman Enrolled (HC)	730	745	775	787	875
Average Freshman Index for New Freshman	2599	2670	2748	2747	2753

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

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STRATEGY 2. INCREASE NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS.

AU continues to leverage its 2013 consolidation to develop a comprehensive portfolio of degree programs and certificates to attract more students to AU and provide them multiple pathways to graduation. Our efforts have been focused in three primary areas:

1. Creating a comprehensive suite of programs in the liberal arts and sciences;
2. Developing multiple undergraduate programs and pathways in health professions to leverage our designation as an academic medical center; and
3. Expanding our portfolio of programs to capitalize on our designation as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense and our proximity to NSA Georgia, the U.S. Army Cyber Protection Brigade, the soon-to-be relocated U.S. Army Cyber Command, and the Georgia Cyber Center.

As a result of these efforts, we have increased our total number of academic programs by 16 since fall 2015.

Additionally, we continue to create degree options in which students can earn a bachelor’s and master’s or professional degree in an accelerated time frame. In 2017-2018, development of an additional option was created to join 4 existing options in our BS to Master of Arts in Teaching program. This option complements our accelerated programs portfolio, which includes the BS-to-MD and BS-to-DMD programs in medicine and dentistry as well as the BA in Criminal Justice to Master of Public Administration (MPA) program, the BA in Political Science to MPA program, and the BS in Mathematics to MS in Biostatistics program.

Academic year 2017-2018 marked the first year that students in the BS-to-MD and BS-to-DMD programs matriculated into the professional component (MD or DMD) of the program. For the BS-to-MD program, 20 students matriculated into the MD program in 2017-18 and will be in the graduating class of 2021. This represents a matriculation rate of 60% of students who entered the program as freshmen. Five of these 20 students were also named Harrison Scholars, representing the top scholars in the MCG class. These 20 students have outperformed the rest of their MD cohort in admission requirements (MCAT scores, Science GPA, and Overall GPA) and in academic performance during the first two curriculum modules of the MD program. For

the BS-to-DMD program, 3 students matriculated into the DMD program in 2017-18, representing a matriculation rate of 75% of students who entered the program as freshmen.

We have also been engaged in significant revision of our existing academic programs in the past 5 years, to ensure relevance to current disciplinary trends and alignment with industry needs and student interests. Evidence of this effort is reflected in 739 curriculum revisions processed in 2017-2018 (double the number in the previous year). Notable achievements at the undergraduate level in 2017-2018 included a new Business concentration in the BS Information Technology, a new concentration in Cyber Operations in the BS Computer Science, the creation of a single Bachelor of Business Administration with multiple concentrations that align with local area workforce needs, and the revamping of Area C in the Core Curriculum.

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

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GOAL 2: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF DEGREES THAT ARE EARNED “ON TIME”.

Our primary indicators for this goal are four-year and six-year graduation rates for undergraduate students. We continue to see these numbers increase as the strategies described throughout this report are employed.

AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE GRADUATION RATES BY COHORT

Cohort	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
4 Year	6%	5%	6%	8%	14%	19%
6 Year	30%	26%	27%	31%	NA	NA

STRATEGY 3: IMPLEMENT THE “I CHOSE 4 YEARS” CAMPAIGN.

In fall 2013, we implemented our “4Years4U” campaign. The campaign was rebranded “I Chose 4 Years” in 2016 to align with other institutional enrollment initiatives. Communication of this campaign begins with freshmen orientation, where students are provided a four-year academic plan for their declared major. Individual advisors from the Academic Advisement Center meet with each student early in the fall semester to develop a course schedule that aligns with their academic plan and creates an expectation that the student will complete 30 credits during each academic year. Expectations are reinforced at the opening Freshman Convocation by 1) having students sign the “I Chose 4 Years” pledge, and 2) the awarding of a class pin, which lists their graduating class 4 years later (i.e., *Class of 20XX*). We also continue to utilize a “flat tuition” model where students enrolled in 10 or more credit hours pay the full-time equivalent rate for 15 credit hours. This model creates a financial incentive for students to take 15 credits.

We employ two measures of success for this strategy: 1) the percentage of students who attempt 15 or more credit hours in the fall term of their first year, and

% of Freshman Cohort Attempting ≥ 15 credits in Fall Term of First Year

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
8%	72%	90%	86%	81%	75%

2) the percentage of students who earn 30, 60 and 90 credit hours by the start of their second, third and fourth year, respectively.

% of Freshman Cohort Earning 30, 60, 90 Credits by 2nd, 3rd, 4th Fall

Fall Freshman Cohort	Earned 30 Credits	Earned 60 Credits	Earned 90 Credits
2012	14%	12%	11%
2013	37%	25%	19%
2014	47%	33%	26%
2015	54%	39%	33%
2016	50%	37%	
2017	56%		

Since the implementation of this campaign, we have adjusted our emphasis regarding 15 credits in the freshman fall semester. Many degree programs, particularly those in the sciences, have sequenced their courses so that students earn 14 credits in the fall and 16 credits in spring, in order to accommodate two 4-credit lab based courses in the fall. These students then complete the balance of 30 credits in the spring or summer semester of their freshmen year. This approach results in a more successful

transition for certain students, as they learn to navigate the compression of difficult content into a 15 week semester. Thus, while the percentage of students completing 15 credits in the fall semester has decreased in recent years, those completing 30 credits by the sophomore year has continued to increase.

This campaign has resulted in a culture shift on campus among the students, staff, faculty and administration, viewing 30 credits per year as the normal course load. Faculty members continue to emphasize this progression as they assume primary advising responsibilities in the junior and senior years.

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

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STRATEGY 4: LAUNCH THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER.

Academic year 2017-2018 marked the first full year of operation of the AU Academic Success Center, which provides transitional academic support to students. In its first year, the Center offered tutoring, academic coaching, and success workshops, and served as home for our First and Second Year Experience (FYE/SYE) program. Initial data (presented in the table below) indicate a successful launch and strong utilization of services by students.

Student Participation Numbers in Academic Success Center Programming

Program	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Total
Tutoring visits	1,785	1,091	2,876
Consultations/Coaching /mentoring	108	174	282
Workshops	68	106	174
Study visits	10,138	5,641	15,779
Total	12,099	7,012	19,111

Our tutoring program offers one-on-one and group tutoring by College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA) certified tutors in lower level courses in biology, chemistry, physics, math, accounting, computer sciences, economics, English, psychology, communication, and history. We also provide assistance with writing for all subject areas. Our Academic Coaching services provided one-on-one sessions in which Academic Coaches meet with students to develop individualized success plans that guide students into becoming effective and self-regulated learners. The Academic Success Workshops are single session workshops designed to provide students with academic skills (e.g., time management, study skills, etc.) to improve their chances for success in their courses. The Academic Success Programs are typically offered across the semester and have a specific area of focus such as writing, assisting students on probation (*Rx for Success*), or developing metacognitive strategies.

The FYE/SYE program is designed to blend academic and student life activities in a manner that will foster academic success in the first year and promote persistence into and through the second year. The program includes activities such as Freshman Convocation, Welcome Back Sophomore Ice Cream Social, TenTalks: Discussions with a Purpose, Half-Way There Celebration, Dean's List Celebrations, Battle Against Hunger (Freshman vs Sophomores), and Cardboard City: Awareness of Homelessness. Students are also provided leadership opportunities through service on the FYE & SYE Advisory Board and the SGA Freshman Council. Finally, a unique study abroad experience is made available to freshman and sophomores. In 2017-2018, 27 of our freshmen visited to Costa Rica, and 26 of our sophomores visited Italy, earning credits for two general education courses.

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

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GOAL 3: DECREASE EXCESS CREDITS EARNED ON THE PATH TO GETTING A DEGREE.

STRATEGY 5: IMPLEMENT CURRICULUM REDESIGN WITH A FOCUS ON HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES.

In 2015-2016, the AU Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence (OFDTE) initiated a curriculum redesign effort in an attempt to improve program quality and reduce bottlenecks to student progression. Faculty learn to align their course-level student learning outcomes to program-level student learning outcomes and create curriculum maps that identified appropriate course sequencing. In 2016-2017, a decision was made to expand this effort to ensure that programs incorporate high impact practices as defined by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), with a primary focus on experiential learning as part of the curriculum and as part of the pedagogy where appropriate. The incorporation of high impact practices in course teaching, inclusive of experiential learning, has been shown to increase student engagement and success in their courses, and, thereby, reduce extra credits earned on the path to graduation for on-time graduation.

By the end of 2017-2018, orientation to curriculum mapping had occurred for all undergraduate degree programs. As part of these orientations, OFDTE collaborated with Student Success to present analytics on student retention and progression that would help guide curriculum redesign. During orientation, faculty were also asked to report where High Impact Practices were incorporated in the curriculum as part of the syllabus review. Additionally, curriculum maps for 27 undergraduate degree programs had been completed.

Academic Year 2017-2018 marked the first year of focus on the inclusion of experiential learning into degree programs. Two tactics were used: 1) to increase the number of faculty with experiential learning training, and 2) to increase the number of course sections offered with the designation of experiential learning (EXL). In 2017-2018, more than 150 faculty members participated in professional development activities related to experiential learning. In 2017-2018, 35 course sections were designated as EXL.

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

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STRATEGY 6. GROW THE JAGUAR JUMPSTART SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAM.

Augusta University's Jaguar Jumpstart is a five-week summer bridge program designed to foster success for students who do not meet AU's minimum freshman index. The goal of the program is to make the transition from high school to college as seamless as possible by promoting academic success and building community among program participants. Students enroll in 6 credits of coursework. Students are supported academically through tutoring and academic coaching, and community is developed through a unique program of speakers, workshops, and service learning. Summer 2018 marked the third year of the program.

With only 3 cohorts of data (see table below), there is little information to inform the effort to date. Nonetheless, we continue to revise the program as a result of our assessment efforts. Summer 2018 and freshman programming will be revised as follows:

- Course offerings will be expanded in the summer beyond math and English to allow for flexibility in student schedules as appropriate to their strengths, interests, and background.
- Peer mentoring will be utilized for the summer 2018 cohort.
- Students will be continued as a cohort in at least one course in each of the fall and spring semesters.
- Undeclared students will be continued as a cohort in INQR 1000 in fall semester. The INQR 1000 course will be entitled "Charting your Academic Course", which will provide students an opportunity to reflect on the purpose of college and redefine goals as appropriate.
- A structured communication plan will be developed for follow-up of JJSP students throughout the freshman and sophomore years.

The program continues to grow in popularity, as evidenced by the increasing enrollments during the past three years. A more formal assessment of the program has been implemented, which will better inform programming for future cohorts. Summer 2018 marked the largest enrollment in the program.

JJSP Cohort	Initial Enrollment (HC)	Enrolled First Fall (%)	Enrolled Second Fall (%)
Summer 2016	19	95%	63%
Summer 2017	25	92%	Not yet available
Summer 2018	56	Not yet available	-

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

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GOAL 4: PROVIDE INTRUSIVE ADVISING TO KEEP STUDENTS ON TRACK TO GRADUATE.

Our primary indicators for this goal are retention and progression rates for undergraduate students. In the table below is reported the percentage of students from the original freshman cohort that enrolled in subsequent fall semesters.

Cohort	Fall 2	Fall 3	Fall 4
Fall 2010 Cohort	68%	49%	42%
Fall 2011 Cohort	67%	46%	38%
Fall 2012 Cohort	68%	49%	40%

Fall 2013 Cohort	70%	54%	45%
Fall 2014 Cohort	75%	58%	47%
Fall 2015 Cohort	75%	61%	NA
Fall 2016 Cohort	73%	NA	NA

We continue to see these numbers increase as the strategies described throughout this report are employed.

STRATEGY 7. IMPLEMENT PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT.

In 2013, in an effort to increase student retention, progression, and graduation rates, AU enhanced its Academic Advisement Center and implemented a professional advising model for all students with less than 60 credits. Over the past 4 years, the scope of the Center has been expanded to include students who wish to pursue a limited or restricted admission program and upper classmen who are returning from academic difficulty. By requiring students to be advised at least once per semester, we are able to provide early intervention and support. Advisors use EAB SSC Campus to receive early alerts from faculty for at risk students. Advisors also consult with the Academic Success Center to provide appropriate supports and follow up for these students.

In January 2017, a Student Retention Manager was hired to assist students and faculty with the transition from professional advising to faculty advising in the major. The Retention Manager works with department chairs and faculty advisors to monitor student progress and develop programming that will help students further engage in their major once they transition to the departments. She also provides training on the use of EAB SSC Campus as an advising tool and has been working with the OFDTE to identify mentoring and other learning opportunities for faculty advisors to make seamless the transition of students from the Advisement Center to their major departments.

Finally, in spring 2018, the AVP for Student Success was asked to examine how we might better use the EAB SSC Campus platform to leverage early alerts and interventions for students and to perform analytics that will help us understand which intervention strategies are most effective for various student populations. This efforts will be fully developed and implemented in 2018-2019.

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

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STRATEGY 8. IDENTIFY, IMPLEMENT, AND REVISE SPECIFIC TACTICS FOR PROVIDING INTRUSIVE ADVISEMENT AND SUPPORT TO TARGET POPULATIONS.

In 2017-2018, several new programs were planned or launched in an effort to provide intrusive advisement and support to target populations through our Academic Success Center, our Academic Advisement Center, Housing and Residence Life, and selected academic departments. Our College of Science and Mathematics launched our first Living and Learning Community (LLC) in 2017, and our Pamplin College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences has completed plans to launch its first LLC, entitled Arts Incubator, in fall 2018. Housing offers a Health Trax Thematic Learning Community which fosters academic and social success for students interested in pursuing a career as a health care provider or health care professional. The Academic Success Center launched its *Rx for Success* program, targeting students who have been placed on probation in the previous semester, and housing complements this program with peer coaches for this group. Plans were developed to embed and hire Career Advisors in our Hull College of Business and in our new School of Computer and Cyber Sciences. And, in spring 2018, we applied for and were awarded a grant to support our African American Male Initiative for the 2018-2019 academic year. As the efforts mature, we will be able to use the information and data collected through them to better understand the impact of intrusive advising on select populations.

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

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OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

- Augusta University continues to realize the benefits of the structural investments that have been made over the past five years. Progression and graduation rates continue to increase, though, additional work is needed as we move forward. In addition to maintaining our current strategies, our plans for the coming year include the following:

- Leverage our unique position as an academic medical center and create a Health Professions Outreach and Advising Center that supports students who are interested in the health professions. We have submitted a \$275,600 funding request to the USG to support this structure.
- Understand better how and why students from underrepresented populations are impacted differentially in their ability to be retained, persist, and graduate at AU, and develop appropriate strategies targeted to these groups. Our current efforts in Gateways to Completion will assist us in this effort.
- Develop a more robust infrastructure to support transfer students and dual enrollment students.
- Continue to understand our dynamic environment. The characteristics of our entering freshman students continue to change significantly. We will continue to improve our assessment efforts related to student retention and progression, and analyze the interactions of our intervention strategies with our student characteristics to better understand what works for specific student populations.

Finally, we are excited to engage with our USG sister institutions in the USG Momentum Year and Gateways to Completion initiatives. While we have already been engaged in many of the activities championed in these initiatives, we hope to leverage the USG mandate to inculcate further a continuous improvement approach to student success in our institution.

MOMENTUM YEAR

In the rollout of the Momentum Year initiative, we felt that it was important to use the spring 2018 and summer 2018 semesters to identify a strategy and approach that would 1) maximize faculty buy-in and avoid “initiative fatigue” on the part of faculty and staff, and 2) promote a collective endeavor across academic and student affairs as we implemented the AU Momentum Year initiative. We decided to manage this initiative as a project with an assigned institutional project manager, to be led by our Vice President of Academic and Faculty Affairs. A Core Team was identified that included faculty and students, as well as staff from academic and student affairs. Three functional teams were identified to work on Purposeful Choice, Academic Mindset, and Pathways and Programs. Each team included faculty and staff representatives across disciplines and across the spectrum of academic and student affairs. A Student Advisory Group was formed to review and provide input on the work of the functional and core teams. Finally, a scope of work was developed with specific deliverables and a timeline. The Project Kick Off is scheduled for September 7, once the 2018-2019 academic year is underway.

As stated earlier, prior to the launch of the USG Momentum initiative in January 2018 by the USG, AU had already engaged in a number of the activities promoted by the Momentum Year. We had developed an intrusive advising model for new freshman that identified one of three general focus areas; launched campaigns to encourage students to register for 30 credits in their freshman year; provided targeted programming for undeclared freshmen; require mandatory advising prior to course registration for students with < 60 credits; developed an Academic Success Center with programs, tutoring, and coaching targeted at student success; developed academic program maps for all majors which require English and Math in the first year as well as 3 courses in their focus area or major; implemented Curriculum Mapping and Course Redesign workshops for faculty; and administered BCSSE and NSSE to better understand our students. This work has resulted in steady improvements in many of the traditional metrics used to define student success.

While the official project kick-off for the Momentum Year is not scheduled until September 7, 2018, much work has already been completed since January 2018 in three areas. First, in the area of Program Maps development, five departments (Mathematics, Art, Psychology, Music, and Communication) have been identified to develop a template for the co-curricular program maps that will be utilized for all undergraduate degree programs across the university. Faculty in these departments have been working over the summer to develop the template, which will be shared more broadly in the fall semester for review and input from the broader university community. Second, planning was completed for the delivery of four sections of our INQR 1000 course in fall 2018. This pilot course is entitled, “Charting Your Academic Course”, and will provide undeclared students an opportunity to reflect on the purpose of college, engage in career and self-exploration, and define short term and long term goals commensurate with their unique experiences, knowledge, and passion. These four sections of INQR 1000 will serve as a pilot for the development and proposal of a first year seminar course to the faculty and administration of AU. Third, planning for the administration of the Academic Mindset survey in the fall 2018 semester was completed.

No major barriers have yet been identified for implementation of the Momentum Year initiative. We look forward to engaging with faculty, staff, and students in the next evolution of Augusta University’s completion strategy to ensure student success. There is much work to be done, and we are eager to capitalize on the Gateways to Completion and the Momentum Year initiatives supported by the USG to assist us in our efforts to ensure success for our undergraduate students.