



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 2017 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE

As evidenced by fall 2017 student demographic data, Georgia Southern University enrolls a primarily full-time, residential, undergraduate population. Of 20,418 students enrolled in fall 2017, 17,759 (87%) were undergraduates and 16,873 (83%) were full-time. With a freshman on-campus residence requirement, the University housed 90% of beginning freshmen on campus. Consistent with its mission as a University System of Georgia institution, 94% of undergraduates were state of Georgia residents. The University enrolled 50% (n=8,955) undergraduate female students and 50% (n=8,804) undergraduate male students. Minorities accounted for 36% of the total University enrollment. Only 6% (n=1,076) of undergraduates were transfer students with most of these coming from other System state colleges.

Georgia Southern's first-year retention rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen who entered in fall 2016 (and returned in fall 2017) was 80%, dropping one percentage point from the previous year. The six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen who entered in fall 2011 and completed a bachelor's degree was 50%, also declining one percentage point from the previous year; however, approximately, 17% of this cohort completed their degree at another institution of higher education, representing a total degree completion rate of 67%—an increase of one percentage point from last year.

EVIDENCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS

Regular Admission

While not a "highly selective" institution, Georgia Southern University generally enrolls above average freshmen. For fall 2017, regular freshman admission at Georgia Southern University required that students have a total SAT (math and critical reading) score of at least 1010 on the old test or 1090 on the new test, 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 six years. The data indicate that the average SAT composite score of Georgia Southern freshmen continues to hold steady at 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 SIX FALL TERMS

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (old test)	2017 (new test)
Composite								
Georgia Southern	1112	1115	1112	1113	1112	1113	1106	1171 ^a
University System	1096	1110	1111	1065	1052	1056	1089	1098 ^b
State Average	972	977	977	973	975	983	n/a	1050
National Average	1011	1010	1010	1010	1006	1002	n/a	1060

n/a = not available.

^a Georgia Southern uses the redesigned total scores of S11-Evidence-Based Reading & Writing Section plus the S12-Math Section.

^b University System uses the redesigned score of S10-SAT Total.

Source: IR Web <http://em.georgiasouthern.edu/ir/fallsum/>, University System: http://www.usg.edu/research/college_readiness, State Avg (new Score): <https://reports.collegeboard.org/pdf/2017-georgia-sat-suite-assessments-annual-report.pdf> (pg.4), and National Avg (new score): <https://reports.collegeboard.org/pdf/2017-total-group-sat-suite-assessments-annual-report.pdf> (pg.3)

Table 2 displays the average high school GPA for beginning freshmen for the past six 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 SIX FALL TERMS

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
3.20	3.21	3.24	3.27	3.29	3.33	3.34

Source: IR Web <http://em.georgiasouthern.edu/ir/fallsum/>

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 risen from 61 students in 2012-13 to 107 students in 2016-17, with the largest increase occurring between 2015-16 and 2016-17 with an additional 41 students. The Academic Success Center is unable to explain why they are seeing such a large increase. Note, however, that while the total number of students in Learning Support has increased, the rate of those being dismissed after two semesters has decreased. The lower percentage of completers is due to more students being initially placed into MATH 0989, Foundations of College Algebra, which is a lower level of math Learning Support. This placement means it takes students longer to exit the program—three semesters on average compared to one semester if they are placed into a higher level course. Students are allowed two semesters to pass MATH 0989 which most of them use. The Academic Success Center continuously evaluates the quality of

support given to Learning Support students and makes changes to improve course instruction, advisement, and registration.

TABLE 3: LEARNING SUPPORT STUDENTS FOR PAST FIVE YEARS BY TYPE OF LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning Support	Summer 2012- Spring 2013	Summer 2013- Spring 2014	Summer 2014- Spring 2015	Summer 2015- Spring 2016	Summer 2016- Spring 2017
Math					
Total #	47	45	33	51	97
# Completed	25 (53%)	29 (64%)	23 (70%)	24 (47%)	29 (30%)
# Stopped Attending	16 (34%)	12 (27%)	8 (24%)	20 (39%)	8 (8%)
# Dismissed	6 (13%)	4 (9%)	2 (6%)	7 (14%)	2 (2%)
English					
Total #	7	6	12	15	10
# Completed	5 (71%)	5 (83%)	11 (92%)	10 (67%)	3 (30%)
# Stopped Attending	2 (29%)	1 (17%)	1 (8%)	5 (33%)	5 (5%)
# Dismissed	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<i>Students are no longer dismissed for English Learning Support.</i>	<i>Students are no longer dismissed for English Learning Support.</i>
Reading					
Total #	7	11	6	<i>USG Learning Support (LS) structure was changed to combine the LS Reading class with LS for English.</i>	<i>USG Learning Support (LS) structure was changed to combine the LS Reading class with LS for English.</i>
# Completed	7 (100%)	11 (100%)	6 (100%)		
# Stopped Attending	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)		
# Dismissed	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)		
Total Learning Support	61	62	51	66	107
% of University Freshmen Enrollment	1.2%	1.3%	1%	1.4%	2.2%

Source: Academic Success Center, June 8, 2018

Beginning fall 2018, the Academic Success Center will have the expanded resources to support all students on academic intervention, which has not historically been the case. Under guidance from the University System Office and in collaboration with the academic departments, the teaching of Learning Support courses will fall under math and English faculty. Moreover, all Learning Support students will have the same instructor for the core class and the co-requisite class. It is anticipated that these changes will improve the experience and completion rates for Learning Support students.

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%; the retention rate remained stable for 2016, but dropped slightly in fall 2017. 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 six 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.

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 barriers where possible to help students return for successful junior and senior years.

Goals I and II of the 2017-2018 CCG plan continue the focus on progression of sophomores to juniors, established in last year's CCG plan.

TABLE 4: RETENTION RATES OF IPEDS FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME, DEGREE-SEEKING FRESHMEN AND TRANSFER FRESHMEN FALL 2010 THROUGH FALL 2016 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)	4th year retention: Fall 2014 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2010 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	79.6%	64.8% (-14.8)	56.7% (-8.1)	29.1% (-27.6)
Transfer Freshmen	68.6%	53.9% (-14.7)	37.3% (-16.6)	15.7% (-21.6)
	Fall 2012	Fall 2013 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2014 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2015 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2011 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	77.2%	61.9% (-15.3)	56.0% (-5.9)	27.5% (-28.4)
Transfer Freshmen	73.7%	55.8% (-17.9)	43.2% (-12.6)	21.1% (-22.1)
	Fall 2013	Fall 2014 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2015 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2016 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2012 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	80.5%	65.8% (-14.7)	58.8% (-7)	28.7% (-30.1)
Transfer Freshmen	60.6%	54.9% (-5.7)	38.0% (-16.9)	14.1% (-23.9)
	Fall 2014	Fall 2015 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2016 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2017 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2013 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	80.6%	64.9% (-15.7)	58.0% (-6.9)	28.8% (-30.8)
Transfer Freshmen	65.7%	57.1% (-8.6)	44.3% (-12.9)	14.3% (-30%)
	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%	67.6% (-13.9)	60.1% (-7.5)	
Transfer Freshmen	76.3%	62.5% (-13.8)	45.0% (-17.5)	

	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)	4th year retention: Fall 2014 (percentage point difference from prior year)
	Fall 2016	Fall 2017 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2018 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2019 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2015 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	80.8%	67.4% (-13.4)		
Transfer Freshmen	71.2%	51.5% (-19.7)		
	Fall 2017	Fall 2018 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2019 (percentage point difference from prior year)	Fall 2020 (percentage point difference from prior year)
Fall 2016 Cohort				
First-time Freshmen	79.5%			
Transfer Freshmen	72.2%			

Source: Office of Institutional Research

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 and English 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. Therefore, goal III of the 2017-2018 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

For summer/fall 2017, the University continued to offer the Eagle Incentive Program (EIP). Since its inception in 2004, EIP provided 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 passed all summer courses and earned at least a 2.0 GPA with no “F” or “W” grades could enroll under regular admission for the fall semester. New for 2017 because of changes in interpreting financial aid requirements, EIP was no longer provisional. Students were allowed to continue to the fall semester irrespective of their GPA in the summer. As previously, to be eligible for the Eagle Incentive Program in 2017, 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 continue to 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 521 admits each summer. Table 5 displays the number of freshmen admitted each summer into the Eagle Incentive Program since summer 2008; 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, 2008-2017

Year	# Admitted Summer (% of IPEDS Freshman Enrollment)	% Retained Subsequent Fall	% Retained Next Fall (% Non-EIP Retained)
2008	484 (16%)	90%	81% (81%)
2009	492 (14%)	92%	80% (79%)
2010	476 (13%)	90%	82% (79%)
2011	505 (14%)	90%	83% (76%)
2012	529 (15%)	90%	81% (80%)
2013	582 (16%)	94%	76% (81%)
2014	572 (16%)	88%	81% (82%)
2015	547 (16%)	91%	80% (84%)
2016	508 (14%)	91%	75% (80%)
2017	515 (15%)	97%	
Ten Year Average	521 (15%)		

Source: Eagle Incentive Program (EIP), Non-EIP, and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) First-time Freshmen: Retention, Graduation, Demographics, and Academics: Summer and Fall 2008 through Fall 2017 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 2011. The data shows mostly an upward trajectory for EIP student graduation success, with 2011 the strongest cohort yet, surpassing that for non-EIP students.

TABLE 6: SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATES: EIP VERSUS NON-EIP

Fall Cohort	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EIP	40%	45%	46%	51%	51%	48%	54%
Non-EIP	47%	50%	51%	51%	50%	52%	49%

Sources: Ibid. and 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 2015 Cohorts, Office of Strategic Research and Analysis

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY: EARLY ACADEMIC ALERT

Improve academic alert communications and expand to all students in area A-E core courses along with other key courses as designated by departments.

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, Georgia Southern has witnessed the greatest attrition in the first-time freshman cohort between the junior and senior years; however, it can be argued that this attrition is a consequence of students experiencing academic difficulties in their sophomore year. For instance, students who experience 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 barriers where possible to retain students for successful junior and senior years. A more robust academic alert system, communicated more effectively and open to more students, will address these issues

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT FOR THIS ACTIVITY

Dr. Christopher Caplinger, Director of the First-Year Experience Program, caplinca@georgiasouthern.edu

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

In 2017-2018, the CCG team implemented a revised Academic Alert policy. Beginning in fall 2017, academic alerts were expanded from the freshman population to all students enrolled in core courses in areas A-E as well as in other key courses as designated by departments. Academic alerts were also renamed from early alert/midterm grades to emphasize that they are not midterm grades, but rather indications that students are not performing satisfactory work in one of several categories (i.e., grades, attendance, participation, missed assignments, or some combination of these categories). Faculty are encouraged to submit academic alerts as early as possible to allow more time for students to make improvements and, in some cases, for academic advisors to intervene. Faculty may submit academic alerts as early as the first day of the term, but must submit no later than the 34th day of classes during the fall and spring semesters (the calendar varies for the summer term). Faculty submit “no alert/satisfactory” for all students in the course who are performing satisfactorily at that point in the semester. Faculty may change academic alerts prior to the deadline as additional assessment occurs.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

Metric/data element:

The metric measuring success is the second-year retention rate, or retention to students' third fall semester. Source: ‘Retention, Progression and Graduation Rates (RPG)’ produced by Institutional Research, Georgia Southern University (<https://www.sta.georgiasouthern.edu/sra/RPG/index.cfm>).

Baseline measure:

- Fall 2013-Fall 2015 second-year retention: 64.9%

Interim measures of progress:

- Fall 2014-Fall 2016 second-year retention: 67.6%
- Fall 2015-Fall 2017 second-year retention: 67.4%
- Fall 2017 (first implementation): Under the new policy, faculty submitted 83% more unsatisfactory academic alerts in 2017 than the previous year. It seemed to have a significant impact on some courses that sophomores typically take. As an example, only 43 students taking ENGL 2111 (World Literature I) in fall 2016 earned an unsatisfactory academic alert, mainly because only 14% were classified as freshmen and thus eligible. The average GPA for all students in the course was a 2.45 and the DFWI rate was 28%. In fall 2017, when all students taking the course received alerts, 192 were unsatisfactory. The average GPA was 2.82 and the DFWI rate was 22%.

Targets:

- Fall 2016-Fall 2018 second-year retention: 69%
- Fall 2018-Fall 2020 second-year retention: 70%

LESSONS LEARNED

Not all faculty understood that a submission was required of all students. As we transition to EAB for alert submission in fall 2018 and use a campaign model to capture grades, this will no longer be a concern. More fundamentally, as part of consolidation, Georgia Southern has created a new Sophomore-Year Experience (SYE) program to include a new course, CORE 2000, which will undergo pilot implementation in spring 2019. Future CCG reports may focus more directly on SYE than the academic alert program, as it more directly addresses second-year attrition.

HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY: “SOAR IN 4!” CAMPAIGN (LOCAL BRANDING OF “15 TO FINISH”)

RELATED GOAL

Increase the percentage of sophomore students enrolling in 15 or more credit hours per semester from 39.8% (fall 2015) to 52% by fall 2020 and junior students from 43.5% (fall 2015) to 54% by fall 2020.

DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT

The study, “Redefining Full-Time in College: Evidence on 15-Credit Strategies” (Klempin, 2014), documents the benefits of a 15-credit course load per semester. A minimum full-time load is not sufficient to allow students to graduate on time. 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

Dr. Christopher Caplinger, Director of the First-Year Experience Program, caplinca@georgiasouthern.edu

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

In summer 2017, we showed an updated, two-minute “Soar in 4!” video (first used in summer 2016) to students and parents at orientation. The video has 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 are more likely to 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 \$15,000+. We continued previous “Soar in 4!” marketing efforts, including social media placement, bus advertisements, yard signs, door decals, and posters, and through an advertisement in the new student “Our House” publication. In Fall 2017, we entered students enrolled in 15 or more hours into a drawing for one of ten \$100 gift cards for the University Store.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS**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.

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

Interim measures of progress:

The CCG team met or exceeded its interim measure of progress (45% of sophomores registered for 15 credits or more and 48% of juniors registered for 15 credits or more) for fall 2017, and have thus modified upward the targets for 2018 and 2020, below.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS BY CLASSIFICATION WHO ENROLLED IN 15 OR MORE CREDIT HOURS

Classification	Fall 2015 (at census)	Fall 2016 (at census)	Fall 2017 (at census)
Freshmen	55.5%	62.7%	62.9%
Sophomores	39.7%	42.3%	45.0%
Juniors	43.4%	45.2%	48.0%
Seniors	41.0%	41.4%	43.2%

- Fall 2018 Sophomores: Targeting 47% registered for 15 or more credit hours
- Fall 2018 Juniors: Targeting 49% registered for 15 or more credit hours

Measures of success:

- Fall 2020 Sophomores: 52.0% registered for 15 or more credit hours
- Fall 2020 Juniors: 54.0% registered for 15 or more credit hours

LESSONS LEARNED

We had much higher click through rate in our social media campaign for parents than for students, and therefore focused the 2018 campaign on parents. For spring 2017-2018, we discontinued the budget allocated for social media to students and more than doubled it for parents (\$298.62 in 2017 to \$650 in 2018).

HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY: POLICY REFORM

Revise Georgia Southern University's Academic Standing Policy and develop a limited Grade Forgiveness Policy. (See lessons learned.)

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 and revision of institutional academic policies which may impede a student's ability to progress academically and through transforming the way that remediation is accomplished.

DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT

Each semester, a number of students fail to register for the subsequent semester. While many of these students have valid reasons for not registering (such as graduating or transferring), others do not register due to difficulties experienced with registration or academic success issues. In fall 2017, 15,719 undergraduates were eligible to register for spring 2018. As of January 18, 2018, 719 (4.5%) were still not registered for spring 2018. The reasons why undergraduate students were not registered for spring 2018 as of January 18, 2018 are shown Table 5. These data were collected from the survey portion of the injection pages (with a 47% response rate). Of the 335 responding undergraduate students, 33 noted reasons that are under the control of Academic Affairs (i.e., academic reasons and unavailable courses), representing 4.4% of the total respondents.

In addition, each year, approximately 25% of students dip below an institution GPA of 2.0. Students in poor academic standing often leave the institution—not because of suspension—but because their academic progress (or lack thereof) negatively impacts their financial aid (SAP), their self-esteem, their ability to balance work and to support themselves academically by seeking academic support, etc. Each of these students met the admissions requirements of the institution and should, by all rights, be successful in meeting their goal of earning a degree.

University policies appear to be a barrier to students succeeding once they have stumbled academically. The Academic Standing Policy punishes students by pushing them towards suspension, even when they have taken the necessary steps to seek academic support and earn stronger term GPAs.

TABLE 5: REASONS FOR NOT REGISTERING FOR SPRING 2018 FOR STUDENTS WHO RESPONDED TO SURVEY

Reason	Number of Students Listing as Reason
Transferring	169
Personal	66
Financial	18
Military	14
Academic	12
Internship	11
Graduating	10
Family	8
Courses Unavailable	3
Other	24
Total	335

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT FOR THIS ACTIVITY

Dr. Christine Ludowise, Associate Provost for Student Success and Advising, ludowise@georgiasouthern.edu

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Partnering with the Provost's Office (Associate Provost for Student Success and Advising), two Faculty Senate committees revised the institutional Academic Standing Policy and wrote a Limited Grade Forgiveness Policy. The new policies were approved by the Faculty Senate in November 2017 and will take effect for fall 2018.

In addition, to provide support for students in poor academic standing, the Academic Intervention Policy was revised to include all students in academic difficulty, not just first-year students. Students needing academic intervention will be paired with Academic Success Coaches and will create individualized Academic Improvement Plans.

The metrics for this goal are still under active development. All policies will go into effect in August 2018 with the start of the 2018-2019 academic year. Interim measures will be to continue 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 allow progress to be tracked once policy changes have been fully implemented. Additionally, getting students to register is the first step in enabling them to progress and graduate.

Each semester, several thousand undergraduate students fail to register during their scheduled registration period. To encourage them to register, the Associate Provost for Student Success and Advising administers an electronic survey (commonly referred to as the injection pages) to unregistered students at least three times each semester. The first injection page is sent the day after registration begins for that particular group of students. The page is sent via My.GeorgiaSouthern to any student who has not registered for the subsequent semester. The injection page asks whether the student plans on registering for the following semester. If the student replies "no," then the injection page asks for the reasons why: academic reasons; courses unavailable; family issues; financial issues; graduating; internships; military duties; personal reasons; transferring to another college; or other. Some of these reasons (like internships, graduating, transferring, military duties) are valid and do not require any further action. Others (academic reasons, courses unavailable, financial issues) are more within the control of the University and are the areas where our efforts are most likely to result in conversions from unregistered to registered status. If the student replies "yes," then the injection page inquires as to why they have not registered. The second injection page is sent towards the end of classes for that semester. This page is sent to all students who originally indicated that they plan to register, but have still not done so. The injection page asks whether they plan to register and the reasons why they will not register or have not registered thus far. The third injection page is sent just before classes begin the following term, reminding students to register and asking if they need assistance from their advisor or another support unit on campus.

To convert 'not registered' students in areas within our control, the following activities are employed:

- Current data on each college's 'not registered' student population is shared by the Associate Provost with the applicable college dean's office and academic advisement coordinators. Academic advisors use the information to reach out to 'not registered' students (through letters, emails, phone calls, campaigns through EAB SSC Campus) to assist students in getting registered before the end of the semester.

- Beginning in fall 2016, a Student Dashboard through My.GeorgiaSouthern was implemented. Student Dashboard is another tool for communicating with students to ensure that they are aware of critical deadlines and other alerts that could affect their registration and academic progression. The alerts focus on tuition and fees, financial aid, and registration and advising. Alerts are time-bound and triggered throughout the semester so students will receive personalized, timely communications as needed. For example, a student with an outstanding balance will receive a student account balance pop-up immediately after logging into My.GeorgiaSouthern. Clicking on the “view details” routes the student to the Student Dashboard where the student can find additional information on how to resolve the problem.

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. The baseline measure (fall 2017 eligible to register students) was 15,719.

Interim measures of progress:

The strategies for this goal (review of academic standing and grade forgiveness policies) 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.

Of the 1,464 undergraduate students who began the spring 2018 semester in academic warning (W1, P1, W2, or P2), 343 (23%) earned spring 2018 grades to convert them to good academic standing. See Table 6.

TABLE 6: ACADEMIC STANDING AT END OF SPRING 2018 FOR STUDENTS WHO BEGAN SPRING 2018 NOT IN GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING

Academic Standing Entering Spring 2018 Semester for Students Not in Good Standing	Academic Standing End of Spring 2018 Semester for Students Who Began Semester Not in Good Standing							
	GS	W1	P1	E1	W2	P2	E2	Total
W1	225	30	717					973
P1	60		16	169				245
W2	33				7	113		153
P2	25					6	62	93
Total	343	30	733	169	7	119	62	1,464

Of the 1,464 undergraduate students who began the spring 2018 semester on academic warning, 704 (48%) earned a spring 2018 term GPA of 2.0 or better; but still ended the semester in academic warning and in danger of being excluded despite a successful spring 2018 semester. See Table 7.

TABLE 7: NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY ACADEMIC WARNING STATUS AND GPA RANGE AT END OF SPRING 2018 SEMESTER

Spring 2018 Term GPA Range	Spring 2018 Academic Standing Classification				
	W1	P1	W2	P2	Total
4.0-3.0	112	30	25	23	190
2.99-2.5	149	39	20	20	228
2.49-2.25	76	33	18	8	135
2.24-2.0	110	18	11	12	151

Below 2.0	513	118	78	51	760
Total	960	238	152	114	1,464

Measures of Success:

- Reducing the spring percentage of students in academic warning by 5%.
- By the end of spring 2018, we successfully converted 23% of students who ended fall 2017 in academic warning to good standing status.

LESSONS LEARNED

At the July 12, 2017, Consolidation Implementation Committee meeting, a recommendation was put forward to develop an Academic Standing Policy that holds students accountable without imposing excessively punitive requirements for continued enrollment at the institution. For instance, students struggle academically for many reasons and some stumble spectacularly during their academic careers. An academic standing policy should both hold students accountable and provide them with a safety net of support, resources, and opportunities. It should also reward, not continue to punish, movement in the right direction (i.e., term GPAs above 2.25). Consolidation provided the opportunity for the institution to articulate the standards we expect of students, outline the consequences of failing to meet those standards, and clearly explain both the pathways to success and the tools, resources, and support a student can reasonably expect to receive as they strive for academic excellence.

Through consolidation, Georgia Southern also hoped to establish a limited Grade Forgiveness Policy. Not having a grade forgiveness policy means that missteps in the transition from high school to college are often punitive rather than instructional and transformative. In addition, many students who end up in poor academic standing require additional semesters to bring their GPAs up to 2.0. These students end up with anywhere from 10% to 40% more credit hours than required for graduation alone. Limited grade replacement policies tend to (a) require an application from the student; (b) limit both the number of retake attempts and the number of grade replacements; (c) limit the grade forgiveness to courses in which a D or an F was earned; and (d) limit the type of course for which a student can apply for grade forgiveness (e.g., lower division or CORE courses).

Partnering with the Provost's Office (Associate Provost for Student Success and Advising), two Faculty Senate committees revised the institutional Academic Standing Policy and wrote a Limited Grade Forgiveness Policy. The new policies were approved by the Faculty Senate in November 2017 and will take effect for fall 2018.

In addition, to provide support for students in poor academic standing, the Academic Intervention Policy was revised to include all students in academic difficulty, not just first-year students. Students needing academic intervention will be paired with Academic Success Coaches and will create individualized Academic Improvement Plans.

HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY: GATEWAYS TO COMPLETION

Reduce barriers to degree completion via participation in Gateways to Completion® and lowering DFW rates in high-enrollment foundational courses.

RELATED GOAL

Increase the first-time freshmen six-year graduation rate from 50.4% (fall 2009 first-time freshman cohort) to 55% by 2023 (fall 2017 cohort).

DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT

Gateways to Completion® is a faculty-led self-study process “designed to create and implement an evidence-based plan for improving teaching, learning, and success in historically high-failure rate courses.”¹ “Success in foundation level courses, such as: accounting, math, chemistry, biology, and writing and rhetoric, is a direct predictor of retention.”² The John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Excellence lists outcomes of Gateways to Completion® as: “increases in first-to-second term retention rates; decreases in number of students in poor academic standing; increases in A, B, and C grades; decreases in D, F, W, and I grades; lower course repetition rates; and high performance in the next course in the sequence.”³ Helping students to complete these foundational courses successfully the first-time will alleviate one barrier to degree completion and enable students to proceed smoothly along their program of study.

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT FOR THIS ACTIVITY

Dr. Christopher Caplinger, Director of the First-Year Experience Program, caplinca@georgiasouthern.edu

¹ www.jngi.org/g2c/, retrieved 7/13/2017

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

In the 2016-2017 academic year, Georgia Southern identified Calculus I (MATH 1441) as a high-enrollment course in which students often struggle, with a DFWI rate often approaching 40% in a given semester. Lack of success in MATH 1441 is a major stumbling block to degree completion for many students in the STEM fields, and especially engineering, computer science, and physics. The College of Engineering and Information Technology and the College of Science and Mathematics together accounted for over 1/3 of the first-year entering student population for fall 2017; therefore, improving student learning in MATH 1441 could have a major impact on overall retention and on-time graduation rates. The self-study process has led faculty to recommend piloting ALEKS Adaptive Technology in fall 2017. Data have shown that students weak in algebra and trigonometry perform very poorly in MATH 1441. To prepare students for the rigor of Calculus I, all new students placed in a Calculus I class were expected to complete an online review of prerequisite algebra and trigonometry skills utilizing ALEKS Adaptive Technology. Students were asked to practice each topic in ALEKS until they achieved a 70% proficiency of the subject matter. Seventy-one percent of students in MATH 1441 fall 2017 created an ALEKS account. Of those, 30% achieved target mastery of 70% or higher. Twenty-three percent of students only created an account and never demonstrated mastery of any topic. Another 48% mastered fewer than 70 percent of the topics. ALEKS mastery level was highly predictive of students' final grade in MATH 1441. Students mastering 70% of topics had a DFWI rate of less than 13%, whereas students who didn't register for ALEKS at all had a DFWI rate of 46%. Students who registered but didn't demonstrate mastery of any topics had a DFWI rate of nearly 37%.

While ALEKS was the major initiative for fall 2017, we also brought in Dr. Saundra McGuire, a nationally renowned expert on metacognition, to speak to students, faculty, and academic advisors (in separate settings) about promotion of student success. In spring 2018, we selected ENGL 1101, MATH 1111, and FYE 1220 to include in the G2C process beginning in fall 2018.

For students starting in fall 2018, we are using ALEKS in a more targeted way, providing it as an option for students who would not otherwise test directly into Calculus I (rather than taking MATH 1111 or MATH 1112). We also made arrangements to bring back Dr. McGuire to speak to students both in Statesboro and at Armstrong.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

Goal metric/data element:

The metric measuring success is six year graduation rate. Source: 'Retention, Progression and Graduation Rates (RPG)' produced by Institutional Research, Georgia Southern University (<https://www.sta.georgiasouthern.edu/sra/RPG/index.cfm>).

Baseline measure:

- the six-year graduation rate for the fall 2009 first-time freshman cohort: 50.4%

Goal:

- to increase the six-year graduation rate for the cohort that entered fall 2017 to 55%.

Interim measure of progress:

The target interim measure of progress is a DFWI rates consistently below 30% for MATH 1441. Prior to implementation, the DFWI rate averaged 34% for the previous three fall semesters. The rate for fall 2017 was 35%, and thus missed the target.

COMPARISON OF DFW RATES IN MATH 1441 (CALCULUS I) FOR PAST FOUR YEARS

Semester	% of DWFs	Total Enrollment
Fall 2017	35%	790
Fall 2016	30%	926
Fall 2015	36%	778
Fall 2014	36%	768

LESSONS LEARNED

While highly predictive, ALEKS can only work if students spend time in it, and that is not likely to happen unless and until faculty require it of students. Doing so has a cost, either for students or the institution, and some students don't need it, because their preparation level in algebra and trigonometry is high. While we will

continue to use ALEKS with students who would like to demonstrate their proficiency, we cannot rely on it as a way to mitigate lack of preparation. Instead, the focus needs to shift to more robust student support. The University is in the process of implementing several general student success initiatives that will provide increased levels of peer support and mentoring. One possibility that we are considering is learning assistants in MATH 1441.

MOMENTUM YEAR PLAN STATUS UPDATE (JULY 30, 2018)

GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
Advise students into an academic focus area. Remove the undeclared designation and introduce an exploratory designation with an academic focus area.	Implementation date from the University System Office is fall 2019. Soft launch this summer with Orientation and moving students into exploratory status.	Collaborate with Office of Admissions, First-Year Experience Program Office, and Office of Professional and Career Services on full implementation plan for Orientation 2019. Admissions including exploratory status on application for fall 2019.	Complete May 2019.
GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
Identify academic focus areas and the programs with which they are aligned.	Complete.	Submit the academic focus area list, with identified programs, to our System Office liaison for review.	Identification of academic focus areas complete.
GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
Create program maps for each program of study and each focus area.	All programs of study in the new institution have an established default program map.	Develop program maps for the approved academic focus areas in preparation for Orientation 2019.	Program maps complete. Focus area maps to be completed by May 2019.
GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
Establish program map standard requirements, including: term-by-term course requirements; ENGL 1101 in term 1 of first year; ENGL 1102 in term 2 of first year; CORE Area A Math in first 30 hours; clearly indicated critical courses and prerequisites; semester specific benchmarks and milestones; at least three program/focus area related courses in the first year; at least 30 hours indicated per year [15 hours per semester].	Complete. All program maps include the stated requirements.	Review institutional data to determine if there are barriers to students completing any of the elements required per the program maps. Engage with colleges, departments, and programs to identify whether course and/or curriculum redesign is warranted.	Program maps complete.

GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
Students have ongoing advisement in their academic program.	Complete. Students are required to meet with their academic advisor at least once per semester. We are moving all campuses to a fully professional advising model. We have hired advisors for the Armstrong and Liberty campuses; Georgia Southern class of 2022 will meet with professional advisors, in their programs/majors, from orientation through graduation.	Create a strong, faculty-driven mentoring program to support students in their program of study and to help identify appropriate co-curricular and leadership activities for each program and major.	Professional academic advisement model implementation complete.
GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
Students are directed to co-curricular activities and practices that are supportive of their major and overall integration into the college environment.	Some suggested co-curricular and leadership activities are listed on program maps for each degree program. Student Affairs' offices work closely with students to both identify "best fit" activities and to provide co-curricular opportunities.	In addition to creating a strong, faculty-driven mentoring program, work with faculty to identify opportunities to integrate co-curricular activities with academic coursework in each discipline/major.	Commence work on this goal during fall 2018. Anticipate completion August 2019.
GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
All incoming freshmen participate in the University System of Georgia Getting to Know Our Students Mindset Survey.	Provided to students in fall 2017. Prepared to market and distribute to incoming first-year students for fall 2018.	Distribution of University System of Georgia Getting to Know Our Students Mindset Survey in August.	Complete August 2018. Ongoing on an annual basis.

GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
<p>All faculty and staff engage in lifelong learning and share those tools and strategies with each other and with their students, focusing on supporting student engagement and success.</p>	<p>Faculty who teach the first-year experience course integrate student engagement, academic readiness, and perseverance, and co-curricular learning experiences into the course.</p>	<p>Integrate student engagement and co-curricular learning experiences into discipline-specific and major courses. Engage with faculty and staff about professional development needs and student support needs. Engage with colleges and departments on creating mechanisms and processes that ensure that professional development opportunities are valued in faculty and staff evaluation processes.</p>	<p>Commence work on this goal during fall 2018. Continue work until complete.</p>
GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
<p>Create an inventory of high-impact practices that are already in place at one or more of our campuses.</p>	<p>Not yet started a formal inventory.</p>	<p>Create an inventory template and start gathering data on high impact practices. Determine which practices it makes sense to build upon and scale across campuses.</p>	<p>Create template and start gathering data during fall 2018.</p>
GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
<p>Remove roadblocks/barriers to student completion within degree programs.</p>	<p>The Faculty Senate has clearly articulated that the newly consolidated curriculum should be carefully reviewed and, if needed, redesigned. Provides an opening for course evaluation and course redesign, as well as full program curriculum redesign.</p>	<p>Engage with faculty on where they see the barriers to student success. Use institutional data to assess where the roadblocks to degree completion likely are. Build a program to incentivize college, department, program, and faculty work with curriculum review and redesign.</p>	<p>Commence work on this goal during fall 2018. Continue work until complete.</p>

GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
Create a faculty/staff mentoring program.	Mentoring occurs, both formally and informally, on all campuses.	Create a mentorship inventory template and start gathering data on mentoring practices on all three campuses. Develop a formal mentoring program, managed by faculty and staff, for faculty and staff.	Create template and start gathering data during fall 2018. Encourage development of formal mentoring program to begin fall 2019.
GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
Continue course redesign of high-impact courses with G2C (Gateways to Completion).	We are in the third year of the cohort for redesigning MATH 1441 Calculus. We have identified the other three courses for redesign: ENGL 1101 Composition I; FYE 1220 First Year Seminar; MATH 1111 College Algebra.	Scale our work with MATH 1441 Calculus across all three campuses. Start the first-year cohort for the other three courses.	Course selection complete. Work with MATH 1441 redesign across campuses during AY 2018-2019. Course redesign for remaining courses over three-year G2C project timeline.
GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
Implement our new Student Advisement and Success plan across all three campuses.	Most of the professional staff has been hired or is in the process of being hired for fall 2018.	Create a faculty committee to support Undergraduate Research initiatives. Provide support for departments and programs to hire the undergraduate student peer leaders, tutors, supplemental instructors, course assistants, etc. Create opportunities for engagement and collaboration across divisions and across campuses.	Professional staff hiring complete in August 2018. Create Faculty Undergraduate Research Committee during fall 2018 to start spring term 2019. Support for student peer leaders, instructors, etc., ongoing starting fall 2018.
GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
Create a Major and Career Exploration (MACE) space on the Armstrong campus.	The space has been identified. The MACE will be located in the Student Success Center until the new Academic Success Center space is completely renovated (3-5 years?).	Purchasing for the MACE will commence in July. Once computers and furniture are available, we will set up and equip the space. Anticipated	Complete August 2018.

		opening for start of classes in August.	
--	--	---	--

GOAL	STATUS	NEXT STEPS	TIMELINE TO COMPLETE
Implement EAB SSC and Guide for the Statesboro campus.	Go live date for Statesboro Campus was May 14, 2018.	Integrate Armstrong instance of EAB SSC Campus into main instance. Go live date is July 30, 2018. We will also implement the Guide app for the Armstrong campus in spring or summer 2019.	Complete. Armstrong instance consolidation complete July 30, 2018. Guide app implementation complete May 2019.

ACADEMIC FOCUS AREAS

JUNE 26, 2018

Art	Behavioral & Social Sciences	Business	Computing	Education
Art Art Education Art History Graphic Design Music Music Education Theatre Visual Arts	Anthropology Child & Family Development Criminal Justice & Criminology Fashion Merch. & Apparel Design Interior Design International Studies International Trade Law & Society Political Science Psychology Recreation Sociology Sport Management	Accounting Economics Finance Information Systems Logistics Management Marketing	Computer Science Information Technology	Elementary Education Health & Physical Education Middle Grades Education Secondary Education Special Education

Engineering	Health Professions	Humanities	Science & Mathematics
Construction Management Civil Engineering Electrical Engineering Manufacturing Engineering Mechanical Engineering	Athletic Training Comm. Sciences & Disorders Exercise Science Health Sciences Medical Laboratory Sciences Nursing Nutrition and Food Science Public Health Radiologic Sciences Rehabilitation Sciences Respiratory Therapy	Communication Studies English History Interdisciplinary Studies Modern Languages Multimedia Film & Production Multimedia Journalism Philosophy Religious Studies Women's, Gender, Sexuality Studies Writing	Biochemistry Biology Chemistry Geography Geology Mathematics Physics Physics & Astronomy