



# GEORGIA HIGHLANDS COLLEGE

## INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Georgia Highlands College (GHC) is a limited-mission, four-year state college which serves as the associate-level access institution for northwest Georgia. The mission is to provide access to excellent educational opportunities for the intellectual, cultural, and physical development of a diverse population. The mission of GHC is to provide access to excellent educational opportunities for the intellectual, cultural and physical development of a diverse population through pre-baccalaureate associate degree transfer programs, career associate degree programs, and targeted baccalaureate degree programs that meet the economic development needs of the region.

Current student demographics are detailed in the image below.

<b>Total Enrollment</b>		5,680				
	<b>Gender</b>				<b>Residency</b>	
Female		3,643	64%	Georgia Residents	5,025	88%
Male		2,037	36%	<b>Fall or Part Time</b>		
	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			Full Time	2,259	40%
White		3,431	60%	Part Time	3,421	60%
Hispanic/Latino		949	17%		<b>Financial Aid</b>	
Black or African American		933	16%	Students receiving some aid	3,909	69%
Two or More Races		220	4%	Pell awardees	2,049	36%
Asian		100	2%	HOPE awardees, all categories	1,860	33%
All Others		47	<1%	<b>Beginning Students</b>		
	<b>Other</b>			Total	979	17%
All Adult Learners (25+)		1,227	22%	Started in Learning Support	314	32%
All Veterans		84	1%	Beginning Adult Learners (25+)	34	3%
				Beginning Veterans	8	<1%

Our students self-reported First-Generation status at 12.1% for Fall 2020 (n= 688). This number is down from our prior year rate of 22.3%, likely due to changes in admissions requirements at universities within the USG. Over the past several years, we have consistently raised our graduation rates, from 12.1% for our Fall 2013 cohort to 19.8% for our Fall 2017 cohort. Meanwhile, our overall one-year retention rate for First-Time Full-Time (FTFT) students is 64%, down slightly from the prior year’s rate of 66%. We attribute this drop to COVID-19. However, GHC outperforms the sector average for state colleges. Additionally, our QEP, which is focused on advising and student success, is showing a positive impact. For students who participated in the QEP, the Fall to Spring persistence rate was 80.9% for the Fall 2019 cohort; students who did not participate persisted at a rate of 73.3%. Much of our Momentum work ties into our QEP work in advising students, as detailed below. These projects allow us to better serve our mission by providing high-quality educational opportunities to a diverse student population.

## IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES

In the spring of 2019, Enrollment Management Action Team (EMAT) was created at GHC to analyze our enrollment management practices. EMAT consists of faculty and staff representatives who are enrollment stakeholders across the institution. EMAT set out with the goal of using GHC data to learn when and why students leave GHC so that we could better determine where to focus success efforts. EMAT began by compiling a long list of processes and activities we thought impacted student success from applicant through the first year of enrollment. We then took the list and determined what data sources were available to give us insight into each. What we discovered is we have the data, but it is not available in a format that would allow EMAT to visualize which processes or activities produce the most stop-outs.

Over the past year, the Office of Planning, Assessment, Accreditation, and Research (PAAR), has been reviewing and revising reports to make our data cleaner and more trustworthy. Realizing the need for better access to accurate data for more teams, such as EMAT, PAAR has worked to identify a set of key metrics and characteristics that can be used to better understand student successes and barriers. To this end, the PAAR team is utilizing Tableau to create new data visualizations to assist EMAT and other teams to use the data in actionable ways.

While PAAR is working on creation of a data set that allows us to visualize success barriers across multiple processes and activities, EMAT focused on one particular activity at GHC that was not producing positive results, our Early Warning program. The Early Warning program was put in place Fall of 2011 and was designed to provide a way to notify students of academic problems for hopeful turn around or withdrawal. Instructors reported on all students in all classes at around the 40% mark of a term/session as either Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Once all instructors completed reporting, advisors manually sent emails to those tagged Unsatisfactory suggesting they reach out to instructor, advisor, tutor, etc. Responsibility was placed on the student to follow up and address the problem. Consistently, 70%+ of students reported as Unsatisfactory went on to receive a DFW in the respective course.

Across Fall 2019 and Spring 2020, EMAT worked with our Navigate consultant and stakeholders at the college to design a new Early Warning program, renaming it Early Alert. The old program asked instructors to indicate satisfactory or unsatisfactory, but there was little consistency or understanding of what those two terms meant. Our new program, housed in Navigate, allows instructors to choose a reason the student is not doing well, and the reason prompts a specific outreach process. The new program was launched Fall 2020. While we are still collecting data on students who received an alert, anecdotal evidence from faculty points to a higher level of satisfaction with the new process.

GHC has seen minority student enrollments grow over the past five years, accounting for 4.2% of growth in our overall population. Black/African American enrollment has held steady around 16% of our population, but Latinx students have grown by 24.3% to now account for nearly 17% of our population. GHC has a long history of supporting African American and Latinx males through our African American Minority Male Initiative, locally referred to as Georgia Highlands African American Male Excellence (GHAAME). Students who participate in this initiative outperform their peers in terms of retention and graduation. First time, full time Black or African American males who started in Fall 2016 and were members of GHC’s AAMI graduated with associate degrees by the end of Summer 2019 at a rate of 18.2%, while the rate for those who did not participate was 3.6%. The number and percentage of associate degrees conferred to AAMs were 31 and 4.3% respectively, up from the prior year (FY 2019=26 associate degrees awarded to AAMs for 3.5%). The percentage of degrees awarded to AAMs that were awarded to AAMI members increased in FY 2020 to 51.6% (FY 2019=38.5%), and total associate degrees awarded to AAMs was higher (FY 2020=16, FY 2019=10). The percentage of degrees conferred

to AAMI members remains higher than the participation rate, pointing to the productivity of the program overall. Much work remains in this area, but GHC is confident we can build on these successes to empower more students to be successful.

## **MOMENTUM UPDATE: OBSERVATIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

### **SECTION 3.1 EXISTING MOMENTUM WORK**

#### **PURPOSEFUL CHOICE**

<b>Strategy or activity</b>	<b>Career assessment (Major Exploration)</b>
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	Our advising model is designed to address purposeful choice beginning at orientation. Students will gain access to tools allowing them to begin a personal student inventory of their academic strengths and weaknesses, identify their potential academic and career interests, and acknowledge factors that might influence their ability to reach their goals. At orientation, students will meet one-on-one with an advisor who will explain the benefit of purposeful choice of focus area and/or pathway. Advisors will also begin conversations with students about the benefits of graduation.
<b>Outcomes/Measures of progress</b>	QEP Overarching Goal 1: To help students develop self-direction and decision-making skills related to their academic success.

SLO A: Students will determine their reason(s) for attending college.  
 SLO B: Students will assess their academic strengths and weaknesses.  
 SLO C: Students will identify and utilize appropriate resources for addressing weaknesses and developing strengths.

Baseline Data Set:  
 Fall 2019: 35% completion (n=561)  
 Spring 2020: 56% completion (n=300)  
 Summer 2020: 58% completion (n=105)

<b>Lessons Learned and Plans for the Future</b>	The data above comes from our first full academic year of this activity's implementation (Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Summer 2020). We will use this data as our baseline to improve student completion rates of the career inventory.
<b>Changes because of COVID-19</b>	Shifting to a fully online orientation made communicating the need to complete the career inventory more challenging. When orientations are held on campus, we can have students complete the career inventory in a computer lab. We do not yet have Fall 2020 data, but we suspect the completion rates will be lower due to virtual orientations.

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**TRANSPARENT PATHWAYS**

<b>Strategy or activity</b>	<b>Building an academic plan with an advisor in Navigate</b>
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	During the first term of enrollment, new students work within their advising network to formulate an individualized plan for success, an online, evolving record of the student's progress and experience at GHC documented via Navigate. In crafting a success plan, students will also learn to recognize factors that can impede progress toward their goals. Imbedded in this process are targeted activities to allow students to strengthen their purposeful choices and ensure that they have clear pathways to their educational goals.
<b>Outcomes/Measures of progress</b>	QEP Overarching Goal 2: To foster student success through improved academic planning skills.  SLO D: Students will develop a success plan tailored to their academic needs and professional interests. SLO E: Students will participate in a comprehensive advising process.  Baseline Data: Fall 2018 (Pilot): 85% (n=44) completion rate Spring 2019: 82% (n=381) completion rate Summer 2019: 98% (n=182) completion rate  Current Year Data: Fall 2019: 91% completion (n=1449) Spring 2020: 89% completion (n=450) Summer 2020: 59% completion (n=106)

<b>Lessons Learned and Plans for the Future</b>	One major lesson learned is a majority of our students need personalized academic plans, and these plans need to be updated each semester to address students' ever-changing needs. The benefit of housing our students' academic plans in Navigate is that the current plan is always available to both the student and the advisor to review and update. The electronic plan is an efficiency for advisors as they can quickly reference the plan to assist students with registration rather than crafting an entirely new plan for the student.  Despite the efficiency, we shifted from an advising model where students were advised on a voluntary basis to one where all new students are required to meet with an advisor. The first semester meeting is designed to be an hour long. Students tend to wait to schedule their required appointments around open registration for the next semester. The current advisor load does not allow advisors enough time to host these
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individual advising sessions in just the month surrounding open registration. To address this challenge, we will need begin earlier with our communication campaign explaining to students the benefits of scheduling an appointment early.

<b>Changes because of COVID-19</b>	The data shows a slight completion increase from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019 and Spring 2019 to Spring 2020, but a sharp decline from Summer 2019 to Summer 2020. Our summer 2020 new student population was the first group to participate in a fully virtual orientation because of COVID-19. Summer is also a challenge for data analysis because many students take classes at GHC in the summer with an explicit goal of attending another college in the fall. As we begin to collect Fall 2020 data, we will need to watch these participation numbers to see if summer 2020 is an indicator that we need to adjust our messaging to students about the importance of advising participation.
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## ACADEMIC MINDSET

<b>Strategy or activity</b>	<b>Mindset Survey</b>
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	We are currently administering the Mindset Survey as scheduled by the USG.
<b>Outcomes/Measures of progress</b>	We are using survey completion metrics as our primary measure of progress.
<b>Lessons Learned and Plans for the Future</b>	Our primary challenge has been response rates. Prior to Fall 2020, we were attempting to collect the survey results through a first-year course (ENGL 1101); however, faculty were concerned about taking class-time to complete the survey. For Fall 2020, we modified our approach and used EAB Navigate to distribute the survey to all eligible students. This allowed us to email and text multiple times and to use follow-up data from USG to target students who had not yet taken the survey. Unfortunately, requiring students to enter their GHC IDs has proved difficult. We have noticed that many students enter inaccurate information, thus limiting what we can discern from survey data. In Fall 2020, we attempted a messaging campaign with our survey distribution to explain the importance of accurate information and how those data might be used.
<b>Changes because of COVID-19</b>	COVID-19 poses many challenges, but our survey collection has not been disrupted significantly.
<b>Strategy or activity</b>	<b>Chancellor's Learning Scholar Faculty Learning Community with the Math Division 2019 – 2020 on Mindset and HIPs</b>
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	The math division was involved in the FLC during our monthly meetings. As Chancellor's Learning Scholars, Camille and I presented (briefly) the topic for the meeting. Then, we would typically have a short discussion surrounding the topic. Finally, each faculty member would have an activity to complete, whether in groups or individually.
<b>Outcomes/Measure s of progress</b>	At the end of spring 2020, the faculty members did a reflection regarding what they learned and how they could apply the knowledge in the future. A couple of those comments are below:  <b>Math Faculty #1:</b> As a result of participating in a Faculty Learning Community, I learned and put into practice how small changes can create big differences. As a result of my participation in the FLC, I found a way to encourage notetaking in my online courses. The original discussion assignment for the course detailed how students could utilize note-taking in the course and provided many effective strategies. The purpose of my transformed discussion was to wait until after the students' first test and implement the use of notetaking to see if students would see a difference in their studies from that point forward. It appeared that students participating in the implementation and learning experience of how to take notes, increased their study habits and course grade. Participation in the FLC encouraged this small change and motivated me to try this change in other courses.

**Math Faculty #2:** It can be challenging to help students begin to think this way. One of the things I have seen in the design of our stats course is that students have many opportunities to reattempt the same material in order to improve, and this tends to make them believers in growth mindset over the course of the semester. I also stress the linkages between assignment types in order to help them along: class problems demonstrate the material, practice problems help them know what they understand and what they don't, the homework is an assessment but also preparation for the test, the test is a more important assessment but also preparation for the final...and they have multiple attempts at the homework, in addition to being able to replace their lowest test grade with the final exam grade. I'm pleased every semester by the number of students that come to me and say, "I didn't get this on the test, but can we look at it so I can learn it for the final?" This, to me, is growth mindset in action.

<b>Lessons Learned and Plans for the Future</b>	As CLS's, we pushed the envelope a little by combining our missions for the good of the entire math division. Of course, not all faculty members were enthusiastic about the work, so I believe it will work better to have a smaller, more intimate group of participants.
<b>Changes because of COVID-19</b>	Our focus changed to be more about what our students needed in online classes. We had to work to meet the needs of the students, considering they hadn't elected to take online classes (and many of our faculty hadn't elected to teach online), but were forced to when GHC went virtual in March.
<b>Strategy or activity</b>	<b>Humanities FLC focused on Growth Mindset</b>
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	We read/studied Dweck's book about Growth Mindset & implemented mindset in our courses by way of revising our syllabuses and/or assignments to include growth mindset language. We also presented GM to the FYA, at Faculty Inservice, and we were accepted to several conferences to present on faculty growth mindset at 2-year colleges (COVID changed that)
<b>Outcomes/Measure of progress</b>	Eight faculty members participated in the FLC; all implemented some aspect of mindset into at least one class. Each faculty member brought a syllabus to review for mindset language.
<b>Lessons Learned and Plans for the Future</b>	For future iterations, we need to develop ways to better measure the impact of these changes.
<b>Changes because of COVID-19</b>	Conferences were cancelled; FLC went online

**GENERAL OVERVIEW AND OBSERVATIONS**

As noted above, much of our Momentum work is tied to our QEP, and we are proud of the retention gains we have realized through a more holistic, yet structured, advising model. Providing intentional touch points around purposeful choice, pathways, and mindset throughout a student's first year gives students a better opportunity to think through their educational and career goals and then to visualize how to reach those goals. While completion rates are high for the activities that are required for registration, those that are optional have lower completion rates. We know that once we get students to participate, they will see better success rates. To address low completion rates, we are continually looking for ways to communicate the benefits with students so they more fully engage in the advising process.

Lessons learned from COVID-19 transition:

- Find a way to blend the Learning Mindsets in your daily work - with or without dealing with a pandemic.
- Establish an immediate plan of action
- Inform faculty and students of the resources available
- Give faculty plenty of pedagogical tools and information on best practices so they can customize their classrooms to fit their teaching style and meet the needs of students
- Offer daily, spanning into the evening, opportunities for IT and Teaching and Learning support
- Create a mentor/mentee system for those faculty who struggle with technology
- Purchases of microphones and Swivl cameras offered more instructional options

## SECTION 3.2 FOLLOW UP FROM MOMENTUM SUMMIT III - “CAMPUS-WIDE” MOMENTUM APPROACH ACTIVITIES (BEYOND THE CLASSROOM)

### PURPOSE

<b>Priority Work</b>	<b>Academic Program Choice</b>
<b>Description of Activities</b>	Develop a program fair to be held in the beginning of each semester
<b>Activity status and plans for 2020</b>	Due to COVID-19 safety and social distancing concerns we were not able to hold face to face pathway fairs on GHC academic sites, but an alternative approach was utilized in place of face-to-face interaction. This fall one of our Department Chairs worked with a Library faculty member and our Cocurricular & Transition Programs Coordinator on a series of guest speakers made up of local business leaders titled “Momentous Tuesdays”. Three of these events were held on 9/29, 10/13, and 10/29. Each event had faculty of various disciplines speak briefly about their pathways and were available to answer questions after the guest speakers were finished speaking. Faculty from Art, Biology, Business, Communication, and Kinesiology and Wellness pathways were on hand during these three events. This spring we will be working to hold a Virtual Pathway fair for all students.
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	Each of the Momentous Tuesday events was attended by at least 10 students. We would like to explore ways to make the students more comfortable asking questions during the events.
<b>Priority Work</b>	<b>Extended Advising</b>
<b>Description of Activities</b>	Students are required to attend an advising session in terms one and two. The goal of this priority work is to encourage students to communicate with an advisor beyond year one and after required advising activities are complete. Establish checkpoints for faculty to reach students after year 1 and after required advising activities are complete. This will build on existing activity around the Quest for Success advising model. Training for faculty advisors on establishing checkpoints after year 1 and after advising activities are complete. This will build on existing activity around the Quest for Success advising model. Develop a student focused outreach plan to remind students to communicate with an advisor beyond year one and after required advising activities are complete. Compile a set of tools and communication strategies to remind students of the opportunity to continue advising activities with faculty advisor beyond the required advising activities. This will consist of building on existing work with the Quest for Success advising model as well as development of new activities.
<b>Activity status and plans for 2020</b>	We started by creating a communication plan designed around the best time is to message students to keep them on track to graduation. Next, we designed a “touch points” document which details the various important times that an advisor should message a student, with details pertinent to keeping the student on their quest to graduation. This document gives advisors a clear picture of when to have checkpoints in a semester to reach out to students.  Our QEP, Quest for Success, already outlined trainings for faculty and staff advisors each semester. We incorporated the communication plan and touchpoints document into trainings for faculty advisors and staff advisors. We are continuing trainings throughout the rest of the Fall 2020 semester in which the touch points document is incorporated in the overall messaging. We continue to refine the messaging as we receive feedback from both advisors and students.
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	Recent feedback from students infers that they are overwhelmed with messaging, especially right now with issues regarding the pandemic, so we will continue to look at the communication plan and make adjustments where necessary.

### MINDSET

<b>Priority Work</b>	<b>Deepening of mindset training</b>
<b>Description of Activities</b>	Development of academic mindset training opportunities for faculty and staff. Responsible units will use data from the USG Mindset survey, as well as institutional

data to drive development plan. This work will expand on 2019 In-Service presentation which examined various pieces of Mindset Data from 2018. During the 2019-2020 academic year, faculty were encouraged to participate in CETL workshops grounded in mindset theory. For academic year 2020-2021, CETL will offer the following professional development for both faculty and staff:

- Book Talk – Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol Dweck
- Workshops focused on increasing growth mindset in the classroom:
- Instructional strategies such as metacognition, transparency in learning and teaching, and providing feedback to students
- Discussion and workshops on the effect of the faculty’s mindset on student success
- Reframing failure
- Intentional connection to both faculty and staff needs when working with students

<b>Activity status and plans for 2020</b>	The book talk club has been moved to Spring 2021. The shift is due to the need to support faculty with online High Impact Practices in Fall 2020 because of an increase in remote instruction. Mindset is embedded in many courses already at GHC. However, in New Faculty Academy (those faculty new to teaching at GHC for the first two years), we have dedicated time to discussing learning mindsets and growth mindset research-based strategies. The new faculty are reading the books <i>Small Teaching Online</i> and <i>What the Best College Teachers Do</i> . Both books are grounded in learning mindset research.
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	The new faculty involved in the Academy discuss ways of shifting their own mindset in the classroom. We have examined the importance of the instructor’s mindset based on the research from Indiana University. This, along with other articles and the aforementioned books, have supported their work. CETL is in the process of creating a reflection for faculty to self-assess their own mindset and potentially discover areas to improve their class climate.

**PATHWAYS**

<b>Priority Work</b>	<b>Financing College</b>
<b>Description of Activities</b>	Create a Financial SWAT Team to look at ways to help remove financial roadblocks that hinder student success in obtaining a degree.
<b>Activity status and plans for 2020</b>	The SWAT team will meet for the first time during the month of November; however, we have already been working on an “Early Outreach” program. This program is designed to connect the Bursar Office staff with those first-time GHC students as soon as they register for class. The goal of this program is to help those first-time students navigate through the college experience, providing them a personal contact for questions. Payment options will be discussed during the conversation, such as ensuring that the student has filled out all the necessary financial aid paperwork. We hope that this program will help improve retention and overall success of GHC’s students. The program is being rolled out for Spring 2021. One of the other ideas being looked at is alternative payment plan options for those students who either cannot do the Nelnet plan or registered too late to enroll. At this point, it is just being discussed and researched to see what our options are.
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	We will know more after the program runs for Spring 2021.

<b>Priority Work</b>	<b>Co-curricular</b>
<b>Description of Activities</b>	Currently GHC offers 3-4 co-curricular trips a year that range from overnight stays at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival to day trips at historically significant venues. The trips relate to specific courses taught at GHC and help students to be engaged and apply their knowledge to a real world setting outside of the traditional classroom. Moving forward we want to grow these programs across more disciplines and provide these types of activities thoughtfully to increase student engagement, help students make purposeful choices in their major, develop lasting interest and passion for their pathway, and ultimately increase student success.

**Activity status and plans for 2020**

In the spring of 2020, we created a procedure with faculty affairs and Student Engagement to begin accepting ideas from faculty and staff for potential co-curricular activities. This included an electronic form someone could fill out, which started a process of reviews to work out the feasibility and logistics. Within the first week this procedure was announced to faculty and went live, we received 8 requests through the system for possible co-curricular activities. However, within 2 weeks of the procedure being implemented a few things happened. One, COVID-19 moved all classes and activities virtual and has kept us with social distancing measure since. This has impacted our ability to offer face to face activities and forced us to explore virtual activities. The second major event that happened a few weeks after COVID is our Student Life department was dissolved. This was a strategic plan made by GHC's executive leadership but placed a large hole in our original plans and procedures. To account for these things, in the Fall of 2020 we were able to hire a full time Co-Curricular Coordinator who will now be taking charge of our future co-curricular plans and implementation.

Since the hiring of the new position, we have reworked some of the procedures and again have begun to collect requests from faculty. We have also now begun implementing activities in a virtual nature for the Fall 2020 and are planning both virtual and face to face activities for spring 2021, pending health guidelines.

Over the summer GHC hosted two virtual events in response to the social justice issues in the country. In June there was the "Black Voices Matter" forum where students from Brother 2 Brother spoke about their experiences as a young black male and expressed their viewpoints to the GHC community. In July, the two sheriff candidates from Floyd County spoke to the GHC community about training law enforcement conduct in their interactions with the minority community, as well as the protocol and reasoning for "no-knock" warrants. In Fall 2020, we conducted a virtual conversation on the importance and impact of local elections, with two guest panelists- a Rome city commissioner and a GHC alumna who has run congressional and local campaigns. For October we have hosted Dr. Sandra McGuire to present an interactive, virtual, presentation on how students learn. This was a large event that reached across all of GHC and included students and faculty from other USG institutions. In November, a GHC faculty member will be giving a virtual lecture on stigma, stereotypes and implicit bias. The School of Social Sciences and Education have a three-part virtual speaker series on racism and social justice, taking place in September, October and November. The School of Business and Professional Studies also has a three-part virtual speaker series in which they bring in entrepreneurs to speak on how they started their businesses and tips and strategies for students.

While we had some bumps along the way, we are now back on schedule and beginning to implement a wide variety of activities in multiple formats that are co-curricular. For spring of 2021, we already have 7 co-curricular activities planned and possibly more on the way.

**Lessons Learned**

The Black Voices Matter forum saw 89 participants from across the GHC community. A survey went out to all participants, and we received 32 responses, all positive. The Floyd County sheriff's forum welcomed 68 participants with 14 returning surveys. There were two responses that said the forum seemed like a campaign rather than discussion, feedback that was taken into consideration with the local elections virtual event. That event saw two political science classes attend and three other students. Feedback on the event was 100% positive, and all the surveys indicated that both learning objectives were met. Our presentation from Dr. Sandra McGuire was a huge success. We had 363 students attend the presentation from GHC. We received 62 responses from feedback surveys and 100% of the responses were positive. Every student who responded states they took something away from the presentation that will help them be more successful in their coursework.

**STUDENT SUCCESS AND COMPLETION TEAM**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>email</b>
Jennifer Hicks	Director of Academic Success	Jhicks@highlands.edu
Dana Nichols	Provost	dnichols@highlands.edu
Jesse Bishop	Dean of Planning, Assessment, Accreditation, & Research	jebishop@highlands.edu
Elizabeth Tanner	QEP Coordinator	etanner@highlands.edu
Josie Baudier	Director of Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning	jbaudier@highlands.edu
Melanie Largin	Dean, School of Business and Professional Studies	mlargin@highlands.edu
Jon Hershey	Dean, School of Humanities	jhershey@highlands.edu
Laura Walton	Advising Coordinator	lwalton@highlands.edu