



# UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

## SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Established in 2011, Complete College Georgia (CCG) was conceived as a collaborative effort among Georgia's K-12 schools, public colleges, universities and technical colleges, and the private sector to take concrete steps to improve college access and completion in the state. Framed on a set of high impact, evidence-based strategies, CCG builds on national research and local activities to support student success at all levels. The overarching goal is to graduate an additional 250,000 Georgia students with high-quality degrees or certificates by 2025 in order to reach projections of employment readiness. Each institution in the University System of Georgia has submitted and updated action plans on their activities that have the greatest impact on college completion within their institutional mission and context.

For the University System of Georgia, CCG has evolved into a framework for focusing institutional attention on what matters most: helping Georgia's students succeed. Institutions have adopted, adapted, and promoted a wide range of strategies to suit their local settings. More importantly, the work of promoting student success has become broadly shared on campus and better understood across the units of institutions. As the work of CCG has evolved to incorporate a Momentum Approach to student success, institutions have adapted more holistic approaches to improving student outcomes and addressing persistent equity gaps. CCG continues to forge partnerships among functional areas and foster understandings of how the various elements of a college or university come together. These partnerships have created statewide support for Georgia's orientation in building a 21st century workforce.

## SYSTEM PROFILE

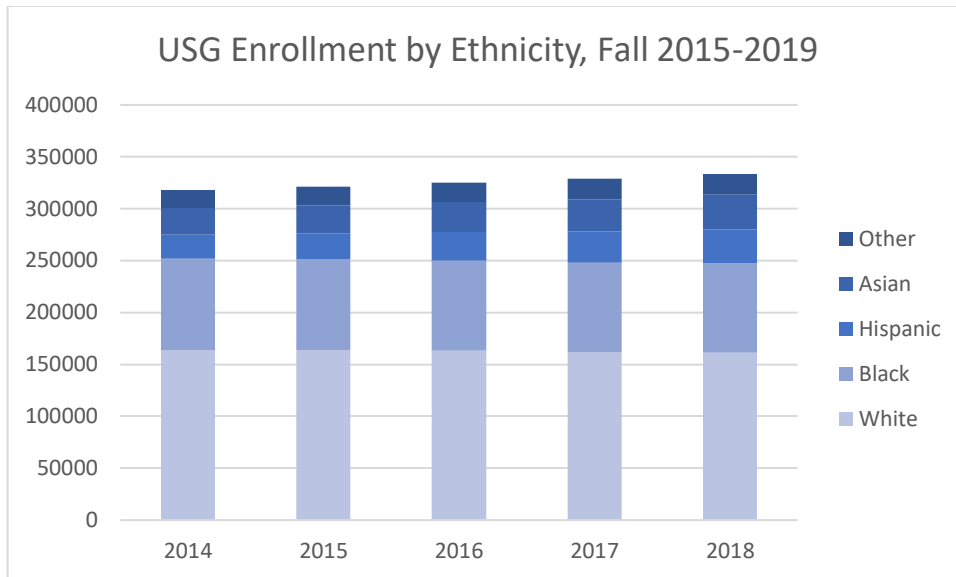
The University System of Georgia (USG) includes 26 institutions, with fall 2019 enrollment of 333,507 students. Academic year 2019 marked the fifth consecutive year that enrollment in the University System has exceeded the recession peak (fall 2011—318,027) and is an increase of 4,795 or roughly 1.4 percent, over fall 2018. The increase in enrollment at USG institutions compares favorably with national trends, with four-year public institutions nationally experiencing a slight (1.3 percent) drop in enrollment in the past year.

The University System's institutions in fall 2019 headcount ranged from 1,844 at Atlanta Metropolitan State College to 53,619 at Georgia State University. Georgia Tech witnessed the greatest percentage increase in enrollment since 2018 at 11.5 percent (largely driven by their online master's in computer science program), followed by the Kennesaw State University at 6.7 percent and the Middle Georgia State University at 3.4 percent. Atlanta Metropolitan State College saw the greatest decline in enrollment since 2018, dropping 15.7 percent, followed by Savannah State University, which shrank by roughly 9.5 percent and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, which saw a decline of 8.5 percent. Nearly 84.6 percent of students served by USG institutions are from Georgia, with 10.6 percent of students from out of state, and 5.8 percent of enrollment consisting of international students.

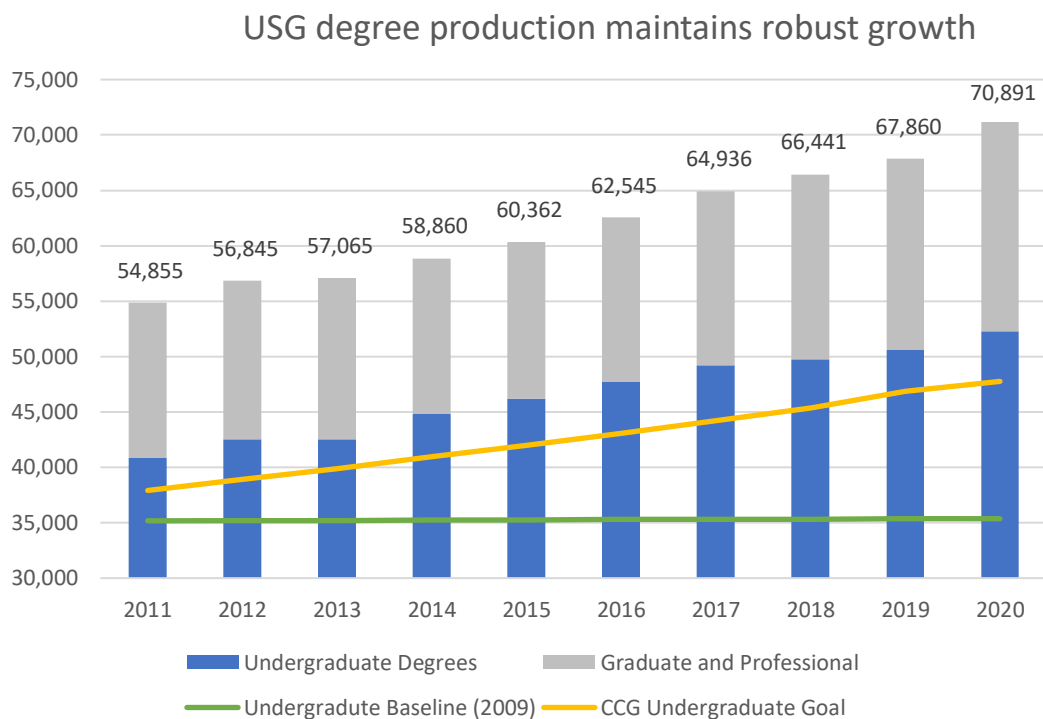
The USG serves a diverse population:

- » 48.3 percent white      » 25.9 percent Black
- » 10.1 percent Asian     » 9.7 percent Hispanic
- » 6 percent other categories/unreported

Over the past five years, the number of Hispanic students has increased by 40 percent and the percentage of Asian students has increased by 33 percent. Black or African American enrollment and white enrollment has declined by 2 percent over this same period. Figure 1 illustrates the shifting composition of students enrolled in USG institutions.

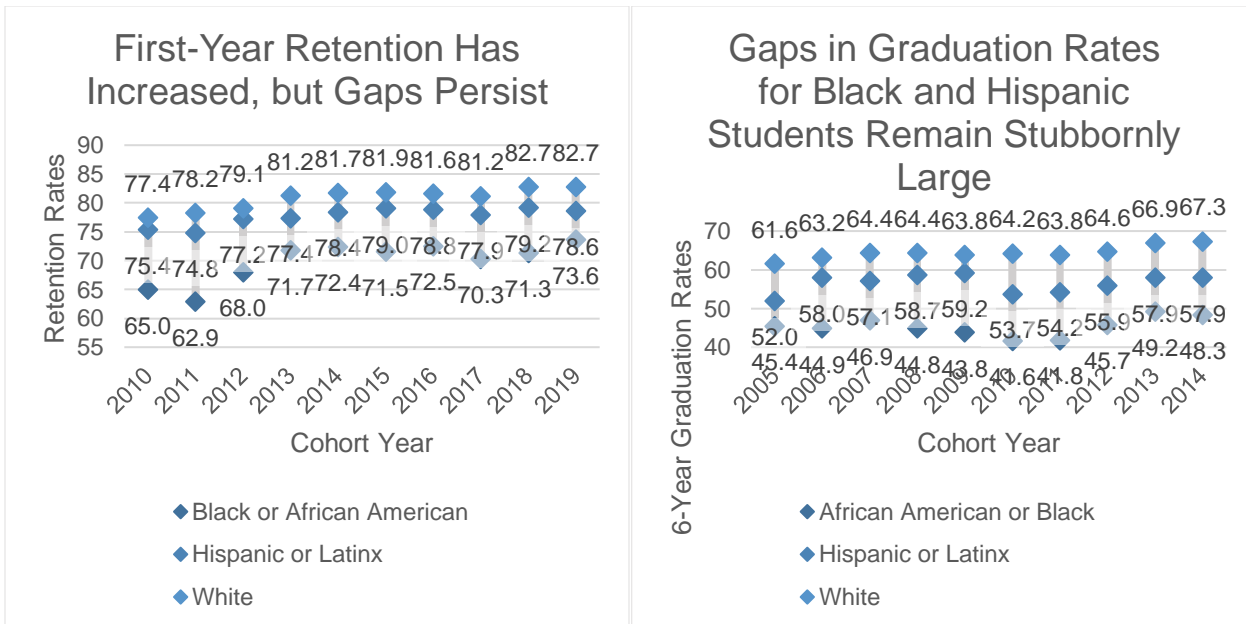


Complete College Georgia launched in 2011 with a commitment to increase the educational attainment of Georgians and a specific goal of increasing the percentage of young adults aged 25-34 with a credential of economic value from 40 percent to 60 percent by 2025. Undergraduate degree conferrals in the University System have risen nearly 28 percent since 2011 (from 40,867 to 52,25), remaining above the goals established for CCG by roughly 10 percent over this period. The figure below illustrates this trend.

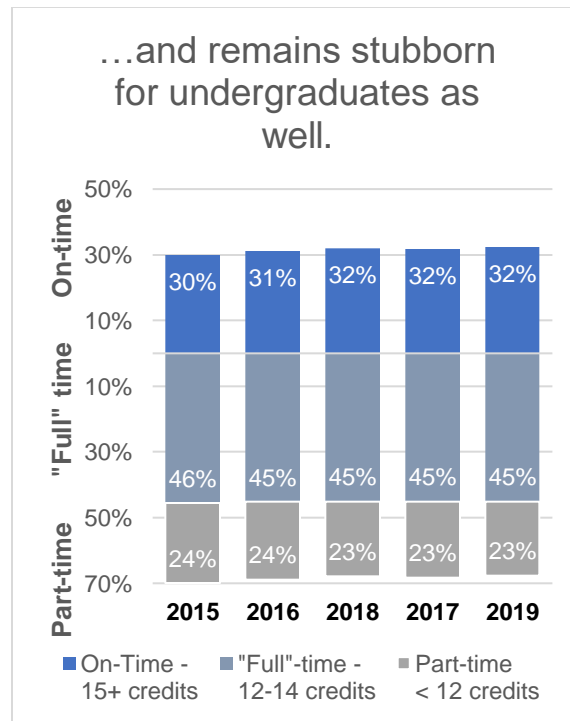
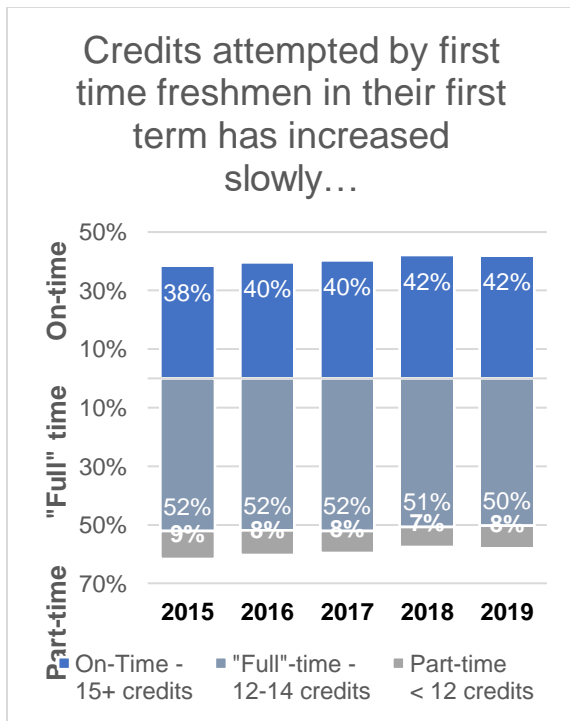


For all this success, however, the state still has a substantial way to go. Significant gaps in attainment, retention, and graduation exist between African Americans and Hispanics and the white population. While African Americans and Hispanic are an increasingly larger share of the younger population in the state, they remain underrepresented in attainment data. There exists a 12 percentage point gap between the share of the population with an associate degree or higher for the African American and the white population aged 25 and over, and a 19 percentage point gap with Hispanics. This gap is echoed in USG graduation rate gaps, with African American six-year graduation rates systemwide lagging 19 percentage points (48.38 percent to 67.3 percent for the 2014 cohort), and Hispanic rates

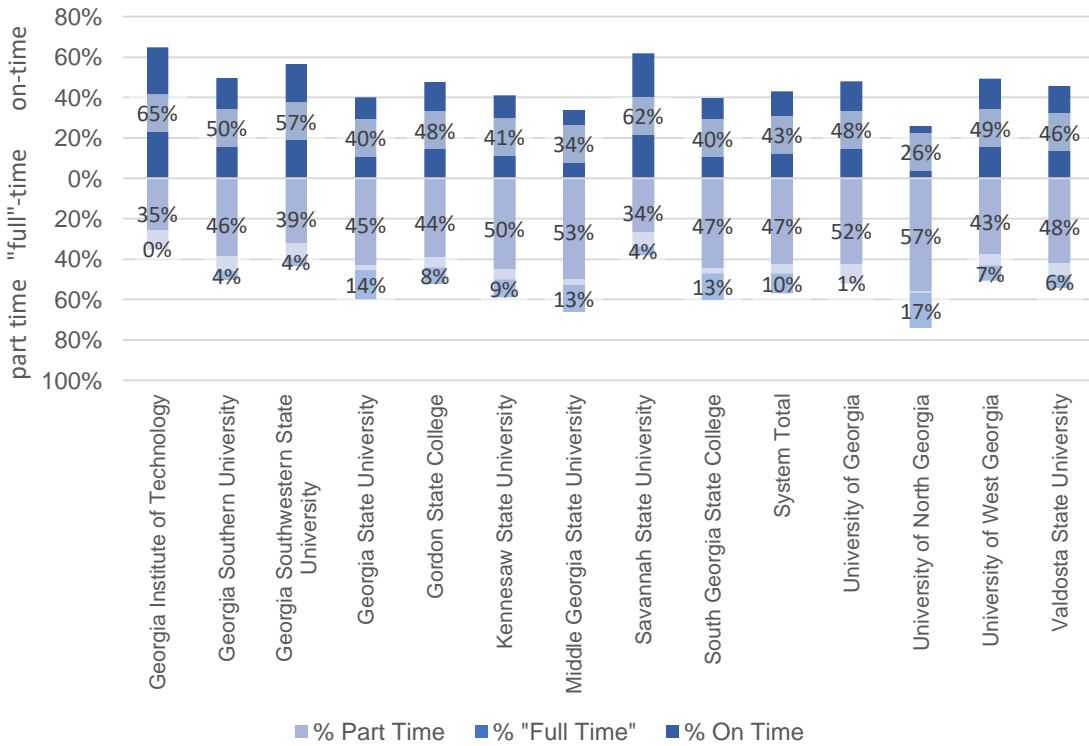
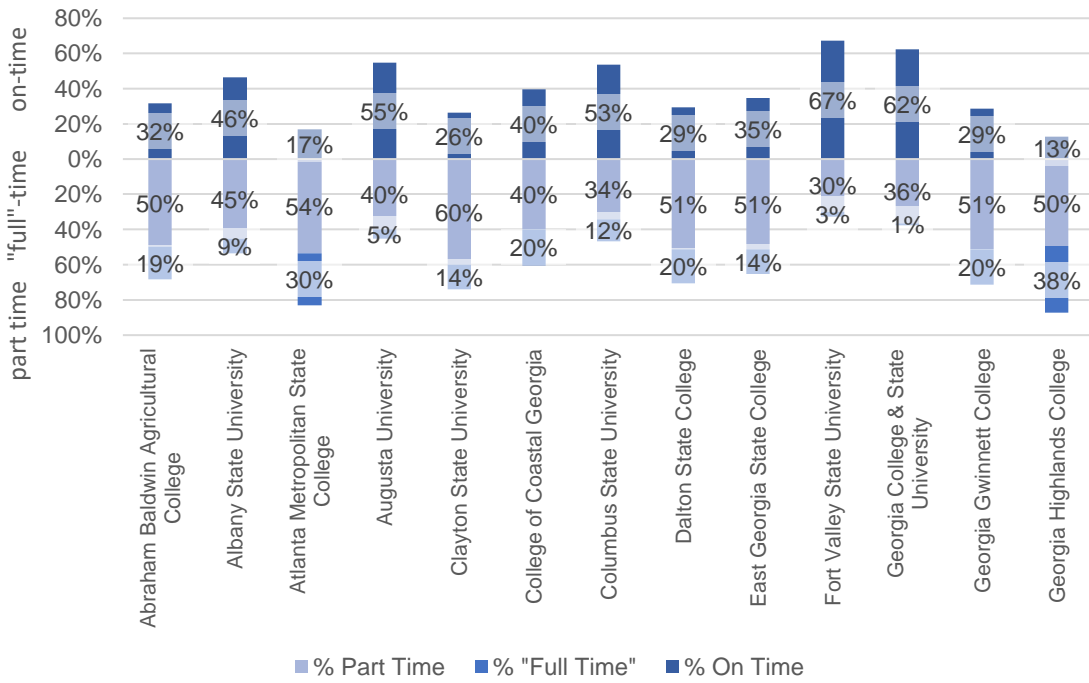
lagging by 9.4 percentage points (57.9 percent to 67.3 percent). Interestingly, first-year retention for Latinx students only lags slightly behind white students, but compounds yearly, resulting in significantly lower graduation rates. The retention rates experienced by African American students also decline each year the cohort is enrolled, but to a lesser degree.



An early component of the Complete College Georgia work was the promotion of 15-to-Finish and other credit intensity campaigns. These campaigns were embedded in the Momentum Year work for institutions within their creation of clear pathways with fuller schedules for all students. Across the System, the tools to implement this strategy was largely at the discretion of institutions, resulting in a mixture of default registration and communication campaigns. In both cases, the impact of these efforts had demonstrable impacts in the first year of their implementation. At most schools, however, the effect on credit taking seems to diminish for subsequent cohorts, the reasons for which are unclear.



### FTF Credit taking, Fall 2019



## **MOMENTUM UPDATE**

Building on the foundation of the Momentum Year, the System Office expanded and extended the focus of Momentum Work to look beyond the first year and beyond the classroom. Applying a Momentum Framework of Purpose, Pathways, and Mindset to the full scope of institutional activities, a Momentum Approach invites campuses to think about how students can start strong, build on early work with deeper activities that lead to success in the classroom and beyond. Just as there is a Momentum Approach to the first year – the Momentum Year – understanding the key elements and strategies across the life-cycle of the student provides a lens to focus campus work to boost student success and reduce gaps in attainment in all aspects of a student’s experience.

As a part of this work campuses convened for the Momentum Summit III in January 2020 to reflect on their current Momentum Year work, solidify the gains already made, and plan for how to expand the Momentum Approach to a wide variety of campus work. A key feature of the Summit III was the central role that USG institutions played in providing the expertise and knowledge about Momentum. A significant milestone for this year’s Summit was the degree to which the event highlighted the work that had been undertaken within the System. After years of experimentation and refining the Momentum Year at institutions, the third Summit reflected the maturing of the expert community within the state to support innovation and demonstrated the strengths Georgia enjoys through the relationships and structure of the University System.

At the Summit, institutions planned for their work in the year ahead, with considerable interest in earlier engagement for students with career services, engaging housing and student life more explicitly in academic conversations, expanding the application of experiential learning across the curriculum, and engaging faculty in a host of professional practices to advance and support the academic mindsets of their students. Institutions developed plans among teams at the Summit to support the sustainability of their established Momentum Year work and to identify opportunities to explore, experiment, and expand their work beyond the core academic areas and the first year.

### **MOMENTUM YEAR UPDATE: PURPOSEFUL CHOICE AND THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE**

Institutions across the System undertook activities to support students transitioning to college and making a purposeful choice in a program of study or focus area. The System supported this work through the 2019 Advising Academy, held at the University of West Georgia, which focused on supporting successful student transition to college and the integration of purposeful choice. Institutions investigated the ways they can serve a diverse group as they navigate the steps from application through the completion of their Momentum Year. This scope encouraged a campus-wide conversation about the numerous transition points students encounter and how to best manage them in order to support their success in the institution. The Academy was divided between presentations and panels from a range of USG institutions sharing their progress and experiences in this area and structured planning time for campus teams to create Transition Improvement Plans that lay out concrete steps for deeper engagement with students as they transition to college and throughout their Momentum Year.

While much of this work was built around the presumption of in-person experiences for students, a strand of the work involved the re-envisioning of orientation as a “first course” in college using the institutional learning management system (LMS) as the vehicle to deliver a host of information typically communicated during in person and often promptly forgotten. When the Covid-19 Pandemic upended in-person orientation programs, these orientation courses proved extremely adaptable and effective in providing students with essential information and connection in a virtual manner. Institutions were also able to move other tools, including career and interest inventories and peer leader meetings, into a virtual space to support the transition, work that may prove to have utility regardless of the mode for future orientations.

### **CLEAR PATHWAYS: GENERAL EDUCATION REDESIGN**

In 2017, the University System of Georgia took a hard look at the pressures and challenges facing public higher education through the College 2025 project. The results of the work of the statewide College 2025 Commission was a roadmap for the future direction within Georgia of public higher education to be responsive to the educational needs of all its citizens. Among the findings were calls to rethink practices, curriculum and processes, and to ensure students are exposed to the essential skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.

At the same time, the System began scaling the Momentum Year approach for all students. As institutions began the process of implementing the Momentum Year, it became clear that current curricular structure made some key elements, including connecting to purpose and providing opportunities to explore in a focus area, more difficult. It was also clear that revisiting the General Education Curriculum would allow for students to make more of the opportunities that the Momentum Year created and supported the System’s strategic goals around student success.

In May 2019, the Chancellor of the University System charged a [Design Committee](#) of academic and industry representatives with establishing principles that would guide the curricular redesign. Working through the summer, this group considered the purpose and broad outcomes the System should expect of a general education curriculum. A draft list of principles was released for comments from the System and stakeholders, resulting in a [final set of six design principles](#) that were formally approved by the Board of Regents during their September 2019 meeting.

Following this, a larger [Implementation Committee](#) was tasked with the development of the form and structure of a redesigned General Education Curriculum aligned with the Design Principles. The members of this committee included faculty, students, academic administrators, and administrative leadership from across the System, including the chairs of many discipline advisory committees. This group met twice in the fall and engaged in a series of human centered design exercises to develop the critical skills, knowledge, and attributes of a learner that should be a part of a General Education Curriculum.

From this work, the Committee developed the essential domains of knowledge that comprise a core curriculum, along with a cross-cutting elements that may be delivered in a variety of disciplinary contexts. The Committee also envisioned a curriculum that provided increased flexibility for institutions to tailor the curriculum to their institutional mission and context, and space for student exploration, all within a structure that maintains comprehensive transferability. As a component of this latter aspect of the work, the Committee undertook the initial work to identify potential outcomes for the institutional curriculum.

At each stage of process, the work of the Implementation Committee was supported by feedback and input from the broader community, who were invited to provide their general feedback as well as input on the essential domains of knowledge and those elements that should be common to all institutions.

From this work the recommendation of the Committee recognized that the USG General Education Curriculum is an integral component of all undergraduate degree programs. The purpose of the Curriculum is to provide foundational knowledge in major academic disciplines and 21<sup>st</sup> century core competencies, to expose students to diverse experiences that prepares them to thrive in all settings. General education provides a clear platform for student success by offering engaging, high quality courses that maintain consistent rigor and facilitate seamless institutional transfer.

This work resulted in a proposed curriculum that included eight core areas representing 33 hours of coursework, along with nine credit hours reserved for student exploration and 18 credit hours for the student's field of study. Across the core elements of the curriculum are infused three contextualized, cross-cutting elements:

- Critical Thinking+
- Global Competencies, and
- Information Literacy+.

These cross-cutting elements reflect many of the 21<sup>st</sup> century essential skills that students must master to be successful throughout their academic careers and beyond.

The General Education Curriculum was still a work in progress when the Pandemic struck in March 2020 and suspended the process. While some of the exploratory and developmental work can proceed, fully implementing the new curriculum would require significant investments of faculty and administrative resources that were needed for more immediate priorities on campus. The foundational work of the committees and the vital input of campus stakeholders will remain essential when the opportunity to revisit the curriculum returns.

### *Statistics Pathway*

In 2019 the University System invited institutions to prototype a new mathematics pathway that begins with Elementary Statistics in the Quantitative Skills (Area A2) for programs that are statistically-based. Fifteen institutions across all four sectors joined in a prototype:

Augusta University	Georgia Gwinnett College	Kennesaw State University
College of Coastal Georgia	Georgia Highlands College	Middle Georgia State University
Columbus State University	Georgia Southern University	Savannah State University

Dalton State College	Georgia Southwestern State University	University of West Georgia
Fort Valley State University	Georgia State University	Valdosta State University

Institutions participating in the prototype agreed to:

1. Establish clear statistics pathways on their campus.
2. Offer Elementary Statistics (MATH/STAT 1401) without a prerequisite.
3. Include Elementary Statistics as an Area A2 math as well as Area D.
4. Identify a coordinator for the statistics pathway
5. For institutions that admit students requiring Learning Support, develop and offer a Corequisite Learning Support course for statistics no later than Fall 2020. Institutions will be asked to work with the University of Texas' Dana Center on the development of this Learning Support course.
6. Utilize the same placement criteria MATH/STAT 1401 as for MATH 1001/1101.
7. Institutions must commit to identifying programs for which the statistics pathway may be appropriate, and must develop mathematics pathways and advising protocols for students in those programs. The statistics pathway is not appropriate for students in programs that will require them to take precalculus or calculus in the future.
8. Prototype institutions must implement a strategy to address any issues with students satisfying Area D that are created by these pathways. For instance, institutions may wish to consider including a second statistics or research methods course for inclusion in Area D for the duration of the pilot.
9. In implementing this work, mathematics departments should engage departments that offer degrees in the social sciences, behavioral sciences, health professions and business to ensure that their pathways appropriately address the mathematical need in these fields.

To help identify the programs for which statistics is the recommended first math, the System Office surveyed the Regents Advisory Committees of non-STEM disciplines for their recommendations, which were communicated to campuses as they undertook their deliberations. The System supported institutions in the development of the corequisite Learning Support course for Statistics along with the University of Texas Dana Center through meetings and institutional check ins. For participating institutions, while they were authorized to begin offering Elementary Statistics in Area A2 in Fall 2019, the development of the Learning Support course (MATH 0996) and associated administrative and governance changes required to implement these changes, including working with statistics-based disciplines to update program maps and academic guidance, represented the bulk of the activity for the year.

## ACADEMIC MINDSET

### *Productive Academic Mindset*

Academic mindsets—individual's beliefs about learning that shape how they interpret difficulty—are crucial for success in college. Mindsets can be categorized into three groups of beliefs: *growth mindset* (the belief that one can improve through effort), *purpose* (the belief that an activity has value), and *social belonging* (the belief that one fits in with peers, colleagues, and teachers). Even within the first semester of college, students receive numerous messages from students, instructors, and the institution that shape perceptions of whether they belong in college and have the potential to succeed. Those perceptions, in turn, can affect students' performance in their classes and decisions to remain enrolled. Research suggests that learning mindsets are malleable and learning mindset interventions are effective at reducing equity and opportunity gaps for students from traditionally underrepresented groups.

To better understand the current scope of learning mindsets for students in the University System and to understand how they affect student outcomes, the System joined with the University of Virginia's Motivate Lab in creating an Academic Mindset Survey, a 80+ element device administered to all first-time freshmen before their third week of classes and again within the last three weeks of classes. The 2019 survey yielded more than 21,000 discrete responses, providing a snapshot of how students approach their academic work, social integration, and sense of purpose, as well as indicators of scarcity and other factors. Because the survey is linked to student outcomes data, the survey allows the University System an opportunity to explore at a level of detail unmatched elsewhere the impact of academic mindset on student outcomes. The substantial response rate provides one of the largest, if not the largest, data sets on mindset in higher education anywhere.

*Mindset Responses 2019*

<b>Institution</b>	<b># responses</b>	<b>% Freshmen</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b># responses</b>	<b>% Freshmen</b>
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	355	21%	Georgia Institute of Technology	284	0.09
Albany State University	1,194	37%	Georgia Southern University	3,673	54%
Atlanta Metropolitan State College	36	4%	Georgia Southwestern State University	518	67%
Augusta University	496	32%	Georgia State University	4,055	22%
Clayton State University	241	20%	Gordon State College	676	47%
College of Coastal Georgia	180	15%	Kennesaw State University	302	3%
Columbus State University	1,163	67%	Middle Georgia State University	1,008	40%
Dalton State College	918	38%	Savannah State University	1,305	78%
East Georgia State College	112	6%	South Georgia State College	99	8%
Fort Valley State University	268	40%	University of Georgia	770	15%
Georgia College & State University	756	45%	University of North Georgia	816	12%
Georgia Gwinnett College	1,637	24%	University of West Georgia	215	7%
Georgia Highlands College	381	11%	Valdosta State University	364	16%
			<b>System Total</b>	<b>21,822</b>	<b>23%</b>

**OTHER INSTITUTIONAL HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES & OUTCOMES**

**STEM IV INITIATIVE**

FY20 marked a significant milestone for the USG STEM Initiative with the inclusion of all 26 institutions in the Initiative’s System-level effort now spanning just over a decade. Now in its fourth iteration of the 3-year grant cycle, STEM IV focuses on the implementation of four new areas and scaling identified, promising practices from previous years. During this grant cycle, participating institutions are pursuing projects that correspond specifically to current USG priorities, including the Momentum Year and the Momentum Approach.

Institutional programs have a primary or secondary emphasis on (1) **Direct academic support**, including supplemental instruction, learning assistants, and intensive tutoring, for core mathematics and first-year STEM focus area courses; (2) **Learning communities** and effective cohort-based approaches for STEM students; and (3) **Academic mindset** interventions in STEM (for both students and/or faculty), and (4) **Undergraduate research** as a high-impact practice.

STEM IV’s top three **successes** from Year 1: (1) **Faculty/Staff Participation**; (2) **Implementation/ adaptation of academic support programs** and, (3) **Mindset-related efforts**. The Initiative’s top three **challenges** from Year 1: (1) **Low student participation**; (2) **Continuing Undergraduate Research during COVID-19**; and (3) **Measuring the benefit of select activities**

For Year 2, STEM IV is looking to enhance the networking opportunities for administrators, departments and faculty through cross sectional networks to link campus leaders across all 26 institutions based on sector, position



and area of STEM focus. Collectively, in addition to seeking opportunities to interact between and across sectors, the Initiative is working closely with campuses to improve measuring student outcomes and seeking funding opportunities to enhance current STEM-related efforts.

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## ADULT LEARNER EFFORTS

Now, more than ever, efforts supporting adult learners are essential to continue USG's mission to provide quality education to all citizens of the state. With over 1 million adults in Georgia with some college and no degree, USG institutions are doing their part to help Georgia's adults earn credentials toward a degree or certificate. According to the USG Fall 2020 enrollment report, approximately 9% (23,604) of all undergraduates are nontraditional, adult learners.

In addition to our support to active duty military service members, veterans and their families, USG employs other initiatives to buttress campus efforts focused on adult learners including (a) the Regents Academic Committee on Adult Learners (RAC-AL) and (b) the Adult Learner Consortium of USG Institutions (ALC).

The RAC-AL includes a representative from each of the 26 USG institutions that meet as a group twice per year to consider policies and activities that impact the adult learner's access and success on USG campuses. Through subcommittee work, RAC-AL members are examining adult learner definitions, articulation and transfer codes, and graduate student issues.

The ALC, relaunched in Spring 2020, includes representatives from 17 USG institutions that meet monthly and are committed – through their signed memorandum of agreement – to assessing and instituting practices and procedures that enhance adult learner access, persistence and degree completion. As institutional members of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), ALC campuses are working on institutional areas that enhance and support the adult learner regardless of their chosen learning modality. The Consortium's three main goals for FY21 are to: establish Adult Learner campus teams at each institution; encourage the inclusion of adult learner needs in all campus-related student discussions; and, identify on-campus designated space for adult learners as the consortium institutions seek to become destinations of choice for adults returning to college.

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## GEAR UP GEORGIA

The GEAR UP Georgia (GUGa) project is in the fifth year of a seven-year statewide GEAR UP grant Georgia. The Governor designated the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) to administer the GUGa grant in 2016. GUGa has served over 12,000 high need students in more than 100 middle schools and high schools across the state. The first delivery model uses a Cohort strategy in districts that have high levels of poverty (80%+ FRL), students experiencing homelessness and in the foster care system. During Year Four (2019-20) GUGa supported students who were in grade 10 (Class of 22) and 11 (Class of 21) whom we began serving in grades 7 and 8 respectively (Cohort Students). Additionally, the project also served students in grades 11-12 as well as a minimum first year college students who experienced homelessness or were in the foster care system (Priority Students).

GUGa experienced an increase in the following areas from the 2018-19 to 2019-20 school year(30% or more increases):

- Total, unduplicated number of students with parents, guardians, or other family members that

actively participated in one or more GEAR UP activities - 49%

- Total, unduplicated number of educators trained in college and career success strategies trained - 34%
- Sum Total of Hours that GEAR UP students participated in the following activities:
  - o Tutoring/homework assistance – 49%
  - o Summer programs – 39%
- Total, unduplicated Number of GEAR UP Students who participated in the following activities:
  - o Comprehensive mentoring – 41%
  - o Job site visit/job shadowing – 300%

- Workshops – 40%
- College & career counseling/advising – 38%
- Financial aid counseling – 38%

GUGa provided virtual service options for one-on-one on-demand tutoring and mentoring prior to the pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, we increased our capacity to provide tutoring and mentoring online services. Additionally, we added the following new services to accommodate virtual service delivery:

- Increased frequency of staff “check-ins” virtually
- One-on-One phone call college match/fit and career exploration advisement targeting disengaged students/parents and those who were in danger of being retained.
- Virtual college tours facilitation (on-demand and scheduled)
- Increased virtual workshops offered statewide vs. locally
- Virtual ACT/SAT test prep
- Virtual professional development opportunities for school staff in the following areas
  - FAFSA completion (seniors) and EFC calculator tool (juniors) engagement
  - Competitive writing for college admissions and scholarship essays
- One-on-One scholarship search, branding, essay and four-year funding plan advisement
- One-on-One financial aid counseling (FAFSA, Hope, Zell, EFC)
- Weekly career exploration webinar series
- Purposeful choice research study
  - Career Keys assessment tool
  - Pre & post surveys gauging knowledge and confidence levels
  - Purposeful Choice staff advisement training
- Acquired SAT test prep fee waivers for juniors (schools prioritize seniors and had access to fewer waivers due to the pandemic)
- Pursued and received US DOE program approval to purchase giftcard codes from GrubHub and other student supplies to incentivize student participation virtual in workshops
- Requested/Received gift card donations to incentivize student participation in virtual workshops
- Re-established SignalVine texting contract to increase high school senior and *first year college student engagement* in resources and strategic college success task completion and reduce "summer melt" through advisor-led text nudges.
- Set-up YouTube page to record all virtual workshops for students unable to attend due to prior conflicts

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## CHANCELLORS LEARNING SCHOLARS & FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

The Chancellor’s Learning Scholars (CLS) program was designed with a threefold mission: 1) to facilitate pedagogical conversations that lead to course enrichment and improved student learning; 2) to develop a network of strong relationships and enhance collegiality among faculty; and 3) to promote leadership development in USG faculty and the CTL directors. In the past year the program engaged its third cohort of over 100 Learning Scholars from across the System who were equipped to lead faculty learning communities (FLCs) in the application of hybrid high impact practices and best practices.

Each CLS facilitates a learning community of 8-10 interested faculty, who meet regularly throughout the year to investigate their practice around a shared topic that focuses on making changes in their classroom practice. The FLCs represent a scalable vehicle for driving faculty conversations around improved practice deeper in a manner that is sustainable and flexible, allowing the USG to impact the practice of a considerable number of faculty in a decentralized manner. This year also saw the second cohort of CLS enter their second year of appointment, increasing the total number of CLS this year to 140 faculty facilitators. The pandemic has created a certain degree of challenge for both cohorts as in some cases CLS in the second cohort felt the need to modify the topic they explored the first year, and new CLS entering training this fall did not benefit from the face to face workshops enjoyed by previous groups.

This year also marked the introduction of OneHE, an online collaboration and learning platform specifically for higher education. From the first year of the CLS program, the Office of Faculty Development (OFD) saw the potential for creating the means for faculty at different institutions who were exploring common strategies to share their findings, successes, and challenges. This sharing is made possible through webinars to an extent, but OFD has

also pursued tools to emulate the strong connections that emerge from conference sessions or disciplinary conversations through the adoption of the virtual platform OneHE. OneHE possesses the tools and resources to connect learning communities and faculty across institutions by shared pursuit of similar strategies, with plans in the works to develop similar connections through tools within DesiretoLearn/Brightspace..

Finally, when classes shifted to remote instruction in March because of the Pandemic, faculty teaching in traditional modalities were challenged to transition their courses to entirely online delivery. While the USG has considerable experience with teaching courses online, the majority of faculty had not taught online previously. Institutions throughout the System, supported by the USG Office of Faculty Development (OFD) and the network of Centers for Teaching and Learning, put in place intensive workshops and supports to use the brief pause in instruction to help faculty transition their courses online, and then follow up with more structured professional development to promote technology-enhanced instruction. This included the Keep Teaching USG website, which became a central repository for essential material about online teaching, an extensive webinar series facilitated by OFD on pedagogy and practice in the online space, and faculty institutes at institutions to support every faculty teaching a hybrid or online course. The scope, extent, and scale of the training was an unprecedented effort to support instructional innovation across the full teaching corps of the University System, resulting in a massive increase in the utilization of the LMS as a classroom tool.

This work was matched with the implementation of new reporting tools within the Learning Management System (D2L Brightspace, the LMS) to identify individual faculty and students that were struggling to connect with online tools. These utilization reports allowed institutions to identify, in near-real time, those faculty and students who had not logged into the LMS, engaged with certain tools within the system, and were candidates for outreach. Using these reports on campus in the Spring allowed institutions to identify and support students who were experiencing a range of challenges, including connectivity issues, unfamiliarity with the LMS, and those students who were feeling overwhelmed.

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## GATEWAYS TO COMPLETION (G2C)

Gateways to Completion (G2C), an integral part of the Momentum Year initiative, is a faculty-driven, data-informed course redesign process. Twenty – five USG institutions worked in two cohorts in conjunction with the Gardner Institute to first create and then implement an evidence-based plan for deepening student learning and success in high-enrollment courses. High enrollment courses historically result in high rates of Ds, Fs, Withdrawals, and Incompletes (DFWI rates) especially for low-income, first-generation, and historically underrepresented students. This multi-year process helps institutions create and implement a plan for course redesign that supports teaching, learning, academic success, completion, and retention.

Here is a thumbnail explanation of Cohort One results:

- 29 different courses at 10 institutions with redesigned results
  - AADS 1102, ACCT 2100, ACCT 2101, BIO 2121K, BIOL 1107, BIOL 1107K, BIOL 1108K, BIOL 2107K, ENGL 1101 (3), ENGL 2113, HIST 2111 (2), HIST 2112 (2), MATH 1001, MATH 1111 (6), MATH 1113, MATH 1190, MATH 1441, POLS 1101, PSYC 1101, and SCI 1101
  - Positive results found in 22 of the 29 courses
- Fifty-one semesters of recorded data
  - DFWI rates for redesigned courses lower in 31 semesters
    - Results statistically significant in 14 of the 31 semesters
    - Effect size range from .0002 to .4517

Many USG institutions were able to continue the planned interventions in spite of the COVID-19 interruption. In fact, feedback from the institutions indicated that online interventions that were part of the G2C redesigns were an asset to students and faculty who were forced by the pandemic to go fully online.

Cohort Two continues to benefit from the lessons learned in Cohort One. Ongoing evaluation of Cohort One results, as well as initial evaluation of Cohort Two results will continue in 2021. At this juncture, it can be safely asserted that based on the early evaluation results G2C contributions to the success of the Momentum Year initiative are undisputed.

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## AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE INITIATIVE

AAMI continues to make a positive impact both pre- and post- COVID-19. In AY 2019, AAMI served approximately 1000 students. For AY2020, projected participation was 1406 students. Though the actual number served (1125) as of November is 25% less than projected (1406), program numbers are up by 125 students over 2019. Of note, while some institutions saw significant reductions in student participation, Georgia State almost doubled the number of participating students from 100 to 198 and both the University of West Georgia and Georgia Southern have about 100 students.

Prior to the pandemic, program activities were primarily in person. As the system transferred to on-line learning, AAMI ordered 40 Dell laptops to be distributed to students in need to help bridge the digital divide. The laptops are loaners to be checked out and returned similar to the library system. We offered a 2-day virtual training by a leading expert in higher-education for the 40 directors covering such topics as “*Identifying High-Impact Strategies To Support the Academic Achievement of African American Male Students*”, as well as a webinar on stress management led by a Kaiser Permanente psychologist. The purpose was to provide the directors with tools and methods to better serve the students.

As Fall 2020 approached, creative measures were used to recruit students via mail, email, referrals from faculty/staff, social media and word-of-mouth from upper classmen. Engagement via face-to-face meetings, conferences, tutoring, mentoring and various communications transitioned to Zoom meetings, one-on-one FaceTime, personal telephone calls, GroupMe and/or text messages.

Some campuses have implemented virtual AAMI first-year learning classes (earning 1 or 2 credit hours), created academic skills enrichment groups or subgroups by major, tracking study and library use by GPS, as well as using Georgia View (similar to the D2L class format). Students are being acknowledged for their accomplishments as a means of encouragement and to inspire others to achieve in spite of challenges presented by the pandemic.

The following is a summary of AAMI recruitment, engagement and cross-department collaboration efforts for AY2017-2019:

- **Enrollment** in AAMI increased each year, while during the same period total enrollment for the USG and African-American males decreased.
- **Average Cumulative GPA** for the Fall 2019 cohort of students seeking bachelor degrees at:
  - 6 institutions the average cumulative GPA of AAMI students exceeded the institution average GPA
  - 7 institutions the average cumulative GPA of AAMI students exceeded the average cumulative GPA for all African-American males.

For students seeking associate degree at:

- 1 institution the average cumulative GPA of AAMI students exceeded the institution average GPA
- 3 institutions the average GPA of AAMI students exceeded the institution average GPA for all African-American Males.
- **Retention Rates** of 2018, 2017 and 2016 cohorts
  - 3 AAMI programs’ retention rates exceeded the institution rate for three consecutive years or 13.6% of active programs.
  - 7 AAMI programs’ retention rates exceeded the institution rate two out of three years or 31.8% of active programs.
- **Graduation Rates** - Both Georgia Tech and the University of West Georgia’s programs produced higher graduation rates than the overall African-American Male (AAM) population and in some years were close to the institution rates. The AAMI program at East Georgia State College almost tripled the institution graduation rate in the 2015 cohort.
- **Degrees Conferred** – The number of degrees conferred among AAMI students increased each year. From 2017 to 2019, AAMI students at Georgia Highlands and Georgia Southwestern received over 1/3 of the number of degrees conferred upon AAMs, with a high of 45.8% in 2017 at Georgia Highlands. East Georgia AAMI students received about 1/3 of the degrees conferred upon AAMs in both 2019 and 2017.

AAMI students at Georgia Tech, represented 24.0% of degrees conferred upon AAM in 2018 and 34.6% in 2017.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD**

The 2019-2020 academic year witnessed remarkable advances in student success and completion. Across a host of measures - including first-year retention, graduation rates and degree production – the system continued to make progress. Moreover, institutional reporting demonstrates extensive campus engagement and support for a Momentum Approach to student success. Over the past five years, overall 6-year graduation rates have increased by 4.4 percentage points and four-year graduation rates have increased by 5.7 percentage points. Retention rates have seen less robust results, with overall one-year rates growing by a mere half percentage point in the past five year, and two-year rates growing by 2.3 percentage points. Bachelor’s degree production has increased by nearly 16 percent over the past five years even as enrollments have increased more slowly. One significant factor with respect to retention is the impact of the Pandemic on students’ decisions to return in fall 2020, including disparate outcomes for different groups of students.

The progress made by institutions from across the state in forging plans for implementing Momentum that were aligned with their campus contexts was remarkable, with ambitious plans for extending work related to Purposeful Choice, Transparent Pathways, and Mindset to a wide range of functions across the student’s life cycle, including transition to college, career engagement, co-curricular experiences and experiential learning. In many ways the approaches institutions took, the planning steps they made, and the manner in which they embraced the work represents an important milestone for the implementation of Momentum strategies across the state, with the work becoming institutionalized.

The System continues to see evidence of success in the implementation of corequisite learning support. Success rates for students with Learning Support requirements remain robust, and more recent analysis indicates that success in the aligned collegiate-level course was mostly consistent across all levels of preparation and racial and ethnic groups. The System continues to explore the structural components of Learning Support implementation that show the greatest promise, including investigating class composition (cohorting vs. comingling students with learning support and those without; all students in a collegiate course in the same corequisite section vs. a mixture in the corequisite course) and instructor mix (same instructor for both paired course vs. different instructors). These model implementation insights can be matched with learnings from practice on how to best approach the support course in context, including how to embed mindset supportive practices, strategies on how to scaffold, review, and preview material, and methods to ensure that students engage fully in the support course.

Since the beginning of Complete College Georgia, institutions have been encouraged to advocate for students to take 15 credits a term in order to graduate on time. This work dovetailed with the Momentum work on fuller schedules, and early gains in credit intensity were impressive. For the first five years of CCG (2012 to 2017), the percentage of first-time freshmen taking 15 or more credits in their first term increased by more than 7 percentage points. This pattern is mostly matched for undergraduates, with adequate growth in credits attempted until 2017, when progress stalled, and in credit hours earned. There exists tremendous institutional variability on this measure, however, with some institutions, notably Fort Valley State University and Gordon State, experiencing robust growth in credits attempted and earned. These patterns will likely be exacerbated with the 2020-2021 academic year, as students attempted fewer credits overall and will need to be supported to get back on track for on-time graduation. Understanding what has been successful in establishing and maintaining high levels of credit intensity at institutions will be a key to re-energizing this core project.

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## **IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON MOMENTUM**

The transition to emergency remote instruction in March had an impact on institutional plans for the Momentum Approach, delaying implementation of some activities as personnel and resources were deployed to respond to the crisis, and disrupting key touchpoints such as orientation and transition programming and course scheduling. At the same time, the Momentum Team partnered with institutions and other units in Academic Affairs to respond to the immediate challenges facing students and institutions.

This response took many forms. A first step was a rapid deployment of student-level reporting on course engagement in the LMS, an indicator of whether students and faculty had been able to successfully make the transition back to class after the shift to remote learning. This was coupled with the development of two related resources – Keep Teaching USG, which provided essential resources for faculty on teaching online, and Keep Learning USG, which addressed student needs and anxieties around going online. These resources were complemented and amplified by resources from institutional Centers for Teaching and Learning, Advising and Student Success Centers, along with efforts from faculty and staff to connect with students and ensure that they had

the technology and resources they needed, and, if necessary, connect them with tools and equipment. At the end of the semester, student outcomes were largely in line with those from previous terms, a remarkable achievement given the unprecedented disruption. Moreover, even with the uncertainty of the Pandemic, retention rates for the System increased in general and for most subgroups.

Another impact of the Pandemic was the shift of orientation and transition programs to virtual modes. As these programs were implemented, it became evident that institutions where initial work had been undertaken to embed the transition programming into the LMS or other courseware and to utilize other tools to maintain persistent contact with students were better prepared for the transition to fully online programs. Continuity was also supported by institutions' Transition Improvement Plans, which were an outcome of the Fall 2019 Advising Academy and emphasized collaborative engagement between student affairs and academic affairs to support student transition.

In the year ahead, the System will work with institutions to review the impact of the Pandemic on the Momentum work on campuses, identify those areas that need to be reinforced, and those approaches that have been most successful. Additionally, the Pandemic represents an opportunity to explore new approaches to a range of important student success strategies, including scalable faculty professional development, resilient approaches to course design and instruction, multimodal student engagement, and improved use of technology to stay connected with students. Furthermore, some key components of the General Education redesign process will continue, including establishing a more transparent transfer transcript for students in the USG and the development of a true Statistics Pathway with

Key work also needs to be done to restore progress on credit taking and program maps, and to address persistent equity gaps in retention and graduation. The System continues to look for opportunities to reduce the barriers for success faced by students, including understanding ways in which to further improve upon corequisite learning support by digging deeper into structural and pedagogical factors. Finally, the System looks to apply the insights garnered from three years of Academic Mindset surveys to advance an understanding of faculty mindset and to develop and deploy interventions in courses that can help create supportive environments for students.