



# ATLANTA METROPOLITAN STATE COLLEGE

## SECTION 1: INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

A core tenet of the Atlanta Metropolitan State College (also referred to as AMSC or “The Institution”) mission is to “offer student-centered instruction, civic/community engagement, and quality services that lead to the success of inter-generational 21 Century graduates.” AMSC serves a highly diverse student population, with 40% adult learners, 55% first-generation, and 100% commuter. Therefore, the strategy and plan AMSC develops and implements to support its first-year students (“called Momentum Year or Momentum Approach”) is multi-faceted, taking into account the various types of students who attend the college. Because AMSC, as other University System of Georgia (USG) State Colleges, is an open-access institution, a significant number of academic support and monitoring strategies are built into the institution's Momentum Year plan for first-year success to ensure students have real-time and individualized teaching and learning opportunities to provide them the best opportunity for completion and success.

A variety of modalities are important to provide AMSC's first year adult learners and working traditional students the flexibility they need to work while completing a degree. These include on-campus, online, and hybrid classes. Associate and bachelor's program options allow 100% completion online. A new mentoring program, described later in this report, is important for first-generation students who do not have the high-level family support afforded to many traditional students who are not first-generation. A description of the revised New Student Orientation (NSO) Program is provided in this report to better address the needs of the College's commuter population, particularly an NSO that is accessible, efficient, and provides students a comprehensive introduction to College's programs and services.

AMSC, similar to other State Colleges, has a high part-time student population, typically 55-60%. Nonetheless, AMSC fully supports and promotes the 15-to-finish strategy to its students, and realizes that students who are full-time, on average, perform at a higher level than part-time students. Full-time students outperform part-time students in mostly all categories, including retention and graduation rates. To facilitate a transition from part-time to full-time status, part-time students are advised, when possible, to not take less 10 credits per semester, including summer terms. In doing so, part-time student will graduate within three years, or 150% of time expected, a national standard upon which national graduation and retention rates are based. Once students achieve the goal of registering for 10-credits per semester, the goal is to motivate them to continue to 12 and 15 credits per semester, both considered full-time status. However, this is an iterative process for most students, particularly adult learners, that takes planning and preparation.

Creating relevant, high-impact practices that engage students and provide them opportunities to experience real-world career exploration and opportunities are at the core of the strategies to enhance the experience of first-year students. Internships, apprenticeships, and summer programs provide students the opportunity to make meaningful relationships with potential future employers, which motivates and empowers students to make purposeful choices that raise the stakes and value of their education and give them deeper purpose to complete college.

The goal of this report is to provide the strategies that expand the AMSC Complete Georgia Plan to target additional support and assistance to first-year students. Data clearly show that the first-year for most students is the most challenging time in their college career. Any gains obtained in the retention and success of first-year students will provide momentum for those students to stay the course and complete their post-secondary education pursuits. While the College has for years provided intervention strategies for first-time full-time students, this effort, for the first time, expands that support to all first-year students. The benefit of enhancing the performance of first-year students will not only increase their academic success in courses, but also it is expected to enhance their retention and graduation rates, as well.

## SECTION 2: IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES

AMSC has initiated several strategies to remove or lessen the structural and motivational obstacles that students face and improve their outcomes. Many of these strategies were in the planning and developmental phases in the 2020-2021 academic year and will be implemented in the 2021-22 academic year and beyond. Capitalizing on past successes and improving on challenges are the fundamental processes AMSC uses for its improvement practices. The institution measures its progress based on student outcomes, provided in Section 3 of this report. AMSC aims to equip students with the right tools to guide their program choices, as well as afford them with opportunities to explore careers. This will provide students critical starting and endpoints to make informed academic decisions

necessary to create a solid path to academic success. For decades, AMSC has provided program maps for its students, more recently with separate maps to address both part-time and full-time students. Program maps have been utilized to not only ensure student awareness of course requirements, but also to provide students with a roadmap to the proper order and sequence of courses. This helps to ensure they meet pre-requisite requirements and to inform the institution how to better predict and align course demand with course offerings.

Despite these efforts, the institution recognizes that opportunity always exists for improvement of its program maps. To do so, AMSC created various criteria to pressure test its program maps to identify areas of improvement and to determine how its program maps can be used more prominently for making academic decisions by students and the institution. The questions that AMSC will address in its Program Map Pressure Test include, but are not limited to the following:

- Are students on track to graduate at specific checkpoints: 45 credit hours for associate degree-seeking students and 90 credit hours for bachelor's degree-seeking students?
- At a mid-term checkpoint for First-time in College Students, are these students on a path for success in their Math and English gateway courses?
- Is career exploration in the institution's First-Year Experience Courses effective in exposing new students to careers early in their college experience and impactful in students making purposeful choices of the program or pathway they select?
- Should program electives, particularly for general education, be more limited to assist students in making better, more purposeful choices, resulting in shorter time to graduation, and increasing the efficiency, better allocating and utilizing load requirements of faculty?
- Do program maps have clear off-ramps? And, how can "off-ramps" in program maps be better utilized to provide students with the tools to make alternative choices that would provide them a higher education credential when their initial plans fail?
- In what ways can the institution better utilize data accumulated from program maps?

Prospective student onboarding is essential to ensure that first time students get off to a good start and have the proper support for success to launch their first year in college. Ensuring relevant communication methods, such as texting, emails, and telephone calls, is critically important. Establishing direct contact with students and ensuring that the New Student Orientation is a smooth process to address the initial needs of students are critically important onboarding strategies that AMSC regularly reviews for improvement and better means of implementation.

Realizing the importance of data in decision-making, in the 2020-21 academic year, AMSC invested in the Tableau data infrastructure to provide faculty and staff a real-time data dashboard, which provide the tools needed to make current data-based decisions. The new data dashboard includes such metrics as: (1) Gateway Course Pass/DFW Rates, (2) Retention Rates for students who participate in Gateway to Completion courses, (3) New Freshman Student enrollment in major program courses for their first two semesters, (4) Course Loads for First Year students, disaggregated by full-time ( $\geq 12$  credit hours) and part-time students ( $<12$  credit hours). These dashboard metrics include student advisors and course registration numbers (CRNs) so that intervention strategies can be quickly communicated with the faculty member or support staff where a need for improvement is identified.

The institution's Momentum Approach initiatives build from the previous year's experiences focusing on strategies that provide continued support to students for decisions that benefit them far beyond their first year of college. Providing the following resources and monitoring first-year student needs involve input by various stakeholders to maximize chances of graduation: (1) ensuring courses are available for students to graduate on time, (2) providing real-time academic support so that students do not repeat critical courses that will prolong graduation, and (3) assisting students, particular part-time students, to utilize the summer terms to make-up for low credit hour enrollment during the fall and spring terms. An important lesson learned from past experiences is that resources and monitoring must occur earlier in the student's college life, at matriculation, to maximize the benefits and results.

## SECTION 3: THE BIG IDEA

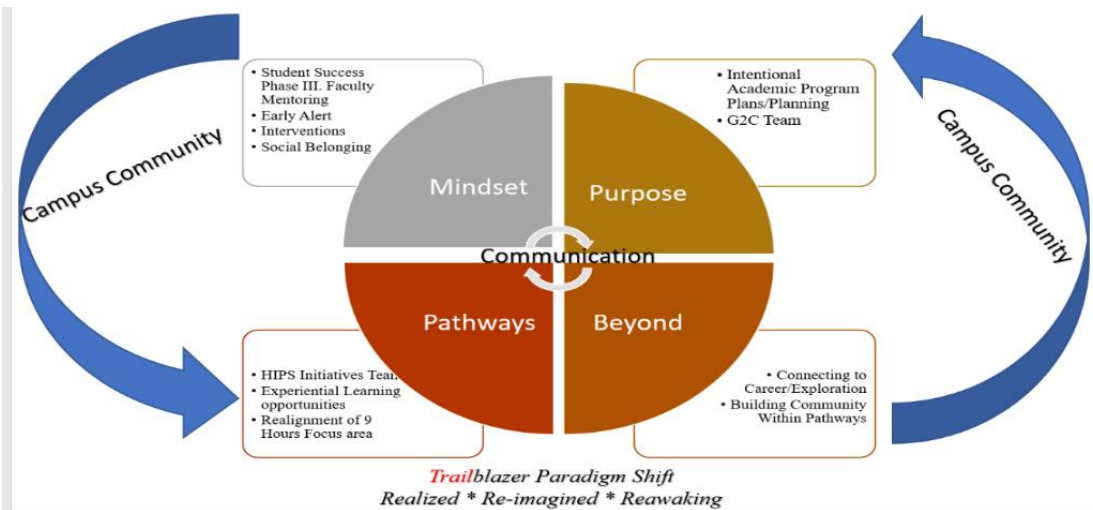
### Overall Student Outcomes

The overall student outcomes for the AMSC Momentum Year/Approach program are in three areas:

- (1) increase purposeful choice in a focused program area (or Pathway) in the freshman year;
- (2) follow clearly sequenced program maps that include: (a) core gateway courses, including Math and English in the first year (b) nine (9) credits in major courses during the first year, and (c) 30 credits earned the freshman year, ideally, or no less than a plan for part-time students to complete the degree within 150% of time (at least 10 credits per term, including summer); and
- (3) develop a productive academic mindset.

To achieve these student outcomes, the institution will implement comprehensive strategies that utilize stakeholders in all divisions of the institution. Figure 1 outlines the major strategies/projects, aligned with overall goals.

Figure 1.



Purposeful choice and productive mindset are specific outcomes that AMSC believes will have the maximum impact on first-year student success. As these characteristics are developed in students, they engender many intangible qualities commonly missing in first-year students. These intangible qualities include: tenacity, strong will, endurance, and confidence. The following sections further define how AMSC measures purposeful choice and productive active

mindset.

### Purposeful Choice in Focused Area or Program

Students who select a specific major or academic pathway, typically, have given their choice some degree of thought, most have some basis for their choice, and their major or pathway has some connection to a career path. On the other hand, students who are undeclared are placed into the “General Studies Pathway.” These students have not made a final decision regarding a major or career path, and the “General Studies Pathway” option allows them the maximum flexibility of courses that would transfer into a major at the point their choice is made. While this strategy is a rational option for students who have not selected a major, nonetheless, it is not the best option when compared to those students who have made a purposeful choice of a major and pathway.

AMSC monitors the changes in the “General Studies” pathway enrollment as one indicator of purposeful choice. Students who have declared a major or pathway, other than “General Studies,” and those who make fewer changes to their choice of major throughout the course of the first two years are considered to have made a purposeful choice. Students who have not declared a major or pathway, excluding “General Studies”, and those who make frequent changes to their choice of major for the first two years, are considered to have not made a purposeful choice. AMSC will continue to develop ways to encourage students to make program choices earlier in the process.

### Monitoring Program Maps

Program maps alone are insufficient. The institution has put in place assessment tools to monitor the extent to which students follow their program maps, as well as progress and support systems to assist students along their path to graduation. Assessments are implemented to identify students who are off-track and to provide intervention strategies that put those students back on the road to graduation. Three gateway courses: (1) Math 1011, (2) Math 1111, and (3) ENGL 1101 are monitored for passing grades and successful learning outcomes, as all students are required to take these courses. The corresponding co-requisite classes are also monitored to determine their impact. Success in English and Math courses are important because they build momentum for future courses and serve as pre-requisites for many future course students will need for graduation.

### Student Success in Gateway Courses

Student success in gateway courses is a primary metric to determine if they are moving forward toward graduation. Grades of A, B, and C are considered successful completions, whereas other grades are considered unsuccessful. Course success and completion rates are monitored on a regular basis. The institution constantly pushes the utilization of its Early Alert referral program. In addition, course grade patterns are used to make changes in pedagogy, ensure consistent grading systems of common courses, and improve teaching/learning strategies in the classroom.

### Productive Academic Mindset

Atlanta Metropolitan State College utilizes an indirect assessment survey instrument provided by the University System of Georgia to collect student feedback and determine their academic mindset. The institution utilizes the survey results to build strategies that will improve academic mindset. Students are surveyed at the beginning of the semester and surveyed again late in the semester to determine if a change in mindset occurred. The student mindset areas include following dimensions:

- Growth Mindset (“I can Learn New Things.”)
- Expectancy (“I can do this.”)
- Value & Purpose (“What I am doing is important and useful.”)
- Cost (“It requires too much to do this.”)
- Belonging (“I am a part of this community.”)
- “Grit” (“I can overcome obstacles.”)
- Reason for Attending College
- Family Support
- Perception of Faculty Mindset
- Expectation for Graduation

## SECTION 4. MOMENTUM PLAN MID-YEAR UPDATE

AMSC utilized the 2020-21 academic year to create a 2021 Momentum Year/Approach Plan that developed strategies to enhance the success of first-year students, particularly in light of the Pandemic impact and moving forward. Momentum Year (Table 1) and Momentum Approach (Table 2) matrices are provided in this section to assess the Pandemic and related impact. The plan to provide additional support for first-year students is presented in this section and contains two major components: Resilience Update (the capacity to recover quickly and sustain progress and success) and Global Momentum Support (support from across the institution). The following sections provide the key components of the AMSC 2021 Momentum Year/Approach Plan to address priorities, strategies, timelines, and assignments to ensure the institution meets its goals of resilience and global momentum support.

### Resilience Update

The institution developed a plan to maximize its capacity to recover quickly from the Pandemic effect and sustain progress as the institution recalibrates to a new normal. The key components of the institution’s Resilience Plan and Update are provided in the following Table 3, which includes priorities, strategies, and other relevant components of the plan.

Table 3. Key Components of the AMSC Resilience Plan

Priority	Strategy/Activity	Completion	Person(s) Responsible
<b>Priority #1</b>  <b>Alignment of Program Maps reflecting 9 Hours of the Focus area in first-year</b>	1. Review by lead Faculty 2. Review the Dean and Submission to the Provost 3. Verification by Office of the Provost	Spring 2022	V. Mangum
<b>Priority #2 &amp; #3</b>  <b>English Redesign</b>	Redesign English 1101 to include the following activities and topics: 1. Appreciate an Academic Mindset 2. Work to have students understand and appreciate the difference between a fixed mindset and an academic mindset 3. Divide complex tasks into small parts 4. Incorporate low stakes/small teaching 5. Provide opportunities for students to be successful 6. Introduce wrappers/reflections 7. Integrate reading and writing	Ongoing	L. Mallory
<b>Priority #2 &amp; #3</b>  <b>Math Redesign</b>	1. Infuse a pilot academic mindset survey from Motivate Lab into Math 1111 and Math 1101 courses to examine the mindsets of our students.	Spring 2022	S. Desai

	2. Implement Adaptive Learning pedagogy in all Math 1111 and Math 1101 courses and making all course assessments uniform to measure proper DFW outcomes.	Ongoing	
<b>Priority #4</b> <b>Prospective Student Recruitment &amp; Onboarding</b>	1. Revamp the Admissions Webpage	Ongoing	J. Wyatt, H. Akoh
	2. Define International & Dual Enrollment Recruitment Cycle	Complete	
	3. Provide students with personal contact with Recruiters		
	4. Notify students of financial aid clearance		
	5. Insert academic program/campus Life into messaging	Ongoing	
6. Revise NSO & Registration			
	7. Post Academic Expectations in D2L and eCore		

Table 3 Continued. Key Components of the AMSC Resilience Plan

Priority	Strategy/Activity	Completion Status	Person(s) Responsible
<b>Priority #4:</b> <b>Re-Launching First-Year Convocation</b>	1. Establish a First-Year Convocation Committee 2. Review previous programs and best practices 3. Establish event date, time, and location 4. Develop program components 5. Develop proposed budget and obtain approval 6. Confirm speaker 7. Finalize program 8. Send Save-the-Date to invitees and program to printer 9. Send invitations	Complete	H. Akoh
<b>Priority #4:</b> <b>Revamp NSO to an Interactive Platform</b>	Establish a subcommittee of the AMSC Strategic Enrollment Committee (NSO Online Task Force) Examine best practices in online orientation programs Research vendors that specialize in online orientation programs Review proposals and submit budget request Submit a proposal to the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee for a recommended vendor to work with campus units to develop an interactive online NSO program	Complete	J. Wyatt
	Develop implementation plan with vendor to roll out cloud-based NSO to the AMSC college community	Ongoing	

*Considering the impact of the past year, Atlanta Metropolitan State College has addressed the priorities listed below in Table 4 as it relates to its Momentum Approach for the Academic Year 2020-21, except where indicated.*

**Priority #1:** Deepened Purposeful Choice (Connecting to Careers) & Going Beyond Academic Mindset  
 Strategic mentoring with faculty advisors for students near graduation

**Priority #2:** Going Beyond Academic Mindset

Connecting students to civic engagement opportunities

Providing career exploration opportunities in alignment with our College Mission

Connecting students with experiential learning experiences through internships and partnership

Table 4. Key Momentum Approach Activities Completed in 2020-21 Academic Year

Priority	Strategy/Activity	Completion Status	Person(s) Responsible
<b>Priority #1</b>  <b>New Student Success Model (Phase III)</b>	1. Create Sub-Committee for a Faculty Mentoring Program	Fall 2021	S. Duhart
	2. Define & design program and format		
	3. Develop the process / operational practices		
	4. Mentor Training	Spring 2022	
	5. Implement Beta Test Mentoring Phase		
<b>Priority #1</b>  <b>FTFT</b>  <b>Leading from the Front: Increasing Graduation Rates for First Time – Full Time (FTFT) Cohort Students</b>	6. Develop Peripherals (Brochure//Marketing Material/Web Page)		C. Todd
	7. Collect Data, Evaluate and Re-evaluate Design		
	8. Implement Program – Full Scale	Fall 2022	
<b>Priority #2</b>  <b>Trailblazer Alumni /Showcase</b>	9. Collect Data, Evaluate	Ongoing	M. Montgomery, C. Chatman
	1. Identify and create an alumni database		
<b>Priority #2</b>  <b>Career Services/Internship</b>	2. Highlight Alumni, External Partnerships and/or Community events that collaborate with current students	Ongoing	D. Williams
	1. Plan for career events	Fall 2021	
	2. Prepare students for three major areas such as: 3. Interviewing, Resume Writing, and Dress for Success.	Ongoing	
	4. Contact Business Professors and others to get idea of student majors and interest.		
	5. Identify Potential Employers from previous contacts, and new ones. Email/telephone them regarding their participation in the event.		
	6. Inform students of upcoming career services events via email.		
	7. Send out Flyers via email regarding Occupational Preparation for upcoming events: (a) Resume Building (b) Interviewing Techniques; (c) Dress for Success		
	8. Re-Contact Potential Employer Vendors for Virtual Career Fair to get commitment		
	9. Set up a virtual Career Fair, lock in potential employers		
	10. Evaluate outcome		
	11. Host a Spring Career/Internship Fair		

**GLOBAL MOMENTUM SUPPORT**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College is committed to ensuring that the footsteps of its Momentum Year/Approach Plan do not go unnoticed. The plan is to embed Momentum Year/Approach initiatives into strategic priorities and communications to ensure that the work is not isolated to committees, but rather that it spreads broadly throughout the campus. Global support is paramount for

successful results. The planning components outlined in Tables 5-8 provide a sample of the campus-wide collaborations and contributions made to the Momentum Year/Approach Plan.

Global Momentum support includes external partners such as Trellis, a third-party vendor of the Department of Education. Trellis has been a strategic partner for several years and plays a major role in enhancing more effective communication strategies with students. Trellis services include texting and calling campaigns, offering workshops of various types (e.g., financial aid, student support, customer service), administering student surveys, providing emergency student funding, and sending visual momentum mailers that inform students of the AMSC Momentum Year/Approach Plan and priorities. As the institution unfolds our upcoming plans, it will offer the opportunity for faculty and staff sub-groups to participate in the momentum work. Written quarterly updates will be made to the campus community with progress reports of the work. Table 5 provides strategies that will be implemented to facilitate campus-wide Momentum Year/Approach communication and awareness.

Table 5. Campus-wide Momentum Year/Approach Communication & Awareness Strategies

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Strategy/Activity</b>	<b>Completion Status</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
<b>New Student Orientation (NSO)</b>	1. Post Information (registration links, dates, delivery options, etc.) on AMSC Website	Spring 2022	NSO Taskforce
	2. Roll out cloud-based NSO to the AMSC College community		
	3. Email participants instructions to access online course	Ongoing	
<b>Faculty &amp; Staff Institute (fall/spring)</b>	Include agenda item to discuss momentum year/approach each semester.	Ongoing	J. McGee
<b>General Faculty Meetings</b>	Include agenda items to discuss momentum year/approach each month		B. Onabanjo
<b>Student Convocation</b>	Add momentum year and its importance to the program each year		H. Akoh
<b>Correspondences:</b>	Consistent communication to students, faculty & staff via email; Utilized social media when appropriate.		M. Montgomery
<b>Staff Emails, Faculty Listserv, Student Listserv</b>			

### Faculty and Staff Outreach and Support

Atlanta Metropolitan State College in the past has implemented various strategies and practices to support its faculty and staff in implementing the Momentum Year/Approach activities. This year, plans are more robust and include a comprehensive campus collaboration. The plans to engage faculty and staff in understanding, supporting, and implementing the Momentum Approach are listed below:

Table 6. Faculty/Staff Engagement in Momentum Year/Approach Activities

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Completion Status</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
<b>Webinars/Workshops</b>	Faculty Development Seminars	Ongoing	K. Ravi
<b>Professional Development</b>	Monthly Divisional School Meetings and Professional Development		H. Akoh

			C. Chatman V. Mangum
<b>Teaching/Learning Training</b>	Bimonthly Faculty Learning Scholars Meetings; Presentations at Fall Faculty Orientation Sessions		Office of the Provost
<b>High Impact Practices (HIPs)</b>	Implementation of HIPs Activities and Strategies		M. Hepburn, HIPs Scholars
<b>English/Math Redesign Team</b>	1. Share webinar regarding Redesign Experiences with English and Math Faculty 2. Share Case Studies from different courses of Gateways to Completion Project 3. Share New Pedagogical Webinar with all the faculty and staff. 4. Share Discipline Calls (with English and Math faculty) on Best Practices from Gateways to Completion Project.		S. Desai  L. Mallory
<b>D2L Training Modules</b>	Implement Training modules included in Brightspace learning environment.	Complete	K. Ravi

Data Plan

Atlanta Metropolitan State College has developed plans to enhance its data plan for Momentum Year/Approach. The institution’s plan includes the creation of a “Student Success” data dashboard that will be available to the campus community, including faculty, staff, and students. The dashboard will allow key stakeholders to analyze, communicate, and use real-time, readily accessible data to support planning activities and decisions. This will allow access to comprehensive datasets to evaluate results and make improvements based on assessment results.

The data elements of the data dashboard allow analysis of special populations of students and guide future strategies designed to build and sustain program success. Because accurate and accessible data are a major priority within the strategic and momentum plan framework, quantitative and qualitative data markers will allow time for questions, answers, and discussions around trends and analyses. Further, the data will provide the basis for the institution to provide rich stories of student success and outcomes. Table 7 provides dashboard metrics and components.

Table 7. Data Elements of the AMSC Momentum Year/Approach Dashboard

Strategy	Metrics	Completion Status	Person(s) Responsible
<b>Indirect Assessments</b>	1. Student Surveys: Student Success, Stop-Out, and Academic Jeopardy; 2. CCSSE Survey 3. Course Evaluations	Ongoing	H. Akoh
<b>Student Success Dashboard</b>	Outlined in Section 3 of this Report		M. Cunningham and L. Mills

Pressure Tests of Program Maps

Atlanta Metropolitan State College will regularly review and implement pressure testing of our program maps to ensure academic programs are efficiently providing a predictable, on-time path to graduation. Listed below are activities that provide benchmarks for the program map pressure tests. Results from each pressure test will be communicated verbally and written, reporting both successes and challenges to the appropriate stakeholders. Table 8 displays a sample of the key pressure test benchmarks that will be applied in evaluating program maps. Specific questions, provided in Section 2 of this Report, will be answered to probe for critical answers that will lead to continuous improvement of program maps.



Table 8. Benchmarks/Metrics Utilized in the Program Map Pressure Tests

Strategy/Activity	Metric	Completion Date	Person(s) Responsible
Senior Records Check	1. Checkpoints for progress toward graduation and potentials for off-ramping students into better options; 45-hours for associate and 90-hours for bachelor's degrees, respectively 2. On-track Assessment; The Registrar's Office will confer with academic advisors to ensure that students are on track to graduate. This creates a two-person audit review to ensure that all course work is being applied to the students' program of study.	Fall Terms  (Ongoing)	K. Clark

Table 8 Continued. Benchmarks/Metrics Utilized in the Program Map Pressure Tests

Strategy/Activity	Metric	Completion Date	Person Responsible
Audit of English/Math Courses	Success in Gateway Math and English by First-time Students	Ongoing  Midpoint/End of Term	C. Bailey
Review of First Year Experience Class	1. Exposure to career options in various modules in the course 2. Advising information in courses 3. Course Review Outcomes by faculty, industry and students	Ongoing	H. Akoh
Complete 9 Hours of Focus Area in First Year	Assessment of 9 hours completed in major courses by first-year students		S. Duhart

## AMSC Complete College Georgia Leadership Team (FY 2021)

Name	Title
Dr. James McGee	Provost and Vice President, Division of Academic and Student Success
Dr. Mark A. Cunningham	Associate Provost, Division of Academic and Student Success, Institutional Effectiveness and Research; CCG Committee Chair
Dr. Brian Crawford	Faculty Representative, School of Science and Health Profession, Associate Professor of Biology
Ms. Sharon Duhart	Director, Academic Advising
Ms. Sharday Lee	SGA President
Dr. Curtis L. Todd	Professor of Social Work, School of Social Sciences and Humanities; and Special Assistant for Student Retention, Progression and Graduation Initiatives, Office of the President