



EAST GEORGIA STATE COLLEGE

SECTION 1. INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

East Georgia State College (EGSC) is an associate degree granting, liberal arts institution providing access to academically transferable programs of study and targeted baccalaureate degrees at low cost to its students. As a unit of the University System of Georgia (USG) within the State College Sector, EGSC extends its access mission from its home campus in Swainsboro to instructional sites in Statesboro and Augusta.

Because admissions testing requirements at USG universities were suspended in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment at colleges in the USG State College Sector declined in Fall Semester 2020 compared to the previous fall semester. EGSC’s enrollment declined by almost 12 percent between Fall Semesters 2019 and 2020. As a result, EGSC enrollment in Spring Semester 2021 declined from the previous spring semester and the enrollment decline continued in Fall Semester 2021. With the reactivation of admissions testing requirements at USG universities in Spring Semester 2022, fall semester enrollments at state college are expected to rebound. As shown in Tables 1a and 1b below, another effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is the significant increase in the number and percentage of students taking classes solely online.

Table 1a: Enrollment by Location/Delivery Mode: Fall Semesters 2012-2021

Fall Semester	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
High School			12	23	115	101	96	33	76	100
Online Only	131	164	171	232	260	383	443	493	797	680
Augusta		92	307	468	462	429	386	357	246	236
Statesboro	1,635	1,523	1,343	1,327	1,249	1,078	1,075	973	634	425
Swainsboro	1,178	1,078	1,077	951	1,066	1,012	942	885	662	582
Total Enrolled	2,944	2,857	2,910	3,001	3,152	3,003	2,942	2,741	2,415	2,023

Table 1b: Percentage of Enrollment by Location/Delivery Mode: Fall Semesters 2012-2021

Fall Semester	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
High School			0.4%	0.8%	3.6%	3.4%	3.3%	1.2%	3.1%	4.9%
Online Only	4.4%	5.7%	5.9%	7.7%	8.2%	12.8%	15.1%	18.0%	33.0%	33.6%
Augusta		3.2%	10.5%	15.6%	14.7%	14.3%	13.1%	13.0%	10.2%	11.7%
Statesboro	55.5%	53.3%	46.2%	44.2%	39.6%	35.9%	36.5%	35.5%	26.3%	21.0%
Swainsboro	40.0%	37.7%	37.0%	31.7%	33.8%	33.7%	32.0%	32.3%	27.4%	28.8%

EGSC Academic Program Review

Because of the decline in enrollment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the related suspension of admissions testing requirements at USG universities, a study group was formed consisting of EGSC and USG academic staff during Spring Semester 2021 to review the viability of the College’s academic programs. Given the decline in EGSC’s enrollment, one certificate program, thirteen associate degree programs, and three baccalaureate degree programs were determined to be unsustainable. Consistent with the USG’s Board of Regents Policy 3.6 Creation and Elimination of Academic Programs, these programs were closed to new admissions on August 11, 2021, and plans were developed to assist students currently majoring in these programs to complete their degrees over the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years.

In addition, meta-majors at the associate degree level were created for the social sciences and the natural sciences to provide efficient pathways for students completing an associate degree at EGSC to go on to complete a baccalaureate degree at another USG institution with seamless transferability of credit hours earned. As a result of these changes, EGSC will be offering the following degrees to current and prospective students:

- Associate of Arts in Elementary Education
- Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts (formally Associate of Arts, Core Curriculum)
- Associate of Arts in Social Sciences (New in Fall Semester 2021)
- Associate of Science in Business Administration
- Associate of Science in Natural Sciences (New in Fall Semester 2021)

Fall Semester 2020 Comparisons of EGSC with the USG State College Sector

Throughout the Complete College Georgia initiative (2012 to 2021), EGSC's four largest demographic cohorts have been African American (Black) Females; African American (Black) Males; White (Non-Hispanic) Females; and White (Non-Hispanic) Males. As indicated in Table 2 below and presented graphically in the Appendix, for Fall Semester 2020 the ethnic composition of EGSC's student population differed from the State College Sector overall. EGSC serves a higher proportion of Black students and lower proportions of White, Hispanic, and Asian students.

Table 2: Fall 2020 Student Ethnic Composition

Student Ethnic Composition	EGSC	USG
White	42.8%	46.2%
Black	45.0%	27.4%
Hispanic	1.7%	17.9%
Asian	0.7%	4.3%
Other	9.8%	4.2%

For Fall Semester 2020, EGSC's student population was like the USG State College Sector in several ways, including gender representation and credit hour load. For both EGSC and the State College Sector, women made up 62 percent of the student population. In addition, 60 percent of EGSC students were full-time compared to 62 percent of students across the State College Sector and in both cases served military students who were 1 percent of the overall student population. 26 percent of EGSC students were first generation compared to 22 percent for the sector. One important difference was EGSC's higher percentage of students requiring learning support, 65 percent, compared to 34 percent for the sector. For the 2019-20 academic year, EGSC student completed associate degrees with an average of 71.4 credit hours earned compared to 80 credit hours earned for the sector. Graphs illustrating these comparisons between EGSC and the USG State College Sector are presented in the Appendix to this report in Figures A1 through A9.

Fall Semester 2021 Student Profile

A numeric breakdown of EGSC's Fall 2021 Enrollment demographic cohorts by location and mode of delivery is presented below in Table 3a. A percentage breakdown of EGSC's demographic cohorts is presented below in Table 3b. Since the multiracial category represents 5.2 percent of female enrollment and 4.2 percent of male enrollment, students in this category are listed separately from other students.

Table 3a: Fall 2021 Enrollment Count by Gender and Ethnicity by Location/Delivery Mode

Fall 2021 Enrollment	Augusta	Statesboro	Swainsboro	High Schools	Online Only	Overall
Female	118	220	313	66	444	1,161
Black or African American	57	82	136	18	198	491
White (Non-Hispanic Origin)	37	100	146	36	193	512
Multiracial	13	25	20	11	36	105
Other	11	13	11	1	17	53
Male	118	205	269	34	236	862
Black or African American	68	73	107	3	101	352
White (Non-Hispanic Origin)	23	104	118	26	103	374
Multiracial	15	15	28	4	23	85
Other	12	13	16	1	9	51

Table 3b: Fall 2021 Enrollment Percentages by Gender and Ethnicity by Location/Delivery Mode

Fall 2021 Enrollment	Augusta	Statesboro	Swainsboro	High Schools	Online Only	Overall
Female	5.8%	10.9%	15.5%	3.3%	21.9%	57.4%
Black or African American	2.8%	4.1%	6.7%	0.9%	9.8%	24.3%
White (Non-Hispanic Origin)	1.8%	4.9%	7.2%	1.8%	9.5%	25.3%
Multiracial	0.6%	1.2%	1.0%	0.5%	1.8%	5.2%
Other	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.0%	0.8%	2.6%
Male	5.8%	10.1%	13.3%	1.7%	11.7%	42.6%
Black or African American	3.4%	3.6%	5.3%	0.1%	5.0%	17.4%
White (Non-Hispanic Origin)	1.1%	5.1%	5.8%	1.3%	5.1%	18.5%
Multiracial	0.7%	0.7%	1.4%	0.2%	1.1%	4.2%
Other	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%	0.0%	0.4%	2.5%

Fall Semester 2021 First-Time Freshmen (FTF) Profile

Presented in Table 4 below is a breakdown by number and percentage of first-time freshmen (FTF) based on course load for Fall Semester 2021. Most first-time freshmen who attend one or more classes at an EGSC location are full-time. In contrast, a smaller majority of FTF taking classes online only are full-time students.

Table 4: Fall 2021 First-Time Freshmen by Course Load

FTF Fall 2021 Course Load	Augusta	Statesboro	Swainsboro	Online Only	Overall
Full-Time Number	94	155	241	53	543
Part-Time Number	32	20	17	42	111
Total First-Time Freshmen	126	175	258	95	654
Full-Time Percentage	74.6%	88.6%	93.4%	55.8%	83.0%
Part-Time Percentage	25.4%	11.4%	6.6%	44.2%	17.0%

Presented in Table 5 below is a breakdown by number and percentage of Fall 2021 first-time freshmen are first generation college students and who receive a Pell Grant.

Table 5: Fall 2021 First-Time Freshmen First Generation and Pell Grant Recipients

FTF Fall 2021 First Generation /Pell Recipient	Augusta	Statesboro	Swainsboro	Online Only	Overall
First Generation Number	36	50	60	32	178
First Generation Percentage	28.6%	28.6%	23.3%	33.7%	27.2%
Pell Grant Recipient Number	87	111	163	57	418
Pell Grant Recipient Percentage	69.0%	63.4%	63.2%	60.0%	63.9%

EGSC Comparisons with Peer Colleges

In 2017, EGSC selected fifteen colleges, including three within the USG, as its comparison group for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Each EGSC data feedback report generated from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) compares the College to this group. According to the IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2020 for the College, 46 percent of EGSC enrolled students in Fall Semester 2019 were Black, in contrast with 6 percent for its comparison group. In addition, the majority of EGSC were full-time students, while most students in its comparison group were part-time. EGSC also had higher percentages of its students taking at least one course online and taking online courses exclusively. As in previous years, tuition and fees charged by EGSC to full-time, first-time (FTFT) students were lower than its comparison group. The 2020 feedback report included three-year associate degree graduation and transfer-out rates for the Fall Semester 2013 FTFT cohort. While EGSC's graduation rate of 12 percent was lower than the 29 percent average for its comparison group, EGSC's transfer-out rate of 66 percent was substantially higher than the 13 percent average for its comparison group. Given its function as an access institution within the USG, the combination of these two rates indicates a success rate of 78 percent for EGSC in accomplishing its mission.

SECTION 2. IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES – UNDERSTANDING CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The improvement practices listed below are drawn from EGSC’s strategic plan and have been implemented to remove or lessen the structural and motivational obstacles that students face and improve student outcomes.

Strategy	Improve access and completion for traditionally underserved students.
Summary of Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateways to Completion (G2C) Course Redesign Project for ENGL 1101, ENGL 1102, and MATH 1001. • Faculty participation in Chancellor’s Learning Scholars. • Utilization of Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) tutoring services. • Utilization of Tutor.com to provide students with 24/7 support. • Utilization of GradesFirst platform to issue Early Alerts for students at-risk of being academically unsuccessful in courses. • Continue to offer low and no-cost textbook options to students. • Continue to provide students with greater course modality options during orientation and advisement processes.
Measures of Progress	All activities are fully implemented and are being monitored for progress and continuous improvement.
Parties Responsible	Faculty, Academic Affairs, Director of Retention, ACE Staff, Academic Advisors
Strategy	Restructure Instructional Delivery.
Summary of Activities	Provide Fall Break, 8-week, and 12-week course options to students for greater schedule flexibility.
Measures of Progress	Course options are currently available to students and are being consistently updated to meet student demand.
Parties Responsible	Academic Affairs, Advisors, Enrollment Management
Strategy	Strengthen Collaboration with Partner Institutions.
Summary of Activities	Continued partnership with Augusta University and Georgia Southern University to provide EGSC students with clear transfer pathways to baccalaureate degree programs.
Measures of Progress	Meetings between the EGSC and its partner institutions occur regularly and aim at improving each partnership.
Parties Responsible	Academic Affairs, Associate Vice President for External Campuses, Director of EGSC-Statesboro

SECTION 3: MOMENTUM SUMMIT BIG IDEA

At East Georgia State College, we will engage students differently through student learning communities (SLCs), the focus of the College’s quality enhancement plan (QEP). As we planned our QEP, we were eager to develop SLC opportunities for students to make solid connections among different academic courses, to improve perceived relevancy of the course work, and foster connections with the course material, other students, and their professors. Since the SLCs involve linking courses in different academic areas, we anticipate student academic success/improvement in their knowledge of the course material.

Section 3.1 Progress Achieved

Despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the results of the three linked courses during Spring Semester 2021 proved that SLCs are effective, but professors involved with momentum year (MY) initiatives, Gateway to Completion (G2C) revisions, or USG’s teaching fellowships had a greater impact on the success rates than those not involved in USG’s initiatives or professional development. For example, a G2C English Composition II (ENGL 1102) class was paired with a U.S. History II (HIST 2112) class. The history professor has held an USG teaching fellowship and the English professor has been involved with promoting the G2C and MY initiatives. Their two courses were linked so that when students registered for one of the courses, they had to register for the other course because linked courses must share the same cohort of students. Both professors draw from pedagogies pertaining to diversity and inclusion, social justice, and mindset, and they used the backward design method in that they first identified what they

wanted students to gain from the interdisciplinary experience. Both professors wanted students to recognize how interconnected literature and history are so that students could use literature to bring history to life or use history to find deeper meaning in the literature. Ideally, the recognition promotes a love for life-long learning while giving students different access points to history or literature. The Composition II course is a literature-based writing course that is organized by themes that focus students on the certain arguments about society or humanity that may be found in the stories. The English professor shifted focus on certain themes like “Arguments about War” and reorganized the course so that the assigned stories were illustrating the historical events or era covered in history class. Students learned the history and then used the history to understand and analyze the literature.

There were three shared writing assignments that encouraged students to make interdisciplinary connections between the two courses as well as to their own society or lives. These assignments were designed to meet the learning objectives “to explore the “big questions” and critically examine the details that make up history and society’s “big picture.” The shared assignment that encouraged students to use a fictional text to make a point in an historical argument especially helped students connect the two disciplines, even as they explored the bigger picture. When students read William Faulkner’s short story, “A Rose for Emily,” they were to write an essay that examined the character of Miss Emily as a symbol for the Old South and the Lost Cause and how these ideas kept the South anchored in a mythical past and prevented the region from moving into a more enlightened future, even as they made an argument about keeping or removing Southern Confederate Monuments in public spaces. In the history class, students read several primary and secondary documents concerning the use of the Confederate flag and the building of monuments in the Jim Crow era. They wrote a discussion where they addressed the motivation behind these symbols that, as many argue, glorify a mythical past to justify Jim Crow racism and promote white supremacy. The students were expected to use the history explored in the discussion assignment to better help them to understand Faulkner’s symbolism. By combining these assignments through an interdisciplinary approach, the students came to a better understanding how this perpetuation of Confederate imagery in public spaces in the twenty-first century helps promote racial division and distorts the true history of the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Students reported an increased sense of empathy, belonging, and deeper interdisciplinary learning. In comments left on student evaluation of the course, students stated that “historical thinking was a big new skill” but they enjoyed learning how to read literature through history, or they developed a greater understanding of history through literature’s dramatization of it. Students claimed they were taught to critically think through issues that impact their lives, even as they have a better understanding of how the past influences the present and shapes the human condition. Students said their experience was “pretty rigorous,” but they enjoyed the experience.

Section 3.2 Implementation and Barriers

COVID-19 disrupted the widespread implementation plan. At first, we listed seven (7) linked communities on the Spring 2021 schedule, but due to COVID-19’s impact on enrollment, we only had three (3) linked courses fill: English Composition II and U.S. History II, Quantitative Math and U.S. History II, and English Composition I online and Fitness Walking online.

Problems included getting students to submit the online assignments and completing the course. There were also scheduling difficulties that we did not anticipate.

Section 3.3 Changes Made

Both instructors believed the added stress of Covid created an unusual online experience and have committed to making small changes for Fall 2021. Those changes are still in progress.

Section 3.4 Lessons Learned

Academic Affairs has been working with the EGSC Registrar’s office to correct scheduling difficulties. We have decided to only offer the SLCs during the full-term to avoid 8-week and 12-week scheduling issues.

Section 3.5 Assessment

At the basic level of analysis, the success rate for both English courses taught as part of a SLC were higher than student success rates than those courses not part of a learning community. The goal was to increase successful completion rate in SLC courses by fifteen (15) percent. The quantitative success outcomes for English Composition II met the goal for linked courses. Seventy-five (75) percent of students successfully completed English Composition II with a “C” or higher, exceeding the 59.6 percent of students in non-SLCs who successfully completed English Composition II. The 15-percentage point increase in success rates also increased the average course GPA by .44 points, to 2.33 compared to the 1.89 course GPA average for students not in the SLC. Though History is not part of the G2C efforts at EGSC, the linked History course also saw similar rates, with a 73.3 percent successful completion rate and a course GPA average of 2.53 compared to a 2.07 GPA course average because the professor adheres to the G2C principles in his course design.

SECTION 4 MOMENTUM WORK UPDATE

Section 4.1 Momentum Work Resilience Update

Summarized in the table below are the activities planned to make the College’s Momentum Year work more resilient during the 2021-2022 academic year.

STRATEGY/AREA

Activity	Process/Steps	Person responsible	Completion date
I. Strengthen communication with faculty concerning Momentum Year initiatives	1) Create a session for the Annual Faculty Workshop emphasizing Momentum Year initiatives	VPASA	August 1, 2021, for Faculty Workshop IN PROGRESS – FACULTY WORKSHOP DATES 8/4-5 UPDATED STATUS - COMPLETED
	2) CETL will host Faculty Academy on Momentum Year Initiatives	CETL Director Director of eLearning	Fall semester 2021 for CETL Faculty Academy IN PROGRESS – SCHEDULE UNDER CONSTRUCTION UPDATED STATUS - COMPLETED
II. Mindset	Create a D2L course for Mindset to include resources for both students and faculty	Humanities faculty member	Initial set up complete by May 1, 2021 COMPLETED
III. Purposeful choice focus on orientation program element	Administer Focus 2 Career prior to start of fall 2021 semester	Director of Learning Commons ACE staff Admissions staff selected faculty	June 1, 2021 IN PROGRESS

Activity	Process/Steps	Person responsible	Completion date
IV. Advising for 15 credit hours per semester	1) Emphasize 15 credit-hour goal to professional and faculty advisors during fall unit meetings (August)	VPASA	August 2021 IN PROGRESS
	2) Distribute two and four-year plans to advisors and review them	Deans Director of Learning Commons	STATUS REPORT – COMPLETED AND ONGOING
V. Focus on High Impact Practices (HIPs)	1) Create a session emphasizing HIPs for the Annual Faculty Workshop	Director of CETL	August 2021 IN PROGRESS
	2) Create a section in the Mindset D2L course on HIPs	Humanities faculty member (other duties assigned due to reduction in teaching load)	UPDATED STATUS – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP AT FACULTY INSTITUTE - COMPLETED
	3) CETL program on HIPs during Annual Faculty Workshop		
VI. Student Learning Communities	QEP with primary focus on SLCs already operational; will assess and tweak based on findings	QEP Director	August 2021
		VPASA Deans Statistician	IN PROGRESS
VII. Student Retention	1) Participate in action research to isolate areas for improvement	Doctoral candidate conducting action research	Action research introduced at Annual Faculty Workshop; ongoing project
	2) Collect, compile, and present retention data to faculty and staff; HIPs implemented and assessed	VPASA Deans Statistician	IN PROGRESS – EXPECTED START DURING FA21

SECTION 4.3 GLOBAL MOMENTUM SUPPORT

Presented in this section are three initiatives EGSC is implementing to support Momentum Year student success.

4.3.1. Service Excellence training was given to staff in Admissions, Residence Life, Financial Aid, Registrar’s office, Library, Academic Center for Excellence, Testing, Retention, and Academics in Residence Halls. Each unit then met independently and completed a Service Excellence survey. Unit heads and associate vice presidents (AVPs) are responsible for reporting, monthly, on Service Excellence initiatives in the unit. Additionally, goals were set by each unit that will be assessed at the conclusion of the academic year. The Service Excellence survey is presented below.

1. Define what “Service Excellence” means in your unit.

2. Ask each participant to rate the service excellence of your unit on a scale of 1-10 with 1 representing very poor service excellence and 10 representing perfect service excellence. Compile all responses below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. Who are your customers/clients? (Hint: Those expecting service excellence at EGSC may be a larger and more diverse pool than you think.) After your unit has identified your customers, ask how the unit is equipped to efficiently/effectively serve your clients. If responses are no, then brainstorm ways to meet the needs of customers that are not efficiently served. Write responses below.

4. Write an anecdotal summary of a time in your unit when the customer was not right, but an employee made the *situation* right (kudos are in order!).

5. Review what the “Golden Rule” represents. What would a “Platinum Rule” look like in your unit? (Hint: the platinum rule = treat others the way they want to be treated.)

6. List the frustrations of frontline staff. How can these frustrations be alleviated in your unit (write responses to the side of each listed frustration)?

7. How would your unit rate, overall, in a secret shopper exercise? What can be improved?

8. Students and their parents ask questions because they don’t know how to navigate college. Always remember that you may have heard a question for the 147th time already, but the person asking has just asked once. Approach each question with that in mind.

9. It is inevitable that you will have to work with a customer who is not happy. Let’s all learn to take the **HEAT**: **H**ear them out, **E**mpathize, **A**pologize and **A**sk, then **T**ake action. Within your unit, develop a plan for taking the **HEAT** and write it below.

10. Develop three goals for your unit that are specifically geared to improve the customer experience at EGSC. Write and explain them below.

4.3.2. Bobcats Excel Program (Academic Action Plan) developed and implemented by student academic support staff with the foci on retention, self-regulation, and graduation. The description is below.

Bobcats Excel Program Overview

Purpose

The purpose of the Bobcats Excel program is to strengthen students’ academic and metacognitive skills and consequently their retention at EGSC. The initiative aligns with EGSC Strategic Goal #1:

“Student Success: East Georgia State College provides access to innovative academic programs and engages in college completion initiatives, transforming students and equipping them with tools for success.”

Target Population

Students assigned to learning support for Fall 2021 and students whose current academic standing is “Academic Warning”.

Objectives

Ten-point increase in course success and fall-to-spring retention rates of students who actively participate in *Bobcats Excel* versus students who do not. Active participation is defined as meeting with an academic coach at least four (8-week courses) or at least eight times (15-week courses).

Intervention

Students will meet weekly with an academic coach to report their current progress in courses. The academic coach will work with the student to determine specific actions that need to be taken to increase likelihood of academic success.

Resources

Resource	Status	Responsible Parties
<i>Teach Yourself How to Learn</i> by Dr. Saundra McGuire for staff serving as academic coaches	Physical Books need to be ordered Online access available.	Area Leads/AVP Data Analytics & Academic Attainment
<i>Bobcats Excel</i> D2L Course to deliver common material/track participation	Created	Area Leads/AVP Data Analytics & Academic Attainment /Director of eLearning
Microsoft Form to track participant interactions https://forms.office.com/r/Twr4Jr3Tdt	Created	Area Leads/AVP Data Analytics & Academic Attainment

Assessments

- Course success rates
- Microsoft Forms interaction log
- ACE Check-in data
- Tutoring Reports
- Spring 2022/Summer 2022 Pre-registration data

Bobcats Excel Program Implementation

Student Notification

Students will be notified by e-mail, instructors who teach learning support, and the course will be listed on their D2L homepage.

Staff Utilization

Students can complete weekly check-ins with staff in the Data Analytics and Academic Attainment Unit (we can use the GradesFirst Campaigns). Students enrolled completely online will be able to check-in via Zoom. Each staff member in the Data Analytics and Academic Attainment unit will serve as the point of contact for at least one learning support course.

D2L Course

- Contains at least one resources related to each academic/metacognitive skill and add a 1 or 2 question quiz.
- Provides a pdf file of the weekly check-in document for students.

4.3.3. Convocation Program will be organized for Fall Semester 2022 and is designed to provide students information on campus resources, including, Counseling, Academic Center for Success, Library, Student Life, and Student Conduct. The program will begin with a Ted Talk video on the importance of resilience and will feature a panel discussion and Q & A from faculty, staff, and students. The students would benefit from an inspirational story about resilience, a meaningful topic that has the potential to motivate and propel students forward through college and any challenging situation. This type of dialog will be more engaging, relevant, and meaningful for EGSC students as they pursue a college degree during these unprecedented times.

SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Presented in this section are examples of high impact practices used by EGSC faculty members in various academic disciplines.

Critical & Academic Thinking for Success Course

Funding from the Chancellor's Learning Scholars Program was used to buy and use cardboard VR headsets (powered by the students' own phones) to take students to Jerusalem using 360-degree VR video tours of the most significant Holy Sites in the city over the course of several classes.

History Courses

Use “Reacting to the Past” series of role-playing games to encourage students to explore key moments in great depth as historical figures, engaging with texts their alter-ego would have read and debating others in written and oral arguments. This pedagogy creates an understanding and empathy for the past, and for both sides of an argument, and builds critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, public speaking, and persuasive writing skills.

American Government Course

Students attend and/or participate in local municipal, county commissioner, or school board meetings. This civic engagement strengthens democracy and the role that students, and future generations, play in it. Likewise, civic engagement is about citizens talking to citizens. The role of staff or elected officials is to pose the right questions, listen, and learn from the public; and the students see this civic engagement first-hand. The benefits of students seeing and being a part of this civic engagement allows them to see that their elected officials, for example, want to develop better and more creative ideas and solutions.

English Courses

High impact practices used in English courses include 1) High Expectations (challenging assignments that help students “level up”) helping students through Growth Mindset pedagogy that promotes capability, purpose, and social belonging. 2) Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) lectures and assignments helping students understand what is expected and why. One student was overheard saying, "I have to get this right because she is professional." 3) Promoting Substantive Interaction between learner to learner, learner to materials, and learner to instructor. 4) Integrate Learning Assignments providing structured opportunities for students to reflect on how and what they are learning so that they can integrate the new knowledge with what they already know. 5) Exposing students to voices and circumstances different from their own Experiences with Diversity assignments.

Spanish Courses

Global or Cultural Learning is emphasized in the Spanish courses. Students do small research about a specific group or country and are asked to talk about its society and culture. Students get to explore and learn cultures different from their own. The small research is usually discussed in the discussion board or turned in as an assignment. Students are always amazed at how different Hispanics/Spanish are from Americans in so many ways. They are expanding their knowledge and gaining a better understanding of the Hispanic culture.

Psychology Courses

Collaborative Assignments and Projects Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others and sharpening one’s own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research. Students engage in a collaborative exercise where they will pretend to play the role of Institution Review Board (IRB) members who will be charged with arguing for or against the ethics of proposed research questions. Students are randomly assigned to a side and are asked to evaluate the feasibility of the research question and delve into the ethical considerations that must be addressed before embarking on a research project that involves humans or animals.

Biology Courses

Growth Mindset is being incorporated in biology courses to encourage students amid the COVID pandemic. Our students are responding in an even a more positive manner than before. Students that have been totally online are appreciating the extra encouragement. Collaborative assignments are used in the intro biology class as well as microbiology. In microbiology students work together to understand specific diseases that are common among different groups of people as well as the effect on body systems. Two or three students work together to present to the class on a selected topic.

Mathematics Courses

Students are provided clear instruction on how to create “Notes that Stick” and how to improve study skills. Checklists for each lesson or module help students know how far they’ve come and how far they still must go to provide a sense of progress. Real world examples are used in class. Example problems are worked on the board to show entire thought process. Students are asked to work problems on the board or in small groups while explaining their thought processes. Students are taught how to map concepts and then do it regularly as homework.