GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

SECTION 1: INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Mission

Georgia Southern University is a public comprehensive and Carnegie Doctoral/R2 university offering associate, bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees in nationally accredited programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines.

The learner-centered culture at Georgia Southern University prepares the members of our university community to think, lead, teach, and serve. Faculty, staff, and students embrace the values of collaboration, academic excellence, discovery and innovation, integrity, openness and inclusion, and sustainability. Georgia Southern University promotes talent and economic development to enhance quality of life through scholarly pursuits, cultural enrichment, student life, and community engagement across three distinctive campuses. Our success is measured by the global impact of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Fall 2020 Undergraduate Student Profile

As evidenced by fall 2020 student demographic data, Georgia Southern University enrolls a primarily full-time, residential, undergraduate population. Of 26,949 students enrolled in fall 2020, 23,469 (87.0%) were undergraduates and 82.8% were full-time. With a freshman on-campus residence requirement, the University housed 90% of beginning freshmen on campus. Consistent with its mission as a University System of Georgia institution, 90% of undergraduates were state of Georgia residents. The University enrolled 57% (n=13,483) undergraduate female students and 43% (n=9,986) undergraduate male students. Minorities accounted for 42% of the total University enrollment. Only 5.7% (n=1,348) of undergraduates were transfer students with most of these coming from other USG institutions.

The University first-year retention rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen who entered in fall 2020 (and returned in fall 2021) was 72%, which was a decrease from last year. There are two primary mitigating factors to this decrease: (1) the transitions to- and away from- online learning formats—a manifestation of pandemic fatigue—created a wider range of expectations and variance in student experience with our incoming class of students, and (2) the lack of testing requirements without a summer bridge program brought in more students who would have benefitted from developmental learning support prior to enrolling full-time at a four-year university. The drop from our regularly admitted students was nowhere nearly as steep (our incoming students meeting all regular admission requirements was within a single percentage point (76.9%). The six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen who entered in fall 2015 and completed a bachelor's degree is 54.7%, completing at a higher rate than the previous cohort (53.7%). It is also worth noting that the four- and five-year graduation rates also improved over previous cohorts. The four-year graduation rate for the 2017 cohort is 34.0% (compared to 31%). Table 1 provides additional demographic breakdowns regarding retention rates.

Georgia Southern recognizes that there are differences in both retention and graduation rates, depending upon campus and student type. Our institutional priority is to address the variance in retention and graduation rates by continuing to build and scale student success initiatives and resources across the institution. The implementation of professional academic advising and academic success coaching on all three campuses has been a promising first step towards providing individualized student support services and mechanisms to undergraduate students.

Evidence of Undergraduate Student Academic Preparedness

Regular freshman admission (for fall 2020) at Georgia Southern University for requires students to have a total SAT (evidence-based reading & writing + math) score of at least 1030 or have an ACT composite score of at least 20 and meet the Board of Regents minimum requirements for each portion of the SAT/ACT. Students must also have a satisfactory grade point average on the required high school curriculum (2.5 or higher). To be considered for transfer admission, students must be eligible to return to their current school, have a cumulative college GPA of 2.0 or higher on all work attempted, and have a minimum of 30 transferable semester hours or 45 transferable quarter hours.

The academic profile of beginning freshman for fall 2020 was a 3.29 high school GPA, a score of 1073 on the SAT, and a score of 21.5 on the ACT. Table 2 displays the average high school GPA for beginning freshmen for the past seven years. The data indicates that Georgia Southern University generally admits above average students but would not be categorized as a "highly selective" institution.

SECTION 2: IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES
STRATEGY 1: EARLY ACADEMIC ALERTS
Improve academic alert communications and expand the academic alert program to all students in areas A-E CORE courses, along with other key courses as designated by academic programs.

Related Goals
- Increase the first-time, full-time freshmen retention rate to 85% by fall 2025 (72% for Fall 2020 cohort).
- Increase sophomore to junior persistence and progression rate to 70% by fall 2025 (currently 63.6%).

Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact
Student attrition is greatest between the first and second years. However, an additional eight (8.4%) percent of Georgia Southern students leave the institution after their sophomore year. Georgia Southern continues to work to identify potential barriers and alleviate those barriers, where possible, to help students persist at the institution and progress to graduation.

Many sophomore students experience both academic and financial challenges that did not present in their first year – or were alleviated by the high degree of programming and support in place for first-year students. Our goal in expanding the Academic Alert program was to provide additional support, as well as an early warning system to our sophomore students, as well as first-year students.

Summary of Activities
In 2017-2018, the CCG team implemented a revised Academic Alert policy. Beginning in fall 2017, academic alerts were expanded from the freshman population to all students enrolled in core courses in areas A-E, as well as in other key courses as designated by departments. Academic alerts were also renamed from early alert/midterm grades to emphasize that they are not midterm grades, but rather indications that students are not performing satisfactory work in one of several categories (i.e., grades, attendance, participation, missed assignments, or some combination of these categories). Faculty are encouraged to submit academic alerts as early as possible to allow more time for students to make improvements and, in most cases, to allow academic advisors, academic success coaches, and faculty opportunities to intervene. Faculty may submit academic alerts as early as the first day of the term. However, the academic alert campaigns to faculty begin the third week of the term. Faculty are then asked to submit their alerts within a specified time frame (generally a month). We send separate academic alert campaigns for full-term, Term A, and Term B classes (based on the start date of the term).

Measures of Progress
AY 2020-2021
- Georgia Southern University: Fall 2020 cohort first-year retention = 72%
- Georgia Southern University: Fall 2019 cohort second-year retention = 63.6%

Baseline measure(s):
- Georgia Southern University: Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 first-year retention = 78%
- Georgia Southern University: Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 second-year retention = 65%

Historical Data
- Georgia Southern University: Fall 2019 cohort first-year retention = 79%
- Georgia Southern University: Fall 2018 cohort second-year retention = 65%
- Georgia Southern University: Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 first-year retention = 78%
- Georgia Southern University: Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 second-year retention = 65%
- Georgia Southern University: Fall 2012-Fall 2016 first-year retention = 79%
- Georgia Southern University: Fall 2012-Fall 2016 second-year retention = 66%
- Armstrong State University: Fall 2012-Fall 2016 first-year retention = 69.2%
- Armstrong State University: Fall 2012-Fall 2016 second-year retention = 53.4%

Lessons Learned

Georgia Southern University transitioned to EAB SSC Navigate for alert submission in fall 2018. We use a campaign model to capture grades, which also allows us to nudge instructors to submit academic alerts multiple times. Each alert issued for a student creates a case that allows for structured follow-up from an academic advisor, academic success coach, or other student success and support professional. Alert notifications to students also direct them on how to reach out to their instructor for advice, support, and course-specific guidance. In spring 2019, we added "lack of engagement in online environment" as an academic alert category

Georgia Southern University implemented a refined course set for EAB SSC Navigate Early/Academic Alerts in fall 2021. We will continue to use the campaign model to capture grades, which also allows us to nudge instructors to submit academic alerts multiple times. While each alert issued for a student still creates a case that allows for structured follow-up from an academic advisor, academic success coach, or other student success and support professional, we have also built a more direct communication campaign with faculty teaching these gateway course to allow for direct intervention as well for course-specific guidance. This more targeted focus aligns with best practices from peer institutions and will optimize faculty and academic professional time for meaningful engagements with "at-risk" students. We will spend the current year assessing the implantation and identifying further or more appropriate courses for direct campaigns. We will also work with EAB for a more fluid indirect campaign model for academic departmental to adopt for additional voluntary courses.

STRATEGY 2: "SOAR IN 4!" CAMPAIGN (LOCAL BRANDING OF "15 TO FINISH")

Increase the number of undergraduate students enrolling in 15 or more credit hours per semester.

Related Goal
- Increase average undergraduate credit hour load from 12.38 (Fall 2018) to 14.00 by Fall 2022.

Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact

A minimum full-time load is not sufficient to allow students to graduate on time. Encouraging students to register for a 15-credit hour load per semester has considerable potential to reduce time to degree. Furthermore, both USG and Georgia Southern data demonstrates that students who attempt at least fifteen hours per term in their first-year graduate at substantially higher rates than their peers.

Summary of Activities

Prior to summer 2019, we showed a two-minute "Soar in 4!" video to students and parents at orientation. The video had three objectives: (1) promote graduation in four years; (2) inform students that completing more than 15 hours per semester often corresponds with higher term and overall GPAs; and (3) demonstrate the costs of additional semesters. In summer 2019, we moved to an interactive conversation with students and parents in a joint information session, led by academic advising teams and student success leaders at orientation. The presentation and discussion had three objectives: (1) promote graduation in four years; (2) inform students that completing more than 15 hours per semester often corresponds with higher term and overall GPAs; and (3) demonstrate the costs of additional semesters. In summer of 2020, we continued this interactive and joint sessions in virtual modes due to the pandemic.

Academic advising teams also provided both students and parents program maps, with all degree requirements presented in eight semesters (four years). In addition, we registered the majority of our first-year students for fifteen-hour schedules, arranged in day/time blocks that students had identified as best fit. Students had to opt out of a fifteen-hour schedule, rather than opting in. Students with credits earned through dual enrollment presented a challenge and a number were registered for fewer than fifteen credit hours because of upper-division course availability by summer registration. We have also continued previous "Soar in 4!" marketing efforts, including social media placement, digital signage, yard signs, door decals, and posters, and will be redesigning the Provost's website to highlight student success initiatives like this one.

Measures of Progress

Fall 2020:
- Fall 2020 average undergraduate credit hour load: 13.0 (full-time 14.3 | part-time 6.9)

Historical measure:
- Fall 2019 average undergraduate credit hour load: 13.3
- Fall 2018 average undergraduate credit hour load: 12.38 (baseline)

Lessons Learned

Initial data from fall 2020 indicates a small decrease in undergraduate credit hour load. Incoming students continued to begin with a fifteen-hour schedule. The very slight decrease in light of the national average during the pandemic continues to show that our active approach to information sharing to a proactive strategy of interaction with parents and students, coupled with guaranteeing students the right schedule as they enter their first semester in college, seems to be moving Georgia Southern and its students in the right direction.

Having adjusted and refined our registration strategy and timing for our first-year students based on student feedback gathered through academic advising during, we continue to pre-register sophomore, junior, and senior students for key progression courses – allowing them to complete a schedule, rather than create it from whole cloth. We continue to see positive returns from the Business Objects (Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Less than 15 Hours) that allows academic advisors to quickly identify students who have dropped below fifteen credit hours for the upcoming semester and are building new counterpart intervention surveys for students through EAB immediately following registration windows to supplement direct contact from advisors to assist them with adding courses to their schedules.

We identified additional possible impediments to student registration in AY 2019-2020. We undertook a project to update the course search for students, so they are better able to see information about courses, including instructional modality, course availability, and low-cost/no-cost textbooks identification. During AY 2020-2021, we have further refined this with the addition of cleaner search parameters, in-line information in search results, and more granular descriptions of delivery and expectations at the course level.

Finding that our approach to course scheduling has also a barrier to students registering for fifteen or more credit hours, we have identified scheduling solutions, as well as better training for course schedulers, program directors, and department chairs. During AY 2020-2021, we have implemented Ad Astra as both a scheduling and monitoring platform and have begun working with chairs to re-evaluate the offering to more evenly spread high-demand and gateway courses to allow for students to optimize their schedules. Last year, we identified the need to make registration an easier process for students and identified a solution for this through EAB. We are currently working with the implementation team on getting this in place during AY 2021-2022.

STRATEGY 3: ACADEMIC INTERVENTION and ACADEMIC STANDING
Decrease the number of students suspended from Georgia Southern University, effectively limiting their chances of earning a degree.

Related Goals
- Increase student persistence and progression rates, particularly in the sophomore and junior years.
- Decrease unnecessary credit hour accumulation by students moving into good standing and towards graduation.

Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact

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

Summary of Activities

The Provost's Office (Associate Provost for Student Success and Advising) continues to work with two Faculty Senate committees (Academic Standing and Student Success) to effect the work begun with the institutional Academic Standing Policy and wrote a Limited Grade Forgiveness Policy.

The revised Academic Standing Policy has demonstrated a positive effect in holding students accountable without imposing excessively punitive requirements for continued enrollment at the institution. Our philosophy remains that students struggle academically for many reasons and some stumble spectacularly during their academic careers. An academic standing policy should both hold students accountable and provide them with a safety net of support, resources, and opportunities. It should also reward, not continue to punish, movement in the right direction (i.e., term GPAs above 2.25). Beyond the direct connection of classroom faculty to the academic standing review process, the Associate Provost for Student Success and Advising has engaged the Academic Success Center's intervention specialists in both coordinating for greater context during the review process and creating a proactive and digitally seamless pathway for students who self-identify as "at-risk" for individualized success coaching.

Georgia Southern also established a limited Grade Forgiveness Policy. Not having a grade forgiveness policy meant that missteps in the transition from high school to college were often punitive rather than instructional and transformative. In addition, many students

who end up in poor academic standing require additional semesters to bring their GPAs up to 2.0. These students end up with anywhere from 10% to 40% more credit hours than required for graduation alone. The Limited Grade Forgiveness Policy (a) requires an application from the student; (b) limits both the number of re-take attempts and the number of grade replacements; (c) limits the grade forgiveness to courses in which a D or an F was earned; and (d) limits the type of course for which a student can apply for grade forgiveness to CORE (Area A-E) courses.

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

Measures of Progress
AY 2020-2021
- AY 2020-2021 undergraduate students moved into good standing = 600
- AY 2020-2021 undergraduate students earned 2.25+ GPA and held status = 1947
- FA2020 (enrolled) undergraduate students on academic intervention (GPA below 2.0) = 2917
- SP2021 (enrolled) undergraduate students on academic intervention (GPA below 2.0) = 2105
- SU2021 (enrolled) undergraduate students on academic intervention (GPA below 2.0) = 845

Historical measures:
- FA2019 (enrolled) undergraduate students on academic intervention (GPA below 2.0) = 1660
- SP2020 (enrolled) undergraduate students on academic intervention (GPA below 2.0) = 2026
- SU2020 (enrolled) undergraduate students on academic intervention (GPA below 2.0) = 690
- FA2018 (enrolled) undergraduate students on academic intervention (GPA below 2.0) = 994
- SP2019 (enrolled) undergraduate students on academic intervention (GPA below 2.0) = 2251
- SU2019 (enrolled) undergraduate students on academic intervention (GPA below 2.0) = 942
- AY 2018-2019 undergraduate students moved into good standing = 925 (22.09%)
- AY 2018-2019 undergraduate students earned 2.25+ GPA and held status = 1787 (42.68%)

The new and revised policies went into effect with the start of the 2018-2019 academic year. The first term in which students could be suspended, under the new policies, was fall 2019. We have seen a marked improved from fall 2020 to 2021 (see **Image 1**).

During AY 2020-2021, Academic Affairs partnered with Information Technology Services partners to modernize our intake process for students proactively ("opting-in") to success coaching in addition to students identified for Academic Intervention. We have moved the delivery of our Success Coaching course (GSU 1000) to a centralized model, which combines 60 individual sections into a single, multi-section Folio course to ensure consistency in communication, curriculum delivery, and engagement. The new mobile-compatible Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) intake process has improved AIP quality control, as well as access and engagement. In Fall of 2020, we had 2917 students identified for Academic Intervention. Of those we had 774 Academic Improvement Plans (or 26.5% engagement). In fall of 2021, we have already seen a vast improvement in two capacities: (1) we saw a drop in students identified for Academic Intervention (1545 students, a 48% reduction) and (2) an uptick in Academic Improvement Plans engaged (1426 AIPs built) which resulted in a 65.8% rise in student engagement with improvement plans or a 92.3% engagement with the success process.

Lessons Learned
We continue to work to educate faculty on the challenges that students face, outside the classroom, that impact their academic output and progress. We also want faculty to see the many ways students work to improve their academic performance. Previously, we have created a role in EAB SSC Navigate for the Academic Standards Committee—to guide them through the advisement and success coaching notes and a review of the students' Academic Improvement Plans—and this year we have lengthened the review windows and extended the committee's service term to better train incoming members. In the coming year, we will continue to focus our attention on substantially decreasing the number of students who are suspended for academic reasons.

STRATEGY 4: REGISTRATION CAMPAIGNS
Increase number of students registered for the next term by end of current semester.

Related Goal
- Increase student retention, persistence, and progression metrics by creating a culture of enrollment.

Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact
Each semester, a number of students fail to register for the subsequent semester. While many of these students have valid reasons for not registering (such as graduating or transferring), others do not register due to difficulties experienced with registration or academic success issues. The reasons why undergraduate students routinely *do not register* are shown in Table 3. These data were collected from the survey portion of the injection pages. Please note that these are the students that respond to the survey; we are still working on understanding why the non-responsive students do not register in a timely manner.

Summary of Activities
Each semester, several thousand undergraduate students fail to register during their scheduled registration period. To encourage them to register, the Associate Provost, working with ITS, administers an electronic survey (commonly referred to as the injection pages) to unregistered students at least three times each semester.

The first injection page is sent the day after registration begins for that particular group of students. The page is sent via *MyGeorgiaSouthern* to any student who has not registered for the subsequent semester. The injection page asks whether the student plans on registering for the following semester. If the student replies "no," then the injection page asks for the reasons why: academic reasons; courses unavailable; family issues; financial issues; graduating; internships; military duties; personal reasons; transferring to another college; or other. Some of these reasons (like internships, graduating, transferring, military duties) are valid and do not require any further action. Others (academic reasons, courses unavailable, financial issues) are more within the control of the University and are the areas where our efforts are most likely to result in conversions from unregistered to registered status. Academic Advisors, associate deans, and other academic faculty and staff reach out to students, no matter what their reason, to gather more information and to offer registration assistance. If the student replies "yes," then the injection page inquires as to why they have not registered. The second injection page is sent towards the end of classes for that semester. This page is sent to all students who originally indicated that they plan to register but have still not done so. The injection page asks whether they plan to register and the reasons why they will not register or have not registered thus far. The third injection page is sent just before classes begin the following term, reminding students to register and asking if they need assistance from their advisor or another support unit on campus.

Current data on each college's 'not registered' student population is shared by the Associate Provost with the applicable college dean's office and academic advisement coordinators. To convert 'not registered' students in areas within our control, the following activities are employed by academic advisors: emails, phone calls, text messaging, and campaigns through EAB SSC Campus.

In addition, Georgia. Southern has created a Student Dashboard to function as another tool for communicating critical deadlines and other alerts that could affect a student's registration and academic progression. The alerts focus on tuition and fees, financial aid, and registration and advising. Alerts are time-bound and triggered throughout the semester so students will receive personalized, timely communications as needed.

Measures of Progress
For Spring 2020, we saw the impact of changing how we calculate eligible to register students for the subsequent term. We will continue to engage students in registration and in creating a culture of enrollment, the reporting for this strategy may change in AY2021-2022.

Baseline measure:
Baseline measure is the number of 'eligible to register' undergraduate students in the fall semester. While this number will vary each fall term, the objective is to successfully convert 94% of eligible to register students to registered by the end of drop/add the following spring semester.

Lessons Learned
The injection page format provided us with data we were previously unable to collect. Academic advising now engages in more personalized registration campaigns through EAB SSC Navigate. Students report that they respond much better to the personalized communications from their advisors facilitated by the EAB platform. We saw the total number of students who had not yet registered responses increase significantly this year. The mechanism succeeded in engaging students and provided us both a greater insight into why they had not registered and allowed us to more quickly align students with the appropriate campus resources for issues beyond course offerings, advising appointments while maximizing the time to offer students additional support. We have also widened the support network through EAB for registration and intervention by onboarding Academic Success Center, Student Athlete Services, ROTC, Military & Veteran Student Services, TRiO, Dean of Students, Panhellenic, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

STRATEGY 5: Sophomore-Year Experience course (CORE 2000) Revision
Clarify the value and application of the core curriculum for students, supporters, and community members.

Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact

A key aspect of Momentum at Georgia Southern is the transition through the entirety of the first year and a successful start to the second year. We see this revision a chance to help students extend the support and campus engagement in more intentional ways bridge both their first two years and the curriculum within and surrounding their major.

Summary of Activities

Georgia Southern University engages in First & Second-Year Experience course redesign processes every five years or so. Following our participation in the USG FYE Academy, we brought our FYE course much more closely aligned with our Momentum Year and Transition Improvement Plans. Over the course of this year, we will undertake the same type of redesign with our CORE 2000 course. This redesign will move the course to a co-requisite model for Core courses to better focus on elements of Inform, Discern, & Affirm, reflections on academic mindset, challenges to perseverance, and highlight the importance of transitions *through* college (rather than just *into* college—i.e., meaningful choices in majors, minors, co-curricular engagements, and the like).

Measures of Progress

This revision will be carried out and implemented in AY 2021-2022.

Lessons Learned

The current model of CORE 2000 proved to be an unsustainable design. The distance between a student's starting point with core and the timing that most students were able to take the course (generally not until year three rather than two), and lack of direct connection to the core did not yield the expected results for the course. The broad nature of the model did not resonant with faculty or students, and we will be aligning this more closely with the kinds of Major *clusters* demonstrated with the core curriculum's Areas.

Strategy 6: Course Scheduling, Curriculum, and Programming

Facilitate timely progression to graduation.

Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact

In order to facilitate students taking a 15-hour schedule, we need to provide a broader range of delivery types, times, and terms. Traditionally, academic schedules have been rolled from one term to the next without serious review of density or conflict, especially at the lower division and core course levels. The schedule speaks to one road-block students encounter, while the other resides in program curricula that see bottlenecks in gateway and high-demand required courses.

Summary of Activities

Georgia Southern University will transition to two new scheduling platforms focused on student success: Ad Astra and EAB Scheduler. From the *academic department* standpoint, we will spend the coming year refining our scheduling practice led by a collaborative steering group drawn from stakeholders across campus. The purpose of this development is to provide more flexible options for student enrollment types, schedule types, and delivery across a broader time-of-day and day-of-the-week. Building on the data we draw out of Astra, we will be able to provide better options (through heat-map testing) beyond the traditional work-day and provide guidance to develop additional "minimester" or "executive" term options. From the *student* standpoint, EAB Scheduler will allow students to register for courses in a more intuitive and direct manner than they had through the previous WINGS platform. This registration access point is linked with their Program Maps to help them make informed, meaningful course choices that align with a direct pathway to timely graduation.

Measures of Progress

This project is still in early stages from the scheduling standpoint, but our target is to remove the tedious, transactional task of room assignments from chairs to allow them to engage directly with programmatic and curricular development issues. In our first optimization, we reduced the manual placement of course sections to 13% on average for departments. We are still working through the density issues but will target a more even distribution of core courses across a 10 hour range rather than the traditional 6.5 hour range between 9:00am and 3:00pm to provide additional options for traditional students to stay on-track with 15-hours and non-traditional students to find times away from "working" hours. A 10% shift would provide rough 200 sections at non-peak hours on a 3-day pattern or 250 on a 2-day pattern.

Lessons Learned

We are in the first iteration of the optimized schedule. The Comprehensive Curricular Review will start later in 2022.

Strategy 7: High Impact Practice Extension

Increase the demonstrable and easily communicable value of our curriculum.

Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact

Producing not only successful, but competitive students is a key goal for the university. 21st century hiring models demand that applicants have something beyond the theoretical knowledge that they garner from a traditional classroom setting, and we have prioritized providing expanded opportunities for High Impact Practices as part of our Student Success mission. Both courses and co-curricular experiences will be designed with more intentional communication about cross-disciplinary applications for those heightened learning experiences made accessible to a wider, more inclusive range of students.

Summary of Activities

Our Student Success Committee, a standing Faculty Senate committee, is currently reviewing the inventories from colleges departments, and other academic affairs units on academic mindset and high-impact practices in use. We have also been working with partners in Student Leadership, First- and Second-Year Experience, the Office of Global Engagement, and our USG High Impact Practice fellows to identify a more consistent language to use with students both ahead of registering for HIP course sections, but also to help better craft the narratives for those experiences to better position them for the career pathways they desire.

Over the past year, we've identified specific Global Learning opportunities to develop through the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) to increase student access and build a gateway for students to more effectively move into international learning environments. We have built our First-Year Seminar as an entry-point for Common Intellectual Experiences by building out direct curricular interaction with the Community Read in their first, and co-curricular engagements for the cohort's text during their second year. We are also developing new pathway to best-fit and non-traditional Internships and Service-Learning opportunities through tiered Peer-Mentoring; this progressive model of mentoring moves students from classroom-based mentoring in their first year to service-based mentoring in their second year before moving to a focus on faculty-and alumni- direct mentoring during their third and fourth years.

Other than the *tiered* Peer-Mentoring initiative, no components of the Georgia Southern Momentum Year plan are still in a developmental phase.

Measures of Progress

HIP fellows will work with the Associate Provost for Student Success, the Registrar, Admissions, the Office of Student Engagement, Career Services, the Office of Global Engagement, and First- and Second- Year Experience to craft standard SIS categories; facilitate consistent HIP course application submission, review, and oversight; and train faculty and staff on inclusive practices for HIP opportunities. Currently, we track only two

Lessons Learned

Over the past year, as an institution we have identified a number of areas with the SIS that could be made more consistent. To help with this, we have already established more frequent training and workshops for chairs and schedulers.

SECTION 3: THE BIG IDEA

Scaffolding and Shared Language

Developing a common set of goals and language focused on the common good of our student body.

Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact

The impact of our *One Big Idea* stemmed from the realization that everyone at a university works well in a silo—except our students. At Georgia Southern, we had previously operated with a centralized, top-down approach to Momentum and student success initiative planning, development, and implementation. Our *One Big Idea* was to move to a more diffused and multi-tiered approach. This would facilitate a more integrated approach with initiatives and practices emerging or flowing *upward* from the "local" level.

Barriers Encountered and Lessons Learned

As with all simple ideas, this one was complicated too. The university had long functioned in the top-down model and shifting the culture to grass-roots responsibility—while welcomed—still required executive guidance. This happened primarily in terms of structure and direction. Local offices and departments were tasked with developing unit level committees and working groups. In the absence of a strong model, many floundered with the new-found freedom. Seeing this, we used the New Student Orientation and Transition planning group to a dual purpose: 1) demonstrate cross-divisional, cohesive collaboration, and 2) model attainable, sustainable Momentum co-curricular practices. This ideology coalesced into the Eagle Experience Steering Committee, and the group shifted to provided a scaffolded structure that department and offices could align their own efforts with by adopting a new, shared lexicon across partner offices.

Summary of Activities

Over the past year, we have strengthened our Momentum initiatives by unifying efforts across our Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Enrollment Management teams. That team ultimately became a planning Group of 55 faculty, staff, students, and administrators with a core steering committee of nine members (from Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, and University Marketing and Communications) and three regular subcommittees from across the university each who worked with numerous partner offices and focus groups.

Georgia Southern University developed a new orientation and transition program called The Eagle Experiencee (see Image 2) for new students to get acquainted with campus communities, and for faculty, staff, students and the community to come together as a new academic year begins. Centered around holistic learning outcomes in three areas—*Enrollment & Persistence, Community & Engagement*, and *Scholarship & Success*—we wanted to hoe-in on programming and events dedicated to helping students seamlessly acclimate to the college environment by helping to begin building a clear understanding of the importance of a strong academic mindset.

This university-wide effort is a showcase that gives new students a snapshot of the ongoing support and dedication to the university's first strategic pillar: student success. Our ultimate goal is to help shape the ways in which students will consistently engage with the university's values and mission, learn about Georgia Southern's traditions, create connections with peers, faculty and staff, and stay well-informed of enrollment milestones and resources to attain successful support as a new student. This new approach to orientation and transition capitalizes on the tremendous work done previously by individual offices to offer students a more cohesive vision of student success in a shared, accessible language. While certainly not exhaustive, below is a representative cross-section of those opportunities and initiatives in those key interwoven outcomes:

- New Student Orientation Leader peer-led sessions on personal challenges and growth mindset practices
- "Parent and Supporter" sessions led cooperatively by academic associate deans and admissions counselors on encouraging a growth mindset, available support, and resources
- Faculty-led sessions on "Meet Your Major Halfway" focused degree exploration, adjusting to path changes, and planning for a career
- New Student Convocation hosted by Provost, featuring student, faculty, and alumni TED-style talks on growth and academic persistence
- USG Mindset survey delivered to all first-year students during the first week of classes, ongoing Learning Support sessions, advisement appointments and 1:1 consultations for students, growth-mindset intake for students on academic probation (intervention); on-going conversations throughout the semester
- FYE courses—taught by faculty and staff—focused on academic inquiry, degree engagement, academic planning, and campus and community engagement (most with embedded Peer Leader support)
- recurring workshop series for faculty, staff, and students, highlighting topics such as "Developing Goals and a Mindset for Success" and "Building Momentum for Student Success"

Measures of Progress

For the first year of implementation, we will use the post frequency within *Eagle Engage* (**Image 3: *Eagle Engage***) to measure progress. The shared language of competencies, and skills, as well as a consistent pattern of metadata markers (i.e., hashtags) has already helped create a more consistent conversation for our students regarding student success. We will move during the spring 2022 term to more intentional language around Momentum. The intention is to create a peer-level familiarity with the language of Momentum and student success so they can engage with our incoming students during the summer and fall of 2022.

SECTION 4.1: MOMENTUM WORK RESILIENCE UPDATE

Below are our primary elements, but please see a full update for resilience planning in Table 4: Resilience Updates.

Purposeful Choice

Strategy or activity	Students choosing an academic focus area or major prior to Orientation; affirming (or changing) that choice based on major/career aptitude assessment (MyMajors).
Summary of Activities	Prior to summer 2019, students could start their first-year at Georgia Southern as "undeclared". In 2019, we created academic focus areas and implemented a major/career aptitude assessment as part of our pre-orientation programming from Academic Advising. • In fall 2018, 705 (18% of first-year class) students started their first year in an undeclared major. • In fall 2019, 337 students (9% of first-year class) started their first year as exploratory without a focus area.

	• In fall 2020, 132 students (2% of first-year class) started their first year as exploratory without a focus area. • In fall 2021, 555 students (6% of first-year class) started their first year as exploratory without a focus area.
Outcomes/Measures of progress	In Summer 2019, 96% of incoming first-year students completed their MyMajors assessment prior to Orientation. 3,465 students completed the full assessment. 2,330 students reported that they had decided on a major or focus area by the start of the academic year. In Summer 2020, 98% of incoming first-year students completed their MyMajors assessment prior to Orientation. 6,059 students completed the full assessment. 4,006 students reported that they had decided on a major or focus area by the start of the academic year. In Summer 2021, 97.3% of incoming first-year students completed their MyMajors assessment prior to Orientation. 8,042 students completed the full assessment. 5,463 students reported that they had decided on a major or focus area by the start of the academic year.
Lessons Learned and Plans for the Future	GS faculty who attended the Momentum Summits would like to see GS change the focus areas to be broader and more meaningful to students. We will continue to explore this as an option; although before we move forward in that direction, we will have to engage students and prospective students about the efficacy of different focus areas.
Changes because of COVID-19	No changes required because of COVID-19, but the lack of testing requirements reflects both the higher intake number and the higher exploratory focus area.

Transparent Pathways

Strategy or activity	Verify/update program maps; use in course scheduling; better course scheduling practices and procedures.
Summary of Activities	In the Comprehensive Curricular Review & Redesign, programs have been asked to stress-test their program maps. Can a student actually complete the program, as mapped, in four years? Worked to identify a scheduling solution that will integrate program maps into course scheduling predictions and optimization.
Outcomes/Measures of progress	CCRR is a 3-year process and progress was halted in spring 2020 as we pivoted in response to COVID-19. Academic advising working with departments to update program maps based on initial review and proposed curriculum changes. Progress measures focus on (a) reducing excess credit accumulation and (b) increasing number of students graduating in four-year time period. Related measure (in process of implementation) focused on tracking whether students complete Success Markers (based on comparison of program maps with institutional completion data) in the time frame articulated by the program in program maps.
Lessons Learned and Plans for the Future	Moving forward on a course scheduling/prediction solution. Success Markers will be in place and able to be tracked/reported for Fall 2022.
Changes because of COVID-19	We continue to move forward on all activities related to this strategy. Our progress was set back approximately 10 months but no changes to implementation. The schedule and instructional changes made necessary by COVID-19 clarified the urgency of these activities, but departments will not return to the process until fall of 2022. This pause has allowed us to reevaluate the measures of success and has given us more time to consider additional modalities and schedule types beyond curricular changes.

Academic Mindset

Strategy or activity	USG Academic Mindset Survey
Summary of Activities	Georgia Southern initially distributed the USG Academic Mindset Survey, via email request to new students each Fall. In 2017 and 2018, both the initial survey and the follow-up survey had poor response rates, although the numbers improved in 2018. In Fall 2019, the USG Academic Mindset Survey was administered as an assignment in our required First-Year Seminar course. Students completed the first survey during the first week of classes, with the follow-up survey administered in mid-November. We continued that process for 2020 and 2021.

- Our response rate was much higher in 2019 (1971 students took the initial survey).
- Our response rate dipped slightly in 2020 (1819 students took the initial survey).
- Our response rate was lower than expected in 2021 (1380 students took the initial survey).

We administered the 2021 USG Academic Mindset Survey as an assignment in FYE 1220 again this year, and will continue in 2022.

Outcomes/Measures of progress	Strong participation by first-year students in both the first and second distribution of the survey.
Lessons Learned and Plans for the Future	Our primary challenge was getting students to participate. By embedding it in our First-Year seminar course and instructors encouraging participation, we had been making progress on student participation in the survey. While the total number dropped, the response rate was over 25% with a sample size more than double needed for a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error for the surveyed population. The drop in percentage participation is reflective of the delivery method. A higher number of FYE sections had been scheduled as Online prior to the statewide online transition. Coming out of an Online-heavy spring and summer, many students demonstrated survey fatigue at this point. We have rectified this with a more even distribution of FYE delivery modes for the fall of 2022.
Changes because of COVID-19	No changes made due to COVID-19.

Strategy or activity	Growth Mindset module in FYE 1220 First-Year Seminar
Summary of Activities	The First- and Second-Year Steering Committee, made up of faculty, staff, and students, worked together to develop a Growth Mindset curriculum module for first-year students. The student learning outcomes are that students will be able to: • Compare and contrast growth and fixed mindsets, • Explain why a growth mindset can promote success in achieving their goals, and • Apply a growth mindset to their academic work.
Outcomes/Measures of progress	Fall 2020 was the first semester that the new module was offered. The primary direct assessment measure was the course Final Exam (short essay). The exam asked students to reflect on Growth Mindset at both an Application and Analysis level; the first asked them to a complex situation they had previously thought simple and explain their development in understanding, and second to identify a specific fixed mentality they had at the beginning of the term and map how they had moved away from that stance and why. Our targets were seeing students demonstrate the following levels: • 75% demonstrating Developing (82.6% at or higher) • 50% demonstrating Competency (60.7% at or higher) • 20% demonstrating above Competency (39% above)
Lessons Learned and Plans for the Future	The First- and Second-Year Steering Committee's assessment team identified a number of areas for enhancement with the measure. The committee also identified additional ways in which to more fully integrate Growth Mindset into other modules. The assessment measure was constructed pre-pandemic and was not adapted to the new environment as well as it could have been. That measure has since been revised.
Changes because of COVID-19	Since students are not engaged as fully on campus – and zoom meetings really aren't doing it for students - we have concerns about whether students can engage with academic mindset when they're struggling to engage at all. We have encouraged FYE 1220 instructors to work even more closely with students on helping them find campus support and resources, whether their students seem to be struggling or not.

SECTION 4.2: MOMENTUM MATRICES UPDATE

Observations

Our efforts to provide students with opportunities to make a purposeful choice have been effective. We continue to move forward with developing (or retooling) programs of study that are meaningful to students and that will help them achieve both their personal

and professional goals. Comprehensive Curricular Review and Redesign has been challenging because program faculty conceptualize student goals and student success differently than students do. But we continue to work through those discussions and differences. The 2-year appointment for the HIP Implementation team has been a positive for us. The team has been able to help move some of the elements forward in a more effective way having to not *learn-the-ropes* as a new group. The broadened discussion of Student Success as a necessary and measurable aspect of faculty life will help move these efforts forward more quickly as well.

SECTION 4.3 "CAMPUS-WIDE" GLOBAL MOMENTUM SUPPORT

Purpose

Priority Work	Building upon the use of *MyMajors* guidance for incoming first-year students, develop complementary and targeted programming for support for 2nd and 3rd year students.
Activity status and plans for 2021-2022	Our Assistant Director for First- and Second-Year Experience and our Academic Engagement Specialist had begun developing and implementing programming aimed at first- to second-year transition, second-year students, and the third-year students. Over the coming year, they will partner with the Academic Success Center, the Office of Career & Professional Development, and Alumni Affairs to build a concierge mentoring program that will deepen a student's academic, social, and professional network by working with a progressive combination of Peer, Faculty, and Alumni mentors. The Office of First- and Second-Year Programs has developed and published transition tasks, student competencies, and goals for first-year and second year students in the areas of: academic success, personal growth, health & wellness, financial wellness, career development, and inclusive excellence based on information garnered from intake platforms like *MyMajors* (see Image 4: Motivation for Attending College) to meet students *where-they-are*. The Division of Student Affairs has implemented an innovative digital engagement portal (*Eagle Engage*) that allows students to intentionally plan and create meaningful co-curricular experiences by building on nine core Competencies, each with a sub-set of Skills: Knowledge acquisition, construction, integration and application; Cognitive Complexity; Intrapersonal Development; Interpersonal Competence; Inclusive Excellence; Community Engagement; Personal Growth & Well-being; and Career Development. Each Competency has three levels (Explore, Experience, and Excel) that help them both map and demonstrate the competency in each area in order to build a holistic narrative of their co-curricular experiences.
Lessons Learned	Student engagement with major and career exploration in the first year is strong. We still need to build clearly defined career focus pathway for students that articulates tasks and allows students to chart outcomes.

Mindset

Priority Work	Inclusive Excellence
Description of Activities	Inclusive Excellence is a major element of our institutional strategic plan. We are also making Inclusive Excellence a hallmark of our Momentum Plan. The scope of our Momentum-focused strategies includes: inclusive environment in our classrooms; inclusive environment for learning communities; inclusive campus environment for co-curricular activities; faculty & staff development; and focus on student social belonging and growth mindset.
Activity status and plans for 2021-2022	As part of the FYE 1220 (First Year Seminar) redesign, we incorporated an inclusive excellence learning outcome, designed lesson modules focused on inclusive practices and worldview, and developed additional lesson modules focused on developing social belonging and engaging with a growth mindset. Institutional professional development opportunities for faculty and for staff in 2021-2022 will focus on inclusive excellence and on Momentum.
Lessons Learned	The institution is engaging strongly with inclusive excellence and each unit has been tasked with identifying how to incorporate inclusive excellence into its actions – and particularly its student success activities and initiatives.

Pathways

Priority Work	**Expand (create where needed) and publicize transition tasks and milestones for all levels and populations of students** (i.e. sophomores, juniors, seniors, transfer students, adult learners, military and veteran students, commuter students, Honors, athletes, first-generation, international, etc.).
Activity status and plans for 2021-2022	We will build the freshmen-forward model in order to develop a sustainable culture of transition on continual engagement. Over the past year, we have strengthened our Momentum initiatives by unifying efforts across our Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Enrollment Management teams. Georgia Southern University developed a new orientation and transition program called The Eagle Experience for new students to get acquainted with campus communities, and for faculty, staff, students and the community to come together as a new academic year begins. Our goal is to help shape the ways in which students will consistently engage with the university's values and mission, learn about Georgia Southern's traditions, create connections with peers, faculty and staff, and stay well-informed of enrollment milestones and resources to attain successful support as a new student. In addition, we are in our third year of registering all first-year students at orientation for fifteen-hour fall term schedules, arranged in day/time blocks students had identified as best fit. We continued this for the 2021 orientation sessions, although those sessions were all virtual. Building off the success of the 2019 Momentum Year and our Transition Improvement plans, Georgia Southern further refined the interactive conversations with students and parents into multiple, focused joint-information sessions led by academic advising teams, enrollment management specialists, and faculty throughout our orientation. These presentations and discussions had three objectives: (1) promote graduation in four years; (2) inform students that completing 15 or more hours per semester often corresponds with higher term and overall GPAs and mitigates costs associated with additional semesters, and (3) demonstrate Day One strategies for students to self-advocate by immediately engaging them with support resources and faculty-direct context of academic mindset. From a direct implementation standpoint, we have now provided students with tools to meet expectations of 15+ hours per semester, by helping them register for a course sequence reflective of their program maps through EAB *Navigate*'s mobile app. We are still in process of testing EAB's *Academic Planning*, which will allow students to virtually build their schedules and register directly through the EAB. This should remove some of the transactional elements of student meetings with Advisors and allow them to engage in more meaningful conversations about program completion, job readiness, and post-graduation planning.
Lessons Learned	This launched in early summer 2021, and has continued throughout the fall 2021 term. The biggest lesson learned was in breaking habits for early student engagement that fell into well-worn patterns (majors fairs, interest group meetings, etc…). The initial roll-out for this had some truly innovative approaches to thinking about cross-divisional and cross-disciplinary opportunities for student engagement; we have elevated those partners as models while we continue to build out co-curricular events, projects, and initiatives throughout the year. During the first three weeks of the semester we hosted 213 unique programs or events. The most attended live events were the Growth Mindset focused Convocation (5664 attendees at the two events) and then the Sex Signals (sexual assault awareness) events (2783 at the live events). Image 5 lists some additional high attendance events and programs, but we intentionally advertised for small scale programming as well to provide a more direct and personal connection point for new students especially those in our lower-retention populations.