



# GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

## Student Body and Institutional Mission

*“Georgia State has been reimagined, amid a moral awakening and a raft of data-driven experimentation, as one of the South’s most innovative engines of social mobility.”*

-- THE NEW YORK TIMES, MAY 15, 2018

*“It’s hard to exaggerate the magnitude—and the national implications—of what Georgia State University has accomplished....By dramatically boosting its graduation rate and wiping out its achievement gap, Georgia State has demolished the excuses that college have generated to rationalize their abysmal track records.”*

-- DAVID KIRP, THE COLLEGE DROPOUT SCANDAL, 2019

*“No other institution has accomplished what Georgia State has over the past decade.”*

-- BILL GATES, OCTOBER 2017

When it comes to higher education, the vision of the United States as a land of equal opportunity is far from a reality. Today, it is eight times more likely that an individual in the top quartile of Americans by annual household income will hold a bachelor’s degree than an individual in the lowest quartile.<sup>1</sup> Nationally, white students graduate from college at rates more than 10 points higher than Hispanic students and are more than twice as likely to graduate with a 4-year college degree when compared to black students.<sup>2</sup> According to the United States Department of Education, Pell-eligible students nationally have a six-year graduation-rate of 39%,<sup>3</sup> a rate that is 20 points lower than the national average.<sup>4</sup>

In 2003, Georgia State University was the embodiment of these national failings. The institutional 6-year graduation rate for bachelor’s students stood at 32% and underserved populations were foundering. Graduation rates were 22% for Hispanics, 29% for African Americans, and 18% for African American males. Pell students were graduating at a rates more than 10 percentage points lower than non-Pell students.

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<sup>1</sup> The Pell Institute (2015) Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States: 45 Year Trend Report (2015 Revised Edition). Retrieved from [http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Indicators\\_of\\_Higher\\_Education\\_Equity\\_in\\_the\\_US\\_45\\_Year\\_Trend\\_Report.pdf](http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Indicators_of_Higher_Education_Equity_in_the_US_45_Year_Trend_Report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (2014) Table 326.10: Graduation rate from first institution attended for first-time, full-time bachelor's-degree- seeking students at 4-year postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity, time to completion, sex, control of institution, and acceptance rate: Selected cohort entry years, 1996 through 2007. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14\\_326.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_326.10.asp).

<sup>3</sup> Horwich, Lloyd (25 November 2015) Report on the Federal Pell Grant Program. Retrieved from <http://www.nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/Pell0212.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (2014) Table 326.10.

## Rising Graduation Rates

Today, thanks to a campus-wide commitment to student success and more than a dozen innovative, scaled initiatives, Georgia State's equity gaps are gone. The institutional graduation rate for bachelor's-degree seeking students has improved by 24 points—among the largest increases in the nation over this period (See Appendix, Chart 1).<sup>5</sup> Rates are up 35 points for Hispanics (to 57%), and 32 points for African Americans (to 57%). Pell-eligible students currently represent 55% of Georgia State University's undergraduate student population and have consistently graduated at or above the rate of non-Pell students (Chart 2). In fact, over the past six years, African-American, Hispanic, and Pell-eligible students have, on average, all graduated from Georgia State at or above the rates of the student body overall—an all-but unprecedented accomplishment for a large public university. In short, race, ethnicity and income level are no longer predictors of success at Georgia State. Even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Georgia State students continue to excel, and the university set new records for both its bachelor's (56%) and associate (24%) degree graduation rates this past year. Tracking these same cohorts using National Student Clearinghouse data, **63% of associate-degree students graduate or are retained after three years, and 70% of bachelor's students graduate and 78% graduate or are retained after six years.** All of these rates are new highs for the university.

## Record Numbers of Degrees Awarded

Georgia State also continues to set new records for degrees conferred. For the third consecutive year, the university awarded more than 10,000 degrees, this year including a record of 7,758 undergraduate degrees (representing an 84% increase since 2010) (Chart 3). The university established new records for total bachelor's degrees awarded (5,422) as well as degrees awarded to Hispanic students (654, up 124% since 2010) and Asian students (913, up 80% since 2010) (Chart 4). Georgia State now awards more bachelor's degrees annually to African American, Hispanic, first generation, and Pell students than any other university in Georgia. In fact, five years ago Georgia State University became the first institution in U.S. history to award more than 2,000 Bachelor's degrees to African American students in a single year, a metric it has matched every year since (with 2,213 awarded this past year). No other college or university in the U.S. has done so even once. According to *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, for the seventh consecutive year Georgia State conferred more bachelor's degrees to African Americans than any other non-profit college or university in the United States (Chart 6). Georgia State is also ranked first nationally in the number of bachelor's degrees conferred to African Americans in a number of specific disciplines: biology, finance, foreign languages, history, marketing, psychology, and the social sciences.

Importantly, students are succeeding in some of the most challenging majors at Georgia State. Over the past decade, the number of bachelor's degrees awarded in STEM fields has increased by 155% overall, 158% for African American students, 216% for African American males, and 406% for Hispanic students (Chart 5).

## Perimeter College

The news may be even better at Perimeter College, Georgia State's associate-degree-granting college that enrolls more than 16,000 students. Consolidation between Georgia State University and Perimeter College was finalized less than six years ago. Since then, the Perimeter 3-year graduation rate **has almost quadrupled**, rising from 6.5% to 24% (Chart 8). Equally encouragingly, as is the case for bachelor's students, equity gaps based on race, ethnicity and income level have largely been eliminated. In 2020 for the first time, African American, Hispanic and Pell students all graduated from Perimeter College at rates at or above those of the student body overall. As recently as 2015, white students were graduating from Perimeter at rates more than two-and-a-half times the rate of African American students. In 2020, both white and African American students graduated at the same rate—exceptional progress in such a short period of time. While the pandemic has disproportionately impacted Perimeter's low-income and African American students, reopening some gaps in 2021, the fact is that Pell students and African Americans are graduating at rates **five times higher** than they were prior to consolidation. The elimination of equity gaps based on race, ethnicity and income level has been a distinctive and much-discussed accomplishment of Georgia State's Atlanta campus, and the rapid progress in this area at Perimeter College lends credence to the view that Georgia State's unique data-based, proactive and systematic approach to student success—an approach now being implemented at Perimeter—helps level the playing field for students from diverse backgrounds.

According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 2020), 83% of Perimeter students now graduate, are retained, and/or successfully transfer to four-year institutions within three years of first enrollment, ranking Perimeter College 20<sup>th</sup> in the nation (among 2,000+ community colleges ranked). Despite steep declines in Perimeter College overall enrollments in the years leading up to consolidation and new declines brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, associate degree conferrals also have increased markedly, with 2,336 degrees awarded in 2020-21—representing an 25% increase since consolidation (Chart 9). Perimeter College now ranks

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<sup>5</sup> All charts can be found in the Appendix.

15<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the number of associate degrees awarded to African Americans annually.<sup>6</sup> There is still much work to be done at Perimeter College, but the results already have been transformative.

## A National Model

A core part of Georgia State’s mission is to serve all students in Georgia. As such, the most foundational principle guiding our student-success efforts has been a pledge to improve student outcomes through *inclusion* rather *exclusion*. In the 2011 Georgia State University Strategic Plan, we committed to increasing the number of underrepresented, first-generation and Pell students enrolled *and* to significantly improving graduation rates for all groups while eliminating equity gaps. The consolidation with Perimeter College, with its thousands of students who fall into federal at-risk categories, is one example of this deep commitment to inclusion. We also committed to achieving improved outcomes for our students not merely while they are at Georgia State but in their lives and careers after graduation.

Over the past six years, Georgia State University’s student-success accomplishments have been the subject of growing levels of national attention. Highlights include:

- In December 2014, former President Barack Obama highlighted the exemplary work being done at Georgia State University to assist students through its innovative Panther Retention Grant program in his address at White House College Opportunity Day.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2014, Georgia State received the inaugural national Award for Student Success from the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU), and in 2015 it received the second-ever Institutional Transformation Award from the American Council on Education (ACE). Both selection committees focused on Georgia State’s exceptional progress in student success and its elimination of equity gaps.
- In August 2015, Georgia State was invited to provide expert testimony on strategies for helping low-income students succeed before the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pension of the U. S. Senate.
- In July 2017, Bill Gates made a half-day visit to campus specifically to learn more about Georgia State’s innovative use of data and technology to transform outcomes for low-income students.
- Between 2018 and 2021, the Brookings Institution, Harvard’s CLIMB initiative, and *US News and World Report* released reports placing Georgia State among the top 1% of institutions in the nation for “social mobility”—helping students move from low-income status at matriculation to upper-income status as alumni.
- In spring 2018, *The New York Times*, in a feature article, highlighted Georgia State’s status as conferring the most degrees to African Americans in the country and labeled the university “an engine of social mobility,” while the *Harvard Business Review* and NPR’s “The Hidden Brain” both chronicled the impact of Georgia State’s groundbreaking work using an A.I.-enhanced chatbot to reduce summer melt.
- Georgia State’s student-success efforts became the subject of a feature-length documentary, *Unlikely* (2018), and an award-winning book by Andrew Gumbel, *Won’t Lose This Dream: How An Upstart Urban University Changed the Rules of a Broken System* (2020).
- In fall 2021, *U.S. News and World Report* ranked Georgia State 1<sup>st</sup> in the nation for its Commitment to Undergraduate Teaching among all public universities (and 2<sup>nd</sup> overall, just ahead of Princeton) and as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Most Innovative University in the nation (behind only ASU). Georgia State ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the nation for Social Mobility and 11<sup>th</sup> for Diversity. Georgia State’s First-Year Experience and Learning Communities were each ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation.

Motivated by a desire to make an impact not only in the lives of its own students but also in the lives of students nation-wide, Georgia State University has made a conscious and significant commitment of time and resources to share with others the lessons that we have learned. Over the past several years, Georgia State has hosted teams of administrators and faculty members from more than 500 colleges and universities enrolling 3 million students, all seeking to learn more about our student-success programs. Visiting campuses have included almost every university in the University System of Georgia (USG), institutions from forty-seven U.S. states, as well as universities and national governing boards from the Netherlands, Great Britain, Bavaria, Georgia, Australia, Colombia, Hong Kong, South Korea, China, New Zealand, and South Africa. Major national organizations—including Achieving the Dream, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU),

<sup>6</sup> Diverse Issues in Higher Education, August 2018.

[diverseeducation.com/top100/pages/AssociatesDegreeProducers2017.php?dtsearch=&dtrace=&dtmajor=&dtschool=Georgia State University\ -Perimeter College&dtstate=&dtpage=0](https://diverseeducation.com/top100/pages/AssociatesDegreeProducers2017.php?dtsearch=&dtrace=&dtmajor=&dtschool=Georgia State University\ -Perimeter College&dtstate=&dtpage=0)

<sup>7</sup> President Barack Obama (4 December 2014) Remarks by the President at College Opportunity Summit. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/04/remarks-president-college-opportunity-summit>.

the American Council on Education (ACE), Complete College America, and the U.S. Department of Education—have also turned to Georgia State for its expertise in the area.

In order to better support this dissemination work, as well as to incubate the next-generation of student-success innovations, Georgia State University established the National Institute of Student Success (NISS) in October 2020. In its first year, the NISS is already delivering diagnostic and coaching services to more than two-dozen campuses nationally, including six in the state of Georgia.

## STUDENT SUCCESS GOALS AND PRACTICES

### Student Success Goals

The central goal that we have set for our undergraduate success efforts is highly ambitious, but the words were chosen carefully: Georgia State will *“become a national model for undergraduate education by demonstrating that students from all backgrounds can achieve academic and career success at high rates.”*<sup>8</sup>

In 2011, Georgia State University committed to reach a graduation rate for bachelor’s-degree-seeking students of 52% by 2016 and 60% by 2021.<sup>9</sup> We also committed to conferring 2,500 more degrees annually than we did in 2010 and to eliminating all significant equity gaps between student populations. More recently, we committed to doubling the graduation rate of our new associate-degree seeking students from the 2014 baseline over a five-year period.

On the surface, attaining these goals seems implausible. Georgia State’s demographic trends—characterized in recent years by huge increases in the enrollments of students from underserved populations—typically would project a steep decline in student outcomes. Georgia State University, though, has been able to make dramatic gains towards its success targets even as the student body has become far more diverse and less financially secure.

The 2011 Strategic Plan also outlined key strategies to achieve these goals. We made a commitment to overhaul our advising system, to track every student daily with the use of predictive analytics and to intervene with students who are at risk in a proactive fashion, to expand existing high-impact programs such as freshman learning communities and Keep Hope Alive, to raise more scholarship dollars, to pilot and scale innovative new types of financial interventions, and to open a new Student Success Center. After the launch of the strategic plan, we launched additional programs such as the Success Academy, meta-majors, Panther Retention Grants, College to Career, and an AI-enhanced chatbot to guide students through administrative and academic processes

The strategies have worked. Since the launch of Georgia State University’s 2011 Strategic Plan, each of the new programs outlined in the Strategic Plan has been successfully implemented—and the new Student Success Center building will open in 2024. Our institutional six-year graduation rate for bachelor’s-degree-seeking students has increased by 8 percentage points from 48% to 56%, while Georgia State’s cross-institutional six-year graduation rate this year reached a record 70%. It is important to note that, due to frequent changes in jobs and economic circumstances, low-income and first-generation students and their families transfer more frequently than do middle- and upper-income college students. This phenomenon significantly impacts Georgia State’s institutional graduation rate. When including Georgia State students who transfer to and graduate from other institutions (with the vast majority doing so from other schools within the University System of Georgia), **the six-year bachelor’s graduation rate reached 70% in 2021**; and the percent of students who either earned a degree or were still actively enrolled reached 78%. The four-year graduation rate has improved even more dramatically, with a 14-percentage-point increase, from 21% to 35%, between 2010 and 2020 (Charts 1, 2, 12).

The news is equally positive for Perimeter College. In the short time since consolidation was announced, the graduation rate for associate-degree-seeking students at Perimeter College has more than tripled, moving from 6.5% in 2015 to 24% in 2021—far exceeding the strategic goal of doubling the rate by 2021. Just as impressively, as previously happened at the Atlanta campus, equity gaps based on race, ethnicity and income level have been closed at Perimeter College. The year prior to consolidation, white students were graduating from Perimeter at rates two-and-a-half times those for African Americans. By 2020, white and African American students are graduating at the same rates (Chart 7). 83% of Perimeter students are now graduating, successfully transferring, or are

<sup>8</sup> Georgia State University (2012). Strategic Plan 2011-2016/21. Retrieved from [http://strategic.gsu.edu/files/2012/09/GSU\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_2016-2.pdf](http://strategic.gsu.edu/files/2012/09/GSU_Strategic_Plan_2016-2.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Georgia State University (2012) College Completion Plan 2012: A University-wide Plan for Student Success (The Implementation of Goal 1 of the GSU Strategic Plan). Retrieved from [http://enrollment.gsu.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/57/files/2013/09/GSU\\_College\\_Completion\\_Plan\\_09-06-12.pdf](http://enrollment.gsu.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/57/files/2013/09/GSU_College_Completion_Plan_09-06-12.pdf)

still enrolled after three years—a rate that ranks Perimeter College 20<sup>th</sup> among more than 2,000 community colleges nationally according to *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 2020).<sup>10</sup>

A record 7,758 undergraduate degrees were conferred by Georgia State University during the 2020-2021 academic year, representing a 3,534-degree increase (84%) over the baseline year of 2011 (Chart 3). The total now far exceeds the Strategic Plan’s target to increase undergraduate degrees awarded by 2,500 annually by 2021. The number of degrees awarded by Perimeter College reached 2,336 (Chart 9).

Despite the fact that no major Georgia State initiative is targeted by race, ethnicity or income level, the gains have been greatest for students from underserved backgrounds. In recent years, Georgia State University has conferred record numbers of bachelor’s degrees to Pell-eligible, first generation, African American, and Hispanic students (Chart 4). Since the 2010-2011 academic year, the number of bachelor’s degrees conferred to Pell students has grown by 48%, conferrals to African American students have increased by 58%, and degrees awarded to Hispanic students have grown by 115%<sup>11</sup>. Time to degree is down markedly—by almost a full semester per student since 2011—saving the graduating class of 2021 approximately \$21 million in tuition and fees compared to their colleagues just five years earlier (Chart 11).

Georgia State’s combination of large enrollment increases of students from underserved backgrounds and significantly rising graduation rates confounds the conventional wisdom. How has Georgia State accomplished these unprecedented gains?

## HIGH IMPACT STRATEGIES

Georgia State’s student-success strategy has been innovative and data-informed. We have not created programs targeted at students by their race, ethnicity, first-generation status, or income level. Rather, we have used data to identify problems impacting large numbers of Georgia State students, and we have changed the way the institution supports *all* students. Here are Georgia State’s ten most impactful strategies:

### 1. GPS Advising

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	Use predictive analytics and a system of more than 800 data-based alerts to track all undergraduates daily. Create a structure of trained academic advisors to monitor the alerts and respond with timely, proactive advice to students at scale.
<b>Summary of Activities and Lessons Learned</b>	<p>The GPS System went fully live for bachelor’s students in August 2012. This past academic year, the system generated more than 135,000 individual meetings between advisors and students to discuss specific alerts—all aimed at getting the student back on path to graduation. Approximately 35,000 of the meetings were prompted by new alerts stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as tracking student log-ons to their online courses and advisors proactively reaching out when students are not engaged. Since Georgia State went live with GPS Advising seven years ago, Georgia State four-year graduation rate for bachelor’s students has increased by 13 percentage points, equity gaps have been eliminated, and the average time to degree has decreased by more than half a semester.</p> <p>In 2016, Georgia State University consolidated with Georgia Perimeter College. EDUCAUSE, with the support of the Bill &amp; Melinda Gates Foundation and the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust (the Helmsley Trust) and in partnership with Achieving the Dream (ATD), awarded Georgia State University a grant to facilitate our efforts to deploy our technology solution and adapt our advising strategy in order to increase graduation rates for the 17,000 students seeking associate degrees at Perimeter. The GPS platform launched at Perimeter in 2016-17 and the university hired an additional 30 Perimeter academic advisors in support. Since consolidation, the three-year graduation rate for associate-degree seeking students had increased by almost 16 percentage points and equity gaps based on race, ethnicity and income level have been eliminated.</p>

<sup>10</sup> The metric used by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* here includes students who successfully transfer from Perimeter College within three years, whether or not they are actively enrolled at the transfer institution for the fall term three years after first matriculation. As reported elsewhere in this document, 68% of Perimeter’s 2018 freshmen had earned an Associate degree *or were actively enrolled during the Fall 2021 semester*. This is a more rigorous metric.

<sup>11</sup> Actual percent increases were much higher in these two categories, but we have controlled for the effects of the University implementing more rigorous processes encouraging students to self-report their race and ethnicity.

	In each context, 90% of the upfront costs have been directed to personnel, not technology. A 2019 study by the Boston Consulting Group concludes that GPS Advising has produced a positive ROI, with programmatic costs of roughly \$150 per students even larger increases in revenues from student progression.
<b>Baseline Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Graduation Rates at Launch: 48%</i> Bachelor level 6-year rate and 21% Bachelor level 4-year rate (2011). <i>7%</i> associate-level rate (2014)</li> <li>• <i>Degrees Conferred: in the 2013-2014 Academic Year: 4,155</i> bachelor’s degrees</li> <li>• and <i>1,882</i> associate degrees (2014)</li> </ul>
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The numbers we are achieving via the programs are exceptionally strong.</li> <li>• Credit hours accumulated at the time of graduation have declined by an average of 9 credit hours per graduating bachelor’s student since 2011 (Chart 11)</li> <li>• Face-to face advising visits (bachelor’s + associate) grew to a record 100,000+ during the 2019-2020 AY.</li> <li>• Bachelor’s students switching majors after the first year of studies is down by 32%. Percent of students in majors that fit their academic abilities (up by 13 points).</li> <li>• Correlation between advisor visits and success markers (such as credit hours attempted and retention rates) (Chart 13)</li> <li>• Face-to-face advising meetings with associate-degree students at Perimeter College increased to 43,000+ during the 2019-2020 academic year (Chart 14). While there are no reliable baseline numbers from before consolidation, with only four to five advisors, it is estimated that annual visits were below 7,000.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor’s degree six-year graduation rates are up 7 percentage points, bachelor’s four-year graduation rates are up by 14 percentage points since 2011 and associate degree three-year rates are up 15.8 percentage points since their respective launches since 2014.</li> <li>• Bachelor’s degree conferrals up 26% and associate degree conferrals up 11% since launches</li> <li>• Wasted credit hours have declined by 8 credit hours per graduating student while average time to degree is down by half a semester, saving students roughly \$18 million a year in tuition and fee costs.</li> <li>• All equity gaps for bachelor’s students based on race, ethnicity and income have been eliminated</li> <li>• Boston Consulting Group has determined a positive ROI for the initiative</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown (Sr. Vice President for Student Success),</li> <li>• Carol Cohen (associate Vice President of the University Advising)</li> </ul>

2. Summer Success Academy

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	Use predictive analytics to identify admitted students for the fall freshman class who are academically at-risk and require that these students attend a seven-week summer session before fall classes, pursuing 7 credit hours of college credit while being immersed in learning communities, near-peer mentoring, and a suite of mindset-building activities.
<b>Summary of Activities and Lessons Learned</b>	Program was initiated for bachelor’s students in 2012 as an alternate to deferring weaker freshman admits to the Spring semester. Students enroll in 7 credits of college-level (non-remedial) courses and have the support of all of GSU’s tutoring, advising, financial literacy, and academic skills programs at their disposal. All students are in freshmen learning committees, participate in community and campus projects, and worked with near-peer tutors—all designed to increase “mindset,” the students’ sense of belonging and confidence. This year’s cohort at the Atlanta campus was the largest ever, with more than 400 students enrolled. The most recent cohort was retained at a rate of 88%. This compares to an 83% retention rate for remainder of the freshmen class who were, on paper, better academically prepared for college. It is important to note that these same students, when Georgia State was deferring their enrollment until the spring semester (as is the common practice nationally), were being retained at only a 50% clip. This equates to more than 100 additional freshmen being retained via the Summer Success Academy annually than was the case under the old model. We launched the first application of the program to Perimeter College, the Perimeter Academy, in the Summer of 2017. Amid the first cohort of 60 students, 92% persisted to the spring semester (compared with 70% for students overall). Since then, the Perimeter Academy has expanded to three Perimeter campuses—Decatur, Clarkston, and Dunwoody—and 200 students.
<b>Baseline Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor’s: Prior to the launch of the program, students with their similar academic profile had a one-year retention rate of 50% (2010). Associate: The baseline retention rate for Perimeter</li> </ul>

	Decatur-campus students overall is 64.5% with 11 credit hours attempted and a first-year GPA of 2.1.
<b>Interim Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention rates, GPA, hours attempted and completed</li> </ul>
<b>Measures of Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bachelor’s: Retention rates for the students enrolled in the Success Academy (<b>90+</b>%) exceed those of the rest of the freshman class (<b>82%</b>) and the baseline of <b>51%</b> in 2011.</li> <li>62% of the students from the first cohort of the Success Academy in 2012 graduated, making their 6-year graduation rate higher than both the rate of the rest of the freshman class and the one-year retention rate was for the like cohort the year before the program launch (Chart15).</li> <li>Associate: The first cohort of Perimeter Academy students enjoyed markedly higher credit-hours attempted, GPAs, and retention rates than the rest of the Decatur campus students (Chart 16).</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown (Vice President for Student Engagement and Programs)</li> <li>Dr. Eric Cuevas (Sr. Director of Student Success Programs)</li> </ul>

### 3. Panther Retention Grants

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	Provide micro-grants to students at the fee drop each semester to help cover modest financial shortfalls impacting the students’ ability to pay tuition and fees, thus preventing students from stopping/dropping out. This past fall, more than 18,000 of Georgia State’s 25,000+ bachelor’s-seeking students had some level of unmet need, meaning that even after grants, loans, scholarships, family contributions and the income generated from the student working 20 hours a week, the students lack enough funds to attend college. Each semester, hundreds of fully qualified students are dropped from their classes for lack of payment. For as little as \$300, Panther Retention Grants provide the emergency funding to allow students who want to get their degrees the opportunity to stay enrolled. Last year, more than 3,000 Georgia State students were brought back to the classroom—and kept on the path to attaining a college degree—through the program. As of spring summer 2020, 19,000 grants have been awarded to Atlanta campus and Perimeter College students since the program’s inception in 2011. Of these, 80% of students have gone on to graduate. The program has prevented literally thousands of students from dropping out of Georgia State.
<b>Summary of Activities and Lesson Learned</b>	Staff examine the drop lists for students with unmet need, who are on track for graduation using our academic analytics, and who have modest balances for tuition and fees. Students are offered micro-grants on the condition that they agree to certain activities, including participating in financial literacy modules and meeting with a financial counselor to map out plans to finance the rest of their education. Last academic year, more than 3,000 grants were awarded. This included grants awarded to Perimeter College students. The timeliness of the intervention and access to good data are the keys to success.
<b>Baseline Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A California State University study found that, among students who stop out for a semester, only 30% ever return and graduate from the institution. The PRG program is designed to prevent stop out and the negative impact on completion rates that follow.</li> </ul>
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Of freshmen who were offered Panther Retention Grants in Fall term, 93% enrolled the following Spring, a rate higher than that of the student body as a whole.</li> <li>Of the Perimeter College students receiving Panther Retention Grants during the Fall semester, 73% returned for the Spring term.</li> </ul>
<b>Measures of Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ultimate measure of success is college completion. More than 19,000 Panther Retention Grants have now been awarded since the program’s inception in 2011. More than 80% of students who have received the grant have graduated, most within two semesters. The program also generates a positive ROI for the institution according to a Gates-Foundation-financed 2018 analysis of the program conducted by the Boston Consulting Group,</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown</li> <li>James Blackburn (Associate Vice President for Student Financial Services)</li> </ul>

### 4. Keep Hope Alive (KHA)

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	With 58% of Georgia State students coming from Pell-eligible households (where the average annual household income is less than \$30,000), the Hope scholarship can be a mixed blessing. Hope’s \$6,000+ annual scholarship provides access to college for thousands of Georgia State students, but for the students who do not maintain a 3.0 college GPA, the loss of Hope often means
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	<p>they drop out for financial reasons. In 2008, the graduation rate for students who lose the Hope scholarship was only 20%, 40-points lower than the rates for those who hold on to the scholarship. Before Keep Hope Alive, gaining the Hope Scholarship back after losing it is a statistical longshot: only about 9% of Georgia State students pull this off. Keep Hope Alive provides a \$500 stipend for two semesters to students who have lost Hope as an incentive for them to follow a rigorous academic restoration plan that includes meeting with advisors, attending workshops, and participating in financial literacy training—all designed to help students improve their GPAs and to regain the scholarship. Since 2008, the program has helped to almost <u>double</u> the graduation rates of Georgia State students who lose the Hope scholarship.</p>
<b>Summary of Activities and Lessons Learned</b>	<p>By signing a contract to receive \$500 for each of the first two semesters after losing Hope, students agree to participate in a series of programs and interventions designed to get them back on track academically and to make wise financial choices in the aftermath of losing the scholarship.</p> <p>Scholarship Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program is open to freshman and sophomore students with a 2.75 – 2.99 HOPE grade point average.</li> <li>• Students must pursue a minimum of 30 credit hours within the next academic year.</li> <li>• Students must attend Student Success workshops facilitated by the Office of Undergraduate Studies.</li> <li>• Students must meet with their academic coaches on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Students are required to attend mandatory advisement sessions facilitated by the University Advisement Center.</li> </ul> <p>During the coming academic year, we are exploring models for the use of KHA for our associate-degree seeking students. It is critical to identify students at risk of losing Hope as early as possible, when the interventions are far more likely to change outcomes. Good tracking data are essential.</p>
<b>Baseline Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retention rates for students receiving the HOPE scholarship were 50% in 2008.</li> <li>• Six-year graduation rates for students who lost their HOPE scholarship at some point in their academic career were 21% in 2008</li> </ul>
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For students in KHA in the period from 2011 to 2019, better than 55% gained the scholarship back at the next marker, in the process leveraging our \$1,000 scholarship investment by gaining between \$6,000 and \$12,000 of Hope dollars back again. Students losing HOPE who did not participate in the program regained the HOPE scholarship at a 9% rate.</li> </ul>
<b>Measures of Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since 2008, institutional HOPE retention rates have increased by 50%, from 49% to 75% in 2018.</li> <li>• Compared to 2008, the six-year graduation rate for students who lost their HOPE scholarship at some point in their academic career has almost doubled, from 21% in 2008 to 39% in 2018.</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Eric Cuevas (Sr. Director of Student Success Programs)</li> <li>• Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown</li> </ul>

5. Meta-Majors/Career Pathways

**High-impact strategy**

At a large public university such as Georgia State, freshmen can feel overwhelmed by the size and scope of the campus and choices that they face. This fall, Georgia State is offering 96 majors and more than 10,000 course sections. Freshmen Learning Communities are now required of all non-Honors freshmen at Georgia State. They organize the freshmen class into cohorts of 25 students arranged by common academic interests, otherwise known as “meta majors” or “career pathways” (STEM, business, arts and humanities, policy, health, education and social sciences). Students in each cohort travel through their classes together, building friendships, study partners and support along the way. Block schedules—FLCs in which all courses might be between, for example, 8:30 AM and 1:30 PM three days a week—accommodate students’ work schedules and help to improve class attendance. FLC students have one-year retention rates that are 5 percentage points higher than freshmen not enrolled in FLCs. 86% of this fall’s bachelor’s-degree-seeking freshmen are in FLCs. In the third year of rolling out “career pathways” learning communities at Perimeter College, 79% of incoming freshmen were enrolled in the thematically-based block schedules. Requiring all students to choose a meta-major/career pathway puts students on a path to degree that allows for flexibility in future specialization in a particular program of study, while also ensuring the applicability of early course credits to their final majors. Implemented in conjunction with major maps and a suite of faculty-led programming that exposes students to the differences between specific academic majors during their first semester, meta-majors provide clarity and direction in

	what previously had been a confusing and unstructured registration process, helping students to develop an academic purpose earlier and more stably in their studies.
<b>Summary of Activities and Lessons Learned</b>	Upon registration, all students are required to enroll in one of seven <b>meta-majors/career pathways</b> : STEM, Arts, Humanities, Health, Education, Policy & Social Science, and Exploratory. Once students have selected their meta-major, they are given a choice of several <b>block schedules</b> , which are pre-populated course timetables including courses relevant to their first year of study. On the basis of their timetable, students are assigned to <b>Freshman Learning Communities</b> consisting of 25 students who are in the same meta-major and take classes according to the same block schedules of 5 – 6 courses in addition to a one-credit-hour orientation course grounded in the meta major and providing students with essential information and survival skills to help them navigate the logistical, academic, and social demands of the university. Academic departments deliver programming to students—alumni panels, departmental open houses—that help students to understand the practical differences between majors within each meta major. A new career-related portal by academic discipline allows students in meta majors and beyond to explore live job data for actual Georgia State alums by academic major, including common employer and job titles as well as accompanying salaries. The portal also suggests cognate careers that students may be unaware of and shares live job data for GSU alums about them. It is critical to make career preparation part of the curriculum, from first semester on. Doing so also promotes voluntary students visits to Career Services, which have increased more than 600% since the introduction of meta majors. These visits are also occurring earlier in the student’s academic careers.
<b>Baseline Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 48% FLC participation with opt-in model at the Atlanta campus (2010); 0% FLC participation at Perimeter College (2014)</li> <li>• Average bachelor’s-degree graduates going through 2.6 majors before graduating (2009). In the 2017-2018 academic year, enrollment in a Freshman Learning Community according to meta-major resulted in an average increase in GPA of 8%.</li> <li>• In the 2016-2017 academic year, enrollment in a Freshman Learning Community by meta-major was found to increase a student’s likelihood of being retained through to the following year by 5%.</li> <li>• Perimeter College retention rates were 64.5% in 2014.</li> </ul>
<b>Interim Measures</b>	Adopting an opt-out model has meant that more than 86% of bachelor’s-degree freshmen and 79% of associate-degree-seeking freshmen now participate in FLCs.
<b>Measures of Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-year retention rates are 3-4 point higher and GPAs 0.4 points higher for bachelor’s students in FLCs. Perimeter Academy students, the first associate-degree-seeking students to start their studies in meta-major-based FLC, had a semester-to-semester retention rates 15 points higher than other Perimeter students and accumulated an average of almost two more credit hours.</li> <li>• Changes in majors after the freshman year are down by 32% at GSU since 2011.</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown</li> <li>• Eric Cuevas (Sr. Director of Student Success Programs)</li> </ul>

6. A.I.-Enhanced Chatbot

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	In the Fall 2015, 19% of Georgia State’s incoming freshman class were victims of “summer melt.” Having been accepted to GSU and having confirmed their plans to attend, these students never showed up for fall classes. We tracked these students using National Student Clearinghouse data and found that, one year later, 274 of these students (74% of whom were low-income) never attended a single day of college classes at any institution. We knew we needed to be far more proactive and personal with interacting with students between high-school graduation and the first day of college classes. Towards this end, we launched a new portal to track students through the fourteen steps they needed to complete during the summer (e.g., completing their FAFSA, supplying proof of immunizations, taking placement exams) to be ready for the first day of college classes. We also become one of the first universities nationally to deploy an AI-enhanced chatbot in support of student success. Grants from the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and ECMC allowed for the expansion of the chatbot to all continuing Georgia State students, including students at Perimeter College.
<b>Summary of Activities and Lessons Learned</b>	In the summer of 2016, we piloted a new student portal with partner EAB to track where incoming freshmen are in the steps they need to complete during the summer before fall classes. With the help of Admit Hub, we deployed an artificial-intelligence-enhanced texting system—a chatbot—that allowed students to text 24/7 from their smart devices any questions that they had about financial aid, registration, housing, admissions, and academic advising. We built a knowledge-base of 3,000+ answers

	<p>to commonly asked questions that served as the responses. We secured the services of Dr. Lindsay Page of the University of Pittsburgh as an independent evaluator of the project. From these efforts, we lowered “summer melt” by 37% over the past three years. This translates into 360 more students, mostly low-income and first-generation, enrolling for freshman fall who, one year earlier, were sitting out the college experience. Critical to success is building an adequate knowledge base of answers so students can rely on the system. Many students reported that they preferred the impersonal nature of the chat-bot. During the 2019-20 AY, with the support of the Dell and ECMC Foundations, we expanded the chatbot across continuing students at the Atlanta campus and, for Fall 2020, at Perimeter College with Dr. Lindsay Page once again running random control trials to determine impacts. RCT’s have confirmed major improvements in students successfully completing critical enrollment and academic tasks.</p>
<b>Baseline Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer Melt rate of 19% for the incoming freshman class of 2015.</li> </ul>
<b>Interim Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the three months leading up to the start of Fall 2016 classes, the chatbot replied to 185,000 student questions, with an average response time of 6 seconds. Similar usage has been tracked each of the past two summers, with summer melt declining by an additional 4 percentage points.</li> </ul>
<b>Measures of Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer Melt has been reduced by 37% when compared to the 2015 baseline, translating into almost 1,000 more students, mostly low-income, who matriculated at Georgia State rather than sitting out college entirely. Dr. Lindsey Page has published a research article confirming these results. See <a href="https://www.ecampusnews.com/top-news/gsu-summer-melt-enrollment/">https://www.ecampusnews.com/top-news/gsu-summer-melt-enrollment/</a> <a href="https://hbr.org/2018/01/how-georgia-state-university-used-an-algorithm-to-help-students-navigate-the-road-to-college">https://hbr.org/2018/01/how-georgia-state-university-used-an-algorithm-to-help-students-navigate-the-road-to-college</a> Dr. Page also served as an independent evaluator for the expansion of the chatbot to Georgia State continuing students using a random control trial. <u>Since the launch in fall 2018, students with access to the chatbot have completed key tasks such as removing holds from their accounts, addressing account balances, and meeting with advisors when prompted to do so, at rates 30%-40% higher than their counterparts not using the chatbot.</u></li> </ul>
<b>Primary Contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown (Sr. Vice President for Student Success)</li> <li>• Scott Burke (Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Admissions and Housing)</li> <li>• Ben Brandon (Sr. Director of Student Success Analytics)</li> </ul>

7. Truist Student Financial Management Center

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	<p>Supported by a gift from the SunTrust (now Truist) Foundation, Georgia State opened the SunTrust Student Financial Management Center (SFMC) in late fall 2016. Predicated on the premise that more students will persist if their financial problems are identified early and proactively addressed, the center deploys predictive analytics parallel to those critical to Georgia State’s ground-breaking GPS academic advising system. In the case of SFMC, ten years of financial data were analyzed to identify early warning signs of student financial problems. We discovered that some financial decisions made before the students first set foot on campus may determine whether a student ever graduates, such as a student choosing a single dorm rather than living at home or with roommate in the summer before the freshman year. Through the SFMC, certified financial counselors now track students daily and reach out to offer support and advice when problems are identified. In the first 18 months of operation, 56,833 Georgia State students visited the SFMC.</p>
<b>Summary of Activities and Lessons Learned</b>	<p>A central objective of the SFMC is to deliver to our students the help they need before financial problems become severe enough to cause them to drop out. Building on a similar system that Georgia State has already deployed for academic advising, the initiative extends our predictive analytics to financial advisement. Over a six-month period, the SunTrust SFMC conducts <b>72,000+</b> in-person, online and phone interactions. <b>62%</b> of the interactions focus on loans, FAFSA verification, status of aid, and HOPE Scholarship questions. We find that missing or incomplete documents, FAFSA problems, and parent loans are among the leading issues faced by students. An additional <b>6%</b> of interactions focus on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) appeals. Combining information currently in Banner, our student information and records system, with data from student interactions, the SunTrust SFMC has identified 16 risk triggers that are aligned with the data. A first-of-its-kind financial alert system, created in part through our engagement with the Educational Advisory Board (EAB), is accessible by campus advisors, college academic assistance staff, and student retention staff.</p>
<b>Baseline Status</b>	<p>This project represents new territory, not only for Georgia State but nationally. We have more than 1,000 students being dropped for non-payment each semester, and historically 50% of our students miss the deadline for completing the FAFSA.</p>

<b>Interim Measures</b>	In the first year of SunTrust SFMC operation, 56,833 unique students visited the center. Of the 13,428 student who visited the center over its initial semester, 12,326 completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and 1,104 did not complete the FAFSA. In addition, more than 2,500 first-year students received financial literacy training through their GSU 1010 new student orientation course, primarily offered through the Freshman Learning Community program. This hour-long session provides information on maintaining financial-aid eligibility, FAFSA completion, Satisfactory Academic Progress, HOPE Scholarship eligibility, and student loan responsibilities. Students were also given information on managing credit and budgeting. These efforts had a significant positive impact on our students, as we found a more than 94% FAFSA completion rate for students re-enrolled in the spring semester compared to a general Georgia State student population FAFSA completion rate of 74%.
<b>Measures of Success</b>	With 93% of Georgia State undergraduates receiving federal aid, a major challenge for the university is getting students to take the steps to address outstanding financial-aid obligations and to resolve their balances. Students who visit the SFMC are 6 percentage points more likely to complete all financial-aid requirements and to bring their balances down to zero than the rest of the student body. With a campus of 52,000 students, this translates into more than 3,000 students being financially able ready to start the semester than would have been true without the assistance of the SFMC. Since establishing the SFMC, Georgia State has increased by 50% the number of students who were fully “packaged” and financially ready for the start of classes one month before the start of the fall semester.
<b>Primary Contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown (Sr. Vice President for Student Success)</li> <li>• James Blackburn (AVP for Student Financial Services)</li> <li>• Atia Lindley (Director of the SFMC)</li> </ul>

8. Supplemental Instruction

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	Supplemental Instruction (SI) builds upon Georgia State’s extensive use of near-peer tutoring and mentoring by taking undergraduates who succeed in lower-division courses one semester and deploying them as tutors in the same courses the next semester(s). Students are paid to go through training, to sit in on the same class again so they get to know the new students, and to offer three formal instructional sessions each week.
<b>Summary of Activities and Lessons Learned</b>	During the past academic year, Georgia State had more than 1,000 course sections with near-peer tutors embedded in the courses. We have found that we can leverage our data to identify federal work-study and Panther Works students who have succeeded in courses with high non-pass rates and redeploy these students from their current campus jobs, thus reducing the costs of the program. We have also found that SI becomes more important with the use of early alerts to identify academic risks (as with our GPS Advising). The reason is simple: if one identifies a student struggling during week three of an Accounting course (to use one example), there needs to be support specific to that Accounting course. SI provides it. Finally, we have found that SI creates a natural and strong mentoring relationship between the faculty members teaching the course and the SI instructors (who faculty often nominate to the position), thus improving graduation rates for the tutors.
<b>Baseline Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average GPA in courses identified prior to SI was 2.6 with non-pass (DFW) rates in excess of 20%.</li> </ul>
<b>Interim Measures</b>	More than 15,000 students attended at least one SI session during the most recent academic year. Over 1,000 course sections had a supplemental instructor embedded in the course.
<b>Measures of Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who attended at least five sessions of SI for any given course earned an GPA in these sections of 3.22 when compared to 2.59 for students who did not attend and non-pass rates were 30% lower (Chart 17).</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown</li> <li>• Eric Cuevas (Sr. Director of Student Success Programs)</li> </ul>

9. Hybrid Math Classes Using Adaptive Learning

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	Deliver introductory courses in mathematics using a pedagogy that requires students actively to do math rather than merely to hear an instructor talk about math. Leveraging adaptive technologies, students receive dozens of bits of immediate, personalized feedback every hour that they are in class, and they spend class times with instructors and classmates in a math lab environment.
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<b>Summary of Activities and Lessons Learned</b>	Georgia State has adopted and scaled a model for introductory math instruction on the Atlanta campus in which students meet for one hour per week in a traditional classroom and three hours per week in a math lab with classmates and instructors. In the lab, dubbed the MILE (Mathematics Interactive Learning Environment) students sit at their own computer terminals and learn the subject matter at their own pace. As they answer questions, students receive personalized feedback from the adaptive program that allows slower students time to build up foundational competencies and more advanced students to be challenged—all at the same time. Results show improvement in GPA and pass rates for all demographics, but the largest gains are for students from underserved backgrounds. Students taking adaptive classes not only pass math courses at significantly higher rates, they perform at higher levels in next-level courses reliant on math skills. We are working on a pilot with Stanford University to test open-source adaptive math courseware, as well as a project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to expand adaptive pedagogies to first-year courses in the social sciences (Psychology, Economics, and Political Science). During 2019-20, we piloted the model at Perimeter College's Decatur campus.
<b>Baseline Status</b>	Before the launch of the model, 43% of all Georgia State bachelor's students attempting introductory math courses were receiving non-passing grades. These numbers are often in excess of 60% at Perimeter College, where the adaptive model is set to be piloted.
<b>Interim Measures</b>	Last year, all 8,500 seats of Introduction to Statistics, College Algebra and Pre Calculus offered at the Atlanta campus were taught using adaptive, hybrid pedagogies. Since the launch of the program, non-pass rates for these courses have been reduced by 35%. We deployed random control trials in initial semesters, having students in the lecture and hybrid sections of a given math courses come together to take the same mid-term and final, thus verifying the effectiveness of the new approach.
<b>Measures of Success</b>	1,300 more bachelor's students annually are passing math courses in their first attempt than was the case before the launch of the initiative. STEM completion rates at Georgia State have more than doubled over the last six years, with the greatest gains being seen by underserved populations (Chart 5).
<b>Primary Contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Guantao Gu (Chair of Mathematics)</li> <li>• Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown (Sr. VP for Student Success)</li> </ul>

## 10. College to Career

<b>High-impact strategy</b>	Integrate career preparation and awareness throughout the college curriculum and co-curricular experiences, starting with the first semester. Onboard students through learning communities structured around career pathways/meta majors, with competencies documented by students in real time by providing all students with career-based e-portfolios.
<b>Summary of Activities and Lessons Learned</b>	Georgia State's Quality Enhancement Plan, College to Career, is a campus-wide effort to get students to recognize the career competencies that they are acquiring through their curricular and co-curricular activities; to document these competencies in a robust fashion thorough archiving textual, video and audio evidence in faculty- and peer-reviewed e-portfolios; and to articulate the competencies through resumes, cover letters, and oral discourse. All students are now provided with Portfolium e-portfolios upon matriculation at Georgia State so that they can chronicle, archive and share their career competencies on a semester-by-semester basis. Faculty and departmental grants are awarded to encourage instructors to integrate assignments highlighting career competencies into both lower-level and capstone courses. New technologies have been implemented to share real-time job data for metro Atlanta with students, starting before they arrive on campus. All undergraduates are now onboarded on career-pathway-based learning communities in their first semester and receive College to Career modules in both their orientation courses and in English 1101. In 2018, Georgia State became the first university nationally to partner with Road Trip Nation to create a searchable video archive of the careers of Georgia State alumni. In 2019, Georgia State became the first national partner of Stepping blocks, a company that scrapes the web to identify career outcomes of Georgia State alumni.
<b>Baseline Status</b>	In 2015, the average Georgia State undergraduate made their first visit to University Career Services in their final semester before graduation.
<b>Interim Measures</b>	Last year, Georgia State students posted more than 700,000 artifacts (evidence of their career competencies) to their e-portfolios. All students complete a first resume as part of their first-semester orientation courses. Visits by first- and second-year students to University Career Services have increased 300% since 2015 and visits by freshmen are up by almost 500%. We are now two years into a new program to provide small grants to faculty to create assignments in existing courses that highlight the career competencies that students are learning. We now have a cohort of College to Career Faculty Fellows at Atlanta and Perimeter tasked with creating career-readiness programming.

<b>Measures of Success</b>	Students are now most likely to visit University Career Services in their first year of enrollment and overall visits are up by more than 400%. The Brookings Institution 2017 Rankings of Social Mobility ranked Georgia State first in Georgia and 25th in the nation for social mobility (defined as moving students from the bottom quintile of Americans by annual household income at matriculation to the top half of Americans by annual household income fifteen year later). In fall 2019, U.S. News and World Report ranked Georgia State University 8th in the nation for social mobility.
<b>Primary Contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Angela Christie, Faculty Director of College to Career</li> <li>• Catherine Neiner (Director of University Career Services)</li> <li>• Dr. Timothy Renick (Executive Director of the National Institute for Student Success)</li> </ul>

### 3. THE BIG IDEA: THE ACCELERATOR ACADEMY

During the pandemic-dominated 2020-2021 academic year, a period when most Georgia State courses were offered virtually, Georgia State saw significant increases in first-year students failing critical freshman-year courses. In some of these courses, DFW rates increased by more than 20 percentage points, resulting not only in students falling behind academically but also risking their eligibility for federal aid and the HOPE scholarship (aid programs for which eligibility depends on GPA and/or credit-hour accumulation markers). During Summer 2021, Georgia State offered a first-of-its-kind initiative designed specifically to help first-year college students who had fallen behind in their academic progression due to the pandemic. The Accelerator Academy targeted first-year students who had received non-passing grades in critical first-year courses during the academic year. The large-scale program, which enrolled more than 600 students, was designed and implemented under a short timeline in order to leverage federal pandemic aid and to capitalize on the summer term between the students' freshman and sophomore years. The Accelerator Academy sought to allow students to "accelerate" their credit-hour accumulation in critical first-year courses and to improve their SAP standing through re-taking the courses during the summer—with a suite of additional academic and mindset supports. The Accelerator Academy, the very embodiment of a *momentum* strategy, involved the following steps:

- 1) We analyzed DFW rates and identified first-year courses most critical to progression that also saw increases in DFW rates during the 2020-2021 academic year. After careful analysis, the following courses were identified as part of Accelerator program: ENGL 1101, ENGL 1102, HIST 2110, MATH 996 & 1401, MATH 007 & 1001, MATH 1401, PHIL 1010, POLS 1101, POLS 2401, PSYC 1101, SCOM 1000, BIOL 1103, and CHEM 1151.
- 2) We gained clearance for the use of federal pandemic funds for the program from appropriate state and federal sources. The Accelerator Academy offered an opportunity for students to repeat a course they did not pass during their first attempt in the Fall semester in exchange for tuition and fees and a \$500 educational grant.
- 3) We convened a cross-campus team to develop a proposal to address the increased DFW rates for students. The Office of Student Success partnered with faculty and academic leadership on every Georgia State campus to deliver comprehensive wrap-around services for program participants. Support included Supplemental Instruction tied to all Academy sections, near-peer mentoring, and special, proactive advising. Academic support was offered for every course, and 17 additional graduate students were hired to work in concert with faculty to bolster learning and content mastery.
- 4) Dr. Charles Fox and Andrea Hendricks, Director of Online Initiatives, developed several strategies for improving ONL MATH performance. One of the strategies is to require MATH faculty with persistently high DFW rates to participate in teaching circles in SPR 21
- 5) We secured funding to support students engaged in the program. With the use of Federal Covid Relief Funding (HERF 2 funds), the university was able to invest directly in students during this unprecedented time of financial and academic need. Students were invited individually to the program, and over 600 students enrolled in Accelerator program courses at no cost to them, as well as receiving \$500 to defray educational expenses.
- 6) We invited first-year students who have previously failed to complete key required core courses in Fall 2020 to register for designated summer sections of the same courses that had enhanced academic supports to facilitate successful completion. The recruitment process involved academic advisors, chatbot messaging, and other approaches. A total of 764 unique students applied to the Accelerator Academy.
- 7) We implemented a special communication strategy to support students in the program. A comprehensive marketing and communication campaign was launched. Accelerator students received chatbot nudges throughout the semester to remind them about available resources, to attend Supplemental Instruction, and to register for Fall classes. Additionally, 17 graduate student academic coaches emailed and called students weekly throughout the semester to check on students and keep them encouraged and engaged.
- 8) The chatbot provided recruitment and retention nudges to Accelerator Academy students, helping to improve participation in the program and encouraging students to take advantage of the success resources once enrolled. 13 personalized distinct campaigns were sent, 8 for recruitment into the program and 5 for support through the program.
- 9) We developed a Banner attribute for monitoring students participating in the program. All program participants were coded in Banner with the Accelerator Program Attribute to allow for future tracking and reporting.

**Results:** Despite the fact that 100% of the 600 students in Accelerator courses had previously received grades of DF or W in the same course—the first time Georgia State has taught courses enrolled exclusively by students who had previously failed to earn credit in the course—more than 400 students earned grades of C or better in the Accelerator program. In fact, 98 students earned grades of “A” in their Accelerator courses—testimony to how negatively impactful the past academic year had been for our students and how unrepresentative (and *under*-representative) their academic work may have been this past year. These 400+ students are now on track to text new-level courses during the Fall 2021 term.

Arizona State University, University of California Riverside, and Ohio State University have each now launched their own versions of the Accelerator program specifically based on the Georgia State model and protocols.

We are exploring the possibility that some permutation of the Accelerator Academy might be offered every summer as a way of assisting first-year students who have failed critical courses necessary for progression to regain academic momentum.

## 4. MOMENTUM PLAN UPDATE

Georgia State University continues to strengthen its broader Momentum strategies to support students as they navigate through and complete college. The coronavirus pandemic has created both new challenges and several opportunities to innovate in student success. The seismic changes brought by COVID-19 have meant that predictive analytics—an approach based on determining future behaviors from past trends—have had to be rethought and new data quickly gathered. Georgia State’s commitment to data and nimble cross-unit collaboration have been critical to identifying issues and implementing timely resolutions for students faced with unprecedented issues related to learning loss, health, unemployment, mental stress, housing, and food insecurities.

Student success remains Georgia State’s highest priority as we leverage resources to support students at scale across the university. For instance, Georgia State has taken the Momentum principles and engaged in a comprehensive review of the services we provide virtually. This, in turn, has led to significant changes in how we support students in face-to-face settings, as well. As existing programs are strengthened and new programs established, Georgia State continues to use data and analytics to inform decisions and to pilot, evaluate, refine, and scale initiatives.

The Momentum principles and approaches set forth by the University System of Georgia and adapted by Georgia State this past year include:

- 1) Deepening and refining purposeful choice in the first year and beyond
- 2) Supporting the development of productive academic mindsets
- 3) Maximizing academic success in courses most critical to progression and completion
- 4) Providing each student with a comprehensive pathway for student success

To this list, Georgia State adds an additional priority: Effectively scaling supports for more than 45,000 undergraduate students across six Georgia State campuses throughout the metro area. These principles and approaches will continue to serve as the guidelines for areas of focus during the 2021-2022 academic year, supported by Georgia State’s entire Student Success team.

This section consists of three parts. First, we will discuss the positive developments GSU has achieved and the innovative programs GSU deployed in 2020 that provided immediate and effective interventions and supports to our students adversely impacted by the pandemic academically, financially, and emotionally. Second, we will outline the largest challenges we have seen as the result of COVID-19 pandemic. Third, we will discuss some strategies for our upcoming Momentum work. Georgia State has identified six major focused areas for 2021:

- 1) Support the academic recovery of first-year students and others facing disrupted progression or learning loss due to the pandemic
- 2) Helping students overcome financial barriers
- 3) Enhance supports for students transitioning from Perimeter College to the Atlanta campus
- 4) Further strengthen academic success in Math and English courses
- 5) Reinforce the “15 to Finish” model; and
- 6) Enhance purposeful choice and pathways

In each of the focused areas, our action plan has been laid out with implementation strategies and steps taken by the team members. A senior Student Success leader is assigned to each area as the lead with the support of a subgroup of staff members. The Senior Vice President of Student Success, Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown, leads quarterly check-in meetings with the team to ensure the Momentum work is on track and producing positive results throughout the year.

## POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN 2020-2021

### Data Intelligence:

Our data reporting has been exceptional in adapting to the new environment and helping us understand how students are engaging in the online format. As the university transitioned to online instructional modalities in response to the pandemic, Georgia State added daily monitoring of LMS data including log-ons, and it relayed the data to our advising staff for proactive outreach—a practice which literally began the day Georgia State went fully online in Spring 2020. In the first twelve months, advisors proactively reached out to students not logging onto their online courses more than 30,000 times, quickly identifying a range of academic, emotional, financial, and technological issues faced by the students. The entire Student Success team then served as an integrated support network to quickly resolve thousands of the issues before they resulted in the students dropping or failing their courses. We also created dozens of new data reports—tracking emergency aid, drops and withdrawals, Counseling Center visits, technology needs, and other factors on a weekly and at times daily basis to discern new behaviors and trends created by the pandemic.

### Federal Pandemic Funds and Emergency Aid:

Building on Georgia State’s Panther Retention Grant (PRG) program, we were able to quickly distribute federal pandemic support funds to our students within days of receipt. Over a twelve-month period, the university proactively awarded more than 70,000 grants to students who were in financial distress without the students having to fill out an application by using financial analytics honed over ten years of distributing retention grants. In addition, the Dean of Students Office developed an emergency assistance fund providing wraparound support service amidst the ongoing pandemic, helping an additional 7,000 students.

### Early Alerts for Online Courses:

As detailed above, we have been nimble in adapting our existing Early Alert program by developing new metrics for monitoring student engagement in the learning management system (LMS), and providing virtual academic support services, supplemental instruction, and tutoring (through Tutor Ocean).

### Chatbot:

The university chatbot “Pounce” has been instrumental in providing real-time data at GSU. We have deployed our chatbot in many ways during the pandemic, such as polling students and providing them with information about the pivot to virtual instruction, coordinating students transitioning students out of housing during the Spring 2020 semester, discerning instructional modality preferences for the Fall 2020 and 2021 semesters, and gauging academic mindset, among other things. At times, the chatbot has provided us with thousands of real-time responses from students within minutes of a question being posed. We have also begun pilots which deploy the chatbot to answer common academic questions and deliver preparatory quizzes in high-enrollment first-year courses.

### Student Support Services:

Academic advising had to shift its services to the virtual environment and was able to successfully do so with the scale-up of Navigate technology, delivering nearly 100,000 appointments via WebEx over a twelve-month period. This enabled or students to keep on track for their academic plans/pathways remotely, and it enabled us to set new Georgia State records for both our baccalaureate- and associate-degree graduation rates. Supplemental Instruction, tutoring, academic coaching, student financial services, and other supports were all delivered successfully and at scale through online modalities.

### Transition Students:

Our transition students did exceptionally well transitioning from Perimeter to Atlanta. Transition students who moved with at least 60 hours of credits to the Atlanta campus finished their first terms with a GPA above 3.0.

### Senior Students:

We did not see academic challenges with Seniors. More than a hundred additional students graduated at the bachelor’s- and associate-degree levels during the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 terms than ever before, and both the six-year baccalaureate (56%) and the 3-year associate degree (24%) graduation rates reached all-time highs. Tracking these same cohorts using National Student Clearinghouse data, 63% of associate-degree students graduated or were retained after three years, and 70% of baccalaureate students graduated and 78% graduated or were retained after six years. All are new highs for the university.

### Strengthened Online Delivery of Support Programs:

Offering services and programs in both online and in-person modalities across all different campuses—counseling services, financial aid, tutoring, and so forth—has strengthened our student services and programming by allowing greater and more consistent student access to the supports. The online components have expanded the accessibility and flexibility of our student programming and provided immediate solutions and support to the students’ needs. In some cases—such as group sessions offered by our Counseling Center—participation has increased markedly.

## CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED FOR 2021

### Course Modality Issues:

Students' re-acclimation to the face-to-face instruction modality has been a challenge. Fall 2020 freshmen may have spent little or no time in face-to-face courses during their first year of college. This fall's entering freshmen have had almost half of their secondary schooling delivered remotely. This significant shift means our first- and second-year students have—and will have for several years—very different experiences and expectations in course registration, course taking, and how they approach their classes. They may be impacted by significant learning loss when compared to previous cohorts. They need help re-acclimating to an in-person environment, and many students are telling us they want to remain in online courses due to preference, convenience, or continued fears of the coronavirus. This adds more complications to the transition. We must reset the value proposition for course modality. Until then, we will continue to face considerable pressures regarding the number of students seeking online courses, especially at Perimeter College where online courses were historically more popular before the pandemic.

After being accustomed to teaching online, faculty require some of the same adjustments as students. Equipping faculty with modality data to show them which modalities work the best for their classes is helping to inform the conversations, but at times the data is in tension with faculty beliefs and preferences. We are working to ensure that the course modalities offered by the faculty are in the best interest of students.

### Math and English:

Introductory Math courses are a particular challenge as students transition from a year of remote learning back to face-to-face instruction. We are unsure of the learning levels that have been achieved by our students in their online math classes in high school, with results likely differing widely from district to district. During the Fall 2020 semester, the percent of new students attempting college-level Math and English courses was quite high (aided, in part, by lower enrollments at Perimeter College, which alleviated some of the staffing challenges of previous fall terms). Unfortunately, DFW rates increased significantly in these courses due to the shift to online modality and pressures from the pandemic. The pattern was consistent with previous data—Georgia State's first-year students do not perform well in entirely online Math and English courses in their initial college semesters—but the number of first-year students attempting these courses in online modalities exploded due to the pandemic, meaning that more first-year students were left still needing passing credits in Math and English by the end of the Spring 2021 term. The completion rates of Math and English were significantly lower on both the Atlanta and Perimeter campuses than they had been in previous years. The persistence rates for students who didn't complete Math and English were much lower than they have been in the past. As evidenced by the increase in 2nd Attempt Math petitions for STEM majors at PC, Math completion rates are now affecting student progression.

### DFW Rates:

DFW rates increased significantly for both associate-level and bachelor's-level students, especially among first-year students, due to the multiple impacts of the coronavirus pandemic (e.g., financial hardship, health concerns, stress, anxiety, and new learning modalities, among others).

### Financial Risk:

Mediating financial risk continues to be challenging. Given the high level of Pell eligibility in the Georgia State student population, the pandemic has had a disproportionate negative financial impact on many of our students. Especially at Perimeter College, Georgia State saw an increase in the number of students on warning for failing to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) criteria and at risk of losing financial aid eligibility. Given the loss of employment during the pandemic and that nationally FAFSA applications are down for low-income and minority students, access to financial aid may be threatened in multiple ways, and this phenomenon is very likely to impact students' decisions to go to and persist in college.

### Student Engagement:

How to effectively engage students who have primarily participated in an online environment is challenging, especially the first-time, full-time students. Many of Georgia State's most effective student success programs—Success Academy, learning communities, near-peer mentoring, Keep Hope Alive—traditionally include in-person elements critical to their success. All of these programs were weakened by the move to remote delivery, and we are in the process of collecting new types of data to help mitigate these problems and to customize programs that enhance the student engagement virtually.

*Note: For further information, the Momentum Year/Momentum Approach Matrix can be found at the end of the Appendix.*

## FOCUSED AREAS, ACTION PLANS, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES (CAMPUS LEAD IS NOTED IN PARENTHESES)

Support first-year students through post pandemic recovery  
(Allison Calhoun-Brown)

Accelerator Academy:

See section 3 of this report.

Comeback Camp:

The Comeback Camp was established in the Spring 2021 semester to provide academic support and resources to students who fell below a 1.99 GPA in the Fall 2020 semester. A total of 1,294 students were automatically enrolled in the campaign which provided supportive messaging and extra encouragement to access academic support. Students enrolled in Comeback Camp were tagged in Navigate. Students in Supplemental Instruction, the Learning and Tutoring Center, and STEM Tutoring Support were also tagged in the platform. Students received weekly email messages with short, visual success tips and mindset messaging through email and chatbot. There were 1,083 academic coaching sessions for students in Comeback Camp with 81% of the population participating in at least one coaching session. Comeback Camp helped to expand support, steady outreach, and provide access to academic coaches for the 2021 cohort students who did poorly last fall. Through boosting retention and progression, the program also helped students improve their status with Satisfactory Academic Progress and allowed more to keep their Hope scholarships

Success and Perimeter Academies:

In 2020 the Success Academy class grew by 34% from 335 to 449 students. Unfortunately, with the program offered virtually due to the pandemic, the 2020 cohort did not perform as well academically as previous cohorts. There are several factors that contributed to the decline, including the significant growth in the size of the class and the challenges that COVID-19 presented. The program was built to be in-person; however, this was not possible in 2020 due to the pandemic. Our students took all their courses online and participated in the programmatic elements virtually. The average GPA dropped by .47 and the first-year retention rate by 12 points. Based on these results, it was decided to scale back the size of the Success Academy class in 2021 when most of the program still had to be delivered virtually. 397 students were enrolled in the Success Academy for Summer 2021, and the average GPA rebounded to 2.7—still below pre-pandemic levels but an improvement over Fall 2020. We anticipate the return of the face-to-face Success Academy in Summer 2022.

Perimeter Academy (PA) has been a challenging program to recruit for and to meet established enrollment targets. Over the last three summer semesters, we enrolled 157 (2019), 109(2020) and 107 (2021) students in PA. There are several reasons for this. Unlike Success Academy, Perimeter Academy is an opt-in program, not a conditional admission program. In 2020, due to the pandemic, the USG allowed system colleges and universities to offer test- score-optional admissions, meaning more students gained admission to bachelor's programs. This shift changed the admissions landscape and significantly impacted community college enrollments. Nationally, this sector decreased by 9.5%. Perimeter College first-year enrollment declined by 18% in 2020, and 3% in 2021. Perimeter Academy over this same time-period declined by 31% and 1.8% respectively. With the return of test-required admission, it is very likely we will see our numbers rebound at least partially if not to levels where we were pre-pandemic. As far as performance in the Perimeter Academy, students did very well during the Summer 2021 term, finishing the program with an average GPA of 2.89—the first time they outperformed their Atlanta-campus counterparts.

Help Student Overcome Financial Barriers  
(James Blackburn)

Keep SAP Alive:

Prior to Fall 2020, we struggled to support SAP Warning students who failed to complete SAP appeals and thus lost eligibility for financial aid. One problem was that, due to the pandemic, fewer students were actively engaged on a continuous basis to complete the necessary appeal paperwork. To address this, in Fall 2020, the university launched a special campaign to assist 1,094 SAP Warning students with completing the paperwork and engaging in academic support services. The campaign included emails, phone calls, and chatbot nudges. As a result of this engagement, 297 students regained academic eligibility and retained access to financial aid. In addition, 51 SAP Appeals were approved, allowing students to continue to receive financial aid while they improved their academic progress.

The campaign and results were reviewed after Fall 2020 term to identify opportunities for improvement. One of the areas for improvement was to increase communication frequency, virtual meetings, and academic support tracking. The improvement targets for the Spring 2021 term included increases in messaging to the students, better tracking of show rates of appointments and virtual meetings and tracking student participation in academic coaching. The campaign was repeated in the Spring 2021 term to an increased

population of 2,462 SAP Warning students. We developed a plan to ensure that students understand how to submit a SAP appeal in a timely manner to maintain aid eligibility. A team of student financial services professionals from the Student Financial Management Center (SFMC) was organized to actively engage with SAP Warning students to discuss financial aid eligibility and the circumstances surrounding the failed academic performance and recommend the next steps to take. The SFMC adopted a holistic approach to engage students by assessing the student's academic preparedness, academic engagement, financial health, mental and physical wellbeing, and engagement level. Using this framework, the financial aid team recommended the appropriate services needed to ensure successful academic progress was achieved. In Spring 2021, 494 students scheduled appointments with a SFMC for SAP assistance, 393 students met with the team, and 30% regained SAP before the end of the term. Only 13% of the students who did not meet with the SFMC regained eligibility by the end of the term. 266 students in the SAP Warning status engaged in at least one session with an academic coach. 24% of these students regained SAP by the end of the Spring term. 39% of the students who met with academic coaching also met with an SFMC advisor, and 36% of these students achieved SAP by the end of the term compared to 16% who participated in academic coaching alone.

Currently, the campaign for in Fall 2021 will expand to include existing interventions in mental and physical wellness, student engagement, and non-cognitive factors of academic preparedness. An iCollege course is currently under development that will include all five holistic categories. This iCollege course allows the Keep SAP Alive intervention to scale and impact more students. The anticipated launch date of the pilot iCollege course is Spring 2022. Additional information will be gathered during the Spring 2022 term about the appropriate class loads a student experiencing academic challenges should undertake.

The positive early results of these various SAP interventions suggest that a holistic approach to Satisfactory Academic Progress has merit.

#### FAFSA Communication:

A review of students at risk at the start of Fall 2021 term identified three categories of risk: a) students transitioning from Perimeter College to the Atlanta campus; b) students charged non-resident fees; and c) students living in on-campus housing. The primary risk of these categories is the accompanying substantially higher costs of attendance. During the admissions and enrollment process, students in these three categories were identified and an attribute was placed in their Banner records to allow for outreach and tracking. 13,107 students were identified as having a financial risk across these three categories: 1,289 transition students, 8,901 non-resident students, and 2,917 housing students. Students in each risk category were communicated with in various modes including emails, phone calls, and chatbot nudges. The students were encouraged to schedule a virtual meeting with one of our SFMC advisors. A dedicated team of counselors were assigned to these high-risk students to ensure access. The advisors informed the students of the higher costs associated with attending the university and discussed the various options for paying the higher costs. The conversations focused on solutions to assist students and their families with the financial barriers presented. 2,334 students attended a virtual or in-person meeting with the SFMC and 2,207 or 95% of these students enrolled in classes for the Fall 2021 term. 73% of the students were financially ready to begin classes by the beginning of the term. Of the students who did not meet with an SFMC advisor, only 27% of the students enrolled and 63% were financially ready by the beginning of the term. Enrollment and financial readiness in each of the categories suggest that the intervention was successful. 86.2% of the transition students who met with SFMC enrolled compared to 75.4% who did not. 84.3% of the non-resident students who met with SFMC enrolled compared to 12.1% who did not. 98.1% of the housing students who met with SFMC enrolled compared to 84.8% who did not. The improvement in financial readiness was significant; students who met with an SFMC advisor were 9.9 percentage points more financially ready compared to those who did not meet with the SFMC advisor. Observations from the counselors during their interactions with the students identified three common themes: lack of awareness of costs, expectation of more scholarship aid, and a reluctance to commit until the beginning of the term. In 2021-2022, we will incorporate these observations into new message campaigns and discussions to help the student overcome these issues. Another observation of note is students in housing tended to have fewer financial barriers given the high rate of Hope scholarships among the population. We will gather additional data to determine the impact of Hope scholarship and housing affordability. Further, the low engagement rate of the transition students suggests that the price differential between Perimeter College and Atlanta may not be a significant barrier to enrollment. However, the large price differential for out-of-state students is significant and may be impacting enrollments from this population. This data suggests additional investment in staff to work with out-of-state students should be explored. In addition to the staff increase, increase funding options are required.

#### Support Transition Students (Scott Burke)

##### New Student Orientation:

During the 2021 admissions cycle, we continued to improve our outreach and onboarding processes for transition students from Perimeter College. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions hosted 10 virtual next step sessions for accepted transition students to the downtown campus. The sessions ran between December 2020 through August 2021. Overall, 630 students registered, and 371 students attended. The transition admissions counselor met with 225 students for virtual appointments. The Student Financial Management Center served 900 transition students virtually over the same period. Unfortunately, due to staffing, resources, and

COVID-19, we did not implement an in-person orientation program for transition students; however, we did successfully revamp our online orientation program to deliver the important onboarding guidance that transition students need to successfully enroll. Our goal is to develop and implement an in-person NSO in 2022.

#### Community for Transition Students:

Under our new model, PC Advisors review and discuss students' plans to transition to the Atlanta campus. Intentional conversation focuses on career interests, requisite skill set, and which pathways support seamless transition to the bachelor's programs that align with career goals and interests. The PC advising sessions include a review of how the associate-level programs align with the bachelor's level programs and requirements, including additional planning for students seeking premium programs at the bachelor's level that require a 2nd admissions process. PC Advising team partners with Admissions team to host transition sessions to inform students of application deadlines, the importance of working with advising team to review prescribed academic plans in preparation of transition and remind students to connect with financial aid to review award package for transition plan. The Perimeter Learning Community schedules are designed to support seamless transition from the associate level to the bachelor's level. After NSO, PC Advisors review and discuss students plans to transition to the Atlanta campus. The advising session includes a review of how the associate-degree programs align with the Bachelor-level programs and requirements, including additional planning for students seeking premium programs at the bachelor's level that require a 2nd admissions process. The PC/ATL Advising team is developing Meta Major information sessions to support students as they navigate the bridge from UAC PC advising to UAC Atlanta advising team.

#### Strengthen Math and English Success (Allison Calhoun-Brown & Cynthia Lester)

##### The Teaching Fellows Program:

The Teaching Fellows program for Perimeter College was piloted beginning fall 2021 with an initial cohort of 10 graduate students from the Atlanta campus. The implementation consisted of students selected as either a Graduate Teaching Assistant A (GTAA) – students who are supervised by a Perimeter College faculty member and assist in grading, serving as a discussion leader or lab section leader—or Graduate Teaching Assistant B (GTAB)—students who have some teaching experience and serve as the instructor of record for a course. Atlanta campus colleges that are participating in the initial phase are the College of the Arts, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, and the College of Arts and Sciences. To provide additional support, all graduate students participating in the program register for a one-credit-hour teaching seminar that introduces them to Perimeter College culture and strategies to support students at the associate-degree level. The graduate teaching assistants will also participate in a one-credit-hour teaching circle, which focuses on teaching and best pedagogical practices. Both experiences are collaborations between Perimeter College and the Graduate School.

##### Perimeter MILE Lab:

The latest Mathematics Interactive Learning Environment (MILE) lab is near completion at Georgia State's PC Decatur campus. This newest lab will focus on three distinct interactive working stations and several individual workstations for students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) courses. This is the third state-of-the-art MILE lab at Georgia State. The lab's completion is scheduled for the end of November 2021, and its grand opening for the spring 2022 semester

#### Reinforce the "15 to Finish" and Pathways Models (Carol Cohen, Michael Sanseviro & Allison Calhoun-Brown)

##### Leveraging Block Schedules:

The learning community model continues as the default for all incoming freshman students at both Perimeter and Atlanta, providing premade block schedules with 15-16 credit hours each. The schedules are created with attention to morning only, evening only, as well as MW and TT only course options to allow students to select a block compatible with their work and family schedules. For Fall 2021, there were 93 Perimeter Learning Communities offered for student registration. 1,246 new, incoming freshmen are currently registered in Perimeter learning communities. For returning students, advisors are using the academic planning tool within Navigate to create 15-hour term plans for better planning and progression. Advisors constantly review schedules throughout the enrollment cycle, reaching out to thousands of students who may be under-enrolled or need other types of registration adjustments.

In addition to offering Accuplacer, the Math department created an iCollege math placement test that provides online access to placement for all our incoming students needing placement into collegiate level math or to increase their current math placement. This iCollege exam is emailed out as a link during our next steps process within admissions once a student is accepted. During the orientation program students are divided into groups based on meta major to allow for the appropriate guidance (especially in math) during their advising session. Students also have access to Accuplacer testing within our testing centers across the Atlanta and Perimeter locations. A total of 2,343 new incoming freshmen registered and completed the Accuplacer or ICM math exam.

The “Chat with an Advisor” option was piloted during Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters with an average of 100 advisors participating who provided a one-hour block each week to meet with students. Approximately 3,000 advisor chats were conducted based on this model. We will continue with this program throughout the spring term.

#### Navigate:

The new advisor assignment process was finalized and the assignments to begin at the point of admission for both Atlanta and Perimeter students were streamlined. Currently, 20,000 advisor assignments have been made for Atlanta campus students and 15,000 have been made for Perimeter students. This process runs nightly and can adjust to any changes in the student population or advisor staffing. The use of the chatbot has been expanded to strategically reach out to various groups of students based on their meta major, registration status, and barriers to progression. Other campaigns include graduation applications, registration for the same course, or reverse transfer interests. Navigate and the chatbot continued to be used collaboratively by nudging students through the chatbot then communicating with students via Navigate based on the chatbot responses. The advisement team is strategizing the communication flow within Navigate based on chatbot data to follow up with the students via calling campaigns and notate all correspondence. From Fall 2020 to Fall 2021, 39 individual chatbot campaigns were launched and resulted in advisor-driven strategic Navigate calling-campaigns.

#### Virtual Appointments:

Academic advising appointments have increased significantly. The year over year comparison of advising appointments reflects a 60% increase from the 2019/2020 academic year to the 2020/2021 academic year. Both virtual and in person advising appointments continued to be integrated to allow for maximum service capacity to our student population. From August 1, 2020, to July 31, 2021, we have conducted a record 135,284 virtual and in person advising interactions with the UAC student population.

#### Academic Credit Reconciliation:

A team of advisors worked daily to evaluate the AP/IB/DE credit as soon as it arrived. In Summer 2021, the credits were evaluated the credits and alerts sent out daily to the NSO team to make the adjustments needed to the schedules and to notify students. (Note: Fall 2021 College Board had a staggered test date reporting schedule, therefore scores were sent in batches between July and mid-August due to their internal changes. This change required our advisors to have to pivot and prepare to make schedule changes into late August.) A job in banner was created that provided the output for duplicate course work for the upcoming term. Students who have re-registered for any AP/IB/DE credit can be identified easily and alerted via phone calls, emails or Chatbot nudges. A note is now put on their record when the student intends on repeating the course. Advising & Admissions collaborate at a team meeting each month. The review of new AP/IB exams is discussed and planned for if needed. Analysis of the AP/IB credit received for the fall term is then shared with the FLC team to determine any trends in credit received, i.e. more ENGL 1101 credit received, fewer GEOG 1101 credit, etc. Over 15,000 students had transfer credits entered, with an average of 40 credits per student. Total credit hours received were 442,000 with an average of 147,000 courses articulated.

#### FLC and Panther Tracks:

Two systems were created to track FLC onboarding: (a) Pre-registration Dashboard that tracks 113 data points across 13 categories to help advisors map incoming freshmen to FLCs; and (b) Post-Registration App developed to better track student registration change requests. These systems were utilized by 45 Academic Advisors and a team of 7 processors. A better integrated Banner functionality in the app is required for next year’s cycle to address the time lapse that caused untimely processing submission changes for students before classes become unavailable or closed. A review of the FLC structure with the Banner teams is called for to cultivate a model that better fits our student demographic that requires variations of scheduling. The scaling of the Academic Coaching program was prioritized to reach more students in the term. This allowed us to build a better connection with students as we navigated the pandemic and provide better support to the graduate students through student employment. 15 coaches (8 more than previous terms) in Spring 2021 were hired to serve 3,030 students, 31 coaches in Summer 2021 serving 2,713 students, and 34 coaches in Fall 2021 serving 1,847 students. These students complete an intake process with each coach that helps our team identify risky behaviors and administer effective strategies to help our students succeed.

#### Guided Pathways:

The Advising Team developed a Chatbot calendar and added content to GSU 1010/PCO 1020 in iCollege to communicate timely information related to full-time registration, retention, graduation information, and action items concerning progression as it relates to full-time vs part-time status. Atlanta and PC advisors follow up with NSO schedule to ensure full-time balanced schedules meet pathway and momentum requirements, adjust schedules as needed, and upload academic maps that promote the 15 to Finish Model, 30 hours per academic year, and add summer schedules for students as an opportunity to advance in their major and pathways or complete academic year with 30 earned credit hours.

### Advising Model and Academic Coaching:

Advisors utilize the UAC created 360<sup>o</sup> Advising Tool that incorporates time management tips and tools to assist with developing a balanced study schedule based on course content, credit hours, and school/work/life balance. Advisors reiterate the importance of incorporating academic resources such as the Math Lab (MILE), Supplemental Instruction, Writing lab, the Learning and Tutoring Centers, and Online tutoring services. The academic resources have been incorporated within the Navigate application. Before and after each term, and in collaboration with PC Academic Affairs, the Associate Dean of Enrollment Management, the schedulers, and the UAC leadership team developed a weekly Course Availability and Demand report to measure course demand in support of building balanced and progressive schedules. The Course Availability/Demand report provides data that informs what courses need to be added or modified in real time to provide courses needed by student schedules to support progression.

### Leveraging the Chatbot to Support Pathways:

An RCT consisted of 11,561 students (5,780 control, 5,781 treatment) was concluded in May 2021. The results from the formal data analysis are expected soon. The PC chatbot was scaled in summer 2021 to include 11,430 enrolled Perimeter students in total. Personalized understandings have been developed for PC students and a combined bot with personalized responses was launched in September 2021 to manage both ATL and PC communications and understandings within the same bot. Pounce has operated at scale for 11,430 Perimeter students and 24,825 Atlanta campus students for the Fall 2021 term. 55 Distinct Text Campaigns/ Nudges sent at in fall 2021 semester (Aug 16-current). “How’s it going?” Campaign meant to help assess how freshmen are adapting to the university and drive them towards appropriate resources. The scope of communication sent out through the chatbot has expanded to include reminding students of supplemental supports (including new STEM tutoring pushes), encouraging students to visit academic advising and periodically checking in on how students are doing with his “How’s it going” campaigns. Monthly communication meetings with Student Financial Services, Advisement and Registrar Staff help align communication goals across teams. We currently have an RCT in progress to assess the effectiveness and viability of course level nudging (currently taking place in POLS 1101 on the Atlanta Campus). Modality campaigns targeted all active students to listen to student voices as course modality is planned and scheduled for upcoming terms. DWF Rate Nudges: The chatbot provided recruitment and retention nudges to the Summer Accelerator Academy students (a program designed to aid students who had withdrawn or failed a course), helping to improve participation in the program and encourage students to take advantage of the success resources once enrolled. (13 personalized distinct campaigns sent, 8 for recruitment into the program and 5 for support through the program.) Math and English: The chatbot plans regular communication to students who are missing key English or Math courses to encourage those students to engage with an academic advisor early in their academic career. Targeted 2,305 students. STEM tutoring nudges were encouraged outside of courses designed for SI. These nudges reached a much larger number than the targeted SI nudges. Pounce continues to engage students who are consistently showing lack of engagement within iCollege.

### Parent Engagement:

The Student Success and Career Support communities are being utilized within the Panther Family Portal to increase shared content around the momentum initiatives. Because of Georgia State University’s commitment to student success, all families that join the Panther Family Portal are automatically added to the Student Success community and receive those posts. Based on their responses to the onboarding survey within the portal, families can also join the Career Support community. In October 2021, implementation of a content calendar allowed for more intentional use of both communities, incorporating input and posts from University partners to ensure consistent messaging.

- Student Success Community Membership – 691.7% increase
  - September 1, 2020: 7,502
  - September 1, 2021: 59,392
- Career Support Community Membership – 277.8% increase
  - September 1, 2020: 1,141
  - September 1, 2021: 4,311
- Total Number of Posts Shared within Community
  - Student Success: 112
  - Career Support: 10

Academic calendar notifications were activated within the portal to remind family members of key deadlines and term information so they can better nudge and support their students. Additionally, the weekly “Student News You Can Use” email newsletter (containing key student success content, academic reminders, and engagement information) that is sent each Monday to all enrolled students is also forwarded via the portal to all family members, and thus allows them to be kept up to date on key campus reminders and better support their students. In March 2021, the Student Connections FERPA (The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) module was activated within the Panther Family Portal to provide families with direct access to key information to support their students, with appropriate FERPA permissions.

FERPA Module Connection Requests & Approvals to date:

- Account Balance Connections Approved/ Requested: 983/1343 (73%)
- Class Schedule/ Enrollment Connections Approved/ Requested: 960/1343 (71%)
- Financial Aid Information Connections Approved/ Requested: 984/1343 (74%)
- Grade Information Connections Approved/ Requested: 897/1343 (67%)
- Graduation Information Connections Approved/ Requested: 965/1343 (72%)
- Holds on Account Connections Approved/ Requested: 979/1343 (73%)

Georgia State received the Q3 MVP award from the portal provider (CampusESP) due to the rapid increase of FERPA connections made during the summer of 2021.

## Enhance Purposeful Choice (Michael Sanseviro, Heather Housley, Catherine Neiner, Angela Christie)

### Panther Connect:

Panther Connect was successfully piloted in summer 2020 using the Panther Involvement Network (PIN) based in Campus Labs Engage. A daily data feed of the Panther Connect involvement data from Slate into PIN was completed in Spring 2021, allowing for a more timely, accurate, and efficient process. It provided us with increased understanding of how the technology works, and the enhancement needed going into next NSO cycle. The model is complementary to our Meta Majors and narrows the hundreds of co-curricular opportunities into a handful of guided and connected pathways for students to have co-curricular opportunities that support their curricular experiences. The model also pulls data from admissions to proactively connect new students with tailored co-curricular opportunities that align with previously demonstrated interests. Departmental owners of the related PIN pages have been provided continuous support and training to utilize the email messaging function within PIN to share engagement information, events, and opportunities with the students on their roster. Departments that fully embraced the Panther Connect program and communicated regularly with their student members achieved impressive gains in engagement and attendance. Due to the codes given each student indicating their entry term and campus in PIN, they can be sent more targeted content from each engagement area. As an example, sophomore students were sent emails relating to the specific events and support created for them this fall separate from the information sent to new freshmen. In addition to the use of PIN pages, new in-person Panther Connect sessions were added to the Atlanta campus freshmen New Student Orientation schedule in summer 2021. Each student attended two 20-minute sessions representing their top two involvement selections where they were provided with information on how to get involved in that area and connected with other students who share that interest. Going into the Fall 2022 orientation cycle, students' meta major will also be included in the data feed so that they can be placed as a member in these related meta major PIN pages. The challenge will be to work effectively with college colleagues to ensure that accurate, timely, and interesting co-curricular content and events are included in those pages.

### Panther Rewards:

Provide incentives for students to increase co-curricular engagement. The pilot program was launched in January 2021 with over 300 student participants. The program continued for Fall 2021 and beyond. Prize values have been reduced slightly to lower the overall cost of the program. Event attendance is regularly studied in PIN to identify and recruit students who are attending events, reminding them that they have already begun to accumulate points towards the program and that they only need to ask to join. An aggressive enrollment goal of 1,000 students has been established for Fall 2021. Students were more effectively introduced to the PIN event check-in app feature at New Student Orientation in summer 2021, and thus will be more prepared to have their attendance at events recorded and POUNCE Rewards accumulate. A new monthly audit is being conducted to identify events which lack attendance information in PIN and remind the hosts to enter it, thus increasing student attendance data that can contribute to the program. This past summer Student Organizations staff purchased 10 new pop-up banners with the event check-in QR code on them for display at university events. Banners can be checked out by departments for use at their events without having to purchase it themselves. More information for event hosts on the benefits of using the event check-in app to gain new data about their attendees should be included in future training plans.

### College to Career:

The Awareness module for the Orientation course (GSU 1010/PCO 1020) was developed and implemented so that students learn the career readiness competencies and begin to consider career starting in their first year. However, the awareness student engagement numbers dropped significantly in 2020—only 32% of GSU 1010 students and 20% of PCO 1020 students uploaded their resumes as part of the final, required Career Explorer Project. (A new approach for Fall 2021 increased these number to above 70%.) In every part of the Awareness module, we saw decreased student engagement. Of those students who did engage, students in 2020 performed slightly better when asked to recognize each of the competencies than they did in 2019. PCO 1020 students performed better in 2020 than they did in 2019. Their awareness of specific competencies increased across the board. Students still struggle with recognizing opportunities on campus for skills development. 56% of students could not adequately identify the co-curricular activities that help develop career competencies. We ensure alignment of QEP with all student engagement programs. One of the exemplary programs is Stepping Blocks, a career navigator digital platform that has been developed, along with a curriculum skill-builder tool for faculty and

staff that assist in the learning processes for students about their undergraduate experience and its value to prospective employers. The connection module for English 1101 was developed and piloted so that students learn how to connect the skills they learn in their coursework with the in-demand skills employers require. In the Connection Modules there is a modest increase in career preparedness confidence levels as reported by students from the start of the course to the end of the course. In each category, students noted an increase in their ability to connect, articulate, and demonstrate the career readiness skills they acquired. At PC, students using the connection modules created Portfolium and LinkedIn accounts at a rate of 85% or higher. The Demonstration module for Signature Experience courses was developed and adopted by faculty so that students could learn how to appropriately articulate the skills and competencies they have developed in a digital portfolio space. The module also allows students to practice articulating their skills proficiency by stepping them through a mock interview. Provided digital skills training for students during the first year with Ready, Set, Go! This platform provides students with free digital tools workshops in Excel, PowerPoint, Digital Literacy, and WordPress. The digital tools in Ready, Set, Go! are also imbedded in the Awareness and Connection course modules

## 5. CONCLUSION

Georgia State University is testimony to the fact that students from all backgrounds can succeed at high rates. Moreover, our efforts over the past few years demonstrate that dramatic gains are possible not through changing the nature of the students served but through changing the nature of the institution that serves them. How has Georgia State University made the gains outlined above? How do we propose to reach our ambitious future targets? In one sense, the answer is simple. We employ a consistent, evidenced-based strategy. Our general approach can be summarized as follows:

- Use data systematically and daily to identify and to understand the most pervasive obstacles to our students' progressions and completion.
- Be willing to address the problems by becoming an early adopter. This means piloting new strategies and experimenting with new technologies. After all, we will not solve decades-old problems by the same old means.
- Track the impacts of the new interventions via data and make adjustments as necessary to improve results.
- Scale the initiatives that prove effective to have maximal impact. In fact, almost all of the initiatives outlined benefit thousands of students annually.

Our work to promote student success at Georgia State has steadily increased graduation rates among students from all backgrounds, but it has also served to foster a culture of student success among faculty, staff, and administration. As the story of Georgia State University demonstrates, institutional transformation in the service of student success does not come about from a single program or office but grows from a series of changes throughout the university that undergo continual evaluation and refinement. It also shows how a series of initially small initiatives, when scaled over time, can significantly transform an institution's culture. Student-success planning must be flexible since the removal of each impediment to student progress reveals a new challenge that was previously invisible. When retention rates improved and thousands of additional students began progressing through their academic programs, for instance, we faced a growing problem of students running out of financial aid just short of the finish line, prompting the creation of the Panther Retention Grant program. It also led to a new analytics-based initiative to better predict and address student demand in upper-level courses. Problems we faced with Summer Melt, seniors stopping out for financial reasons, and pandemic-related struggles for incoming students have each led to significant, new innovations—all of which have been adopted by other universities nationally. For a timeline of where we have been and where we are going next, please see Chart 18.

Georgia State still has much work to do, but our progress in recent years demonstrates that significant improvements in student success outcomes can come through embracing inclusion rather than exclusion, and that such gains can be made even amid a context of constrained resources. It shows that, even at very large public universities, we can provide students with systematic, personalized supports that have transformative impacts. Perhaps most importantly, the example of Georgia State shows that, despite the conventional wisdom, demographics are not destiny and equity gaps are not inevitable. Low-income and underrepresented students can succeed at the same levels as their peers—if we support students by systemic and proven approaches. We owe our students no less.