



GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

SECTION 1: YOUR INSTITUTIONAL MISSION & STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Georgia Southwestern State University’s (GSW) institutional mission is,

Georgia Southwestern State University is a state university serving a diverse population of students, offering a range of strong undergraduate and graduate programs in a vibrant learning environment. The University is a collegial community that values collaboration and community engagement with an emphasis on faculty, staff, and student interactions. An active student body and state-of-the-art amenities enhance the learning experience on a visually appealing campus located in historic Americus, Georgia.

GSW’s total enrollment in fall 2021 was 3158 down by four students from fall 2020. At that time, the gender distribution of the student population was 67.3% women and 32.7% men. The ethnicity of the fall 2021 student population was 58.8% White, 24.8% African American, 7.3% Asian and Pacific Islander, 6.4% Hispanic, 2.3% Multiracial and less than 1.0% were Native American or Unknown. Approximately 38% of GSW undergraduates receive Pell Grants; 53% are First-Generation college students (no parent/guardian with bachelor degree or higher); 16% began college for the first-time as adults (25 years old or older); and 22% are age 25 or older. The majority of our undergraduates (62%) are classified as full-time (taking 12 or more hours); 25% live on campus; 61% are enrolled in one or more online classes; and 33% are enrolled exclusively in online classes. These populations are also representative of our recent graduates. Out of the undergraduates who were awarded bachelor’s degrees in FY22, 50% had received the Pell grant while enrolled at GSW, 51% were first-generation students, and 19% were 29 or older at the time of graduation.

We noted in our March 2022 Momentum Plan that the performance of our male students is significantly lower than that for our female students. The large percentage of Pell eligible and First-Generation students among our populations has led us to concentrate on two areas of the Momentum Approach: clear pathways and social belonging. While we are concerned about and concentrating upon the performance of our male students, we choose not to specifically target them, but rather to use strategies that are beneficial to all students and monitor the progress of our male students.

SECTION 2: YOUR STUDENT SUCCESS INVENTORY

| Activity/Project Name | |
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| Momentum Area (select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Purpose <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pathways√ <input type="checkbox"/> Mindset <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change Management√ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data & Communications√ |
| Activity/Project Overview or Description (what this is?) | Refine pressure testing of Storm Tracks (GSW’s degree pathways) by using Curricular Analytics during Comprehensive Program Review. Also train faculty to use Storm Tracks and Student Educational Planner effectively. |
| Activity/Project Activity Status (where is this in process? E.g., studying, initiating, piloting, scaling, maintaining, retiring, etc.) | We piloted the testing of Storm Tracks as part of the Comprehensive Program Review process during the current academic year by analyzing the courses taken by students from the 2019 and 2020 cohorts majoring in Chemistry and History. The process we used was essentially manual, so we are excited about the possibility of incorporating the Curricular Analytics tool into our process. We will be scaling pressure testing to all CPRs during the 2022-23 cycle. |
| Evaluation/Assessment plan (Key Performance Indicators, | Evaluation Plan and measures: |

assessment plan, anticipated time period, reporting and review)

If students follow their Storm Tracks, they will presumably graduate within four years. Therefore, we would expect to see an increase in both four-year and six-year graduation rates within the next two to three years. A more reliable measure may be time to degree, both overall and by degree program.

Baseline measure

2015 four- and six-year graduation rates, as well as average time to degree.

Goal or targets

Increase 4 YR Graduation Rate to 25%

Increase 6 YR Graduation Rate to 40%

Time period/duration

3years

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| Updates for 2022 | Progress and Adjustments (what has been accomplished and what changes do you feel you need to make) | The Student Educational Planner (SEP), using Storm Tracks as the templates for degree planning, have been demonstrated for all faculty and professional advisors. Since only two programs are undergoing Comprehensive Program Review this year, the scaling of pressure testing will be delayed until next academic year when more programs will be up for CPR. Early returns on the use of SEP suggest that these pathways are of greater utility with new first-time students than with continuing or transfer students. Also, given the number of students who enter GSW in a STEM major but are not ready to take Pre-Calculus or Calculus, adjustments will need to be made to STEM major plans to create on ramps for underprepared students. |
| | Plan for the year ahead (What steps will you be taking in 2022) | Pressure test Storm Track for BS in Mathematics, which is the only program up for CPR this year. Plan for using process with more programs in 2023-24 academic year. |
| | What challenges will affect your ability to do this activity? What support do you need from outside your institution (e.g., the System Office or other institutions) to be successful? | The disruption of the high school experience of our last few cohorts of first-time full-time students presents a challenge to our ability to accurately measure the effects of clear pathways. The retention rates for the 2020 and 2021 cohorts are significantly below the rate of the 2019 cohort. We will need to recalibrate our expectations and aspirations for retention and graduation going forward. The task of establishing new student achievement targets has been assigned to GSW's Institutional Effectiveness Committee in preparation for our SACSCOC Reaffirmation, but should be complete by the end of fall term. |

Project Lead/point of contact

Bryan Davis, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

| Activity/Project Name | Increase Social Belonging |
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| Momentum Area (select all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Purpose✓ <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways <input type="checkbox"/> Mindset✓ <input type="checkbox"/> Change Management <input type="checkbox"/> Data & Communications |
| Activity/Project Overview or Description (what this is?) | Social Belonging – helping students become connected and engaged on campus both socially and academically. |
| Activity/Project Activity Status (where is this in process? E.g., studying, initiating, piloting, | FYE Check-In Meetings (maintaining), Events targeted to first-year students (maintaining), The Brotherhood Living and Learning Community for African-American males (piloting), administering the Clifton Strengths Assessment to |

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| scaling, maintaining, retiring, etc.) | all first-year students and then connecting them to like students during New Student Orientation (maintaining) | |
| Evaluation/Assessment plan (Key Performance Indicators, assessment plan, anticipated time period, reporting and review) | Evaluation Plan and measures: Retention numbers, event attendance, event evaluations | |
| | Baseline measure - fall 2018 cohort retention rates | |
| | Goal or targets - increased participation and retention | |
| | Time period/duration - yearly | |
| Update these sections for 2022 | <p>Progress and Adjustments (what has been accomplished and what changes do you feel you need to make)</p> | <p>-The Office of First-Year Experience (FYE) continues to maintain FYE Check-In Meetings with all first-year students during their first few weeks of the fall semester. All first-year students were assigned to an FYE Advisor as well as an Academic Advisor. Students can locate their FYE and Academic Advisors through Self Service in their myGSW portal. The FYE Advisors also reach out to their advisees to schedule appointments.</p> <p>-We have started our 2nd cohort of The Brotherhood Living and Learning Community for African-American males. The first-year students participating in the cohort are enrolled in the same UNIV 1000 First-Year Seminar course during the Fall semester and programming with keynote speakers is held bi-weekly for all students in the program.</p> <p>-The Clifton Strengths Assessment was administered to all first-year students prior to New Student Orientation. During New Student Orientation, a session was presented on how to use their strengths to connect to others and how to use their strengths for academic success in the classroom.</p> <p>-Our STORM Registration Days during the Summer of 2022 were revamped to align specific days with specific academic departments. On these days, the Deans from each of the respective colleges presented the academic information to the first-year students and parents. The STORM Day schedules were also expanded to provide more information from the Financial Aid and Student Accounts offices.</p> <p>-FYE has begun partnering with academic departments to host events that give students the chance to meet with professors and instructors for additional tutoring assistance or to learn more about their programs. In addition, FYE has started FYE First Fridays for students to drop in for additional assistance, ask questions, or come visit with the FYE staff and student leaders. Wisdom Wednesdays are also being hosted monthly in the Tutoring Center for students to meet the tutors and receive additional academic support.</p> <p>-Changes were made to the UNIV 1000 First-Year Seminar course. More student convocations are being held, with all being conducted in a face-to-face format; we continue to require a common read in the course and students were able to meet and hear from the author; and a campus resource assignment was added for students to learn more about the opportunities and resources available on campus.</p> |
| | <p>Plan for the year ahead (What steps will you be taking in 2022)</p> | <p>-Continue to look at ways to improve New Student Orientation and the First-Year Seminar Course to better serve our student populations.</p> <p>-The creation of a sophomore/2nd year retention plan is still ongoing but conversations have started. The Retention Task Force will be making recommendations on this project.</p> <p>-The incorporation of mindset programs in LLC and residential hall programs is pending but events and guest speakers are being planned.</p> <p>-Additional education programming is being planned to increase student awareness in mental health, risky behaviors, and cybersecurity.</p> |

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| <p>What challenges will affect your ability to do this activity? What support do you need from outside your institution (e.g., the System Office or other institutions) to be successful?</p> | <p>-The ongoing effect of the pandemic and lower admission requirements are still impacting the campus climate academically.</p> <p>-We are also experiencing an increase in student mental health issues and risky behaviors.</p> |
| <p>Project Lead/point of contact</p> | <p>Dr. Laura Boren, Executive Vice Present for Student Engagement and Success</p> |

GSW'S BIG IDEA

GSW has made great strides in planning and implementing programming surrounding our Momentum Big Idea, transparency in learning and teaching, or TILT. The Momentum planning committee charged the Office of Teaching and Learning and Office of Experiential Learning with identifying six key faculty members across campus to serve as a steering committee to orchestrate TILT activities, including faculty development programming and faculty learning communities focused on TILT.

As a recap, we introduced TILT to our faculty and staff across campus in April 2021 through a virtual workshop led by TILT Higher Ed founder and director, Dr. Mary-Ann Winkelmes. Following this event, faculty were invited to participate in a summer-long faculty learning community (FLC) under the direction the TILT steering committee, who underwent training by Dr. Winkelmes to serve as TILT FLC facilitators. Faculty participants a follow-up workshop about TILT led by Dr. Denise Domizi (USG) and Dr. Jesse Bishop (Georgia Highlands College) to learn more about TILT. A total of 30 faculty, which is approximately one-quarter of GSW’s faculty body, representing all four colleges participated in the FLC summer series and provided generally positive feedback in their final reflections, including their positive experience of having meaningful conversations about teaching and learning with faculty from different departments and their appreciation for being able to transform a part of their course to provide a more student-centered learning opportunity. In Fall 2022, several faculty participants led a panel titled “Tales of TiLTing: From the Syllabus to the Final” in Fall 2021 during our faculty planning week, Southwestern Week.

In summer 2022, we held a second FLC TILT series, led by a generally different group of facilitators, who conducted a very similar type of program. A total of 15 faculty participated in the summer 2022 FLC series under the direction of five facilitators. Most of the facilitators were faculty participants in the FLC series the previous year.

Also during the 2022-2023 academic year, we held a series of TILT Brown Bag sessions, where faculty and staff were invited to attend a professional development session over lunch. These events were generally well-attended (between 10-20 faculty at each session), and the discussions during the events were rich. A total of three sessions were held in Fall 2021: 1) "Teaching Students How to Study," which covered evidence-based study strategies that faculty can share with their students; 2) "The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) of TILT," where Grissett and one TILT steering committee member discussed how to turn TILT activities into a scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) project; and 3) "Integrating TILT into Co-Curricular Campus Activities," which was aimed toward staff members in Student Engagement and Success to help them integrate more transparency into their everyday activities with students. In Spring 2022, Dr. Susan Hrach from Columbus State held a session titled “Minding Bodies” based on her recent book by the same name, and Dr. Mark Grimes and Dr. John LeJeune led an information session on Group Instructional Feedback Technique, or GIFT.

An important point worth highlighting is that GSW’s “Big Idea” includes not only faculty, but also staff, since we believe that informed and engaged student-staff interactions are an important dimension to the GSW experience. When staff understand what is unclear for students, they can work toward making those things, whether it be website structure, forms, processes, or terms, clearer so that students can succeed. Our Brown Bag session, “Integrating TILT into Co-Curricular Campus Activities” was aimed at SES staff specifically. During the workshop component, participants were led through brainstorming what things in their areas were sometimes unclear to students and to work in small groups to identify how

those things more transparent. It generated a lot of necessary and healthy discussion among participants during the session. In fact, Jeremy Wicker, Assistant Director of Campus Life, participated in a USG Momentum virtual session highlighting how he has implemented TILT into his work, and Judy Grissett participated in a USG Momentum virtual panel, where she talked about the ongoing and future directions of implementing the TILT framework into student engagement and success in and out of the classroom.

Overall, the TILT initiative has had a positive impact on teaching and learning across GSW, including helping faculty understand the importance of transparency when communicating with students through assignment instructions. Still there is much room for growth to ensure that more faculty and especially staff are aware of TILT. To work toward addressing the gap in TILT awareness, in Fall 2022 Judy Grissett spoke with new faculty about TILT during the New Faculty Orientation and in the New Faculty Teaching Circle. Moving forward, GSW hopes to offer more professional development trainings with GSW faculty, and particularly staff about TILT, including concrete examples for how TILT can be implemented. Challenges exist, such as negative perceptions about transparency (e.g., making things too “easy” for students) or faculty feeling like they must choose between pedagogical interventions (e.g., “TILT vs. small-teaching”). Another challenge is the lack of faculty to implement future TILT workshops and faculty learning communities, as faculty become increasingly fatigued for being the ones always called to lead TILT activities.