



# Columbus State University

## INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Columbus State University is a four-year public institution that offers more than 100 programs at the certificate, associate, bachelor’s, master’s, specialist, and doctoral levels. Many degrees are conferred in professional areas of pursuit at both undergraduate and graduate levels in response to student demand and service area needs.

### Institutional Mission

The mission of Columbus State University is:

We empower people to contribute to the advancement of our local and global communities through an emphasis on excellence in teaching and research, life-long learning, cultural enrichment, public-private partnerships, and service to others.

The institutional focus on excellence in teaching and research as well as the emphasis on life-long learning, cultural enrichment, public-private partnerships and service to others influences the key priorities of the college completion work undertaken by Columbus State University. Because effective teaching is a central component of student success, the CSU Faculty Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning supports faculty members as they investigate and implement new pedagogical strategies that support millennial learners. The University financially supports student research and creative inquiry projects facilitated by faculty mentors. CSU has a strong commitment to service and has provided significant leadership in meeting the needs of the community, the region, and the state through endeavors such as the Early College initiative, service to military-affiliated students, and the development of high-quality online programs that allow students to decrease time to completion and increase the timely accomplishment of their educational goals regardless of their geographic location.

### Student Body Profile

In Fall 2013, CSU enrolled 8,164 students, including an undergraduate student population of 7,021. Enrollment has remained flat over the past four years with a small .7% increase in undergraduate enrollment from Fall 2009 – Fall 2013. The institution’s population is comprised of 66% full-time students. CSU also follows national trends with the female population representing 59% of the student body. The student population is 53% white and 35% black. Since Fall 2008, the number of transfer students has risen by 15.2%. In Fall 2013, the institution increased the number of new transfer students by 47 (7.8%) from the previous year. Of the new transfer students in Fall 2013, 29 (62%) transferred from Columbus Technical College, with whom the university has robust articulation agreements. Of the total undergraduate student population, 2,243 (32%) of these students were first generation college students.

Columbus State University utilizes moderately selective admissions standards and processes for most applicants (high school grade point average of 2.5 and SAT minimum scores of 440 Critical Reading and 410 Math or ACT English 17/Math 17). More moderate standards are applied for applicants within the local service area in accordance with the University System of Georgia-mandated local access mission (high school grade point average of 2.0 and SAT minimum scores of 330 Critical Reading and 310 Math or ACT English 12/Math 14).

The University System of Georgia (USG) designates CSU as one of the three “access” institutions within the state because no state colleges in USG are located within the geographic service area above. The service area of Columbus State University is defined in terms of the following Georgia

counties: Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, Meriwether, Muscogee, Stewart, Talbot, Taylor, and Troup. In Fall 2013, 43.9% of the new student population was drawn from these counties.

The University takes pride its role as an access institution, but this role also presents challenges in student recruitment and retention. As noted in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 below, students admitted with learning support status through the institution’s access mission were retained and graduated at much lower rates than students admitted with regular admission status.

TABLE 1.1: CSU RETENTION RATE TRENDS 2007-2008 THROUGH 2012-2013 DEFINED

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Non-Learning Support	71.1%	67.9%	72.1%	70.4%	67.7%	67.7%
Learning Support	58.6%	46.3%	54.7%	59.5%	49.6%	51.9%
<i>Total</i>	<i>68.4%</i>	<i>63.3%</i>	<i>68.1%</i>	<i>68.2%</i>	<i>65.6%</i>	<i>66.2%</i>

TABLE 1.2: CSU BACHELOR’S DEGREE SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE TRENDS: 2002-2008 THROUGH 2007-2013

	2002-2008	2003-2009	2004-2010	2005-2011	2006-2012	2007-2013
Non-Learning Support	30.7%	36.0%	34.9%	34.2%	39.5%	35.2%
Learning Support	20.0%	14.6%	19.0%	9.0%	11.4%	12.7%

Total	28.7%	32.6%	32.3%	30.3%	33.6%	30.5%
-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Columbus State University continues to address the goals and objectives identified in the CSU Complete College Georgia plan. We look forward to continuing this work as we believe that it will positively impact the lives of our students.

## INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

### 2.1 Change institutional culture to emphasize taking full-time course loads (15 or more credits per semester) to earn degrees “on time.”

A review of institutional data indicated that many students were not carrying a minimum of 15 credit hours each term. In Fall 2013, 3,680 undergraduate students were taking less than 15 credit hours per term. This group had an average overall GPA of 2.81. During the same term, 1,015 were enrolled in 15 or more credit hours. The average overall GPA of that group was 3.12. A campus-wide initiative was implemented in Summer 2014 to provide new students beginning in Fall 2014 with 15 hour schedules for their first term of study. These were developed in advance by academic advisors with input from the students.

Challenges/Issues:

1. Dissemination of the data to all stakeholders.
2. Garnering faculty and advisor buy-in.
3. Educating students on the impact of taking 15 hours per term.

These challenges/issues can be tackled by creating educational videos for faculty and students, among other activities mentioned in the next section. Meeting this 15-to - Finish goal could significantly increase CSU’s degree completion rates through the development of sound 15-hour schedules that prepare students for success.

### 3.1 Provide “program maps” that plot the path to a degree and reduce choice through “choice architecture.”

While students have previously been given guidance by academic advisors through individual advising sessions each term, they were rarely provided with documentation that mapped their degree from beginning to end. Department chairs are currently developing program maps for each major. These will be shared with students during advising sessions in an effort to help them stay on track toward degree completion and to increase their understanding of the program requirements.

Challenges/Issues:

1. Timely completion of program maps by department chairs.
2. . Insertion of maps into the catalog – this has already been addressed with IT to develop a format that will be easily imported into the online catalog.
3. Educating faculty and students on how these maps can be used to facilitate student progress.

These challenges/issues can be overcome by good communication with the Chairs Assembly and with the Faculty Senate as well as stringent attention to time restraints. The accomplishment of this goal will reinforce to students the

need to complete 15 credit hours per term to complete their degree in a timely manner.

### 4.2 Use predictive analytics (EAB, D2L, or Ellucian) to help identify students who are off-track and help students understand their likelihood of success in particular programs.

In an effort to boost RPG, CSU is developing an advising information system that will include early alert and predictive analytic functionality. After viewing demos of similar software and consulting with our Information Technology department, we decided to build our own system to meet our specific needs. The system will complement DegreeWorks and will include student information such as demographic data, contact information, academic history, standardized test scores, and a predictive analytics function that will assist students in choosing appropriate majors. The product will be tested in the Academic Center for Excellence in Fall 2014.

Challenges/Issues:

1. Effectively and efficiently communicating with Banner, D2L, and DegreeWorks to load, update, and maintain the program.
2. Training staff and obtaining faculty buy-in.
3. Regularly maintaining and evaluating the product to ensure it is working properly and it is meeting our needs.

These challenges/issues can be met by having frequent communication among stakeholders and by thoroughly testing the predictive analytics program before campus-wide launch.

The creation of this product will create targeted, timely interventions for underclassmen. This will allow advisors to create action plans and/or refer students to appropriate resources on a daily basis.

### 7.2 Combine remediation in English and reading.

In accordance with recommendations made by the USG Committee on Transforming Remediation, CSU is revamping the remediation model for students requiring support in English and reading. CSU is developing a co-requisite course that will support students who need remediation while allowing them to take the general education courses required of all students.

Beginning Fall 2015, there will be only two areas of remediation: English and math. Entering freshmen who score significantly below the institution’s admission requirements in English and reading will be placed in an Integrated Reading and Writing course, ENGL 0989, Foundations for English Composition. Following the successful completion of this course, students will enroll in ENGL 1101 with a co-requisite, one-credit remedial course ENGL 0999 Support for English Composition. The goal is for students with significant reading and writing remedial needs to complete the gateway English composition course within two semesters, or one academic year. Students who require only writing remediation, or whose placement scores are not significantly below admissions requirements will be placed in the gateway course, ENGL 1101 with the co-requisite ENGL 0999. The goal for these students is successful completion of the gateway course in one semester by providing additional support.

Challenges/Issues:

1. Determining the English Placement Index (EPI) levels that will place students in either the foundations course or the gateway course with the co-requisite remedial course.
2. Providing important training for advisors so that students are appropriately enrolled.
3. Proving training and assistance for instructors of the new courses, especially the Foundations course.
4. Providing adequate technological support for these courses.

Resolving these challenges/issues will involve having numerous committee meetings, offering training sessions (for advisors, enrollment services staff, and instructors), and working with UITS. Meeting this goal could significantly increase completion rates for our students by removing obstacles to entering college credit courses, while providing appropriate support for those who need remedial help.

**1.2 Increase degree completion in STEM fields.**

CSU has been and will continue to be successful in

attracting students to and graduating students from our STEM programs. We will focus on successful outcomes designed to address recruitment efforts, RPG concerns, and instructional best practices. All endeavors work together for students with interest in STEM majors to have the support that they need to succeed in their chosen program of study.

Challenges/Issues:

1. Attract more students to the program by inaugurating high school awareness programs and visitation.
2. Offer more scholarships and other incentives such as job shadowing, tutoring, and internships.
3. Incentivize high impact practices and provide professional development.

Meeting this goal would increase the number of students who want to major in STEM fields and complete such an endeavor as well as make Columbus State a contender in the competition for math, science, computer science and engineering students. CSU is striving to become a “First Choice” institution for STEM study.

**Summary of Goals, High-Impact Strategies and Activities**

**Strategy 2.1 Change institutional culture to emphasize taking full-time course loads (15 or more credits per semester) to earn degrees “on time.”**

<b>Goal</b>	Increase the number of students enrolled in 15 or more credits per semester
<b>High-impact strategy</b>	Preregister most entering freshmen with a schedule of 15 or more credits Develop program maps for majors (see Strategy 3.1 below)
<b>Summary of the Activities</b>	Use orientation survey to determine preference of course times and courses for incoming freshmen Create videos (such as with SPEED TECH) to educate students/faculty about the importance of 15-to-Finish (GPA higher, loan debt less, fewer life emergencies)
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	Creation of videos by early spring 2015 Increased number of students at all levels enrolled in 15 or more hours
<b>Measures of Success/Outcome Metrics</b>	Increased number of students enrolled in 15 hours or more—increase of 10% from Fall 2013 to Fall 2015.
<i>Strategy 3.1 Provide “program maps” that plot the path to a degree and reduce choice through “choice architecture.”</i>	
<b>Goals</b>	Develop bachelor and associate program maps for all undergraduate degrees Develop interest-area maps for students still searching for a major
<b>High-impact strategy</b>	Our high-impact strategy involves developing a campus campaign around the existence and use of these maps to improve progress toward graduation
<b>Summary of the Activities</b>	Have department chairs develop maps for all undergraduate degrees by Nov. 3, 2014 Verify accuracy of all maps by mid-December 2014 Upload maps into online academic catalog by January 31, 2015
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	Meeting of deadlines Emailing students and faculty about information availability in catalog Counseling of advisors on how to appropriately use maps when advising
<b>Measures of Success/Outcome Metrics</b>	Increased number of students enrolled in 15 hours or more—increase of 10% from Fall 2013 to Fall 2015

**Strategy 4.2 Use predictive analytics (EAB, D2L, or Ellucian) to help identify students who are off-track and help students understand their likelihood of success in particular programs.**

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>Goals</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide intrusive advising to keep students on track to graduate</li> <li>2. Increase use of D2L to report in-progress grades</li> <li>3. Implement software that supplements the Academic Advising Record with diagnostic analytics and graphical displays of degree progress</li> <li>4. Challenge the extant culture that limits assessment practices to summative</li> </ol> |
|--------------|--|

evaluations of student performance

**High-impact strategy  
Summary of the Activities**

- Identify students who may need special interventions in the semester
1. Educate faculty to use the Early Alert System. EAS is designed to assist undergraduate students who demonstrate difficulty in their classes by making them aware of support services available and by encouraging them to use these resources to promote academic success and student retention
  2. Email faculty the link to the online referral form ([https://ace.columbusstate.edu/early\\_alert.php](https://ace.columbusstate.edu/early_alert.php)). Faculty members complete the referral at a secured site and students are contacted by the Academic Center for Excellence. Unfortunately, there is a less than 10% referral rate by faculty members who teach in core curriculum courses
  3. Meet with identified at-risk students and refer them to appropriate and effective campus resources, such as Tutorial Services, Counseling, Office of Disability Services, and the Center for Career Development
  4. Develop campus signage to increase foot traffic to Tutorial Services
  5. Offer more workshops for faculty to learn how to use D2L to report in-progress grades and to understand why such communication is important
  6. Require midterm grade submissions for all core classes
  7. Offer faculty development workshops on best assessment practices that explores multiple purposes for assessment (e.g. student self-assessment, formative assessment, summative evaluations) and strategies that enable students to identify and respond to course content deficiencies (e.g. backward design, feedback frequency)

**Interim Measures of Progress**

1. Increase faculty referral rate of EAS by 20% in 2014-2015
2. Increase number of faculty using D2L as their gradebook by offering SPEED TECH sessions
3. Increase use of assessment instrument (EvaluationKIT ) for formative assessment

**Measures of Success/Outcome Metrics**

Success is measured by student pass rate and retention.  
 Outcome Metric: Percentage of credits successfully completed (A, B, C, P, S) versus attempted (A, B, C, D, F, U, W, WF) each fall semester for the past 5 years.  
 For freshmen, the percentage of earned to enrolled credits were:  
 Fall 2013: 82%  
 Fall 2012: 74%  
 Fall 2011: 73%  
 Fall 2010: 66%  
 Fall 2009: 70%

**Strategy 7.2 Combine remediation in English and reading.**

**Goal  
High-impact strategies**

**Reduce time for completion of gateway course**

1. Combine English and Reading into one Foundations course for students with significant English and/or reading deficiencies at the college level
  2. Provide a co-curricular course for students with minimal writing deficiencies
- Summary of the Activities**
1. Develop the four-credit hour ENGL 0989 pre-requisite course content and the one-credit hour ENGL 0999 co-requisite course content
  2. Create appropriate English Placement Index (EPI) to determine students placement at the Foundations level or the co-curricular level
  3. Provide training for enrollment services and advisors so that students are appropriately enrolled
  4. Provide training and assistance for instructors of the new courses
  5. Provide adequate technological support for these courses
- Interim Measures of Progress**
1. Receive approval of these courses by the University Curriculum Committee
  2. Meet deadlines for 2015-2016 catalog
  3. Schedule new courses for fall 2015
  4. Complete progression of activities on schedule and place students in appropriate courses
- Measures of Success/Outcome Metrics**
5. 60% of students assigned to ENGL 1101/0999 will exit LS and pass ENGL 1101 on the first attempt
  6. 60% of students assigned to the IRW foundations course will successfully complete ENGL 1101 within one year of enrollment

**Strategy 1.2 Increase degree completion in STEM fields.**

**Goal** Increase the number of students graduating with degrees in the STEM fields  
**High-impact strategy** Our high impact strategy focuses on successful outcomes designed to address recruitment efforts, RPG concerns, and instructional best practices. All endeavors work together for students with interest in STEM majors to have the support that they need to succeed in their chosen program of study. To that end, CSU engages in a wide range of activities designed to accentuate recruitment, to positively impact RPG for students graduating with degrees in STEM fields, including STEM education (UTeach), and to enhance teaching.

**Summary of the Activities**

Recruitment Efforts

1. Offer STEM Honors Camp to encourage high school students' interest in STEM fields at CSU, and to encourage CSU students to consider teaching in STEM fields
2. Participate in the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program. In the past, we have offered these scholarships to CSU juniors and seniors but plan to expand the program to attract more transfer students into the UTeach Program
3. Project FOCUS replication via the first two courses in the UTeach Columbus program

RPG Efforts

4. Provide free tutoring to students in gateway STEM courses
5. Train and provide Peer Instruction Leaders for targeted STEM intro level courses.
6. Add peer leader support for developmental math courses (and continue its practice for college algebra). Since math is one of the chief obstacles of college completion for many students (including students majoring in science and computer science), boosting success rates in that area should help with retention of students in STEM paths
7. Submit a grant proposal to launch a summer bridge program, peer leader support, and academic community building among targeted groups of freshmen (1st generation, rural, and female students) interested in STEM fields

Instructional Best Practices

8. Provide faculty mini-grants (1 funded in FY 2014) to encourage STEM faculty engagement in the scholarship of teaching and learning, and to promote the implementation of established best practices

**Interim Measures of Progress**

Number of students currently enrolled in STEM programs.  
 Bachelors: Fall 2013 - 1,144  
 Number of currently enrolled students making satisfactory academic progress (Overall GPA of 2.0 or higher).  
 Bachelors: Fall 2013 - 1,019

**Measures of Success/Outcome Metrics**

Outcome Metrics  
 1.8: Increase of 5% per year of students completing bachelor's degrees in STEM fields (mathematics, environmental science, chemistry, biology, computer science, geology, secondary science, or mathematics education).  
 FY 14: 113  
 FY 13: 92  
 FY 12: 83  
 FY 11: 98  
 FY 10: 86

**OBSERVATIONS**

**Successful Strategies from last year:**

**Transformation of the Adult Re-Entry program into the Square One program.** The program has been taken to soldiers at Fort Benning and local businesses have expressed interest in having this program delivered on their site. It is also delivered on the main CSU campus. The materials used in the program were reviewed and replaced in order to provide the best possible resources for the students and the instructors.

This program has been revived from a stagnant state and is flourishing.

**Targeting students in courses which traditionally have high rates of non-productive grades.** The most effective strategy has been communicating with those students through classroom visits about the need to access tutorial and other support services that will assist them in the courses.

**Least Effective Strategies from last year:**

**Increasing dashboard usage by licensed users.** Users have had difficulty extracting meaningful data to support their initiatives. This is due in part to the expense of the licenses. Since not all individuals had access, some faculty and staff who might have availed themselves of this opportunity did not have the access to do so.

**Adjustments to Completion Strategies compared to years past:**

The main difference over the past three years is that we have moved from a model which casts a wide net to a model that strategically targets certain populations in need of assistance or attention. This has been accomplished by

reducing the number of projects involved and focusing on a limited number of projects that will make a bigger impact. This year we are focusing on five main areas:

- Creating a Culture of 15-to-Finish (Strategy 2.1)
- Developing Program Maps (Strategy 3.1)
- Using Predictive Analytics for Identifying At-Risk Students (Strategy 4.2)
- Revamping Remediation (Strategy 7.2)
- Targeting STEM Recruitment, Retention, and Completion (Strategy 1.2)

Focusing our resources and energies on these five areas will increase the likelihood of success and permanent value to the institution.