



# Georgia State University

## OVERVIEW

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 *ten times* more likely that an individual among the top quartile of Americans by annual household income will hold a college degree than an individual in the lowest quartile. Nationally, white students graduate from college at rates up to 20 points above black and Latino students, and non-Pell students succeed at rates 22 points above Pell students.

Ten years ago, Georgia State's institutional graduation rate stood at 32% and underserved populations were foundering. Graduation rates were 22% for Latinos, 29% for African Americans, and 18% for African American males. Pell students were graduating at rates far below those of non-Pell students.

Today, thanks to a campus-wide commitment to student success and more than a dozen strategic programs implemented over the past several years, Georgia State's achievement gap is gone. The institutional graduation rate has improved 21 points—among the highest increases in the nation over this period. Rates are up 32 points for Latinos (to 54%), 28 points for African Americans (to 57%), and 41 points for African-American males (to 59%). Pell students (53.3%) now graduate at rates slightly above those of non-Pell students (52.9%). Conferrals have increased by more than 1,700 degrees annually over the past five years, and, for each of the past three years, Georgia State has conferred more bachelor's degrees to African Americans than any non-profit college or university in the United States.

GEORGIA STATE DEGREE CONFERRALS

2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	5 Year Change
5,857	6,188	6,419	6,901	7,365	7,590	+30%

While overall degrees conferred have increased by 30% over the past five years, even stronger gains have been made with at-risk student populations. Over the past five years, bachelor degree conferrals are up 59% for African Americans, 93% for Pell students, and 171% for Hispanics. Because of these transformative results, this past November Georgia State was named the recipient of the first-ever MVP Award from the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU), the largest organization of national public universities in the country. The award recognizes Georgia State as the public university that has made the greatest impact on improving student success outcomes in the nation.

BACHELOR'S DEGREES AWARDED TO AT-RISK STUDENTS

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>African American</b>	1,067	1,001	1,322	1,440	1,550	1,692
<b>Pell</b>	1,066	1,298	1,648	1,835	2,007	2,058
<b>Hispanic</b>	153	196	300	328	372	414

2012 BACHELOR'S DEGREES CONFERRED TO AFRICAN AMERICANS NATIONALLY

Institution	State	Total	% Grads	% Change
<b>Georgia State University</b>	GA	1262	31%	17%

<b>FAMU</b>	FL	1224	94%	5%
<b>North Carolina A &amp; T State University</b>	NC	1172	90%	-6%
<b>Jackson State University</b>	MS	966	94%	4%
<b>Howard University</b>	D.C.	953	93%	-10%
<b>University of Central Florida</b>	FL	939	9%	10%
<b>University of Memphis</b>	TN	862	32%	0%
<b>Troy University</b>	AL	859	32%	4%
<b>University of Florida</b>	FL	859	10%	11%
<b>University of South Florida-Main Campus</b>	FL	845	12%	6%
<b>University of North Texas</b>	TX	835	13%	11%
<b>Temple University</b>	PA	831	15%	-5%
<b>University of Maryland-College Park</b>	MD	809	25%	11%
<b>Florida Atlanta University</b>	FL	808	18%	-3%
<b>5-Year Change Commonwealth University</b>	VA	805	19%	13%

Source: *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*

171%  
93%

## INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND THE CHANGING STUDY BODY

At Georgia State, we have made student success our highest institutional priority. With the unanimous support of the University Senate, the 2011 University Strategic Plan details principles to guide our efforts, establishes specific goals with numerical targets to be achieved, and commits to major strategies designed to reach these goals and targets.

The most distinctive **principle** guiding our efforts was a pledge to improve student outcomes through *inclusion* rather

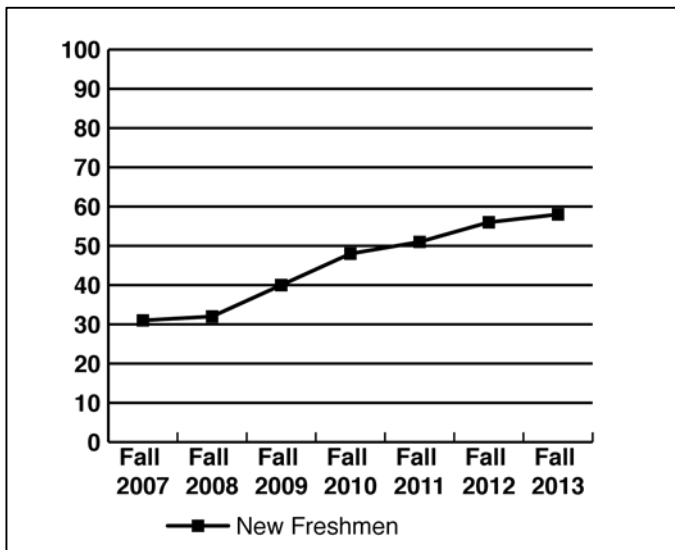
exclusion. We would not improve our graduation rates by turning our backs on the low-income, underrepresented and first-generation students that we have traditionally served. To the contrary: we pledged to increase the number of underrepresented, first-generation and Pell students enrolled and to serve them better. We committed to achieving improved outcomes for our students not merely at Georgia State but in their lives and careers after graduation.

The central goal that we set for the our undergraduate success efforts was highly ambitious, but the words were carefully chosen: Georgia State would “become a national model for undergraduate education by demonstrating that students from all backgrounds can achieve academic and career success at high rates.” Our goals included a commitment to raise overall institutional graduation rates and degree conferrals by significant margins—graduation rates would climb 13 points and completions would increase by 2,500 by 2021—and we committed to closing all achievement gaps between our student populations.

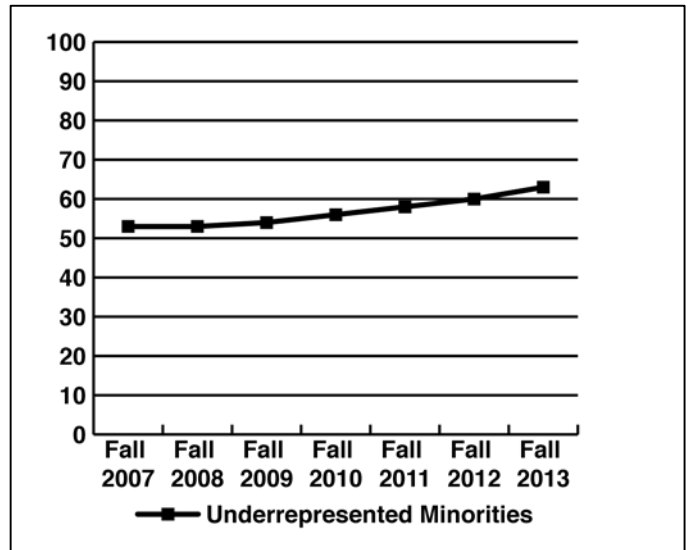
The Strategic Plan also outlined key strategies to achieve these goals. We made a commitment to overhaul our advising system, to track every student daily with the use of predictive analytics and to intervene with students who are at risk in a proactive fashion, to expand existing high-impact programs such as freshman learning communities and Keep Hope Alive, to raise more scholarship dollars, and to pilot and scale innovative new types of financial interventions.

As this report will outline, the University has taken these commitments seriously. In the area of inclusion, Georgia State now enrolls more African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, first-generation students, and Pell students than any other four-year university Georgia. In fact, the University set new records for the number of students enrolled in every one of these categories during the fall semester of 2013. Our undergraduate population is now 61% non-white and 58% Pell, with both of these numbers climbing dramatically in recent years. According to *U.S. News and World Report (2014)*, Georgia State is now one of only two universities to rank in the Top 15 in the nation for both its racial/ethnic diversity and for the number of low-income students enrolled.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS



CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS: RACE & ETHNICITY



The details of our efforts to reach our goals and targets and the specific natures and impacts of the strategies employed to achieve them will be outlined in sections II and III.

### INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION RESULTS AND OVERALL STRATEGIES

In 2011, Georgia State committed to reach a graduation rate of 52% by 2016 and 60% by 2021. We also committed to conferring 2,500 more degrees annually than we did in 2010 and to eliminating all significant achievement gaps between student populations.

On the surface, attaining these goals seems implausible. Georgia State’s demographic trends—characterized by huge increases in the enrollments of at-risk students in recent years—typically would project a steep decline in student outcomes. Georgia State, though, has been able to make dramatic gains towards its success targets even as the student body has become more distressed. In the relatively short period since the adoption of the Strategic Plan in 2011, the overall number of Bachelor’s degrees conferred by Georgia State has increased by 894 a year, a 24% increase. The gains have been even greater for a number of at-risk student populations. The number of Bachelor’s degrees conferred to adult learners has increased by 25%, to first-generation students by 28%, and to Pell students by a remarkable 63% over the past three years.

Underrepresented students have also made striking gains over the period, with conferrals increasing by 57% for Latino students and 36% for African Americans. (Note: As evidenced in the chart below, 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.)

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED, 2010 TO PRESENT

	Academic Year				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 (to date)*
<b>Students Receiving Undergraduate Degrees</b>	3,727	4,035	4,295	4,621	3,620
Adult Learners	1,421	1,523	1,578	1,763	1,383
Pell Eligible Students	1,448	1,829	2,156	2,355	1,890
First Generation Students	762	800	966	997	805
<b>Race</b>					
American Indian or Alaska Native	13	13	9	18	7
Asian	292	497	473	592	397
Black or African American	756	1,328	1,506	1,615	1,330
More Than One Race	98	161	149	163	142
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	10	19	12	8	5
Not Reported	1,415	197	224	273	223
White	1,143	1,820	1,922	1,952	1,516
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
Hispanic	180	279	327	374	316
Non-Hispanic	2,098	3,521	3,766	3,992	3,105
Not Reported	1,449	235	202	255	199

\* This chart does not include Summer 2014 conferrals. The full 2013-14 academic year totals can be found in the chart on pg 2

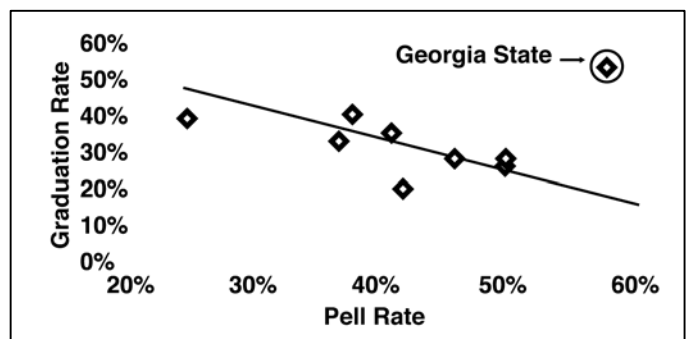
Over this same three-year period—which follows the timeframe of the University’s participation in Complete College Georgia—the institutional graduation rate has increased by 5 percentage points to a record 53%, with further gains being tracked for 2014. Georgia State also set new records this past year for its 4- and 5-year graduation rates and for graduations rates for Pell students and African Americans, among other groups.

other institution or are still actively enrolled in college. The numbers for African American (78.4%) and Latino (80.1%) students are even higher.

This combination of large increases in Pell enrollments and significantly rising graduation rates confounds the conventional pattern. Nationally, one can track a strong correlation between increases in Pell rates and *decreases* in graduation rates. Georgia State’s completion efforts have made us a clear outlier nationally. In fact, among all of our peer institutions, Georgia State now has both the highest Pell rates and the highest graduation rates.

GRADUATION RATES, 2010 TO PRESENT	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 (to date)
6-Year Graduation Rate	48%	48%	51%	53%	54% (proj)
6-Year: African American	51%	52%	54%	57%	---
6-Year: Pell	51%	49%	51%	53%	---
5-Year Graduation Rate	40%	43%	44%	46%	---

GRADUATION AND PELL RATES URBAN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES



It is significant to note that low-income and first-generation students’ families move frequently due to changes in jobs and economic circumstances when compared to middle- and upper-class college students. This phenomenon significantly impacts Georgia State’s institutional graduation rates. Using National Student Clearinghouse data to track Georgia State’s most recent 6-year cohort across all universities nationally, the success rates are even more striking. For the current year, a record 77.5% of the students who started at Georgia State six years ago have either graduated from Georgia State or some

How have we made the gains outlined above and 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 aggressively in order 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, many of the programs that we offer are currently touching 10,000 students or more annually.

An example may help to illustrate our approach. In the case of pre-calculus math courses, our data analysis in 2008 showed that the DFW rates in College Algebra, Pre-Calculus, and Introduction to Statistics combined to average 43%. These courses alone were responsible for hundreds of students dropping out of Georgia State. In an attempt to get their math requirement “out of the way,” dozens of freshmen were enrolling in one of these classes during their first fall, earning an F, then reenrolling in spring—with no concrete prospects for doing any better—and earning another F. By the end of the freshmen year, students had lost their Hope scholarships, were on academic probation, or had simply become discouraged. Too many were dropping out.

Given the depth of the problem, we knew that minor tweaks in the course would not be sufficient. Instead, we piloted sections of these three math courses using adaptive learning modules, doing so at a time when such an approach was relatively uncommon nationally. We experimented with a model that had students working on their own on adaptive learning exercises at computer stations at home and across campus, but the gains in student performance were minimal. In contrast, the data showed that when students spent one hour a week in a math lecture and three hours a week in a computer lab working on personalized, adaptive learning exercises the results were markedly better. The key was keeping the students together as a group in the lab and having the instructors present to answer any questions and to lead larger discussions, when needed.

With these data-based results in hand, we scaled the adaptive-learning version of the course. This past year, we offered no traditional seats in any of the three math courses in question. All 7,500 seats were offered in an adaptive-learning, hybrid format. Why? The results achieved in the new format were simply that much better. In five years, we have lowered the DFW rate in these courses from 43% to 21%—and we have done so while employing the same academic expectations and, in some cases, even the same exams as before the pedagogical change. The content and expectations have not changed, but the results have. Of course, the current DFW rate is still higher than we would like and we continue to

work on further adjustments, but the 22-point drop in the DFW rates means that during the past academic year, 1,650 more students satisfied their math requirement in their first attempt than was the case five years ago.

#### COLLEGE ALGEBRA

Prior to Change:	DFW rates were 43%
Fall 2012:	DFW rate of 21%
Number of Students enrolled in courses taught through the MILE, 2012-13:	7,500+
Additional passing grades:	1,650

The example illustrates the common approach to Georgia State’s thinking about its student-success programs and strategies. In another sense, though, our initiatives have been highly diverse and multi-faceted. The evidence shows that the reasons that students drop out of Georgia State are many. As such, we have had to develop not one or two but more than a dozen large-scale interventions targeted at specific problems, from poor performance in math courses, as described above, to students selecting majors ill fitted to their abilities and interests, students signing up for courses that do not apply to their programs of studies, and students dropping out because they lose the Hope scholarship or are just short in the funding that they need to cover their tuition and fees. All of the programs developed to address these varied group of issues follow the same data-based approach outlined above. The details of some of these programs and their impacts are discussed in the next section.

### HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES

This past year, Georgia State welcomed 320 at-risk freshmen into its Summer Success Academy; served 2,600 students in Freshman Learning Communities; taught more than 7,500 pre-calculus students in a lab-based, adaptive learning format; tutored 9,700 students in peer-led Supplemental Instruction; reversed 2,000+ students from being dropped for non-payment through its Panther Retention Grant program; tracked the academic progress of 25,000 students daily through its web-based GPS advisement system; and engaged in 34,000 one-on-one student-advisor meetings with the goal of getting students back on path for graduation. Not one of these programs existed ten years ago; indeed, most were implemented over the past 3 years.

Some of the programs that have made a difference are outlined in the following pages.

### GPS Advising

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Increase the number of students on track for graduation and who complete their degrees in a timely fashion.</b>
<b>High-impact strategy</b>	Use predictive analytics and a system of more than 700 alerts to track all undergraduates daily, to identify at-risk behaviors, and to have advisors respond to alerts by intervening in a timely fashion to get students back on track.
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	System went fully live in August 2012. This past academic year, there were 34,000 individuals meetings between students and advisors that were prompted by alerts from GPS Advising.
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	We have been tracking the use of the system and gathering interim metrics such as semester-to-semester retention rates (which have increased by 5 points), credit hours at the time of graduation (which have declined by an average of 3), percent of students in majors that fit their academic abilities (up by 13 points), and percent of students with lower academic risk factors (up by 16 points). The

numbers we are achieving via the programs are exceptionally strong.

**Measures of Success**

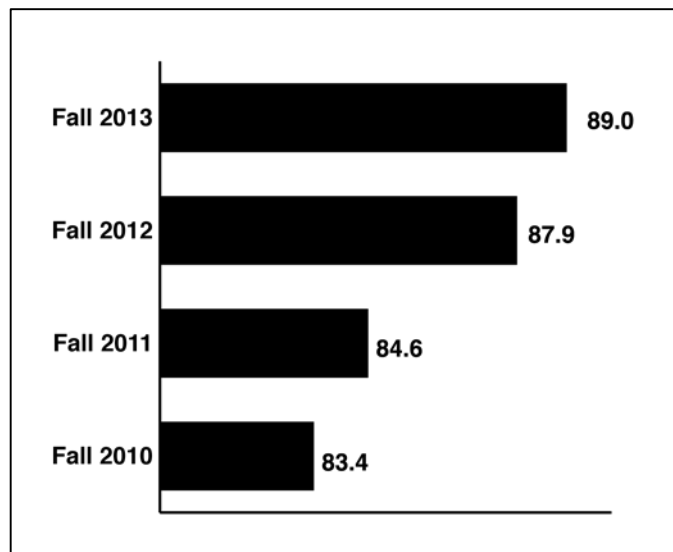
Ultimate measures of success will include increases in graduation rates and degree completions, and a stronger fit between degree content and the students' career choices.

What if students who enroll at large, public universities received the same kind of personalized attention that is afforded to students at small, elite colleges? How would such personalized attention transform student success rates? At Georgia State, we are pursuing the answer to these questions in part by leveraging new technologies. Our cutting-edge GPS Advising, a partnership with the Education Advisory of Board, uses ten years of GSU student data—over 2.5 million grades—to create predictive analytics for how each individual student will fare in any major and most courses that we offer. The system tracks students' decisions and academic performances, and it is updated with data from our student information systems on a daily basis—with alerts going off when a student is off path. Last academic year, the system generated 34,000 individual meetings between advisors and students to discuss specific alerts—all aimed at getting the student back on path to graduation.

Since Georgia State went live with GPS Advising two years ago, freshmen fall-to-spring retention rates have increased by 5 percentage points and graduating seniors are taking fewer excess courses in completing their degrees. This spring's graduates completed all degree requirements with, on average, 3 fewer credit hours amassed than was true of the previous spring's seniors. 3 credit hours may not sound like

much, but the reduction represents \$4 million in savings in the costs of tuition and fees for the Class of 2014.

GPS ADVISING: RETENTION



**Summer Success Academy**

**GOAL**

**INCREASE THE NUMBER OF AT-RISK STUDENT WHO ARE ABLE TO GRADUATE.**

**High-impact strategy**

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. Students earn 7 hours of credit toward their Bachelor's degree while receiving intensive academic and personal support including supplemental instruction, advisement, learning communities, team building, financial literacy training.

**Summary of**

Program was initiated in 2012 as an alternate to deferring weaker freshmen admits to the Spring semester. The program has grown every year and enrolled 320 students this summer.

**Activities**

**Interim Measures of**

**Progress**

Students have performed beyond our expectations, finishing last summer with a 3.29 GPA and their freshmen year with more credit hours and a better GPA than traditionally admitted freshmen. We have doubled one-year retention rates compared to when these same student were deferred until spring. Last year, the one-year retention rate of 90% for Success Academy graduates was 7 percentage points higher than the overall rate, even though the Academy students are at high risk academically.

**Measures of Success**

Ultimate measures of success will include increased retention rates, graduation rates, and degree completions.

Georgia State takes the 5% of the students admitted to the fall freshmen class who are most academically at risk and requires that they attend a 7-week summer semester before the start of fall courses. Students enroll in 7 credits of college-level (non-remedial) courses and are given 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. Last year's cohort achieved a 3.29 GPA for the 7 summer credit hours, getting their academic careers off to a great start. Even more impressively, the group

finished their freshmen years with a GPA slightly better than the academically 'stronger' 95% of the freshmen class and they were retained at a 90% rate. This compares to an 83% retention rate for traditional. 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 130 more freshmen being retained via the Summer Success Academy this past year alone.

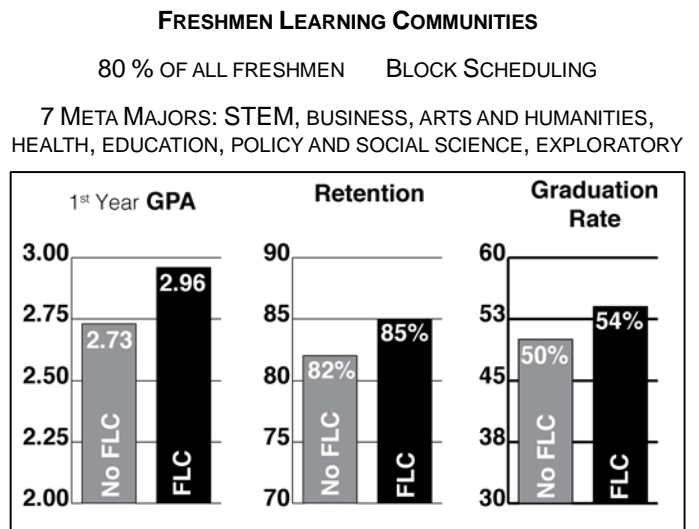
SUMMER SUCCESS ACADEMY	
•	350 Highest Risk Freshmen: 7-credit hours summer session before freshman fall
•	Intensive advisement, academic skills & financial literacy training

GPA Summer 2013	3.29
Last years' Academy:	
<b>GPA 2012-13</b>	<b>2.95</b>
All other freshmen	2.93

### Freshmen Learning Communities (FLCs)

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Increase the number and percent of freshmen who succeed academically and provide a structure for the development of social support structures as well as the informed selection of majors.</b>
<b>High--impact strategy</b>	Organize freshmen into groups of 25 students categorized by their choice of one of seven meta majors. Register the 25 students in block schedules with all courses in common. Use the meta-major groupings to target advisement and information from departments and others about majors and careers.
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	The program has adopted an opt-out policy whereby all students are assumed to be in FLCs unless they provide a compelling reason not to be. For Fall of 2014, almost 80% of the freshman class will be in FLCs, a record for Georgia State.
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	Students in FLCs have significantly higher GPAs and retention rates than those students not in FLCs, even when one controls for incoming high-school GPA.
<b>Measures of Success</b>	The 4-point increase in retention rates of FLC students continues to the point of graduation, where their graduation rates are also 4-points higher than those of non-FLC students.

At a large public university with 32,000 students, freshmen can feel overwhelmed by the size and scope of the campus and can have trouble building friendships and support systems. FLCs organize the freshmen class into cohorts of 25 students arranged by common academic interests, otherwise known as "meta majors" (STEM, business, arts and humanities, policy, health, education and social sciences). Students 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 not only are retained but graduate at rates 4 points above those of non-FLC students. Almost 80% of this fall's freshmen class are in FLCs.



### Panther Retention Grants

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Increase the number of students facing financial shortfalls who are able to persist and to graduate.</b>
<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 to prevent students from stopping/dropping out.
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	Staff examine the drop lists for students with genuine 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 meeting with a financial counselor to map out plans to finance the rest of their education. Last academic year, more than 2,000 grants were offered.
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	Retention rates for freshmen who were offered the grants last year topped 90%, higher than the overall retention rate for the student body. We are also tracking the rate of "returnees" to the program, which we have been able to keep under 25%.
<b>Measures of Success</b>	The ultimate measure of success is college completion. The largest group of recipients last year were seniors, who often are running out of Hope funding or exhausting other aid. Last academic year, 70%



of the seniors receiving PRG funding graduated within two semesters of receiving the grants.

**FINANCIAL INTERVENTIONS**

**PANTHER RETENTION GRANTS: GROWTH**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide emergency funds to students who are registered for classes but who are dropped for non-payment</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As little as \$300 has meant the difference between a student dropping out and being able to continue on the path to a college degree</li> </ul>	
Fall 2011:	41
Total to Date:	3,557
Senior Recipients who graduate within two semesters:	70%

and the income generated from the student working 20 hours a week, the students lack sufficient 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 2,000 Georgia State students were brought back to the classroom—and kept on the path to attaining a college degree—through the program. 70% of the seniors who received PRG support last academic year graduated within two semesters of receiving the grant.

This past fall, over 14,000 of Georgia State’s 25,000 undergraduates had some level of unmet need, meaning that even after grants, loans, scholarships, family contributions

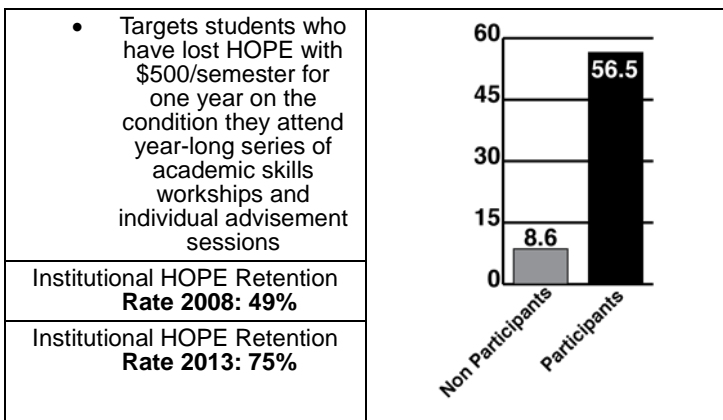
**Keep Hope Alive (KHA)**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Significantly improve the graduation rates of students who lose the Hope scholarship. Increase Hope retention rates and increase the number of students who regain the scholarship after losing it.</b>
<b>High--impact strategy</b>	Five years ago, the graduation rates for students who lose the Hope scholarship were only 20%, 40-points lower than the rates for those who hold on to it. Using a \$500 incentive for two semesters after the scholarship is lost, the Program requires students to sign a contract agreeing to meet with their advisors, attend academic skills workshops and participate in financial literacy training.
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	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.
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	Gaining the Hope Scholarship back after losing it is a statistical longshot: only about 9% of Georgia State students pull this off. For students in KHA over the past three years, better than 55% have gained the scholarship back at the next marker, leveraging our \$1,000 scholarship investment by gaining between \$6,000 and \$12,000 of Hope dollars back again.
<b>Measures of Success</b>	Under five years of the program, the graduation rate for students who lose the Hope scholarship has improved by 20 percentage points and

With half of Georgia State students coming from households with annual incomes of \$30,000 a year or less, the Hope scholarship can be a mixed blessing. The \$6,000+ scholarship provides access to college for thousands of Georgia State students, but for the student who does not maintain a 3.0 college GPA, the loss of Hope often means the student has to drop out for financial reasons. KHA provides a \$500 stipend for two semester 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. Overall, only 9% of students who lose Hope ever gain it back. Last year, over 55% of the students in KHA gained the scholarship back again. Since 2008, the program has helped to *double* the graduation rates of Georgia State students who lose the Hope scholarship.

**THE CRITICAL ROLE OF SCHOLARSHIPS**

**KEEP HOPE ALIVE**

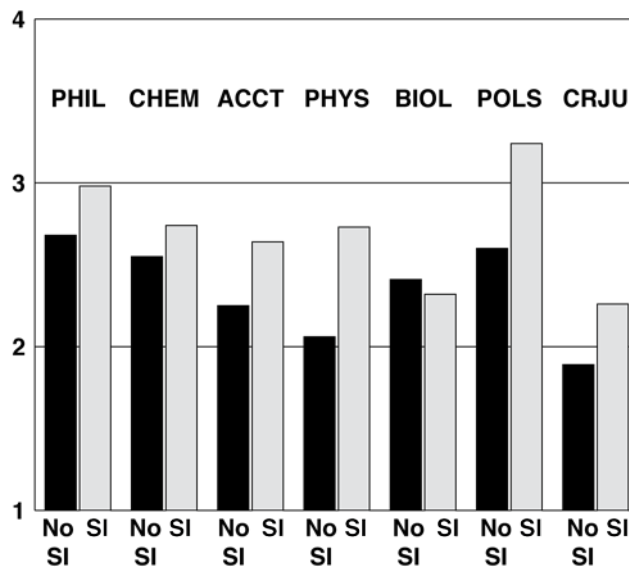


## Supplemental Instruction (SI)

<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Lower the DFW rates in the most challenging freshman- and sophomore-year courses; better deploy Work Study and other supported students who must work for the University as a part of their aid packages.</i></b>
<b>High-impact strategy</b>	Utilize undergraduate students who have successfully completed difficult courses to help tutor/instruct undergraduates currently enrolled in these courses.
<b>Summary of Activities</b>	We cross reference the list of the courses with the highest DFW rates with the grades of students in Work Study, Panther Works and other student work programs. We pull these students out of assignments in the library or offices, train them, pay them to sit in on the same courses that they succeeded in the past, and pay them to offer instructional sessions to the current undergraduates in the courses every week. Attendance at the sessions is monitored by swiping campus I.D.s.
<b>Interim Measures of Progress</b>	The program has expanded to more than twenty courses and impacted 9,700 students last year. Students who attend at least three SI sessions average half a letter grade better in the course than do those students who attend fewer than three SI sessions.
<b>Measures of Success</b>	Retention rates for student who participate in SI are 8 points higher than for those who do not. Graduation rates are up not merely for the participants but for the student instructors.

Georgia State has thousands of students on federal work study or other work-aid programs. We have analyzed the undergraduate courses that have the highest non-pass rates and the roster of work-study students who have excelled in those same courses. Now, rather than having these talented students work in the library or cafeteria, we pay them to go through training, to sit in on the very class that they excelled in again so that they can get to know the new instructor and students, and to offer tutoring sessions during the week to students currently taking the course. Low-income and first-generation students who might be embarrassed to reveal that they do not understand the material in class or during the instructor's office hours do not feel the same hesitancy to seek help from a fellow student—often one who looks more like they do. Students who regularly attend SI sessions do half a letter grade better in these difficult undergraduate courses than those students who do not attend SI, and the instructors now graduate at significantly higher rates, as well. The program, which started with only a handful of courses, now helps student in more than 20 different courses across the freshman- and sophomore-year curricula and supports 9,700 students every year.

**SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION (SI)**



	No SI	SI
Average course GPA	2.41	2.91
One-Year Retention	83.5%	91.2%

**Students Benefitted 2013-14: 9,700**

## OBSERVATIONS

"Which colleges are taking on the vitally important role of educating low-income students and assuring that they graduate with good results?...Which colleges are lowering the cost to students while improving quality learning? Across the country, from Georgia State to Franklin & Marshall, Purdue to Arizona State, and CUNY to SUNY, there are exciting examples of colleges and universities engaging constructively with these questions and advancing these goals."

U.S. Department of Education, May 2014

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 show that dramatic gains are indeed possible—not through changing the nature of the students served but through changing the nature of the institution that serves them.

We have had more than 70 campuses seek us out as a consultant for their own student success efforts over the past twelve months. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the story of Georgia





State is a compelling one. We deal with daunting numbers of at-risk students—approximately 80% of Georgia State undergraduates are first generation, on Pell, or members of underrepresented groups—and yet we have found that large impacts do not necessarily equate to large costs. Small corrections in the advice students receive during the freshmen year—helping them to pause and make a more informed choice of major, for instance—can have huge impacts on their abilities to persist and to succeed. A few hundred dollars in the form of a Panther Retention Grant can mean the difference between a senior stopping or dropping out, on the one hand, or receiving their diploma, on the other.

As this update outlines, Georgia State has made important gains in student success over the past three years, but no one at Georgia State is satisfied with where we are at present. We have a very long way to go in helping our students to succeed at higher rates, and, toward this end, we will be working on several major, new initiatives over the coming months. We are working to integrate financial alerts into our GPS tracking system so that the power of predictive analytics can be

deployed to provide alerts that notify staff when students are facing financial problems while there is still time to help. We are partnering with a major national bank to open a Student Financial Counseling Center that will work with students and their families to mitigate the financial risk factors that are identified. We are integrating career information into our student advisement sessions, supplying majors with live data from national vendor Burning Glass to help them to see the career implications of the courses and majors that they choose. And we will be one of three schools partnering with the Education Advisory Board to pilot a mobile device platform that will use predictive analytics to direct customized, live alerts to students about tutoring, study sessions and other available help on campus.

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THE CALCULUS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

1 point increase in Retention = **321 Students**  
 Average Student Tuition & Fees Annually = **\$9,800**  
 ROI for each 1-point increase = **\$3.14 million/year**

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The good news about many of these initiatives is that, if effective, they will pay for themselves. Perhaps that most underappreciated aspect of our national and state-wide completion agenda is the fact that students who persist generate millions of dollars of additional revenues for the institution. At Georgia State, for every one-point that we increase the overall retention rate, there is an approximately \$3-million increase in annual revenues from tuition and fees. It is not always the case that the morally right thing to do is also the financially most beneficial. We need more campus leaders to appreciate the fact that, whether from a student-centered or financial perspective, none of us can afford *not* to support our students with all of the resources, innovation and determination that we can muster.