



South Georgia State College

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

The mission statement of South Georgia State College (SGSC), approved by the Board of Regents on May 8, 2012, is as follows:

South Georgia State College, a state college of the University System of Georgia, is a multi-campus, student-centered institution offering high-quality associate and select baccalaureate degree programs. The institution provides innovative teaching and learning experiences, a rich array of student activities and athletic programs, access to unique ecological sites, and residential options to create a diverse, globally-focused, and supportive learning environment.

Since SGSC offers three associate degree programs (AA, AS, and AS in Nursing) and two bachelor’s degree programs (BS in Nursing and BS in Biological Sciences) and no certificate programs, the college’s completion priorities focus primarily on attainment of the associate’s degree—but also on attainment of the bachelor’s degree. The first graduating class of BS in Nursing (BSN) students were awarded the bachelor’s degree in May 2014, with 83% (24/29) of those beginning the program achieving the degree at that time. It is noteworthy that three of the five students not graduating in May 2014 will graduate in December 2014. A fourth student is continuing in another BSN cohort at SGSC. The fifth student not completing the degree unfortunately is deceased. The BS in Biological Sciences program began its initial course offerings in fall 2014.

SGSC’s mission, completion priorities, and student body demographics are clearly linked. For instance, an institution consistently enrolling 75-80% “traditional” students best serves its students and promotes retention and graduation with a wide variety of student activities, athletic programs, and student-support services while emphasizing quality teaching and learning experiences. (The average age of SGSC students in fall 2014 is 22.) Such an institution also attracts and retains traditional students through the availability of modern residence and dining halls, as well as through focusing on support and intervention strategies for residential students. In addition, a variety of student-support services is extremely important at SGSC, where for the past three years close to two-thirds of students have been Pell grant recipients and over one third have been first generation college students. The “Enrollment and Demographic Trends” table below provides a good look at the SGSC student body’s characteristics.

SOUTH GEORGIA STATE COLLEGE
ENROLLMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
Total Enrollment	3323	3234	3059	2579	2611
Enrollment Status					
Full-Time	2244	2209	2141	1877	1778
Part-Time	1079	1025	918	702	833
Gender					
Female	2118	2008	1916	1584	1686
Male	1205	1226	1143	995	925
Race/Ethnicity					
Hispanic	99	95	103	103	123
American Indian or Alaska Native	6	11	5	10	11
Asian	31	33	30	21	29

Race/Ethnicity, cont.					
Black or African American	1114	1165	1088	839	834
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	3	5	2	n/a
White	2034	1769	1682	1585	1581
Two or More Races	23	22	30	19	26
Race Unknown	12	136	116	0	7
Class Level					
Freshman	2117	2130	2039	1728	1589
Sophomore	879	812	728	507	518
Junior	n/a*	n/a*	29	29	38
Senior	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	8	15
Joint Enrollment	95	114	129	96	234
Transients	214	165	127	21	5
All Other	18	13	7	190	212
Underserved					
% Pell Recipient	62.71 %	65.18 %	63.48 %	63.67 %	59.25 %
% First Generation	34.64 %	33.83 %	33.08 %	34.32 %	29.80 %
% Adult Learner	25.76 %	22.26 %	20.04 %	18.61 %	17.20 %

Source: USG Semester Enrollment Reports (Fall 2010-13)/USG ADM Census
Note: (1) All data prior to Fall 2013 has been combined due to institutional consolidation. (2) For junior and senior class level, the data reflects only the number of students enrolled in the BSN and BSBS programs. *The BSN began in fall 2012; the BSBS began in fall 2014.

Because the SGSC Douglas Campus features residence and dining halls, that campus attracted in the fall of 2014 students from 106 of the 159 Georgia counties, from 27 other states, from 10 other countries, and from 344 high schools. These enrollment figures help “to create a diverse, globally-focused learning environment” (SGSC mission statement). In the table that follows all data prior to fall 2013 has been combined due to consolidation.

The key priorities of our completion work were set forth in the SGSC 2013 Campus Plan Status Report in five goals: (1) to transform remediation, (2) to restructure instructional

delivery, (3) to reduce time to degree, (4) to exercise intervention strategies to enhance student success, and (5) to maintain/develop P-12 and community partnerships. The five “high impact” institutional strategies that have the potential to affect a substantial proportion of students and that will be discussed in this narrative overview are integral parts of both SGSC’s Complete College Georgia and Strategic plans. The institution’s 2014-2019 Strategic Plan, which is aligned with the USG Strategic Plan approved in August 2013, also establishes college completion as its number one goal.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

SGSC is pursuing five high-impact strategies, each of which will potentially affect a high proportion of SGSC students and each of which is clearly related to the institution’s completion goals. Success with each of the five strategies, all of which have already been implemented, should lead to an increase in college completion at the institution. The five strategies, which will be described in detail in part 3, are as follows:

- **Continued implementation of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s “Quantway” mathematics pathway:** Funded at SGSC for several years by Carnegie, this strategy allows non-STEM-major students to complete remedial mathematics requirements in one semester and move on to the MATH 1001 Quantitative Skills and Reasoning credit course. This strategy is linked to the SGSC completion goals to transform remediation and to reduce time to degree. While the Quantway strategy applies to only students required to enroll in remedial mathematics courses, it is significant that for the fall semester 2014 approximately one out of every five students at SGSC is required to enroll in a remedial mathematics course. In fall 2014, a total of 500 of SGSC’s 2,611 students (19%) is required to take a remedial mathematics course. It is therefore imperative that the institution employ actions to assist students who are weak in mathematics.
- **Increased presence in area high schools to offer dual enrollment (ACCEL) courses** to qualified students—who are, for the most part, the best students in their schools: SGSC offers introductory courses in English, political science, economics, mathematics, psychology, and history. During just the past year, SGSC courses on high school campuses have expanded from two schools to six, and enrollment numbers have grown proportionally. This strategy is linked to the SGSC completion goal to maintain and develop P-12 partnerships. It is also linked to the USG goal and SGSC’s completion goal to reduce time to degree by affording area high school students a “head start” on their college work.
- **Continued implementation of SGSC’s “Near Completers” strategy** piloted in spring 2014, the intent

of which is to encourage and assist in degree completion students who discontinued enrollment within fifteen hours of degree completion. This strategy is linked to the SGSC and USG completion goals of reducing time to degree.

- **Continued implementation of SGSC’s initiative “Strategies to Emerge, Progress, and Succeed” (STEPS):** This strategy focuses on intervention strategies, such as grade monitoring, tutoring, academic success workshops, and counseling. This strategy is clearly linked to the SGSC completion goal to exercise intervention strategies to enhance student success.
- **Continued implementation and development of SGSC’s emphasis on academic advising as fundamental to the completion agenda:** This strategy, which is fundamental to student degree completion, has been expanded well beyond the assigning of students to faculty advisors. It includes implementation of DegreeWorks and a module on the role of advising and advisors in the college’s first year experience course required for all first-time full-time students. This strategy is linked to the SGSC goals to exercise intervention strategies to enhance student success and to reduce time to degree. It also addresses the USG’s fall 2014 implementation of the “15 to Finish” initiative to encourage students to enroll in 15 hours of classes per semester to graduate faster and spend less money obtaining a degree. Already the percentage of SGSC students enrolling for 15 hours has increased from 14.51 for fall 2011 to 25.7 for fall 2014. SGSC has also been identified by the USG as one of its “vanguard” institutions for the “Guided Pathways to Success” initiative in the use of program of study maps to help students stay on track, graduate faster, and save money on their education.

The five strategies identified above will affect a significant portion of SGSC’s students and will lead to a marked increase in college completion for the institution; however, there are needs and challenges associated with them. For a small institution with two campuses, two effective and long-established off campus sites, and a teaching presence at six high schools, the most significant challenge is to ensure that all completion strategies are in full effect at all locations (SGSC has two campuses (Douglas and Waycross), two well-established off-campus sites (at Valdosta State University and Georgia Southwestern State University), and is offering courses for 2014-2015 at six high schools (Coffee County, Jeff Davis County, Ware County, Pierce County, Appling County, and Jeff Davis County).

Too, it is not just effective implementation that is important. It is equally important to assess the impact of strategies on a consistent and ongoing basis at all instructional sites and make changes for improvement. The following section of this report summarizes the five strategies, associated activities, and measures of assessment.

SUMMARY OF GOALS, HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

Goal	Transform remediation, as well as reduce time to degree
<i>Strategy 1</i>	<i>Quantway remedial mathematics</i>
High-Impact Strategy	The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s Quantway remedial mathematics strategy is in its 4th year of implementation at SGSC. The Quantway course affords non-Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics (STEM)-major students the opportunity to complete a remedial mathematics requirement, no matter at what level of initial placement, in one semester. The student is then eligible to enroll in the credit-level MATH 1001 Quantitative Skills and Reasoning course. The Quantway course is comprised of modules developed by a network of colleges nationwide working with Carnegie staff. The modules use “real-life” situational mathematical problems, significant student participation both individually and in groups, and instructor guidance to help students build a solid foundation of mathematical literacy and critical thinking skills.
Summary of Activities	This strategy is fully implemented. Activities fall into three categories: (1) Quantway faculty and administrative team members training and ongoing professional development; (2) Participation of students enrolled in the course; (3) Promoting the course and recruiting students to participate. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The Quantway team is comprised of mathematics faculty members, a campus Quantway administrator, and a campus Quantway institutional researcher. All SGSC team members attended training sessions in California and continue to attend annual Carnegie Pathways forums, the last of which was in July 2014. One of the SGSC mathematics instructors works with Carnegie apart from the regular meetings and forums to assist in developing processes, procedures, and teaching materials and pedagogy. (2) The Quantway course, Mathematical Literacy for College Students (MLCS 0099), has been offered on the Douglas Campus each semester for over three years. The course has not been offered at the Waycross Campus or two SGSC entry program sites (Valdosta and Americus), a situation which will be analyzed during the coming year. (3) The Quantway course needs to be promoted very deliberately on both the Douglas and Waycross campuses. Students tend to shy away from courses employing teaching methods and materials different from what they experienced in high school. Beginning with fall 2014 the college will engage in recruitment actions to promote the benefits of the class and the pedagogy as something to be embraced rather than feared. Promotional materials have been developed over the summer, and faculty academic advisors will participate in an informational session during the week prior to the beginning of fall 2014 classes. (4) Beginning fall 2015 SGSC will have STEM-major and non-STEM-major student tracks for remedial mathematics placement. Non-STEM -major students will be placed in the MLCS 0099 (Quantway) course.
Interim Measures of Progress	The success rate in the MLCS 0099 (Quantway) course has improved during the past year. “Success” is defined as earning a grade of C (70%) or better. At the end of spring semester 2012 the success rate was 22%. From spring 2012 through fall 2013 the success rate increased to 40%. At the conclusion of spring 2014 the success rate increased again to 53%. Also at the conclusion of spring semester 2014 the pass rate for former MLCS 0099 students taking the credit-level MATH 1001 course was 74%.
Measures of Success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the MLCS 0099 course pass rate (2) the MATH 1001 course pass rate of students who came to that course after passing MLCS 0099 (3) In fall 2014 we began tracking the number of attempts it takes MLCS 0099 students to pass the MLCS 0099 course.

Goal	Maintain and develop P-12 partnerships, as well as reduce time to degree
<i>Strategy 2</i>	<i>Increase Dual Enrollment (ACCEL) Offerings on Area High School Campuses</i>
High-Impact Strategy	The strategy is to increase dual enrollment (ACCEL) offerings on area high school campuses in order to enroll students with the best chance of college degree attainment, to help those students graduate in as little time as possible, and to develop a relationship with high schools that will positively affect overall enrollment.
Summary of Activities	For academic year 2013-2014 SGSC set a goal to increase the number of dual enrollment classes offered at area high schools by 25% over such offerings for 2012-2013. A second goal was to increase the

number of ACCEL students enrolled at area high schools by 25%. Both goals were far exceeded. Offerings expanded from introductory courses in English, economics and political science to fall 2014's schedule additions of introductory courses in mathematics, psychology, and history. The combination of ACCEL students taught at their high schools, together with ACCEL students enrolled at one of the SGSC campuses, represents students from 19 different high schools.

Interim Measures of Progress	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The number of ACCEL students increased dramatically, from 96 in fall 2013 to 234 in spring 2014—more than doubling the number of students from fall to spring. (2) Dual enrollment success rates (A, B, or C), grade distribution, and retention data are quite positive.
Measures of Success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Numbers of students and high schools participating in dual enrollment (2) Dual enrollment student grade distribution (3) Continued SGSC enrollment data on dual enrollment students after high school graduation

Goal	Reduce time to degree
Strategy 3	Near Completers Initiative
High-Impact Strategy	Piloted in spring 2014 and in full swing summer 2014, the Near Completer strategy identifies students who have “stopped out” within 15 semester credit hours of earning an associate degree at SGSC. Staff in SGSC’s Student Success unit contact such students to schedule an appointment to determine what it will take for them to complete their degree, not simply in terms of courses needed, but also in terms of options to facilitate completion—such as online and independent study courses, legitimate course substitutions, change of major, and the like. The goal of the pilot was that at least 30% of those re-enrolled would complete their associate’s degree within one calendar year.
Summary of Activities	The strategy was piloted in spring semester 2014 and was engaged for a second time for fall 2014. Students are contacted by phone, met with one-on-one, assisted with a one-stop re-admittance, financial aid, and faculty advisor assignment process, and registered for classes. Student progress is then monitored throughout the semester.
Interim Measures of Progress	Twenty-two students made up the initial cohort; 6 have graduated (27%) to date.
Measures of Success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Numbers of students contacted who re-enroll at SGSC (2) Numbers of re-enrolled students who are retained from semester-to-semester (3) Numbers of re-enrolled students who graduate

Goal	Exercise intervention strategies to enhance student success
Strategy 4	<i>“Strategies to Emerge, Progress, and Succeed” (STEPS)</i>
High-Impact Strategy	The STEPS initiative began in fall 2012 as a collaboration between Academic Affairs, Academic Support Services, and Residential Life as an effort to increase the persistence and retention of residential students. The student profile of those students who are primarily focused on and monitored is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning residential students will a cumulative grade point average < 2.0 • First - year residential students enrolled in two or more learning support courses at SGSC. • First - year residential students entering with a high school grade point average of ≤ 2.5 and enrolled in at least one learning support course at SGSC.
Summary of Activities	The STEPS strategy involves numerous components: student success workshops, Academic Success Center tutoring, STEM center tutoring, academic coaching provided by faculty and staff members, course grade monitoring throughout the semester, and individual academic, personal, and disability counseling. Instructional groups will be formed for first-year residential students entering with a high school grade point average of ≤ 2.5 and enrolled in at least one learning support course at SGSC. These groups will led by a team of instructors from the Division of Student Success. In addition, the team of instructors will serve as academic coaches for the students.
Interim Measures of Progress	Because the focus of this strategy changed during the 2014-2015 academic year, and because we are developing student learning outcomes and a strategic plan for this strategy, the institution at present has no data to determine accurate interim measures of progress.
Measures of Success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relationship between visits to the Academic Success Center or STEM Center and grade distribution, as well as persistence. 2. Relationship between early intervention grade monitoring and grade distribution. 3. Comparison of grades of those students participating in academic coaching to those students not participating in academic coaching. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Comparison of learning support success rates for the following populations: b. First-year residential students enrolled in the Student Success SGSC 1000 Orientation

course, compared to first-year residential students enrolled in SGSC 1000 with the general first-year SGSC population.

4. First-year residential students from Fall 2013 with a high school grade point average or ≤ 2.5 and enrolled in learning support courses during the first semester of enrollment, compared to the first year residential students from Fall 2014 with a high school grade point average of ≤ 2.5 and enrolled in learning support courses during the first semester of enrollment.

Goal	Exercise intervention strategies to enhance student success, as well as reduce time to degree
<i>Strategy 5</i>	<i>Academic Advising</i>
High-Impact Strategy	Strengthen academic advising: SGSC believes that academic advising can be the single most significant factor contributing to college completion. Academic advising has always been a responsibility of the faculty of both former South Georgia College and former Waycross College, as well as the recently consolidated South Georgia State College. The institution's college completion agenda calls for retaining faculty responsibility, but it also calls for educating students about academic advising and making use of the DegreeWorks technological tool that can be employed by both faculty advisors and student advisees. Also, prior to the completion agenda, the institution had not assessed academic advising in any fashion. Now there is a very deliberate and ongoing process of both faculty and student training, participating in, and assessing the academic advising process.
Summary of Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) During spring semester 2014, an academic advising task force was created. (2) New vision and mission statements, as well as guiding values, goals, and outcomes for academic advising, were created. (3) An academic advisement module was completed for the college's first-year experience course, SGSC 1000, a course in which 75% of new students enroll each fall semester. Goals, student learning outcomes, and assessment measures for this module were also created. One focus of the advisement module is to help students understand their own roles and responsibilities in degree completion. (4) Two hours of training on the advisement module were provided to SGSC 1000 instructors. (5) An academic advising syllabus was created for the faculty. (6) DegreeWorks was finally operational for faculty advisors at SGSC in April 2014; the institutional consolidation process held up an earlier DegreeWorks implementation. Technology issues continue to prevent rollout for students; however, it is anticipated that these issues will be resolved by spring semester 2015. (7) Four 90-minute DegreeWorks training sessions were provided to faculty on the Douglas Campus, two such sessions were provided on the Waycross Campus, and one such session was provided at each of the off-campus instructional sites (Valdosta and Americus). All faculty members received further training during the fall opening week prior to the beginning of classes. (8) An academic advisement assessment reporting form has been developed. (9) Two teams of SGSC personnel attended National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) workshops in spring 2014, and SGSC is receiving consultative advice from NACADA staff.
Interim Measures of Progress	Since all of the academic advisement assessment measures were developed in late spring 2014 or during the summer of 2014, they will not be utilized until fall semester 2014.
Measures of Success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Student and faculty survey instruments to be administered after advising each semester (2) Monitoring student advisement issues identified in DegreeWorks (3) Collecting data on student credit hours of enrollment each semester to encourage maximizing hours to shorten time to degree ("15 to Finish") (4) Faculty survey addressing DegreeWorks training (5) Retention rates of students participating in the first-year experience course (6) Course success rates of students participating in the first-year experience course (7) Numbers and percentages of students successfully completing 30 credit hours in their first academic year (8) Percentage of students declaring a "major" by the beginning of their second semester

OBSERVATIONS

- USG feedback on SGSC's August 2014 submission of the CCG draft status report was very positive and quite helpful, particularly with regard to suggestions for streamlining the report and making it more user-friendly for readers outside the USG.
- There really is no "least effective" strategy, since each of the strategies discussed above has significant potential impact on college completion. The most far-reaching or

“involved” strategy is the “Strategies to Emerge, Progress, and Succeed” (STEPS) initiative, but it probably also has the greatest potential for making a difference. Of course, academic advising—when it is truly well defined and intrusive—also has a tremendous potential impact on college completion.

- The creation of this report is itself a form of assessment and has significantly contributed to focusing attention on activities and assessments.
- SGSC has made no changes to its completion goals and only one change thus far to completion activities. That change has to do with a partnership with the Coffee County School System that began in September 2006 and that was one-time funded by several donors. The “Plant Their Feet” program was designed specifically for one class of fifth-grade students at one of the

county’s elementary schools (West Green). The college provided activities at both the elementary school and college campuses to address the high school dropout rate. Students who stayed with the program through high school graduation were awarded a scholarship to attend SGSC. Of the original group of 64 fifth-graders, almost half graduated from Coffee High School on time (spring 2014), and 13 accepted the scholarship and matriculated at SGSC. Those Plant Their Feet students accepting the scholarship and matriculating at SGSC fall 2014 are being mentored and supported during their first term. Numerous SGSC and Coffee School System personnel assisted with the program. While Plant Their Feet has concluded, other options to help middle school students plan for college attendance are being explored.