University of North Georgia

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

The University of North Georgia (UNG), a 4-campus institution of over 15,000 students, was created in January 2013 from the consolidation of North Georgia College & State University (NGCSU) and Gainesville State College (GSC), and includes campus locations in Cumming, Dahlonega, Gainesville, and Oconee. The combined strengths and history of the two previous institutions are reflected in the mission of the new university. UNG focuses on academic excellence in liberal arts, pre-professional, professional and graduate programs, military education, service, and leadership as part of its legacy from the former NGCSU. In addition, UNG retains NGCSU's status as one of only six senior military colleges in the United States, and is designated by the Georgia General Assembly as The Military College of Georgia. Carried over from the former GSC, UNG emphasizes broad access to a quality liberal arts higher education primarily for the population of Northeast Georgia and seeks to assure the success of its students and contribute to the quality of life in the surrounding region. UNG, with an emphasis on diversity and international issues, prepares students to function in a global society.

This combined focus on academic excellence, military education, leadership, and access has resulted in a UNG legacy that allows multiple pathways for degree completion and career preparation. These pathways provide opportunities and support for students with a wide range of academic preparation as well as academic and career goals within a single institution. The goals and strategies we have chosen to focus on in our Complete College Georgia plan reflect the breadth of our mission and these multiple pathways, which include certificates, associate degrees, bachelor degrees and graduate programs. The two-tiered tuition model for our Associate degree and Bachelor degree pathways provide a fundamental level of access to higher education for the population of Northeast Georgia.

UNG ENTERING STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS FALL 2013

Total number of entering students Fall 2013	4,174
Full-Time	76%
Part-Time	24%
Adult Learners	17.5%
First Generation	10%
Low-Income	35%
Underserved Minority Groups	20%

UNG SPRING 2014 MILITARY DATA

Received GI Bill	800+
Veterans Classification	348

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 2: Increase the number of degrees earned on time.

Strategy: 15 to Finish Campaign

In examining enrollment patterns of part-time and full time students at UNG, we noticed that more of our full-time students were taking 12 credit hours than were taking 15 credit hours. Realizing that this was not a reflection of academic ability, but an issue of a culture accustomed to 12 credit hours as full time, we decided to increase the number of degrees earned on time by launching a Fifteen to Finish campaign. In our campaign we focused on the economic and academic benefits to students, citing national data. Students that complete 30 or more credit hours during their first year of college have a 62% chance of earning an associate degree within two years and a 79% chance of earning a bachelor's degree within four years (CCA, 2013). The 15 to Finish initiative was aimed at students who intended to be full-time, not our substantial part-time student population. Another concern was increasing course production to meet the increased demand for classes. For this reason, we began the marketing campaign by targeting high schools so that students would enter college expecting to take 15 credit hours. We have added a promotional piece to orientation this fall that not only emphasizes taking 15 credit hours, but speaks to the various ways in which 30 credit hours can be achieved in the freshman year: by combining AP credit, online courses, attendance in the summer term, and CLEP credit with traditional face to face courses on campus.

Goal 6: Shorten time to degree completion.

Strategy: Allow students to earn college credit while still in high school by expanding dual **enrollment programs.**

When UNG was formed, we had dual-enrollment admissions for both the bachelor and the associate degree pathways. The state pays tuition for dual enrollment, but not fees. The result was that students had to pay academic fees and books out of pocket. This cost was a barrier to participation for lower income students. We wanted to waive the fees, but with the associate level tuition, this was not a financially sustainable model. We conducted an analysis of the success rate of dual enrolled students by entering SAT scores, and determined that we could slightly lower the SAT requirement for admission to the bachelor pathway and end the associate dual enrollment pathway while maintaining access for most students. The higher state university tuition rate of the bachelor pathway made it feasible for us to waive all fees for dual enrolled students, thus reducing financial barriers to participation. Another barrier to participation for high school students is the distance from our campuses. This

academic year we offer dual enrollment opportunities on high school campuses. Our goal through our dual enrollment program is to help students earn college credit while still in high school, and encourage them to matriculate directly to UNG upon high school graduation. With lower income and minority students in particular, a successful dual enrollment experience can make the difference in their desire and ability to pursue a degree.

GOAL 6: SHORTEN TIME TO DEGREE COMPLETION

Strategy: Allow students to earn college credit by awarding credit learning that is verified by appropriate assessment: College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

UNG has a well-developed program for awarding credit for prior learning that is verified by appropriate assessment. These strategies support the overall goal of shortening time to degree, and serve not only our high-achieving traditional aged students, but also our adult learners and veteran students. We award credit based on Advanced Placement scores, International Baccalaureate scores, CLEP scores, DSST scores and scores on the Foreign Language Achievement Testing Services (FLATS) administered through Brigham Young University which offers college credit for over 60 different foreign languages.

The College Board has selected UNG to highlight in its Spotlight on Best Practices in using CLEP.

Goal 6: Shorten time to degree completion

Strategy: Allow students to earn college credit by awarding credit learning that is verified by appropriate assessment: American Council on Education (ACE) recommendations.

UNG awards credit for military training and experience and corporate training based on the American Council of Education (ACE) credit recommendations, as well as an approved process for awarding credit based on portfolio review. The two biggest challenges to these strategies have been ensuring faculty support and communicating these opportunities to students. In the process of creating the UNG policies that support credit for prior learning, we have used national data, recommendations of the American Council on Education and comparison studies of cut scores conducted by the Adult Learning Consortium to assure faculty of the validity of these assessments. Our Center for Adult Learners and the Military, admissions team, and academic advisors work to inform students of these opportunities. These strategies not only shorten time to degree, but they also validate and acknowledge the experience and learning our adult learners and veterans bring with them, encouraging and motivating them to pursue their educational goals.

Goal 8: Restructure educational delivery to support educational excellence and student success.

Strategy: Expand completely online opportunities.

UNG has chosen to restructure instructional delivery to support educational excellence and student success by expanding completely online opportunities. Not only do online courses provide flexibility for students' schedules, but as an institution with four campuses, they provide greater access to more programs of study across the whole university. In order to rapidly expand access to general education core courses, UNG became an eCore affiliate in spring of 2014. We have elected to focus our own course development on courses in the major and graduate programs, as a more strategic use of institutional resources. We take very seriously the charge to make sure that our online courses are of comparable quality to our face-to-face courses. In the process of consolidating the new university, we required that all existing courses as well as all new courses developed by UNG faculty undergo a Quality Matters review, which verifies the quality of the course design. We have also implemented Smarter Measurer as an orientation and screening tool to help students be successful in their online courses.

SUMMARY OF GOALS, HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

Goal 2	Increase the number of degrees that are earned "on time" (associate degrees in 2 years, bachelor's degrees in 4 years)
High-impact strategy	*Fifteen to Finish campaign, Promote full-time enrollment of 15 credit hours per semester (See Appendix A & B)*
Summary of Activities	- Developed 15 to Finish (Learn More, Save More with 15 to Finish) posters and disseminated in high schools to change the culture from 12 credit hours per semester to 15 credit hours per semester. - Presented to over 5,000 middle and high school students, parents, and counselors on the benefits of 15 to Finish. - Incorporated 15 to Finish Video in orientations to target incoming freshman and transfer students. - The Advising Center has also adopted 15 to Finish marketing materials to encourage current students to increase enrollment to a minimum of 15 credit hours per semester. - Advanced scheduled incoming freshmen on the Dahlonega Campus. - The admissions team has ordered t-shirts, notebooks, mugs, and Frisbees to promote 15 to Finish to new and existing students.
Interim Measures	A comparison of enrollment by credit hours from fall 2013 to fall 2014 show a **25%** increase in the

Of Progress	number of students taking fifteen or more credit hours.		

	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
12 credit hours	3186	3269
13 credit hours	2689	2705
14 credit hours	1343	1150
15 credit hours	1329	1851
>15 credit hours	1690	1907

Measures of Success
- Number of students completing associate degrees in 2 years.
- Number of students completing bachelor's degree in 4 years.
- Number of students enrolling for 15 or more credit hours in fall and spring semesters.
- Number of students completing 30 or more credit hours in their first
- academic year**.**

Goal 6   **Shorten time to degree completion.**

High-impact strategy   *Allow students to earn college credit while still in high school by expanding dual enrollment program*

Summary of Activities
- UNG conducted ACCEL Recruitment Events and Counselor Workshops on each campus during fall 2013 and spring 2014.
- Over 1,500 parents and students visited our campuses to learn about dual credit opportunities.
- Each campus assigned an ACCEL academic advisor for high school students, parents, and counselors to provide information assist with orientations, complete registration, and matriculate students into UNG upon high school graduation.
- Developed a model to strategically deliver dual enrollment courses to high schools in our service area. For the 2015 school year, UNG has partnered with Jackson, Oconee, Towns, Fannin, and Union County School Systems in the delivery of ACCEL courses at the high schools.

Interim Measures Of Progress   Statistics based on fall 2014 enrollment to date show a **74% increase** over last fall in combined ACCEL/MOWR registered students from **268** in **fall 2013** to **469** students in **fall 2014**.

DUAL ENROLLMENT FALL 2013

Total Participants	268
Earned six or more credits	73
Earned 12 or more credits	82
Earned 16 or more credits	113
Total college credits earned	3,789
Matriculated immediately after High School Graduation	43%
Number of participating high schools in service region	59

Measures of Success
- Number of students enrolled in dual enrollment
- Number of credits awarded to dual enrolled students
- Number of high schools from which we draw dual enrolled students.

Goal 6   **Shorten time to degree completion.**

High-impact strategy   *Provide programs that allow students to earn college credit by awarding credit learning that is verified by appropriate assessment - CLEP*

Summary of Activities
- Approved policies to support this goal.
- Implemented policies with the 2013-2014 undergraduate catalog.
- Educated academic advisors and the coordinator of the Center for Adult Learners and the Military for the purpose of encouraging students to take advantage of programs.
- Incorporating information on prior learning credit into New Student Orientation.
- Added information about prior learning assessment and CLEP is included in a variety of places on our website.

Interim Measures Of Progress   For 2014 year-to-date, UNG administered 784 CLEP exams, awarding 3,389 credit hours as a result.

Measures of Success
- Number of exams administered
- Number of credits awarded based on CLEP scores

Goal 6	**Shorten time to degree completion.**
High-impact strategy	*Provide programs that permit students to earn college credit by awarding credit for prior learning that is verified by appropriate assessment – ACE credit recommendations*
Summary of Activities	• Through our Center for Adult Learners and the Military, we carefully review a student's experience, corporate training and military transcripts using ACE recommended guidelines. • Coordinator makes a recommendation of credit to the academic department for approval. • Finalize credit that has been approved by the academic department so it does not have to be approved again. • Built database of articulated credit, streamlining the process for future students. • Follow ACE guidelines in awarding credit based on CLEP or DSST scores. • Awarded credit for corporate training transcript

Interim Measures Of Progress

ACE CREDIT AWARDED FOR MILITARY TRANSCRIPTS FALL 2013

Credit hours	266
Academic Disciplines	13

Measures of Success	• Credit hours awarded

Goal 8	**Restructure instructional delivery to support educational excellence and student success**
High-impact strategy	*Expand completely online opportunities*
Summary of Activities	• UNG requires all online courses to undergo a Quality Matters review. • UNG became an eCore affiliate in spring 2014. • Students who enroll in eCore courses can earn a two-year Associate of Arts or Sciences degree or fulfill the first two years of their general education requirements of the baccalaureate degree. • UNG hired an eCore advisor to serve as a single point of contact for eCore students and to contact and assist at-risk students. • Implemented Smarter Measure as an orientation and readiness screening tool to help students be successful in their online courses.

Interim Measures Of Progress

ONLINE COURSE ENROLLMENT AND CREDIT ATTEMPTED

Semester	UNG Online & eCore Headcount	Credit Hours
Fall 2013	2,161	8, 516
Spring 2014	2,409	10, 155
Summer 2014	1,516	6,162
Fall 2014	2,555	11,163

Measures of Success	• Offer fully online courses to students at UNG. • Number of credits attempted in Fall 2013 for courses offered • completely online. • Number of credits successfully completed in fall 2013 for courses offered completely online. • Number and % of degrees conferred in which at least one course has been fully online in the 2013-2014 academic years.

Aspirational Goals

The state of Georgia was chosen by Complete College America as a Guided Pathways to Success (GPS) state to participate in the GPS Institute 2014, and the University of North Georgia was chosen by the University System of Georgia as a GPS Institution. The Guided Pathways to Success Initiative helps students develop a clear path to on-time completion from freshman year to senior year in college. In our implementation of the GPS initiative, UNG will focus on Goal 3: Decrease excess credits earned on the path to getting a degree, and Goal 4: Provide intrusive advising to keep students on track to graduate.

Additionally, UNG has collaborated with Pioneer RESA and local high schools to develop fifteen career road maps that illustrate how specific UNG classes and majors align with the Georgia Department of Education Career Clusters (See Appendix E). The career road maps have been disseminated to high school students, parents, and counselors throughout the UNG service region. The goal of GPS and the high school career road maps is to help students understand the relevance between education and the workforce.

OBSERVATIONS

UNG has implemented several completion strategies that have proven to be successful. Some of them, such as expanding online course availability and awarding credit for prior learning were a part of the completion strategies from the beginning. Others, such as the expansion of the dual

enrollment program and the Fifteen to Finish campaign emerged from the analysis of our student data during the initial year combined with strategies that were emerging in national trends as high impact strategies. We have chosen to prioritize the strategies we are pursuing in a different order over the last three years. Strategies that were producing significant results were moved up the priority list, while others were moved down the list. When we focus on strategies that reduce time to degree, and thus reduce the cost of the degree, we benefit not just our low income students, but all students and their families.

In addition to the strategies highlighted in this report, the University is engaged in transforming remediation through a series of pilot projects in math, English and reading. Although technically not a reverse transfer program, UNG is utilizing the expertise of the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students, which is housed on our Dahlonega campus, to develop similar degree completion procedures for students transitioning internally from Associate Degree programs to Bachelor degree programs.

- Appendix A: What's Your 15?
- Appendix B: Learn More, Save More with 15 to Finish
- Appendix C: The Outcome is Income
- Appendix D: Your New BFF's
- Appendix E: High School Career Road Map