Georgia College & State University

This report describes strategies that Georgia College & State University (GC) is implementing to address Complete College Georgia (CCG) goals as designated by the University System of Georgia (USG). The report evaluates each strategy and its impact and summarizes the activities supporting each strategy. It also describes the baseline measurements and lessons learned.

GOAL I: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES AWARDED BY USG INSTITUTIONS

Description of Strategy: This high-priority strategy aims to increase high school completion from the GC Early College (EC) program by 5% annually and increase earning of college credits by the time of high school graduation by 5% over the next two years. This strategy is a priority because of its potential to have a direct, positive impact on high school students in Middle Georgia—increased high school graduation rates, college admission and completion-- and to increase diversity at GC.

While the number of students enrolled in GC EC declined between 2014 and 2015, there was a significant turnaround in the students enrolled during the 2015-2016 academic year; and a record number of those students graduated (see table below). In spring 2016, 26 students graduated from the EC program; and 21 of those students were accepted into colleges in Georgia. Seven students in the class of 2016, the highest number to date, applied, were admitted, and, subsequently, enrolled in GC. Two students from the EC class of 2014 also applied and were accepted, bringing the total number of EC students admitted and enrolled at GC in the fall of 2016 to nine.

Data from the GC EC Class of 2016 were noticeably higher compared to prior years. While percentages were down in FY '15 as compared to FY '14, the numbers for FY '16 are demonstrably higher, particularly in the number of students enrolled in GC's first-year class. GC EC administration is very proud of the Class of 2016's outstanding achievements. The administration had predicted that only five students would complete the program in 2015, so these results have been greater than anticipated, particularly in the Class of 2016. The administration is anticipating that all 25 seniors in the Class of 2017 will complete the program, with college credits earned continuing to be between nine and 42.

Georgia College Early College Completion Data

	Total GCEC Enrollment	Graduating High School (Attended GC)	% of Original Class of 55*	Continuing @ IHE	**Dual Enrollment Range of College Credits Earned by GCEC graduates
2011-12	168	10 (1)	18.2%	10	15-29
2012-13	194	11 (0)	20%	11	13-26
2013-14	229	19 (5)	34.5%	19	15-37
2014-15	216	12 (2)	22%	12	9-32
2015-16	234	26 (9)	47.27	26	9-42

*% students graduating from GC EC compared to original class enrollment **Number of college credits awarded to GC EC graduates in each of the past three years

ACTIVITIES:

We attribute this rise in the number of students graduating from the EC program to the initiatives implemented by the EC and GC administration, student groups, faculty mentors, and the clear goals set by the director of the EC program.

Collaboration and goal setting

Efforts by the GC administration during the 2015-2016 academic year to maintain communication with GC EC-to provide support, initiate programming, and set goals-have helped to increase graduation and admission to GC from EC. These conversations greatly improved communication. The goal of the EC is for all seniors to graduate and be admitted to colleges in Georgia.

Highlighting the success of students admitted to college

This year, EC hosted spring *Signing Day*, where the each student admitted to a college was announced, applauded, and accompanied on stage by alumni from the college to "sign" their commitment to attend the college where they had received admission. The public acknowledgement in front of parents and other GC students, the presence of alumni from the respective colleges, and the general excitement that included balloons and cheerleaders that is often part of athletic signing day, were an excellent way to make acceptance to college a fun and inspiring experience for the students, the alumni, and their parents.

Mentoring EC students

GC work-study students from the GC College of Education have spent much of their time working with EC students as peer mentors. Mentors and EC students met once a week to discuss the challenges of applying to college, what to expect in college, and how to survive and thrive once they enroll.

Outreach from the GC Male Connection

The MALE Connection is GC's African-American Male Initiative, supported by the USG's African-American Male Initiative (AAMI), which started in 2002. The MALE Connection, an acronym for Mentoring African-Americans for Leadership, Education and Connection, includes over 50 participants, over half of whom are EC and high-achieving male students who are mentored by our undergraduate students. Of the nine students accepted to GC for the fall 2016 class, seven of those students are male, which we attribute in large measure to the success of the mentoring and outreach of the MALE Connection with EC male students.

Collaborations between EC and GC faculty

EC and GC faculty members are working together to create small group tutoring sessions to address the basic skills needed for students to succeed in college core courses. GC EC teachers have engaged in collaborative planning and team teaching with college professors to address those areas where students need to be successful. These intentional efforts are paying off for EC and GC faculty and the students, as evidenced by the increased number of EC students recently admitted to GC. These mentoring relationships will continue with GC professors during the students' first year in college to ensure successful progress.

Outreach from GC academic advisors

In an effort to provide additional mentoring outreach and to help in both academic and social preparation for college, the Associate Provost for Student Success asked GC academic advisors to form an outreach committee to establish long-term advising relationships with EC students in order to help them prepare for admission and successful matriculation at GC. Seven advisors established a committee called the EC Holistic Outreach (ECHO). The ECHO committee has developed a program that includes monthly outreach to seventh, eighth, and ninth grade EC students to help them bond as a cohort and begin early to help them prepare for admission to college. Sessions include getting-to-know-you activities, question-and-answer sessions between students and advisors, and informative discussions on the daily life, resources, and benefits of college. The advisors met with the EC students three times in 2015-2016.

Outreach to EC students enrolled at GC

The academic advisors and faculty members who have established relationships with EC students will continue their mentoring relationships with those students after they enroll at GC. The Associate Provost for Student Success believes that an intentional, ongoing institutional commitment to these students throughout their college career will help to ensure their retention and success. In addition to assigning one of the academic advisors now working with the seventh, eighth, and ninth graders to work directly with students in the first year class at GC, the Associate Provost will be hosting a fall and spring semester lunch with the EC students so that they can get to know senior administrators, learn more about GC, and establish long-term ties to the university. The combination of these efforts will be helpful for the retention and successful completion of the students now enrolled.

Baseline Measure of Success: In 2011, one EC student was enrolled at GC. We want to continue to increase that number and to make sure that the nine new students enrolled this year remain at the college and graduate.

Lessons Learned: Given the varied backgrounds of EC students, often without a tradition of family members who have attended college, comprehensive mentoring and engagement with them is important in order to ensure their readiness, their acceptance, and their retention in college.

Principal Points of Contact: Runee Sallad, Director of the EC Program; Carolyn Denard, Associate Provost for Student Success.

GOAL II: PROVIDE INTRUSIVE ADVISING TO KEEP STUDENTS ON TRACK TO GRADUATE

Description of Strategy: Intrusive advising has taken three forms at GC to help students stay on track for graduation. This is a high-impact, high-priority strategy designed to increase GC graduation and retention rates.

ACTIVITIES

Tracking retention and graduation by advisor

Building on the success of the four-year advising clusters, wherein advisors remain with their advisees all four years, advisors are being asked this year to track the retention and graduation of their advisees. We are soliciting the technical assistance of the predictive analytical tools of the Success Collaborative to help advisors identify and track students who might be at risk and then to make them part of a targeted outreach campaign to make sure that they stay on track. Our lowest retention rate (65%) occurs between the second and third year, with nearly 35% of an entering class having left GC by the beginning of the junior year. We are working now to have each advisor identify which of his or her advisees is leaving the college and why and to ascertain through intrusive advising the assistance that GC can provide to help those students remain enrolled.

Senior-year Progression Pilot Program

To increase the number of students graduating, intrusive advising has been extended this year into a full year *Senior Progression Pilot* to track students who have 90 or more hours at the beginning of the fall semester so that they graduate in the spring. The *Pilot* has included an early fall survey to determine the student's own expectations for their graduation and to determine if they have completed both the course requirements—core course completion, capstone projects, and minimum GPA-- as well as the out-of-class requirements—exit exams and legislative exams-- needed in order to graduate on time. The survey was followed by a fall senior information session and direct calls from advisors to students who have not met benchmarks—exams, GPA, financial aid, core and major requirements—by the end of the first semester. The *Pilot* will not necessarily increase the cohort graduation rate for GC since many students transfer after the sophomore year, but it may increase the number of students who graduate from the university overall. Certain barriers keep students from progressing; the goal of this project is to engage in proactive, intrusive advising through targeted campaigns for seniors to make sure that they are meeting requirements necessary for graduation in a timely manner.

Campus-wide enrollment and retention committee

In an effort to make graduation and retention the responsibility of a broad-based group of college administrators, the Provost (January 2016) created a campus-wide Strategic Enrollment and Retention Committee. The committee was charged with developing initiatives to improve enrollment, retention, and graduation as well as enhance student success at GC. These initiatives will be presented to the President's Cabinet. The first task of the committee was to undertake an initiative similar to intrusive advising. A subcommittee made calls over the summer to students who had not registered for fall and who had not completed a formal withdrawal. A total of 106 students fit this criteria. The responses from students were not unexpected—entered GC with the intent to transfer, desired to be closer to home, and medical challenges. The intervention increased awareness of the reasons why students were not returning and provided an opportunity to intervene if at all possible.

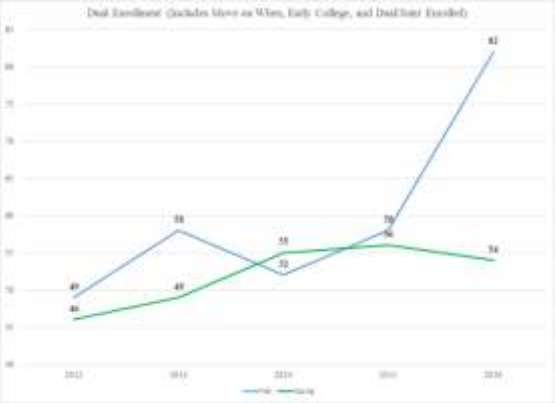
Baseline Measure of Success: Our baseline second-to-third-year retention rate is 68%. Our baseline graduation rate is 47.7%. Our goal is to improve both of these numbers.

Lessons Learned: We have learned that intrusive advising works and can be used by a broader number of college staff beyond academic advisors.

Principal Points of Contract: Carolyn Denard, Associate Provost; Mike Augustine, Director of Academic Advising; and Chris Ferland, Director of Institutional Effectiveness.

GOAL III: SHORTEN TIME TO DEGREE BY ALLOWING STUDENTS TO EARN COLLEGE CREDIT WHILE STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL AND BY AWARDING CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING THAT IS VERIFIED BY APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Description of Strategy: Increasing the number of dually-enrolled students taking GC classes and earning college credit prior to high school graduation is a high-priority strategy that can have a positive impact on graduation rates at GC. This year, GC increased the count of dual-enrollment students by 41% from 58 in fall 2015 to 82 in fall 2016 (see chart below).



ACTIVITIES

Outreach to local schools

The GC Office of Admissions has reached out to local schools to offer assistance for students enrolling dually in high school and college. GC admission counselors work with high school counselors to encourage students all over Georgia to take advantage of dual-enrollment opportunities in their local communities as a way to gain advanced credit and also improve their admissions portfolio when considering application to GC. GC has an advisor specifically designated to work with dual-enrollment students.

Impact of Move on When Ready

The change in the funding model for dual enrollment from the *Accel* program to *Move on When Ready* proved to be quite beneficial for increasing the number of dual-enrollment students. Under *Move on When Ready* funding, families receive funding for all tuition, mandatory fees, and the use of required textbooks. The GC Office of Admissions works closely with local schools to explain the benefits of this program.

Impact of AP credits

In addition to offering dual enrollment, GC encourages entering students to enroll in Advance Placement (AP) courses in high school with the intent of exempting college courses by AP exam score. Score reports from summer 2016 indicate that 635 incoming first-year students at GC, 46% of our first-year class, had received some form of academic credit that is applicable toward their degree. The total academic credit from AP was 1,885 credit hours or approximately three semester hours of credit for each student. The 635 students with AP credit in 2016 is up 12% from 566 in 2015.

Baseline Measure of Success: In 2015, 566 incoming freshmen, or 39% of the group, brought in AP credit. GC is working to appropriately increase the percentage in the coming years.

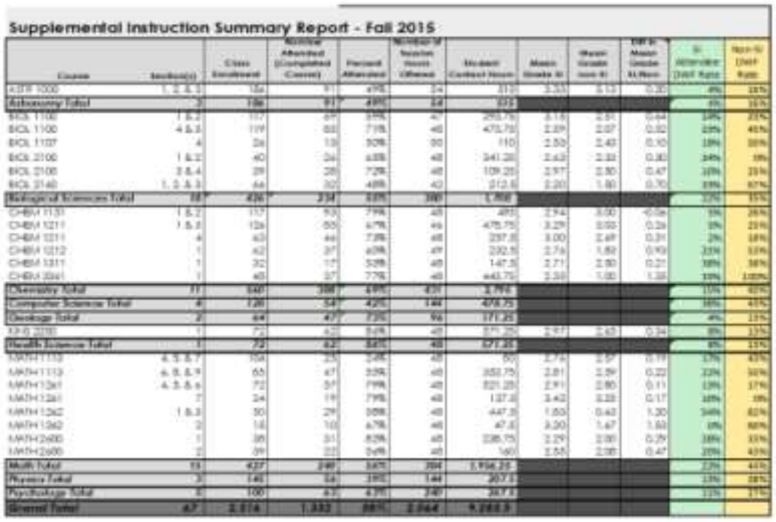
Lessons Learned: Dual enrollment can be positively impacted by providing free tuition for dually-enrolled students. Encouraging students to take AP credits during recruiting sessions pays off in the number of student who enter the university with college credit.

Principal Points of Contact: Suzanne Pittman, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management; Kay Anderson, Registrar; and Mike Augustine, Advisor of Dual Enrollment Students.

GOAL IV: Restructure instructional delivery to support educational excellence and student success

Description of Strategy: In addition to the *Math Emporium* tutoring program, which we highlighted in our CCG Report last year and which has greatly increased student performance in math courses, Georgia College's Supplemental Instruction (SI) program, administered out of the Learning Center, is rapidly becoming a high-impact program. SI is a high-impact, high-priority strategy that reaches one-third of our undergraduates. SI is supporting the university's and the CCG goals in three important ways: greatly improving students' performance in difficult courses, encouraging the retention of high-achieving students who serve as SI leaders, and creating a welcoming social and intellectual climate for students from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

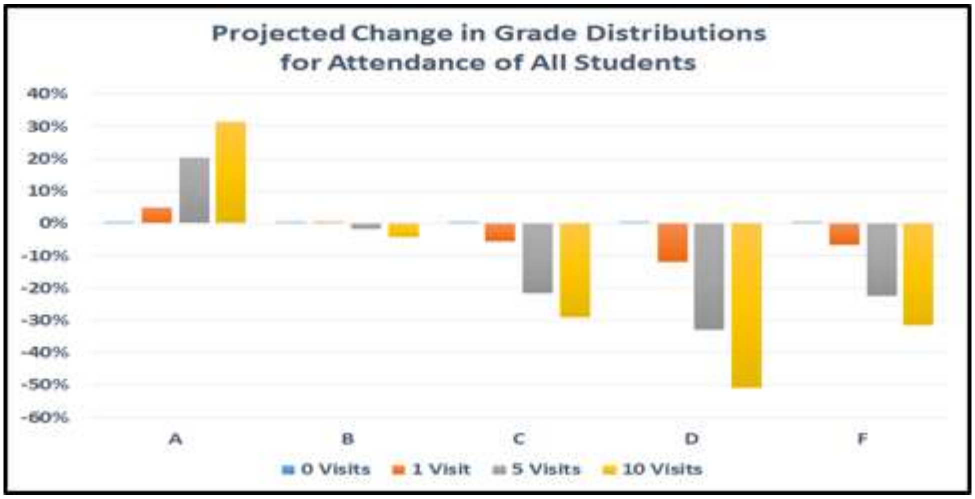
ACTIVITIES:


Supplemental Instruction Summary Report - Fall 2015

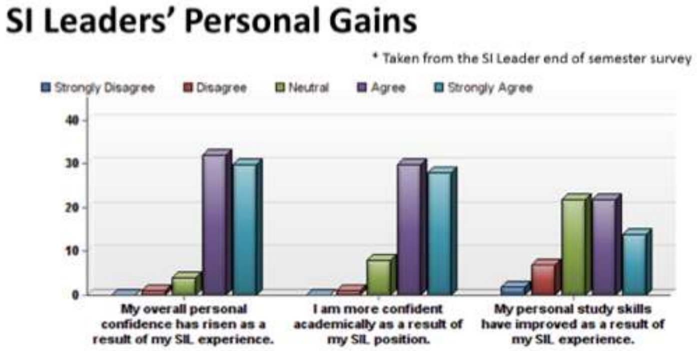
Supplemental Instruction

GC's SI program consists of non-remedial, peer-led study sessions targeted at historically difficult courses. The program (started in the 1970s--and still headquartered at the University of Missouri at Kansas City), began at GC in 2012 with a goal of improving student academic performance and retention in difficult courses and thus improving graduation rates for the university overall. SI leaders are not TAs; they are a highly-selective group of students who have performed well in the courses for which they lead intense discussion sessions outside of class. Since 2012, the SI program has grown from 43 SI leaders to 78 SI leaders in fall 2016. They are assigned to 68 courses and 79 total class sessions. From a population of 2,100 students, 1,400 (or two-thirds of the eligible students) have taken advantage of the program. Student visits to SI sessions have increased from 3,279 in fall 2012 to 7,375 in fall 2015. The DFW rate for courses where students regularly attend SI sessions has dropped consistently over the past four years. In fall 2015, in a sample of 67 courses (see table below), the DFW rate for students who attended SI sessions dropped between five and 66 percentage points. In only two cases did the DFW rate increase after SI visits.

Overall, students who attended SI sessions increased their AB-grade rates and lowered their DFW rates.



According to the model, each additional SI session a student attends increases the student's odds of receiving a higher grade by 1.061 percentage points. The predicted percentage change in grade distributions if all students attended 0, 1, 5 and 10 SI sessions is given in the figure to the right. We see a consistent, positive change in the distribution of As, and consistent, negative change in the distribution of Cs, Ds, and Fs.



Student leaders in the SI program receive training in managing course study sessions, oral presentations, and leadership. An important outcome of the program has been the students' personal growth and academic competency in their major subject areas. The students who serve as SI leaders complete their course work with distinction at GC, engage in research more often with their professors, and go on to receive impressive graduate school scholarships. In spring 2016, fifteen SI leaders received scholarships to graduate schools; and one SI leader won the prestigious Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship. Consistently, students who serve as SI leaders indicate that they receive great personal gains from the program (see chart at left).

Over the past four years, the SI program has become a model for peer-led instruction at GC. Demand for the program has increased dramatically since 2012 as faculty find that it greatly improves the performance of students and allows an important mentoring opportunity with a high-achieving student. The SI program began with a focus on courses in STEM fields and now includes many courses outside STEM. The benefits of the program to faculty and overall student success have exceeded our expectations. Our work in this area has become a model for the system.

Baseline Measure of Success: We will continue to measure the SI program by the decrease in DFW rates in difficult courses, the increase in AB-grade rates, the demand for the program from our faculty, and the overall personal growth and academic development and success of our students.

The Lessons Learned: Good programs that focus on the academic success of students and their personal growth can have enormous benefits well beyond the classroom. Such programs can increase overall retention. We have learned that successful, high-impact programs are a good investment for the university.

Principal Points of Contact: Jeanne Haslam, Director of the Learning Center and the SI Program; Carolyn Denard, Associate Provost for Student Success.