Georgia Southwestern State University

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Georgia Southwestern State University's mission is to "cultivate excellence in learning and teaching that encourages intellectual, personal, and social growth for students, faculty, staff, and the community. Georgia Southwestern State University is a comprehensive state university within the University System of Georgia that offers a full range of bachelor degree programs, along with selected master's and specialist degree programs." Our mission is further augmented by the SACSCOC approved Quality Enhancement Plan, Windows to the World, which encourages all entering students to engage in global literacy in a robust fashion (first full assessment of this program due March, 2020, with data collected through the 2018-19 academic year). The mission of the institution is to strengthen the immediate region, but also to prepare students to be confident and knowledgeable as they venture into the global economy.

The primary service region of Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW) consists of Sumter County and the seven counties contiguous with it: Crisp, Dooly, Lee, Macon, Marion, Schley, Terrell, and Webster counties. The majority of these counties are among the poorest counties in the state of Georgia. The student population is very diverse, including sizable groups of students often considered to have special challenges in completing college, such as non-traditional, first-generation, and low income students. Georgia Southwestern is dedicated to continue to enroll and to graduate students from this region of the state.

GSW's total enrollment in fall 2015 was 2755. At that time, the gender distribution of the student population was 65.8% women and 34.2% men. The ethnicity of the fall 2015 student population was 64.3% White, 27.2% Black, 3.2% Asian and Pacific Islander, 3.3% Hispanic, 1.5% Multiracial, 0.2% Native American and 0.3% Unknown. Approximately 44% of GSW undergraduates receive Pell Grants; 51% are First-Generation college students (no parent/guardian with bachelor degree or higher); 22% began college for the first-time as adults (25 years old or older); and 27% are age 25 or older. The majority of our undergraduates (67.4%) are classified as full-time (taking 12 or more hours); 31.5% live on campus; 53.1% are enrolled in one or more online classes; and 24.1% are enrolled exclusively in online classes. These populations are also representative of our recent graduates. Out of the undergraduates who were awarded bachelor's degrees in FY16, 60% had received the Pell grant while enrolled at GSW, 57% were first-generation students, and 30% were 29 or older at the time of graduation.

Corresponding with our student profile, we know that ample data demonstrate that these students have difficulty successfully transitioning to higher education and that retention of first-year students is typically very low. GSW's initial priority in improving completion has been to improve fall-to-fall retention of first year students through implementation of strategies that have been shown to have high impact among low-income and first-generation college students. National data show that improved first-year success and retention lead to higher persistence and improved graduation rates. An additional component of our retention strategies has been collection of data to identify areas of risk particular to GSW and to develop specific strategies that promise to benefit all our students.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS, HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

In order to improve the retention of first year students, which is an initial, primary goal, GSW has adopted several strategies shown to impact student retention: 1) improved and more intrusive advising, aided by technology [Matrix A]; 2) improved student engagement through peer advising [Matrix B]; 3) redefining of good standing and more information provided to advisors and faculty [Matrix C]; 4) strong emphasis on completing 15 credit hours each semester in order to graduate on-time [Matrix D]; and 5) improved and more sustained extra-curricular student engagement, aided by technology [Matrix E]. We have also included three "aspirational" high-impact strategies [Matrices 1-3], that are directions in which we are beginning to move. These strategies are supported by several specific actions (some actions support more than one strategy). As we indicate in Observations, we intend to hold to these practices until we have amassed enough meaningful data to know that our improvements are not anomalies, and until these practices are fully engrained in GSW's culture. In all cases, all activity and strategies support Goal 1: Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions.

MATRIX A: BEACON 2015-2016

High-impact strategy	Using Campus Labs technology in order to implement Beacon.
	Beacon is a type of early warning software to address academic integration (a risk specific to GSW based on data from the College Persistence Questionnaire and Inventory, administered in 201-15). This ties into Strategy 4.4 (establish criteria for identifying students who may need special interventions in the semester [e.g.: lack of attendance, poor performance on early assignments]) and into Strategy 4.5 (ensure that students who meet off-track criteria receive timely and targeted advising intervention). We are also employing Strategy 4.3 (use Degree Works to track student progress).
Related Goal	Goal 4: Provide intentional advising to keep students on track to graduate.
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	The institution regards this as a very high priority and continues to fund it. Its impact directly affects retention numbers of first year students by giving them a year-long support network, and of continuing students by giving their advisors and a tool to track their academic progress. It should be noted that the Storm Spotters discussed in Matrix B are also a part of the first-year students' success networks.
Primary Point of Contact	Bryan Davis, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning: bryan.davis@gsw.edu
Summary of Activities	Prior to both the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years, we administered the Student Success Inventory to first year students –The SSI measures student responses on several non-cognitive factors that affect retention and probability of academic success. Using the SSI has allowed us to identify several areas of risk specific to GSW, including most importantly resiliency. The results of this survey showed that although GSW's students have a high degrees of academic and campus commitment, as well as educational commitment to obtain a college degree, their resiliency in the face of setbacks is relatively low. The resiliency factor in particular increases risk of attrition. GSW is in the process of implementing strategies specifically designed to address this issue, and to increase faculty use of the tool. Progress towards implementing this strategy in the 2015-2016 academic year included pushing harder on Beacon training and utilization for faculty. Specific activities engaged in this year in regards to this strategy entailed more training for faculty and discussing resiliency strategies in our freshmen orientation course..
Measures of Progress and Success	
Measure, metric, or data element	Process Metric 4.3, Metric 4.3.1; Process Metric 4.4, Metric 4.4.1.
Baseline measures	We have completed two years of using Beacon. One measure is the average time to lower an alert.
Interim Measures of Progress	Preliminary measure should be a higher number of students passing key gateway courses.
Measures of Success	Retention rates and numbers of students with a 2.00 or better GPA.
Lessons Learned	Campus culture has still not fully embraced the CCG philosophy. While some faculty embrace Beacon, others are still not making use of it or use it only sporadically. We will be offering more training and potentially, more incentives.

MATRIX B: PROJECT STORM SPOTTERS

High-impact strategy	**Continuation of Project Storm Spotters.**
	The Storm Spotters Team (SST) consists of peer mentors who serve as co-instructors for UNIV 1000, Orientation to College Success. SST's connect first-year students to campus activities and to academic support services in order to improve engagement and academic success.

Related Goal	Goal 4: Provide intrusive advising to keep students on track to graduate.
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction (SI), Beacon usage, and Obligatory Supplemental Instruction (OSI) are recognized as highly useful and important retention and progression mechanisms. Tutoring pay is going up, and policies and procedures are being developed to make the Storm Spotters a centrally integral part of the first two years of a college student's experience.
Primary Point of Contact	Ms. Linda Randall, Director of Academic Resource Center; linda.randall@gsw.edu
Summary of Activities	The Storm Spotters Team participates in the presentation of orientation material for UNIV 1000, they work on activities to improve student engagement (e.g. inviting students to meetings of student organizations), and participate in outreach to at-risk students. Project Storm Spotters started in the Fall of 2013, and has now completed its third year. The project recruits and trains upper-class students as co-instructors and peer mentors for our first-year orientation course (UNIV 1000). Project Storm Spotters was designed to expand UNIV 1000 beyond a mainly orientation course to include much more student engagement and advisement. SST's were very successful in engaging with first-year students, which is important, as we know that first-year students are more likely to ask questions and take the advice of their peer mentors than from their instructors. SST's encouraged increased participation in student organizations and were successful at directing students to support services on campus.

Measures of Progress and Success	
Baseline measures	Since implementation in Fall 2013, the contact rate between SST's and entering first-year students has been 100 percent. There has been intermittent but increasing contact between SST's and students after their first semester. In terms of affecting retention rates, 64.9 percent was the retention rate before implementing SST's. The retention rate of the first cohort to use SST's is 69.8 percent.
Interim Measures of Progress	Surveys indicated high levels of satisfaction among participating faculty, Storm Spotters, and first-year students. There are probably some paradoxical effects of the SST's. The withdrawal rate for certain core classes that we know to be difficult hurdles has been elevated, due in part to increased counseling by the SST's to students about the importance of maintaining a good GPA. However, we are engaging in the Gardner Institute's Gateways to Completion program which should offer a counterbalance effect, and we anticipate incorporating SST's into the G2C program as well.
Measures of Success	Increased persistence in courses and successful completion of course work, as well as increased participation in student activities and utilization of student support services of various kinds.
Lessons Learned	We implemented SmartThinking as an augmentation to the SST's, but we have found that that system was not being utilized by students enough to justify its cost. Funds for SmartThinking will be reallocated to help fund continued support of Project Storm Spotter. Storm Spotter culture continues to evolve.

MATRIX C: REDEFINING ACADEMIC GOOD STANDING

High-impact strategy	**Redefinition of Academic Good Standing and issuing of DWF Reports twice a semester.** To identify and intervene with at-risk students earlier, we changed Academic Good Standing from a graduated scale to a 2.0 for all students and implemented an advising hold for all students with GPAs below 2.0. And, at mid-term and at the end of each semester, DWF reports are issued, with advisors being asked to contact students and advise them on the best options given their standing and to direct them to appropriate resources. The retention specialist and first-year advocate intervene with first-year and sophomore students who may not yet have a relationship with their major advisor. Advisers were asked to use Degree Works to visually demonstrate progression to their advisees, and students were encouraged

	to view their audits each semester.
Related Goal	Goal 4: Provide intentional advising to keep students on track to graduate
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	A high priority for GSW is to create a culture of completion for our students, thereby impacting the students' determination to earn a degree and influencing the time taken to do so. By intervening with intrusive, intentional advisement earlier in the semester, advisors demonstrate support and provide the best options for success for at-risk students, thereby guiding them individually on the best path for completion.
Primary Point of Contact	Lynda Lee Purvis, Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Lynda.purvis@gsw.edu
Summary of Activities	The increase in GPA required for Good Academic Standing has allowed us to identify students who are at risk academically much earlier and to target institutional resources on students who are most likely to benefit from intervention (those with GPAs 1.5-2.0). Students with GPAs below 2.0 have academic standing holds and are required to meet with their academic advisers to make changes to their schedules. They are also contacted by the Retention Specialist who invites them to one-on-one sessions to develop academic success plans. These interventions apply to all students and the effects are currently difficult to disaggregate for a single cohort. In 2012, we began distributing DFW reports to all advisors at midterm and at end of term. The reports list all advisees with grades of D, F, or W in any of their courses. Advisors are encouraged to contact advisees on their lists to discuss possible options for getting back on track (withdrawing from a course at mid-term, seeking tutoring support, repeating a course the next semester to improve a grade, etc.). We have also adjusted the academic calendar so that midterm grades are now due on the midterm date, thus giving students in trouble and advisors more time to develop success strategies for the rest of the semester. UNIV 1000 instructors are asked to contact first-year students who may not be connected with their academic advisors yet. The Retention Specialist and First-Year Advocate in the Academic Resource Center help students develop success plans. Through these efforts we have substantially increased the percentage of first-year students who complete the fall semester with at least a 2.0 GPA. In 2011, before these changes, only 63% of first-year students completed the first semester with a GPA over 2.0. The rate for the 2012, 2013 and 2014 cohorts was 74%, 75.5%, and 75.3% respectively. For 2015, the rate was 79.3 percent (Table 7), a 16% increase over the 2011 cohort. The improvement in GPA is not only a result of withdrawing from courses where students were receiving low grades, but also from connecting to resources early, allowing them to recover and pass classes in which they were not doing well (Table 9).
Measures of Progress and Success	
Baseline measures	The baseline year is 2011, prior to the distribution of DWF reports, the change in the required grade point average for good standing, and the hiring of the retention specialist. We discovered that with our previous sliding scale, we were blind to students who were in trouble academically, but who were not being flagged because they were technically in good standing (even at a 1.5 GPA). Moving good standing to a 2.00 allowed us to identify academic risk in the first semester of trouble rather than two to three semesters later. The DWF reports help us to pinpoint courses that need additional resources, such as Supplemental Instruction or dedicated tutoring, as well as alert us to students who are in academic difficulty as early as mid-term
Interim Measures of Progress	These are relatively recent processes grafted on to the institution, and they appear to be having a positive effect. One example would be the increase in the percentage of students in the 2015 cohort over those in previous cohorts who earned 30 or more credit hours at the end of their first year. For the 2015-2016 academic year 28.1 percent earned 30+ hours, as compared with 5.7% in 2011.
Measure of Success	Outcome Metric 4.1
Lessons Learned	Timing of distribution of the DWF report is crucial, as is having enough time between semesters to adequately work with students. The DWF report is now being run and

	distributed within one week after grades are processed. In some cases, lack of core classes can create a difficulty in students progressing.

MATRIX D: FIFTEEN TO FINISH

High-impact strategy	**Adoption and implementation of 15 to Finish.** Beginning in Fall 2013, we increased the number of credit hours in the first-time freshmen learning communities from 12-14 hours to 14-16 hours and advisors have been trained to encourage students to continue taking 15+ credits each semester. Briefly describe the strategy or activity. We have also implemented The President's Award for On-Time Finish.
Related Goal	Goal 2: Increase the number of degrees that are earned "on time"
Summary of Activities	Credits assigned to first-year students have been increased from 12-13 to at least 15 credit hours. Advisor training will emphasize the importance of taking at least 15 hours each semester (in progress).Beginning Fall 2013, we increased the number of credit hours first-year students take with the goal of having all students enrolled in at least 15 credits each semester. This has been highly successful in increasing the number of students on track to graduate within four years. The effect has persisted with more students enrolling in 15 or more hours in the spring term. In two years we have almost doubled the percentage of first-year students enrolled full-time in credit-earning classes, who have successfully completed at least 28 credits by the end of the spring semester (17% of the Fall 2011 cohort did this, compared to 33% of the Fall 2013 cohort).
Measures of Progress and Success	
Baseline measures	The general history of advising at GSW was to have students sign up for twelve hours a semester, in order for them to be successful in those fewer hours.
Interim Measures of Progress	In 2014, 61.7 percent of the FTFT cohort attempted 15 or more credit hours (compared to 2013, when 49.6 percent attempted). In 2014, 36.3 percent of the FTFT cohort actually earned 15 or more credit hours (compared to 2013, when 22.8 percent earned hours). At the same time, 75.3 percent of these students in 2014 maintained a GPA of 2.00 or higher.
Measure of Success	Outcome Metrics 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5
Lessons Learned	Better advisor training, and better preparation of students as they come through our summer orientation and registration programs have led to more students attempting fifteen hours a semester or more. The percentage of students taking fifteen or more hours, and the number of students coming into college already with college credit, continues to increase. A lesson learned is that students can do as well in 15 hours as 12 hours. In fact, with the right support, they can actually do better while taking more hours.

MATRIX E: CAMPUS CONNECT

High-impact strategy	**Using Campus Labs technology in order to implement Collegiate Link.** Collegiate Link is a type of social media software that fosters multiple and deeper integration into campus social networks sponsored and supported by the Division of Student Affairs. Now in our third year, our branded version is called Canes Connect, and is used to strengthen social integration primarily outside of the classroom.
Related Goal	Goal 2: Increase the number of degrees that are earned "on time"
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	The benefits of getting involved in co-curricular activities are documented in the fields of cognitive and intellectual growth (Foubert & Grainger, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), social and cultural capital (Holzweiss, Rahn, & Wickline, 2007; Stuber, 2009), higher graduation rates, and higher levels of satisfaction with their college experience (Webber, Bauer, Krylow, & Zhang, 2013). Furthermore, the necessary developmental skills and learning that takes place as a result of co-curricular involvement has continuously proven to

contribute to student retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Foubert, J. D., & Grainger, L. U. (2006). Effects of involvement in clubs and organizations on the psychosocial development of first-year and senior college students. NASPA Journal 43(1), 166-182. Holweiss, P., Rahn, R., & Wickline, J. (2007). Are all student organizations created equal? The differences and implications of student participation in academic versus non-academic organizations. The College Student Affairs Journal, 27(1), 136-150. Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P.T. (2005). How college affects students: A third decade of research. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Stuber, J. M. (2009). Class, culture, and participation in the collegiate extra-curriculum. Sociological Forum. 24(4), 877-900. DOI: 10.1111/j.1573-7861.2009.0114.x Tinto, V. (1993). Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition, 2nd ed., Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Webber, K.L., Bauer Krylow, R., & Zhang, Q. (2013). Does involvement really matter? Indicators of college student success and satisfaction. Journal of College Student Development. 54(6), 591-611

Primary Point of Contact	Josh Curtin, Director of Campus Life; josh.curtin@gsw.edu
Summary of Activities	All research shows that the more socially integrated students are in the culture of the academy, the more likely it is that they will succeed. Toward that end, we see the importance of extra-curricular activities as they are crucial in helping students feel they are part of the academic community. Any extra-curricular activity--from health, wellness, and intramural sports, to serving in the Student Government Association, to attending academic lectures—adds to the sense of cohesiveness and motivation that are necessary for all student success. The many activities sponsored within the Residence Halls, the debates and panels sponsored by Panorama, Third-World Studies, and Windows to the World, are crucial parts to engaging students and keeping them on track to graduate.

Measures of Progress and Success	
Baseline measures	Year of first usage was 2014-15, with 10 percent of student organizations making use of the system. The 2015-2016 showed an increase use of approximately 20% of student organizations using the system.
Interim Measures of Progress	Table 15 shows specifically how data are collected in Canes Connect. The system tells us how many events are being planned per semester and the amount of students who are attending them.
Measures of Success	Measures of success include data from Table 13 and Table 15 which are measures of student engagement, and data from Tables 16 and 17 that indicate health and wellness activities. Table 14, which is a compilation of results from Noel-Levitz surveys of parents during our summer orientation series, indicates areas of strength and weaknesses that need further addressing.
Lessons Learned	Canes Connect is a useful tool, but it is not yet fully integrated into GSW's culture. Our Windows to the World program is relatively recent, with only one year of data that will remain incomplete until we have had a cohort go through a full four years of the program. With this said, we have very strong student programming in the extra-curricular dimension, and with the augmentation of Canes Connect, we should be able to safely say that these programs are having a positive effect on our retention and graduation rates.

MATRIX F: CAREER AND FINANCIAL LITERACY

High-impact strategy	GSW Office of Career Services provides a **financial literacy course** that is currently a non-credit and voluntary course.
Related Goal	Goal 1: Increase in the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions.
	Goal 4: Provide intrusive advising to keep students on track to graduate.
	Goal 8. Restructure instructional delivery to support educational excellence and student success.

Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	Participating students learn the importance of managing their resources well and completing college. They learn about saving for emergencies and school expenses, budgeting, avoiding credit card debt, the difference between "wants," "needs," and more. They learn how to plan effectively for their future.
Primary Point of Contact	Sandra Fowler, Director of Career Services; Sandra.fowler@gsw.edu
Summary of Activities	During the 2014-2015 academic year, an interest meeting was held to expose students to the Foundations in Personal Finance material developed by Dave Ramsey and gauge their interest. Course instruction is provided on DVDs with additional online resources available. Students surveyed were enthusiastically interested in taking the course, even when told the course would cost $95. The course was scheduled to start in January. When it came time to purchase the book, only four students paid. During the 2015-2016 academic year, Career Services purchased a site license that would allow the materials to be shown anywhere on campus to classes or groups at no extra charge to the students.

At GSW, we are the "Hurricanes" with a mascot named "Surge." Students are encouraged to grow from Tropical Waves into Category 5 'Canes. Career Services developed the "Hurricane Force Program," in which students earn points for completing each of the 12 personal finance chapters and other career development activities.

The Career Services Director includes information regarding the course in each class and group presentation. A handout with financial topics and a chart illustrating the importance of time and compound interest is given to each student.

Career Services scheduled two meeting times (Tuesdays from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. and 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.) for the course.

The videos and handouts were made available to students at their convenience if they could not attend on Tuesday evenings.

Approximately 57 attended at least one meeting (including 3 staff members and 2 recent graduates).

Career Services fulfilled student requests to show the videos to one fraternity and one residence hall floor meeting in addition to the regular meeting times. The introduction was also shared in two class meetings.

Certificates were given to students completing at least 10 chapters.

Pre-Tests and Post-Tests were given to measure learning. |
| **Measures of Progress and Success** | |
| **Measure, metric, or data element** | As of now, we have assessed the program's success by tracking student attendance. Student learning is assessed for those who complete the course via a Pre-test and Post-Test. Now that we have the Strategies and Metrics guide, we will meet to discuss what metrics we can use to determine the impact on our CCG goals. |
| **Baseline measures** | 2013 - 2014: Four students took the course. All students showed improvement from the Pre-Test to the Post-Test.

2015 - 2016:

57 attended at least one session. Of those,

    a. 8 attended 2-4 sessions,
    b. 16 attended 5-8 sessions
    c. 13 attended 9-12 sessions
    d. All students tested improved from Pre- to Post-Test. |
| **Interim Measure of Progress** | All students tested showed improvement from the Pre-Test to the Post-Test. |
| **Measures of Success** | This will be discussed and implemented in the 2016-2017 year. We will include tracking the graduation rates of those who participate in the course. |

	tell but we are beginning to have data based on the first cohort of students completing the post-completion GPI instrument and it is revealing positive change / growth.

ASPIRATIONAL MATRIX 1: TARGETING INCREASES IN COMPLETION FOR TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED STUDENT POPULATIONS

High-impact strategy	**Focused recruitment, advising, and support structures for adult learners, military and former military students, first generation, and low income (Pell recipients) students**
Related Goal	Goal 1: Increase in the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions.
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	One priority for us is to increase overall FTE enrollment, which this strategy addresses. Targeted advising and support structures will assist students in graduating, thereby increasing completion rates.
Primary Point of Contact	Outreach Office (proposed)
Summary of Activities	A default mission of the institution is to serve low income students and first generation students. We are slowly growing targeted resources to serve these students specifically (prior to 2015-16). Ongoing status of same, with a desire to reach more aggressively into Fort Benning area (2015-16).
Measures of Progress and Success	
Measure, metric, or data element	What metric(s) is your institution using to assess the outcome of this strategy? 1.4
	Baseline measures	Describe the baseline status (year of or prior to intervention) of the measure (if applicable): NA
	Interim Measure of Progress	Describe the preliminary outcomes associated with this strategy: NA
	Measures of Success	What metric(s) is your institution using to assess the outcome of this strategy? 1.2; 1.4; 1.6;
Lessons Learned	Working on evolving enrollment and retention management structures.

ASPIRATIONAL MATRIX 2: EMPLOY PROGRAM MAPS AND STRONG CHOICE ARCHITECTURE

High-impact strategies	**Offer block schedules for students in meta-majors or majors for the first semester and year. Provide program maps that plot paths to degrees. Strong choice architecture will ensure efficient progress through A1 and A2 of the core. Employ meta-major maps.**
Related Goal	Goal 3: Decrease excess credits earned on the path to getting a degree.
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	We are already offering block scheduling for the first semester (which we call Learning Communities), which has a strong positive impact on progression and retention rates.
Primary Point of Contact	Office of Centralized Advising (proposed)
Summary of Activities	We have been building Learning Communities for the last seven years (prior to 2015-16). We pre-registered incoming freshmen into Learning Communities before they arrived on campus (2015-16).
Measures of Progress and Success	

Measure, metric, or data element	What metric(s) is your institution using to assess the outcome of this strategy? 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5
Baseline measures	Describe the baseline status (year of or prior to intervention) of the measure (if applicable): NA
Interim Measure of Progress	Describe the preliminary outcomes associated with this strategy: 3.1
Measures of Success	What metric(s) is your institution using to assess the outcome of this strategy? NA
Lessons Learned	Working on evolving advising management structures.

ASPIRATIONAL MATRIX 3: SHORTEN TIME TO DEGREE COMPLETION

High-impact strategies	**Participate in dual enrollment programs for high school students; award credit based on AP, IB, CLEP, DSST, ACE scores; award credit based on portfolio exams.**
Related Goal	Goal 6: Shorten time to degree completion through programs that allow students to earn college credit while still in high school and by awarding credit for prior learning that is verified by appropriate assessment.
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	We already offer these practices to a certain extent, but our outreach could be much greater and more strategically integrated with local school systems.
Primary Point of Contact	Outreach Office (proposed)
Summary of Activities	Through ACCEL and MOWR courses, we have been slowly moving into local school systems. Through portfolio assessment training and the development of a bachelor's in general studies degree, we have widened the scope of portfolio usage and assessment
Measures of Progress and Success	
Measure, metric, or data element	What metric(s) is your institution using to assess the outcome of this strategy? 6.1, 6.3,6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.8
Baseline measures	Describe the baseline status (year of or prior to intervention) of the measure (if applicable): NA
Interim Measure of Progress	Describe the preliminary outcomes associated with this strategy: 134 students currently enrolled in MOWR courses in two school systems.
Measures of Success	What metric(s) is your institution using to assess the outcome of this strategy? Increasing our numbers of participating students and school systems.
Lessons Learned	Untapped markets in outlying school systems.

OBSERVATIONS

The strategies listed in this report (even our aspirational ones, which are, to a certain extent, already being implemented) are not an exhaustive list of activities undertaken to improve student success, but they are ones in which we have invested much time and effort, and we hope to continue to focus on these particular strategies for at least several more years in order to have established clear patterns in the data that lead to a confirmation of practice. GSW is on the brink of approving a new strategic plan (to be voted on in Fall 2016) that will guide the institution over the next five to seven years, and we fully expect that the strategies in this report will not only be endorsed, but will serve as a foundation for further development in terms of how we encourage and sustain students beyond the first year. Indeed, toward that end, the work done in the first and only Retention Retreat (May 2014) evolved into an Enrollment Management Council, which has now moved into a position of Special Assistant to the President, to help us centrally and effectively oversee retention efforts and continue to aid in the effort to break down silos across campus and strengthen our ability to retain and graduate the students who come to our institution. In addition to these efforts, we are in our second year of a three year contract with the Educational Advisory Board to aid us with data analysis and consultation in an effort to become fully knowledgeable about best practice and to be better able to implement strategies in the most efficient manner possible. Specially, we hope that EAB will help us strengthen our advising process throughout a student's career at GSW. We know that Degree Works should help with efficiency, especially with its degree mapping tool that we have yet to actively implement, but which we are now learning about. A growing focus on transfer students and on on-line students is also part of our planning for the future, especially as we embrace eMajor and the eBBA.

Indeed, perhaps the most important change we are making at GSW is a shift in our thinking about student success. During the past four years we have held a series of university-wide convocations to share retention data, propose institutional policies to address roadblocks to student success, and to solicit input on problem areas and strategies we might implement. These have been well-attended events and have fostered productive conversations outside of silos that are leading to a number of changes, big and small, but most significantly, they are leading to a change in our overall culture. Given the student population we serve, the stakes are high not just for GSW but also for our region and our

state. We are looking forward to continuing our efforts to improve student success with the momentum gained over the last three years. We think we are on the right track to doing some things well here at Georgia Southwestern State University.