COLLEGE OF COASTAL GEORGIA

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Mission Statement

Revised and approved in November 2015, the CCGA mission statement reads as follows:

> As a state college of the University System of Georgia, the College of Coastal Georgia will be a college of choice for residents of Georgia and beyond by providing an accessible and affordable quality education. Advocating excellence in scholarship and community engagement, the College promotes student progression and timely graduation through student-centered programs that offer a rich and diverse student experience. Students are prepared for meaningful careers, advanced study, lifelong learning, and participation in a global and technological society. The institution will provide associate and baccalaureate degrees that support the intellectual, economic and cultural needs of the community and region.

This mission statement is fully aligned with the University System of Georgia's (USG) mission, it represents the core principles and unique institutional characteristics of a state college, and it is accentuated by strong leadership, worthwhile community linkages, and exemplary student development. Further, the new mission statement effectively infuses the College's strategic framework that is structured around five central themes: Student Enrichment, Academic Excellence, Institutional Distinction, Leadership through Community Engagement & Partnerships, and Sustainability & Organizational Development. Finally, the revised mission underscores the College's sustained commitment to community engagement that encompasses service-learning, volunteerism, practica, and internships, contributing to the cultural, economic and social well-being of the local community, southeast Georgia and beyond.

FALL 2019 STUDENT PROFILE[1]

The College of Coastal Georgia's fall 2019 enrollment, prior to census, stands at 3,528 students and FTE of 2,878. In terms of self-declared race/ethnicity, 7.5% identified as Hispanic/Latino, 0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native, 2.2% Asian, 19.4% Black or African American, 0.2% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 64.3% White, 4.3% two or more races, and 1.7% undeclared.

With an average age of 23.1, the College's student body is composed of 68.5% female and 56.7% full-time students with 89.8% indicating Georgia residency, 8.9% out-of-state, and 1.3% out-of-country.

First-generation students (whose parent(s)/legal guardian(s) have not completed a baccalaureate degree) account for 53.5% of the 3,328 students for whom we know parent/guardian educational attainment. Adult learners (25 years of age or older) and military/veterans account for 22.5% and 16.1% of the total student body, respectively. Pell recipients account for 34.8% of students, while dual-enrolled students total 456, or a 24.3% increase compared to fall 2018. Academically, the class of new freshman (for fall 2018) came to the institution with a 3.03 average high school GPA, attempted an average of 24.79 hours during the first academic year, earning an average of 18.29 credits. This cohort persisted through fall 2018 at a 56.2% rate and had an average GPA of 2.21. The work on completion is imperative as we continue to support this student population.

Influence on Completion Work

CCGA's institutional mission is a beacon that guides its completion priorities. First, by providing access and affordability, CCGA addresses the needs of the region and is particularly impactful for communities that are traditionally underserved in postsecondary education (data from the First Destination Survey shows 89% of graduates remain in the state and 81% in the region). Secondly, the College promotes student progression and timely graduation by expanding and improving retention systems and instructional delivery to support student success (as

evidenced by the high impact strategies referenced in this report). Finally, by increasing student campus and community engagement, the institution prepares students to engage in meaningful careers and to satisfy the economic and cultural needs of the community and the region (data from the First Destination Survey shows that 64% of respondents were employed full-time at or immediately after graduation compared to the national rate of 53.4%).

The next few sections will provide a retrospective review of the major actions undertaken as part of the Momentum Year initiatives, and other high-impact strategies and activities that have promoted college completion during the 2018-2019 academic year. This progress report will conclude with an overview of the effectiveness of the strategies, the plans for the coming year, and the Student Success and Completion Team that will be responsible for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating these strategies.

MOMENTUM YEAR UPDATE

The College of Coastal Georgia continues to be an active participant of the Complete College Georgia's Momentum Year initiative, and has successfully implemented a variety of initiatives that align with each of the three thematic elements: Purpose, Program of Study, and Engagement. Below you can find the major actions undertaken as part of this initiative, the components that are still in development, and the new efforts being implemented as we engage in a Momentum Approach for all students.

Element 1: Purpose

(A): EACH STUDENT IS GUIDED INTO AN ACADEMIC FOCUS AREA OR PROGRAM THAT BEST ALIGNS WITH THAT STUDENT'S ASPIRATIONS, APTITUDES, AND POTENTIAL FOR SUCCESS

Major Actions Undertaken

Academic Focus Areas have been fully implemented throughout all institutional processes.

All academic programs are categorized and aligned with Academic Focus areas, and this has been implemented across our student information system (Banner).

College transition programming has been redesigned to incorporate Academic Focus Areas and purposeful choice. From the selection of an academic focus area during the application process (students can no longer select undecided), to the orientation when students first arrive on campus, and finally to the pre-semester new student activities (Anchor Days Program), all activities are aligned by academic focus areas, and address the inform, discern, and affirm elements of making a purposeful choice.

Components Still in Development

Academic Focus areas are now a component of the customer relationship management (CRM) system, and the new application process is being designed to help students make a more purposeful choice. The inform, discern, and affirm process will be supported by Focus 2 Apply, an assessment tool that considers work interests and academic strengths to suggest areas of study, majors and potential career options. The implementation of Focus 2 Apply is part of the institutional Momentum Approach Development Plan and its deployment is progressing according to the proposed timeline:

Phase 1 - Fall 2019: During the first phase, the tool will be made available through the institutional website with two entry points, one from the Admissions landing page, and one from the Programs of Study landing page.

Phase 2 - Spring 2020: The second phase will explore a deeper integration with the admissions application in the new CRM.

Element 2: Program of Study

(A): DEGREE PROGRAMS ARE ALIGNED INTO ACADEMIC FOCUS AREAS THAT HAVE COMMON FIRST YEAR COURSES.

Major Actions Undertaken

Fully Implemented.

Academic Focus Areas and the alignment of the programs to each focus area have been approved by academic departments, and were submitted to the USG in 2018.

All 4-year program maps have been completed.

Components Still in Development

N/A (Fully Implemented)

(B): EACH FOCUS AREA AND PROGRAM OF STUDY HAS AN ESTABLISHED DEFAULT CURRICULAR (PROGRAM) MAP THAT PROVIDES TERM-BY-TERM COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND STRUCTURED CHOICE FOR APPROPRIATE ELECTIVES.
(C,D,E): STUDENTS ARE PROVIDED WITH A DEFAULT PROGRAM MAP THAT IS SEQUENCED WITH CRITICAL COURSES AND OTHER MILESTONES CLEARLY INDICATED AND ADVISED AND COUNSELED TO BUILD A PERSONAL COURSE SCHEDULE THAT INCLUDES:

- **-(C)- CORE ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS BY THE END OF THEIR FIRST ACADEMIC YEAR.**
  -(D)- THREE COURSES RELATED TO A STUDENT'S ACADEMIC FOCUS AREA IN THE FIRST YEAR.
  -(E)- AS FULL A SCHEDULE AS POSSIBLE - IDEALLY 30 CREDIT HOURS - IN THE FIRST YEAR.

Major Actions Undertaken

Every program now has a highly structured 4-year program map that guides students term-by-term.

These 4-year program maps already have: core English and Mathematics, three courses related to the academic focus area, and 30 credits during the first year.

As part of the institutional Momentum Approach Development Plan, the Center for Academic Advising developed and implemented a marketing campaign to highlight the benefits of maintaining a load at 15 credits every term. This communication campaign included a first phase of messaging for students and parents during orientation, a second phase of communication and delivery of supporting materials during Anchor Days (second stage of orientation), and third phase which was recently implemented to promote second session for those students that dropped courses at the beginning of the term to encourage them to return to a momentum load.

Components Still in Development

In collaboration with the Office of the Registrar and the Center for Academic Advising, Academic Affairs is also leading the effort to embed all 4-year maps within the "Degree Planner" feature of DegreeWorks so that students can keep track of their progress and make more purposeful choices during registration each semester to ensure they complete 15 credits per semester (or 30 credits per year).

(F): STUDENTS ARE PROVIDED WITH PERSONALIZED CURRICULAR MAPS AND HAVE ONGOING ADVISEMENT IN THEIR ACADEMIC PROGRAM. STUDENTS ARE DIRECTED TO CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES THAT ARE SUPPORTIVE OF THEIR MAJOR AND OVERALL INTEGRATION INTO THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT.

Major Actions Undertaken

All 4-year program maps have been developed and are being used to guide students through the curriculum term-by-term. To support the communication of co-curricular opportunities, the institution is in the process of developing Navigation Charts for each program. These charts will outline in detail the courses a student should take every semester, and will also outline the different types of co-curricular activities and practices that will help them integrate into the college environment.

Academic units have completed the first draft of their Navigation Charts for their programs.

Components Still in Development

The Office of Advancement has the draft Navigation Charts for every program and is working with Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management to identify the best design and structure for collaterals that can serve the purpose of the Navigation Chart, that can be extended for marketing purposes, and that can be updated in a sustainable way.

Element 3: Engagement

(G): SELECT SPECIFIC ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES THAT YOUR INSTITUTION IS INVESTIGATING, PILOTING, IMPLEMENTING OR BUILDING TO A GREATER SCALE THAT PROMOTES STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, CONNECTIVITY AND SATISFACTION WITH THEIR PROGRAM OF STUDY AND/OR COLLEGE ITSELF, OR THEIR PRODUCTIVE ACADEMIC MINDSET. THESE MAY BE HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES (HIPS), REORGANIZED COURSES THROUGH G2C, ACADEMIC MINDSET INTERVENTIONS OR OTHER PRACTICES.DEGREE PROGRAMS ARE ALIGNED INTO ACADEMIC FOCUS AREAS THAT HAVE COMMON FIRST YEAR COURSES.

ENDEAVOR

Major Actions Undertaken

- In alignment with the institutional Momentum Approach Development Plan, the Endeavor Steering Committee has now been formed and is guiding the development and implementation of this important project.
    - Endeavor Steering Committee:

Name	Affiliation
Bob Clark (Co-Chair)	Arts & Humanities
Tate Holbrook (Co-Chair)	Natural Sciences
Ashley Barnes	Nursing
Jamaal Brown	Student Life
Cody Cocchi	Service-Learning
Lesley Leonard	Health Sciences
Lee McKinley	Business & Public Management
Courtenay Miller	Mathematics
Jack Parish	Education & Teacher Preparation
Roscoe Scarborough	Social Sciences
Niki Schmauch	Academic Services
Jennifer Wadman	Advising/Camden
Brian Weese	Career Services

- The Steering Committee is developing Endeavor as unifying framework intended to:
  - guide student development by helping students appreciate and articulate the value of their diverse academic experiences,
  - direct institutional energy and resources toward activities that are consistent with the College's key values and priorities, and away from superfluous initiatives, and
  - help build a more cohesive and distinctive Coastal Georgia identity that embodies our overarching focus on student success.
- The committee is currently seeking broad input from various stakeholder groups, including faculty, staff, students, and the community, to identify a set of core competencies that students are expected to develop through a transformative education at the College of Coastal Georgia. These cross-disciplinary abilities, skills, and dispositions will prepare Coastal Georgia graduates to be successful workers, informed and engaged citizens, and lifelong learners. Once established, the general competencies can be aligned with specific curricular and co-curricular programs, activities, and learning outcomes.

Components Still in Development

This major project is in its development stages. While a detailed implementation plan and timeline has been developed as part of the creation of the prospectus (please refer to Momentum Approach Development Plan), this timeline may change based on the work and deployment of the project by the Steering Committee.

(H): SELECT SPECIFIC ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES THAT YOUR INSTITUTION IS INVESTIGATING, PILOTING, IMPLEMENTING OR BUILDING TO A GREATER SCALE THAT PROMOTES STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, CONNECTIVITY AND SATISFACTION WITH THEIR PROGRAM OF STUDY AND/OR COLLEGE ITSELF, OR THEIR PRODUCTIVE ACADEMIC MINDSET. THESE MAY BE HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES (HIPS), REORGANIZED COURSES THROUGH G2C, ACADEMIC MINDSET INTERVENTIONS OR OTHER PRACTICES.DEGREE PROGRAMS ARE ALIGNED INTO ACADEMIC FOCUS AREAS THAT HAVE COMMON FIRST YEAR COURSES.

GATEWAY2COMPLETION

Major Actions Undertaken and Plans for the Incoming Years.

- Throughout the 2018-2019 academic year, the G2C Steering Committee and Course-Specific Committees evaluated the course and college-wide policies and procedures that impacted the four G2C selected courses (ENGL 1102, MATH 0999, POLS 1101, and BIOL 1107) in order to determine what changes to implement in the 2019-2020 academic year in an effort to improve student success, as measured by reduced DFWI rates.
- The course-specific committees evaluated their individual strengths and weaknesses within each course
  - MATH 999
    - Last year, separate from the G2C process, the math department had created the MATH 1101+998 pathway. To better advise students into the correct mathematics pathway, the department created new placement guidelines for all gateway mathematics courses, and implemented new a textbook and homework system in MATH 1111 (the paired course to MATH 999).
    - As part of the G2C redesign, the committee decided from 2019-2020 to move the corequisite course to a computer lab setting to encourage more active learning, to regularly meet with the instructors of the course to share ideas and activities, and to standardize the course content across sections.
  - ENGL 1102
    - Last year, the department was able to gain a permanent lecture line in an effort to reduce faculty overloads.
    - Looking forward to 2019-2020, the department converted a vacant line in another discipline to English to reduce part-time faculty use. The committee also plans to create a repository of assignments and resources and encourage faculty to advertise "themes" for their courses (labeled on the public course schedule).
  - POLS 1101
    - There is only one full-time faculty member for POLS 1101 who just completed his second year.

- ▪ Looking forward to 2019-2020, the committee plans to make students more aware of support services available (in syllabus and in email), reduce the number of high-stakes assignments in favor of more frequent lower-stakes assignments, keep attendance and contact students who miss several courses, and collaborate with the part-time faculty.
  - o BIOL 1107
  - o Last year, the department removed the prerequisite of BIOL 1107 from 1108 and through advising are encouraging students to take BIOL 1108 first. The department also created BIOL 1104 Organismal Biology, so that only STEM-majors take BIOL 1107 and 1108.
  - o Looking forward to 2019-2020, the Committee plans to introduce more hands-on activities and learning support for the lecture course, assess mindset and adopt mindset principles into the course, and focus on the lab component for interventions.
- For institution-wide changes, the Steering Committee identified several areas of improvement to work on over the next two years. Some work has already been completed, for example, the Director of eLearning has included a link to the student support offices on every D2L course page. Additionally, the Office of Academic Affairs is working with Technology Services to create additional reports on all of the categories identified for tracking student success.
- The Office of Academic Affairs has a multi-year plan to reduce faculty overload and part-time pay in an effort to reinvest those dollars into full-time faculty lines. The existing "faculty workload" report will also be modified to identify the number of preps and number of brand-new courses taught per faculty member to help deans and chairs make scheduling decisions. Additionally, the institution plans to evaluate all of the policies and procedures that have not been updated since the college transitioned from a two-year institution and make a timeline for reviewing and updating these. As an example, the policy for withdrawing from a course by the midterm of the semester has not been updated, and in its current form it can be a contributing factor for the DFWI rate; pushing the withdrawal date back could give students a better sense of where they will end up before deciding to withdraw. One suggestion, which is used at other institutions, is make the last day to withdraw the last day of classes.
- In summary, both the Steering Committee and course-specific committees were able to address numerous areas for improvement, both institutionally and in the specific courses, that we will work on over the next two years in an effort to improve student success at the freshmen level.

OTHER INSTITUTIONAL HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES & OUTCOMES

High Impact Strategy (1)

Enroll EVERY student in need of remediation directly into gateway collegiate courses in English and mathematics, with corequisite Learning Support

General Overview

To promote access while at the same time promoting retention, progression, and graduation, it is imperative that the College has an effective structure to support students who arrive at college with a gap in academic preparation. The College has fully embraced the University System of Georgia's corequisite remediation model by shifting the focus from traditional remedial education as a standalone enterprise to providing the support that students need to successfully complete credit-bearing, collegiate-level courses that align with their baccalaureate programs of study.

Summary of Work

The College continues to transform the Learning Support structure; every student in need of remediation enrolls in a gateway collegiate course in English and Mathematics, with corequisite support. As the institution discontinued the Foundation courses in both English and Mathematics, CCGA math and English faculty and administrators have participated in the USG Corequisite Academies and shared knowledge with faculty and administrators at other USG institutions.

Outcomes

When the Department of Arts and Humanities discontinued the Foundations course, as part of the updated USG corequisite model, the department offered a designated English corequisite support section during the spring of 2018 with students that would have traditionally gone in a Foundations-level course. Their success rate in the gateway course was 64.3%, while the historical success rate for students with the same characteristics was only 43.8% (success rate in ENGL1101 within one year for students starting in ENGL0989 during spring 2015, 2016, and 2017). It is important to highlight that not only was the success rate much higher, but students were able to complete the gateway course within one semester, while the 43.8% success rate corresponded to completing the gateway course within one year.

Fall 2018 was the first semester in which the ENGL 0989 Foundations course was completely discontinued. Using the updated USG Learning Support placement criteria, students enrolled in ENGL 0999 and ENGL 1101 if they were not exempt from Learning Support. From the fall 2018 new freshman cohort, 63.3% of the students that started in ENGL 0999 successfully completed the gateway ENGL 1101 course within one semester.

Similarly, Foundations-level courses in Math were completely discontinued in fall 2018. From the fall 2018 new freshman cohort, 60.6% of the students that started in 0997 successfully completed the gateway MATH 1001 course within one semester. When comparing with the now-discontinued Foundations structure, the results from fall 2016 and fall 2017 indicate that 52.2% of the students starting in MATH 0987 completed a Math gateway course within one year. Once again, it is important to note that not only the success rate is higher with the corequisite model, but that students are completing the gateway course within one semester; the Foundations structure required an additional semester to complete this gateway course.

Moving towards full-scale, corequisite support for the College Algebra pathway has presented additional challenges. As the new corequisite structure was developed, it was clear that, for this pathway, the deficiencies in academic preparation are harder to overcome with corequisite support. To address this, a staggered approach was developed in which students with larger gaps in preparation now start their first semester with MATH 1101 with corequisite support and then progress to MATH 1111. Students with higher placement scores can also qualify to be placed directly in MATH 1111 with corequisite support, and only those with high enough scores are placed in MATH 1111 without support. From the fall 2018 new freshman cohort, only 34.5% of the students that started in MATH 0999 successfully completed the gateway MATH 1111 course. While this higher than the 26.4% rate for students that started in the Foundations course for algebra that successfully completed MATH 1111 within one year (fall 2016 and fall 2017), it is still a very low success rate. Therefore, faculty in the Department of Mathematics selected MATH 0999 as one of the College of Coastal Georgia's courses for improvement within the G2C project.

Finally, from the fall 2018 new freshman cohort, 44.8% of the students that started in 0997 successfully completed the gateway MATH 1101 course within one semester. Some of these students were taking this course as part of the staggered approach towards MATH 1111; for others, this course was enough to satisfy their Area A requirement. From the group of students who progressed to take MATH 1111 as part of this staggered approach, 28.6% (4/14) successfully completed this course.

Lessons Learned and Long-term Goal

Arts and Humanities will analyze the experiences and challenges of the 18 students who did not pass the ENGL 0999 corequisite and ENGL 1101 gateway course in fall 2018. English faculty will obtain information about how those 18 students have progressed toward graduation in spring 2019. The quantitative and qualitative data will help English faculty and student-support staff develop additional strategies for student success. With the English faculty members' work on ENGL 1102 as part of the Gateway2Completion project, the entire freshman writing sequence is part of the department's study and student-success plan. This work supports the institutional efforts to align gateway courses with the purposeful pathways offered in our programs of study.

The Department of Mathematics continues to reevaluate the College Algebra pathway. Through the Gateway2Completion project, the course committee has moved the corequisite course to a computer lab setting to

encourage more active learning, to regularly meet with the instructors of the course to share ideas and activities, and to standardize the course content across sections. The department also continues to work closely with academic advising to make sure all the students who can be served by the Quantitative Reasoning pathway are placed in this course (with the appropriate level of support), as this pathway continues to exhibit better success rates.

The full implementation of corequisite support in English and Mathematics has resulted in the creation of new Banner processes to overcome a variety of logistic challenges. While the faculty and staff are now more comfortable with the deployment of the new structure, the relentless realignment of parameters and processes has required a considerable amount of communication and collaboration to update processes and bring the model to an efficient and sustainable delivery. Faculty in the departments of English and Mathematics have fully embraced the new LS structure and continue to make curricular changes to make sure all Learning Support students have the best chance of success.

Primary points of contact
Dr. Elizabeth Wurz, Department Chair, Arts and Humanities, Associate Professor of English, ewurz@ccga.edu
Dr. Tanya Cofer, Department Chair and Associate Professor of Mathematics, tcofer@ccga.edu
Dr. German Vargas, Assistant Vice President for Academic Student Engagement and Associate Professor of Mathematics, gvargas@ccga.edu

High Impact Strategy (2)
Increase Dual Enrollment student outreach to local county school districts.

General Overview

The College continues to strengthen its Dual Enrollment program. The program is delivered as a collaborative enterprise supported by various institutional units, with participation from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, and the Business Office. The administrative oversight is handled by the Lead Academic Advisor, and the institution has a designated Dual Enrollment Advisor.

Summary of Work

Coastal continues to expand and enhance relationships with high school counselors, locally, regionally and statewide, as well as home school programs. The institution continues to host an annual Dual Enrollment/Admissions breakfast for all area high school counselors, including those in the Glynn, McIntosh, Camden, Wayne, and Brantley County school systems as well as area private high schools. Orientation events are held for students and parents. A portal for High School Counselors was launched this year to allow counselors to review the status of a student's admission application in the Coastal system. This provides the high school counselor with up-to-date information on what is needed as they work to complete the admissions process with the student.

The strengthening of the bonds with the school systems in the region is paired with a focused student recruitment plan, with regular College information programs to continually update guidance counselors on new degree programs, and with Dual Enrollment Information Nights for prospective students and parents. In addition, the dual enrollment advisor attends Home School organization meetings to provide information about the program to parents and students. Students presently enrolled in Dual enrollment also participate in these events and talk with students and parents about their experiences.

This year, the College of Coastal Georgia planned an evening to celebrate the impending graduation of our dual enrollment seniors. During this event, students are encouraged to consider Coastal as a college option. In addition, we encourage students to apply for the college's foundation's scholarships, and several received those scholarships.

Outcomes

With the goal of promoting access and shortening time to degree completion, the institution needs to promote Dual Enrollment in all our service counties and home school organizations, and as such, the total enrollment in this program is an important metric for success. With a baseline of 203 students participating in the program during fall 2015, the efforts to strengthen the program have resulted in 304 participants during fall 2016, 418 participants during fall 2017, 367 participants during fall 2018, and 456 participants during fall 2019 (a 24.3% increase from fall 2018 to fall 2019).

Lessons Learned

With the continued growth of the program, the institution has given additional attention to processing students through any single process (e.g. communication with individual counselors, collection of participation agreements, financial aid processes, textbook rentals, etc.). This scalability was addressed via process mapping sessions where the Lead Academic Advisor worked with various units to streamline communication and documentation gathering processes. The new structure is giving the Dual Enrollment Advisor additional time to focus on student support and outreach to the school officials, counselors, and parents.

The institution met the previous decrease in the Dual Enrollment population for fall 2018, which we attributed to the delivery of Dual Enrollment courses within the high schools by the local technical college, with additional outreach to the schools and community which included additional informational events; a greater presence on the local high school campuses by both the dual enrollment advisor and an admissions counselor; and articles and advertising in the local newspapers.

Based on the June 2018 update to SACSCOC policy regarding Dual Enrollment, and in light of the concerns raised by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts Performance Audit Division in their Special Examination Report (No.17-09, January 2018), the institution has not engaged in dual enrollment instruction at the high schools.

Primary point of contact

Patricia Morris, Lead Academic Advisor, pmorris@ccga.edu
Linny A. Bailey, Dual Enrollment Academic Advisor, lbailey@ccga.edu
Dr. German Vargas, Assistant Vice President for Academic Student Engagement and Associate Professor of Mathematics, gvargas@ccga.edu

High Impact Strategy (3)
Improved Communications through Technology

General Overview

The College has implemented several technology enhancements and new software packages to improve communication with students. These improvements have allowed students to get the information they seek faster and allowed the College to take quicker action on student needs.

Summary of Work

- **Student Portal "Mariner Success Crew" Feature**. Academic Affairs worked with Technology Services to create a mechanism that increases the cohesiveness of the College's support services by connecting every student with 5 support staff/faculty: An Academic Advisor, Financial Support Advisor, Academic Support Advisor, Career Advisor, and Campus Life Advisor. Students can click on one of their advisors in this portal feature, which will connect them via email without having to open an email client. The email is sent to the advisor (with cc to the student) who will receive an email from "Success Crew" with a subject

line: "Success Crew question from [Student Name]". The advisor's reply will be sent directly to the advisee.

- **Webpage Chat Box Widget.** Residence Life and Housing began use of a Tawk.to chat box widget on all of the Office of Residence Life and Housing webpages (http://www.ccga.edu/reslife). When anyone navigates to the webpage, a chat box is available at the bottom right of the page where students and visitors can ask questions to the Residence Life staff. Staff receive an alert on their cell phone or on their internet browser that a question has been asked so that they can answer it. If no one is available to answer the question, the student is informed and a staff member will get back to them in a timely fashion.
- **Commit2Coastal.** Expanding on the new USG requirement to have students sign a registration agreement to help lower outstanding student balances, the College implemented Commit2Coastal for fall 2019. Starting a couple months before the semester begins, students who are registered but not yet "committed" begin receiving weekly correspondence (e.g., emails, phone calls, postcards) reminding them that they must "Commit2Coastal". In order to commit, a student must go to the portal and state whether they still intend to take courses for the given semester and, if so, sign the registration agreement. The first question has been powerful. The Registrar's Office weekly reviews responses and drops any student who stated they were not planning to come.
- **"Ask Jack"** Text Messaging. Building off of the work of Georgia State University's "Pounce" virtual assistant, the Office of Admissions worked with administrators and staff across campus to form an extensive knowledge base that was incorporated into AdmitHub, a subscription service that fosters student success with mobile messaging powered by artificial intelligence. Available to all students that applied to the College for fall 2019, students can text their questions to "Ask Jack" and the AdmitHub artificial intelligence system will link their question to data in our institutional knowledge base. Representative from Admissions and Academic Affairs monitor questions asked to update the knowledge base to ensure students receive the correct information.

Outcomes

- **Mariner Success Crew**: We have consistently heard from students who didn't know who their academic advisor was or just whom to contact on campus for various needs. Students have to log into the student portal to access their email and their courses in Brightspace (D2L), so putting this information front and center on an information hub and providing a convenient method to contact these advisors has solved an existing problem. In the six-month period since this feature began (March 25 – September 25, 2019), just one of our academic advisors has receive 229 emails through this feature. Our Financial Support advisors have received a total of 358 emails, our academic support staff have received a total of 39 emails, and our career services staff have received a total of 38 emails.
- **Chat Box Widget**: We have had 131 chats and 5 offline messages since it has gone live in June 2019.
- Commit2Coastal: For fall 2019, 73 students were dropped over the summer from a total of 297 fall courses as a result of this process. Previously, these students would have stayed in the courses until after the add/drop period ended for the semester which prevented us from "reselling" those seats to students who may have been waiting to take a needed course to graduate.
- "**Ask Jack":** This tool has only been recently added, but we already have seen the power of this service. This semester, we sent out the USG Mindset Survey via email to our new freshmen and saw less than 20 responses on the first day it was emailed. However, 16 days after the survey was emailed we sent it out via Ask Jack and over 50 new freshmen completed the survey that same day.

Long-term Goal

The institution is considering expanding "Ask Jack" to serve all students, not only admitted students, as well as working through a more cohesive model of communication. Along with the Chat Box widget in Residential Life, the College has an existing chat box feature for the Library and also a Call Center that receives questions related to topics across all offices. As a long-term strategy, the institution is considering bring these different services together for improved branding and potential cross-training of employees.

Lessons Learned

Mariner Success Crew: There has been some confusion with use of the word "advisor" in this box – our "academic support advisors" refer to our tutoring staff, but some students have mistaken them for academic advisors. We are presently working on improved nomenclature.

Chat Box Widget: The offline chat does not require that visitors leave contact information, so there may be some missed opportunities to answer questions. However, through the frequently asked questions the offices can review the information in the website or train staff in new areas. In addition, it has helped streamline various processes since questions are being answered in an immediate manner instead of responding through email or voicemail.

Commit2Coastal: Communication with students started on July 1 for the fall semester Commit2Coastal process. An introduction to Commit2Coastal was also included in the orientation programming. However, email communications were released too early for some special populations of students that had not yet attended orientation, and this caused some confusion. Communication plans were quickly adjusted to ensure they would only go to continuing students as well as new students who have already completed an orientation.

"Ask Jack": While this feature was just implemented in the last couple months, the institution has benefited greatly from the lessons learned from Georgia State University, who saw a 21.4% decrease in summer melt, a 16.9% increase in flawless FAFSAs, and a 14.9% increase in loan counseling. One such "tip" shared by GSU is that a message should have some action associated to it; rather than inform students about an event, the college is now asking them if they plan to attend. This has the added benefit of gathering an immense amount of data that can be parsed through to determine, for example, what reasons students may have had for not attending an event they were expected to attend.

Primary point of contact

Alan Ours, Chief Information Officer, aours@ccga.edu

High Impact Strategy (4)
Retention Campaigns.

General Overview

In an effort to organize the various retention strategies, initiatives and activities executed across campus, we have implemented a campaign structure that is allowing us to better conceptualize, design, track and evaluate all our retention efforts. Under this structure we are now organizing these efforts as "***Campaigns***", where each campaign has a ***Goal***, an ***Audience/Target***, and various ***Actions/Activities*** each one of them with an associated objective. The motivation for such a defined structure stemmed form the opportunity it opened at the time of reporting; we now have all this information well documented in a database and it is allowing us to connect the campaigns with student data from Banner, which in turn is creating a much richer ground from which to extract the analysis and evaluation of the initiatives.

Summary of Work

During spring 2019 Academic Affairs worked with Technology services to create a custom table in Banner where all the campaigns are being documented. This Banner table now houses every instance of any type of retention campaign activity, and is being actively used to document activities and to evaluate their impact. This new structure was launched with a limited number of campaigns but additional campaigns are being added for tracking and evaluation purposes. It is important to note that many of the activities indicated below were already in place and have been part of our retention efforts of previous semesters, but this new structure is allowing us to better document the activities and to perform detailed treatment effect analyses.

The launching campaign was the **Academic Standing Campaign**, which targeted spring 2019 students that were not in good academic standing. The goal of this campaign was to reduce the number of students in this Audience/Target group that were not in good academic standing by the end of the term. The activities for this campaign included contacts from a freshman advisor, a faculty advocate, and contacts from the Athletic Department, Housing and the student employer when applicable. Similarly, a **Midterm Grades Campaign** was launched, which targeted students that had one or more failing or unsatisfactory grades (D, F or U) at midterm. The goal of this campaign was to reduce the number of failing grades in this audience/target by the end of the term, when compared to the midterm failing grades. This campaign included the same type of contacts from the academic standing campaign, but also included a very strong outreach from Academic Services to connect students struggling in the courses with the specific tutors for those classes.

Outcomes

Academic Standing Campaign

From the Audience/Target of 279 students, 76 of them were able to return to Good Academic Standing, which corresponds to a 27.24% reduction of students not in Good Academic Standing.

By performing a treatment analysis using propensity score matching, it was shown that students that were contacted by academic advisors were around 16% more likely to return to good academic standing. While other activities may have had different levels of impact on student success, we were not able to find any evidence that the treatment had any effect on the academic standing metric under evaluation. Students were matched using the following covariates: Gender, Race, Age, High School GPA, FAFSA, First Generation, and the total number of credits enrolled in the semester.

Midterm Grades Campaign

For the Audience/Target of 1344 students that had one or more failing or unsatisfactory grades (D, F or U) at midterm, their total number of failing grades was 2254. By the end of the term, this same group had a total of 1586 failing grades, a 29.64% reduction in the number of failing grades. This reduction is 2.18% higher when compared with the corresponding reduction for spring 2018 for the equivalent target population (27.46%, from 2265 to 1643), and it is 2.68% higher when compared with spring 2017 (26.96%, from 2285 to 1669).

Lessons Learned

Academic Standing Campaign

By performing a treatment analysis using propensity score matching, it was shown that students that were contacted by academic advisors were around 16% more likely to return to good academic standing. While other activities may have had different levels of impact on student success, we were not able to find any evidence that the treatment had any effect on the academic standing metric under evaluation. Students were matched using the following covariates: Gender, Race, Age, High School GPA, FAFSA, First Generation, and the total number of credits enrolled in the semester.

Midterm Grades Campaign

While the results of this campaign were positive, we were not able to show, via the treatment effect analysis, that the differences found were directly connected with the activities performed in this campaign. The institution will continue to perform interventions and will continue to try to identify which interventions are more effective than others.

Long-term Goal

The scalability of this structure is allowing the institution to incorporate more campaigns and use similar mechanisms for documenting and reporting this information in a way that directly connects with each student record. For example, this campaign structure is now being used to document all advising activity in a general advising campaign, and is now being used for the pilot of the "Always Alert System" which is being developed in fall 2019. The long-term goal is to use this structure to document and analyze every retention and student success intervention in this home-grown platform.

Primary point of contact

Dr. German Vargas, Assistant Vice President for Academic Student Engagement and Associate Professor of Mathematics, gvargas@ccga.edu
Dr. Michael Butcher, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, and Title IX Coordinator, mbutcher@ccga.edu

OBSERVATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The College of Coastal Georgia has been fully committed to implementing the various elements of the Momentum Year, is following a detailed Momentum Approach Development Plan, and as documented above, is making great efforts to improve completion at the institution. As an immediate metric representing the effectiveness of these efforts, the retention of the First-time Full-time Freshman at the institution continues to be at a level that is below the target values. For the fall 2018 cohort, the IPEDS FTFTF one-year retention rate was 56.2%, an increase of 2% when compared with fall 2017 (54.2%), but still under 57.4%, the retention rate of USG state colleges (one-year retention of full-time freshman Bachelor's and Associate degree seeking students from fall 2017). The institution recognizes student success as its main priority and is currently searching for a Director of Retention and Student Success to guide all future initiatives.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND COMPLETION TEAM

As indicated in the high impact strategy 4, Dr. German Vargas, Assistant Vice President for Academic Student Engagement and Associate Professor of Mathematics, and Dr. Michael Butcher, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, and Title IX Coordinator, team up to help manage, monitor and evaluate the various retention initiatives; however, the development and implementation of the various high impact strategies relies on a very broad group of individuals across campus. From the academic units directly associated with the curricular changes (G2C and the LS changes), to various staff offices like Advising, Academic Services, Career services, Housing, Admissions, Financial Aid, all play an essential role in student success and are part of the collective conversation around completion. Under the leadership and coordination of the new Director of Retention and Student Success, the Complete College CCGA Taskforce members will become part of the Student Success and Completion Team which include the following individuals:

Director of Retention and Student Success (Chair)

Johnny Evans Jr., Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Jason W. Umfress, Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management

German Vargas, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President for Academic Student Engagement; Associate Professor of Mathematics

Laura Lynch, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President for Faculty Affairs; Associate Professor of Mathematics

Michael F. Butcher, Ed.D.
Assistant Vice President for Student Affairsl Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator

Elizabeth Wurz, M.F.A., Ph.D
Department Chair, Arts and Humanities; Associate Professor of English

Tanya Cofer, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Chair, Department of
Mathematics

Michelle B. Ham
Vice President for Business Affairs

Kimberly Burgess
Assistant Director of Admissions Operations

Terral Harris, AFC
Director, Office of Financial Aid

Niki Schmauch, M.Ed.
Coordinator of Academic Services

Patricia Morris
Lead Academic Advisor

Ronald Harding, M.Ed.
Senior Research Associate

Syvillia Averett, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Faculty Senate
Chair

Matt Hanak
Information Security Officer, Staff Assembly Chair

In closing, the College of Coastal Georgia is fully committed to making student success an overarching priority, to fully embrace this in its culture, and to embed this priority into institutional processes, including performance reviews, annual reports and budget reviews. The College believes its student progression metrics, standards, and retention/graduation strategies are clear evidence of its commitment to having the student at the center of the entire operation.

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[1] Total enrollment, FTE, and all demographic information are based on USG Preliminary Student Enrollment Report and persisted report data for fall 2019; the academic achievement metrics are based on Banner SIS data for the fall 2018 cohort.