



## GEORGIA GWINNETT COLLEGE

### INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) is **one of four access institutions within the University System of Georgia that primarily offer baccalaureate degrees**. The GGC mission states that the College “provides access to targeted baccalaureate and associate level degrees that meet the economic development needs of the growing and diverse population of the northeast Atlanta metropolitan region.” Founded in 2005, Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) has always operated in the context of a clear strategic plan derived from its mission. GGC’s growth and success serving a challenging population are evidence of the College’s commitment to providing not only access to post-secondary educational opportunity but also support structures that engender success.

GGC’s model of education reflects its values of access, attention, and affordability. It uses a coordinated care model of learning and progression, integrating efforts across campus to ensure that it best serves all students. Further, GGC provides intersectional programming for student success, understanding that layering high impact practices addresses the widest audience and has the greatest effect on students reaching their academic and personal goals. Four broad synthesized goals of the Division of Academic Affairs organize and structure GGC’s efforts: Communities of Learners, Mentoring Reimagined, Engagement Made Meaningful, and Authentic Acculturation.

Basic demographic characteristics of the GGC student population show a preponderance of those who are traditionally underserved and for whom substantial support structures are essential. These characteristics of GGC’s student population shape the College’s strategies for promoting completion. GGC continues to enroll significant numbers of students who historically have not had access to higher education: those who have relatively low levels of academic preparation; are first-generation college students; are low income; and are members of racial and/or ethnic minorities. The mean high school GPA of entering freshmen continues to be between 2.69 and 2.82, and over one-third require remediation in at least one subject. Approximately 40% of each entering cohort is a first-generation student and over 50% of each entering cohort is eligible for a Pell grant. GGC remains a majority-minority institution, and the proportion of Hispanic students continues to increase.

GGC’s key priorities in support of Georgia’s college completion goals are increasing enrollment among typically underserved populations, aiding students with a successful transition to higher education, and providing tools to students that enable early successes. GGC has focused first on increasing access and success for the traditionally underserved. An effective transition to higher education is facilitated by the College’s focus on student engagement and student success in the first year, most notably through a network of support structures, careful course design and pedagogy, and advising. Early successes are fostered by the provision of tools such as academic advising for students enrolled in Learning Support pre-college courses, concurrent remediation, the multi-faceted tutoring program available to all students through the Academic Enhancement Center, and programs tailored to the needs of specific sub-populations of first-year students. The College’s overall commitment to active learning and authentic experiences for all students nurtures ongoing success, deep learning, and preparation for post-graduate careers and study. Finally, GGC’s commitment to maintaining an affordable environment makes continuation and completion more possible for its students.

### MOMENTUM YEAR UPDATE

#### Purposeful Choice:

Georgia Gwinnett College has undertaken to implement multiple campus strategies to ensure that all new students reflect on their interests and skills, select an academic focus area, and have an academic experience during their first year that provides rich information about that focus area. These strategies come into play at multiple time points, beginning well before a student submits an application to GGC.

**Preview Day** Four Preview Day events welcomed approximately 965 people during the 2018-2019 academic year. An important component of Preview Day is the focus area breakout sessions. Prospective students have the opportunity to engage with faculty in their areas of interest to learn more about related majors and careers. Students who are undecided about a focus area have the opportunity to meet with staff in the School of Transitional Studies to learn about career exploration strategies and resources. The Preview Day welcome presentation includes a discussion of the benefits of completing 30 hours by the end of the first year, choosing a focus area, and what it means to enter college with an academic mindset.

**High School Advising Fairs** As part of the Momentum Year Grant, a team of faculty, staff and students visited four Gwinnett County High Schools with large first generation, low income, and ethnically diverse student populations. The purpose of the high school visits is to introduce students and parents to strategies and resources that support Momentum Year elements. Participants visit tables staffed by representatives from academic affairs, student affairs, and enrollment management to discuss majors, co-curricular activities, and financial aid and to speak with current GGC students about their college experience. Student participants also receive the *Planning for College Resource Guide* that includes tips and resources for choosing a major, paying for college, connecting to the campus environment, and preparing for a successful first semester. GGC representatives returned to two of the high schools to speak at a senior breakfast and advisement sessions. In all, over 900 students and parents were engaged at these events during the 2018-2019 school year. GGC is working with Gwinnett County Public Schools to identify dates for fairs and workshops during the 2019-2020 school year.

**Focus2Apply** Information on the Focus2Apply career assessment tool was included in correspondence from the Office of New Student Connections to help students choose a focus area before attending orientation. Focus2Apply uses reported student interests and strengths to identify potential career paths. The suggested career paths are mapped back to GGC's focus areas and majors. Students can also access the tool on the GGC website. Since its implementation in spring 2019, 915 prospective students have utilized Focus2Apply.

**Grizzly Orientation** Grizzly Orientation (GO) aims to integrate students into the GGC community and to equip them with practical knowledge to successfully start the school year. GO also offers students the opportunity to discern and affirm their focus areas and major choices. Students are grouped based on focus areas and meet with faculty in their respective areas to discuss related careers and curricula. They decide to keep their focus area/major or change it and receive a color-coded bracelet that symbolizes the affirmation of their choice. Students then attend advising and registration sessions and receive assistance in selecting appropriate first semester schedules aligned with Momentum Year goals (e.g. English and Math in the first 30 hours). Grizzly Orientation programming includes parent/family orientation meetings to acculturate families to college life and GGC in particular.

**Course triads tied to focus areas** A fusion of block scheduling processes and learning communities pedagogy supports efforts to connect new students to a focus area. First-Year Learning Community triads are based on focus areas and include nine credit hours. During the GO registration session, students select a triad based on their focus area and are guided by faculty mentors to add two additional courses, totaling 15 credit hours for the semester. Triads provide common experiences anchored in the focus areas and allow for affirmation or continued exploration of the focus areas and majors. Additionally, these grouped courses foster a sense of belonging as there is intentional interaction around common interests and experiences.

During the initial student registration sessions, 2678 students were enrolled in course triads. Students were allowed to make adjustments to their schedules during drop-add, and 60% elected to keep their course triads intact. The demographic characteristics of students in course triads are consistent with the demographic characteristics of the overall student population.

**GGC 1000 First-Year Seminar** GGC 1000 sections incorporate a unit on growth mindset and major and career exploration. Instructors discuss with students what majors and minors are, as well as the contours of GGC's six academic focus areas. Students learn about how to navigate and interpret DegreeWorks course audits in Banner, unpack program plans, and study degree pathways. Many instructors have students complete the Focus 2 Career Assessment and invite representatives from GGC's Career Development and Advising Center (CDAC) to help students analyze their results. In this way, the first-year seminar helps students affirm or continue to explore their focus area and major choices, while also connecting them with career readiness resources.

**Career Readiness Program** The Career Development and Advising and the Center for Teaching Excellence collaborated on building an on-line, asynchronous career readiness program. This series of modules supports students in developing a suite of career resources and workforce skills through content delivery, self-reflection, and assessment. This non-credit program was piloted during Spring 2019 and is now available to all enrolled students.

### **Academic Mindset:**

**USG Mindset Survey** This fall (2019), Academic Affairs requested all faculty teaching ENGL 1101 administer the USG Mindset Survey during the first and last three weeks of the semester. These pre-/post- assessment efforts provide significant data collection around students' development of academic/growth mindset and allow for helpful disaggregation according to corequisite vs. individual sections, standalone vs. learning community-embedded sections, and EAP (English for Academic Purposes) vs. non-EAP oriented sections.

Instructors for all sections of GGC 1000 were also asked to encourage students to complete the USG Mindset Survey. Many instructors include lessons on how to cultivate productive academic mindset as part of the course's learning outcomes around

navigating and planning for challenges, both academic and personal. Additional sense of belonging and acculturation questions are included in regular assessment efforts for the course, such as the end of semester attitudinal survey for students.

**Mindset Training for PSI Tutors** GGC's ongoing, successful Peer Supplemental Instruction program for STEM class support was awarded a three-year STEM IV grant by the USG to incorporate academic mindset elements into training for the peer leaders, as well as during each PSI session. The School of Transitional Studies' Academic Enhancement Center staff is partnering with the School of Science and Technology's PSI faculty to build the training program, relevant mindset interventions, and appropriate assessment surveys to begin piloting FA19. Mindset intervention implementation is targeted for select PSI sessions in SP20. Scaling to all sessions is intended by the second year of the grant period (AY20-21).

**First Generation Student Programming** Over 45% of GGC students self-identify as first generation (FG). GGC is committed to serving the needs of this special population, creating more equitable access to college knowledge, and promoting progression and student success. To these ends, GGC staff and faculty have created several initiatives to develop self-efficacy and establish a strong sense of Grizzly community with our first generation students: the Grizzly First Scholars (G1) learning community program; Bears Engaging and Mentoring (BEAM) peer mentoring program to support G1 scholars; and the First-Gen Faculty/Staff doorcard campaign. In Spring 2019 the First-Generation Taskforce, consisting of faculty, staff, and students, was formed in order to continue advocacy and support work for GGC's first-gen community.

### **Clear Pathway:**

**Curriculum Maps:** Curricular maps for all GGC majors are available on the GGC website. Students receive copies of these maps during GO sessions and reference them when meeting with faculty mentors and professional advisors. These maps support degree completion in four years by identifying courses totaling at least 15 credit hours for each semester. Furthermore, the maps identify co-curricular activities and practices that are supportive of students' majors and overall integration into the college environment.

**Faculty Training and Data Dissemination:** A second part of the Momentum grant focused on increasing faculty data literacy related to taking 15 hours each semester and completing math and English in the first year. GGC identified and trained faculty ambassadors to present GGC data to their colleagues regarding this Momentum Year strategy. One of the key successes is the dissemination of GGC data that showed the correlation between credit load and student success. After the presentations, 255 fulltime faculty took the assessment survey; 188 of them report having heard the relevant presentation from their colleagues. Of that number, 67% report having found the information moderately to extremely persuasive. 63% report that the information had moderate to extreme influence on how they conducted AY 18-19 mentoring meetings. 68% report the information to be moderately to extremely likely to influence mentoring meetings in the future.

### **Additional Strategies**

#### *Coordinate Programs and Services to Ensure Access to Higher Education*

GGC has focused on fostering meaningful relationships with Gwinnett County Public Schools, recognizing its mission to serve its immediate geographic region and the population in Gwinnett County. Similar sustained attention is dedicated to other schools from which GGC attracts students. These relationships are developed and sustained through ongoing events and visits. GGC's Admissions Counselors have built working relationships with guidance counselors at 202 individual schools in Georgia and are committed to visiting each school 2-3 times a year.

The College invests in student-focused activities accessible to all prospective students, including:

**Access-focused admissions criteria and recruiting** are central to the College's mission. GGC complies with the access mission institution admission standards established under University System of Georgia Board of Regents policies, and is committed to ensuring admissions procedures implement these standards.

**English Language Institute (ELI)** During 2018-2019, a total of six ELI graduates enrolled at GGC as degree-seeking students; four have enrolled for Fall 2019. Of the 2018-2019 ELI attendees, 66% indicated an intention to attend GGC as degree-seeking students.

GGC also provides a collection of programs designed to meet students where they are, introduce them (and their families) to college culture, and connect them with resources that promote successful progression to graduation. Some of these programs and activities include:

Grizzlies Helping Grizzlies/Beyond Financial Aid support offerings

- Grizzly Orientation sessions for students and families
- March Through the Arch (first year student convocation)
- Grizzly Days (welcome week activities)

*Provide an attentive learning environment to support retention and progression*

GGC's committed faculty and staff provide students with the support and tools they need to be successful in college and in life, from the first day of class until graduation. During the past academic year, GGC's faculty and staff have worked to bring to implementation four broad-based goal: Communities of Learners, Mentoring Reimagined, Engagement Made Meaningful, and Authentic Acculturation. These reflect the commitment of GGC's educational environment to high-quality high-impact practices, student engagement and support, and real-world experiences. These goals are the articulation and operationalization of the Division of Academic and Student Affairs and represent that Division's commitment to GGC's overall strategic plan. Each goal encompasses several of the individual efforts already in place at GGC to support college completion and aligns those efforts, while helping to identify and to organize the College for efficient and effective implementation. While programs currently in place continue – and continue to benefit students – efforts over the next year will focus on strengthening and coordinating existing work and implementing additional structures within the framework of these four strategic goals.

Of GGC's many current programs and strategies to support students in an attentive teaching environment, the Communities of Learners goal is most fully developed and implemented. For the other goals, foundational planning is complete, and the 2019-20 academic year is more focused on their initial implementation. The discussion below presents each goal and reflects both past and planned activity as appropriate.

#### *Communities of Learners:*

Recognizing that the deepest knowledge is built in active, interactive contexts, GGC is expanding its commitment to coordinated learning communities. Activities in this goal will build the structures needed to develop intentional communities of learners during and beyond the first year, for both students and faculty.

**Learning Communities** At GGC, learning communities (as of Fall 2019) consist primarily of triads of purposefully linked classes that share the same group of students. These linked class offerings may include combinations with learning support co-requisite English and mathematics. GGC 1000 First-Year Seminar also is a course frequently included in LCs. LCs incorporate one or more integrative learning experiences, which may involve students working across the classes to complete them. Instructors intentionally coordinate courses and assignment schedules to provide academic support for students.

During the Fall 2017 pilot semester of learning communities, four learning communities were offered. During Spring 2018, nine were offered. Thirteen first-year learning communities were run in Fall 2018. Significant scale-up of learning community numbers was planned for Fall 2019 implementation. Specifically, a cross-campus effort that included Academic and Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, and others led to adapting the existing block scheduling approach to provide for linked first-year learning community courses in the triad model described above. In Fall 2019, 124 learning communities are running. GGC anticipates offering several learning communities in Spring 2020, and will again offer a large number of LCs in Fall 2020 as learning communities become central to GGC's academic culture. Table X outlines the expansion of learning communities from Fall 2017 to the present.

**Equity and Diversity in the Learning Communities** The composition of the learning communities in Fall 2019 largely reflects the diverse makeup of the GGC student body. Of the 1553 students who are enrolled in 100% of the linked sections in their learning community, approximately 35% are Black or African-American, 33% are White, 23% are Hispanic or Latino, and about 8% are Asian. Additionally, about 37% of the learning community students are enrolled in either corequisite English or Math (or both), approximately 21% self-identify as being speakers of English as a second/additional language, and over 34% are first generation college students.

**Assessment of Learning Communities** In addition to assessing the performance of all students enrolled in the learning communities with an equity and growth mindset lens, GGC evaluates the effectiveness of the learning communities programmatically according to three major student development outcomes:

- Students enrolled in learning communities demonstrate a growth in **productive academic mindset** (i.e., *learning* or *growth mindset*). Note: This outcome leverages the *Mindset Survey*: pre-post distributed in all English 1101 and FYS sections.

- Students in LCs can explain specific ways in which their academic interests and career goals align with (or not) their academic **focus area**.
- Through reflection on an **integrative learning experience**, students in LCs show development in: *engaging* new and diverse situations, *expressing* themselves flexibly, *connecting* knowledge and experience creatively, and *deepening* self-understanding. Note: This outcome is to be measured by assessing a representative sample of LC students' reflective writing.

**GGC 1000 First-Year Seminar** GGC 1000 First-Year Seminar (FYS) is a course designed to promote first-year students' success by providing the knowledge and practical skills necessary to reach their educational and personal objectives. GGC 1000 supports first-year students in developing academic goals, fostering a greater sense of personal responsibility, engaging in intentional learning, and participating in campus culture. For students with under 30 credits, GGC 1000 may count for 1 credit in the "Additional Requirements" section of degree program plans.

GGC 1000 is often considered an "anchor course" in the learning communities in which it is involved. Some sections are cohort-oriented, such as those included in the Grizzly First Scholars First-Generation Student Learning Communities. Often sections are included in LCs that contain corequisite learning support Math or English. In GGC 1000, students also are given a first glance at Via, GGC's e-portfolio system, and are encouraged to use it. The first-year seminar continues to be an integral part of student success programming for new students.

In Fall 2018, 18 sections of GGC 1000 were offered, 12 of which were part of learning communities. 226 students completed the course. Of those 226 students 75.6% earned a grade of A, B or C. In Spring 2019, 17 sections of GGC 1000 were offered, 14 of which were part of learning communities. 155 students completed the course. Of those 155 students, 82.6% earned a grade of A, B or C. As staffing resources are available, GGC will scale up the first-year seminar section offerings to provide just-in-time academic and co-curricular support through this curricular avenue.

**Comprehensive and Pervasive Tutoring Support** GGC has invested deeply in tutorial services. Extracurricular tutoring provides a safety net for students who are academically underprepared or who struggle with self-organization and management or find their instructor's pedagogical approach incompatible with their own learning style. Tutoring support also benefits students who wish to develop their skills in a particular area through supplemental learning experiences. GGC's tutoring center, known as the Academic Enhancement Center (AEC), has been awarded CRLA International Tutor Training Program Certification for its high quality professional development of staff.

In order to align with the Momentum Year approach, the AEC seeks to decentralize its student success initiatives to better accommodate students' needs. In addition to tutoring in a central campus location, academic support was provided in 44 classrooms, online for nearly 975 hours, and at several campus venues, including Kaufman Library and Disability Services. The on-campus tutoring center is open 64 hours per week and offers support in high-demand subject areas. The AEC employs two coordinators (one for Writing, one for Math/Science), 1 Lead Tutor, 15 professional tutors, 7 student/peer tutors, and 5 student assistants. In addition, 100 faculty volunteered a total of 1,493 hours in the past academic year. In the 2018-19 academic year, the AEC's central location tutored 3,071 students for a total of 13,233 tutoring sessions.

### *Mentoring Reimagined*

Understanding that its students likely need just-in-time, targeted support and mentoring, GGC has refined its already effective model for student advising and mentoring to make it more responsive to the needs of GGC students. Following a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the efficacy of current mentoring structures, GGC has taken a set of initial steps toward strengthening mentoring support to students. These initial actions include:

**Mentoring Milestones** The Mentoring Reimagined Task Force developed a set of mentoring milestones to provide guidance to faculty as they engage students during mentoring sessions. The milestones are grouped by credit hour acquisition and identify key activities related to curriculum literacy, technology, career readiness, and campus resources. In addition to a set of general milestones, major specific milestones have been developed to help students connect their academic work and professional goals as they move through their collegiate careers.

**Expansion of Professional Advising in the Mentoring and Advising Center** The strong successes of the Mentoring and Advising Center (MAC) programming have demonstrated the value of early intrusive advising for the GGC student population. GGC is continuing to grow the capacity of this office, hiring four additional advisors in Fall 2019 and committing to a long-term plan that supports all new freshmen with professional advising.

**Video repository for students and faculty** GGC has launched a new effort as of Fall 2019 to develop a repository of FAQ videos addressing technology and technology use, financial aid, registration processes, and common student challenges and concerns. Scripts will be finalized during the Fall term and video production will complete by the end of the current academic year.

### *Engagement Made Meaningful*

GGC is committed to graduating students who are prepared for the world of work and/or further advanced education. To meet this commitment, GGC is organizing and structuring existing programs toward two sub-goals: ensuring that students are prepared to enter careers; and enabling students to bring their curricular learning to applied settings in the community. GGC has invested additional resources to support student engagement and has used its Momentum Approach work to integrate student engagement activity with the academic programs.

**Faculty Development** To better support GGC faculty who are integrating experiential and service learning in their classes, the Center for Teacher Excellence (CTE) has established two faculty affiliate slots specifically oriented toward Integrative Learning (one affiliate) and Experiential Learning (one affiliate). In these year-long placements, affiliates both build their own expertise and provide professional development programming to other faculty members.

**Student Programming** The *Assistant Director of Community Engagement and Service* within Student Affairs is a new position charged with developing and leading co-curricular programs that engage the Georgia Gwinnett student body in community service and volunteer activities. This person supports GGC's student community service program Grizzlies Serve, which engaged 463 student volunteers for a total of 2,950 volunteer hours in community service activities during the 2018-19 academic year.

**Curriculum Integration** Each of the curriculum maps developed as part of GGC's Momentum activities includes specific recommendations for service and experiential learning, both as recommendations for summer experiences and for specific class selections. By including these as milestones within the curriculum maps, GGC highlights the importance of such engagement in students' learning and development.

### *Authentic Acculturation*

The final broad goal is based in the recognition that a student's campus experience is shaped by the College's culture. Authentic Acculturation commits GGC to embedding the core elements of its aspirational culture in campus activities and programs, articulating those elements appropriately, and supporting students in "owning" their development, education, and experience. Within this goal are efforts to more clearly articulate the college's aspirational culture, to define experiences and programs that highlight that culture, and to develop a means by which students can reflect on their own experience in this context.

**Articulate and Instantiate Aspirational Culture** The first organized activity within this broad area focuses on articulating the aspirational culture for GGC or, in other words, to "define the Grizzly graduate" in terms of workplace skills, self-awareness, and confidence, primarily through institutional student learning outcomes. This is being instantiated within an ePortfolio to support student reflection and self-awareness.

The ePortfolio was implemented and piloted during Spring 2019 with senior capstone classes and GGC 1000 first-year seminar classes. The First-Year Seminar now introduces students to the platform and, as part of building a growth mindset, introduces students to the value of self-reflection and articulation of learning. It has been successfully integrated into the assessment models of five current programs (Honors, Elementary Education, Middle Grades Education, Special Education, Nursing) and is in the process of being integrated by four additional programs for Spring 2020 (Psychology, CMAP, ITEC, and Political Science). Continued expansion across the academic programs is expected.

**Create Experiences to Highlight GGC Culture** A second primary activity in this broad area is titled "A Year in the Life of a Grizzly." This involves coordinating a series of events that bracket the beginning and ending of each semester and connect to the aspirational culture of the college. For the upcoming year, these anchor events have been identified:

- For faculty and staff
  - Opening faculty convocation
  - New student welcoming (March through the Arch)
  - Promotion and awards recognition event
  - GGC Reads (common reader with events and discussions)
  - Success Talks (campus wide professional development day)

- Commencement
- For students
  - Grizzly Orientation Information Fair
  - New student welcoming (Grizzly Days and March through the Arch)
  - GGC Reads (common reader with events and discussions)
  - Athletic events
  - Student awards recognition event
  - GrizzlyFest (Homecoming)
  - Commencement
- Additionally, multiple all-campus events highlight the academic culture, including:
  - Create: Poster session for undergraduate student research
  - STARS: Research demonstrations and posters for Science and Technology faculty and undergraduate research
  - Learning Communities Day: Symposium focused on learning community work products and experience

### *Provide an Affordable Educational Opportunity*

GGC offers a high-quality, accessible, and attentive education for less money than most other schools in the USG. GGC controls costs through a variety of measures aimed at not sacrificing the quality of education but assessing which services are essential to the College's core.

Affordability is not just about costs and prices. It is about helping students understand their needs, access available financial resources, and improve their financial literacy. To do this, GGC has promoted events and programming such as:

- **Money Smart week activities**, during which the College offers workshops and information on financial literacy, budgeting, and financial planning.
- **FAFSA Fridays**, during which the College offers targeted financial aid assistance in completing the FAFSA form. Sessions were run in October – December for those filing FAFSAs in the fall and March – April for those filing in the spring.
- **Parent Orientation sessions** focused on Financial Aid and Student Accounts information designed to engage parents and to enhance their ability to support their students in sound financial decision making.
- **Scholarships and Grants**, including “last dollar” funding to allow students with low balances to remain enrolled and emergency grants to support students who face unexpected expenses during a semester.
- **Scholarship Information Sessions** focused on searching and applying for scholarships in October – January
- **Housing Help Days** during the admissions timeline that focus on supporting admitted students and their families evaluate housing options and make financially sound choices.
- **Partnership with Gwinnett County Public Schools and Georgia Student Finance** for outreach at high school college nights.
- **Financial literacy and financial aid presentations** in the GGC 1000 courses.

GGC's commitment to keeping the out-of-pocket price for students as low as possible is critical to maintaining affordability and central to sustaining accessibility for traditionally underserved populations. Equally important is GGC's commitment to supporting students in their financial decision making to ensure that their financial choices during matriculation support their long-term fiscal health.

GGC has established a functional business model that maintains affordability for all students. The College remains committed to this model and to ongoing attention to fiscal responsibility and excellence in core competencies.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Data on the core metrics GGC has elected to track are encouraging for this reporting year as shown in Table 1 below. During the 2018-2019 academic year, GGC revised and refined its core student achievement metrics to align more directly with the University System's Momentum Approach and to establish new targets for these metrics out to 2025. While other more granular measures remain important, GGC will focus its strategic attention on first year retention rate, four year graduation rate, and six year graduation rate both within GGC and within the University System. In addition, GGC has begun monitoring the percentage of first-year students who successfully complete their first required English and Math courses.

GGC continues to document reasonably strong performance by students entering the College. Since hitting a low of 61.5% for the Fall 2010 cohort, first-year retention has continued to strengthen, with retention of the Fall 2018 cohort at approximately 67%, indicating

that GGC’s integrated efforts to ensure access, attentiveness, and affordability are having an impact on student success and persistence.

Data on graduation numbers are also encouraging, as can be seen in Table 2. Data for the Fall 2013 cohort show an increase, for the second year, in 4-year graduation rates, which is consistent with the turnaround in retention rates. Further, the number of students graduating in each cohort has continued to climb, reflecting GGC’s rapid growth rate. GGC’s role as a starting point for many students is reflected in the system-wide graduation rates, which continue to show that substantial numbers of students who transfer out of GGC continue to successful completion. As with retention rates, graduation rates for the Fall 2012 and subsequent cohorts are showing a slight, but meaningful increase, reflecting GGC’s efforts to support students and its stabilizing population.

The common theme across the specific elements of GGC’s **attentive learning model** and the four primary goals that are shaping the college’s strategic focus is that they are all high engagement, individual focused efforts. The level of impact of these efforts is perhaps not surprising given the high-need population that GGC serves. GGC’s commitment to meeting students where they are and providing the kind of high impact scaffolds and supports that are known to engender success is continuing to bear fruit as can be seen in the performance metrics in Tables 1 and 2.

GGC’s combination of inclusive access, an attentive teaching model, and efforts to maintain affordability means a high-quality educational experience, without crippling debt, for a greater number of students. GGC provides a comprehensive, integrated environment in which the success of students is the core focus. In so doing, GGC not only opens the door to higher education to an expanded population, but also supports those students to graduation, thus contributing to the needs of Georgia and to the goals of Complete College Georgia.

## NEXT STEPS

During the 2019-2020 academic year, GGC will complete a Cabinet reorganization and hire a Vice-President for Student Engagement and Success, who will be responsible for creating and maintaining (a) an innovative 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum and pedagogy for student engagement and success with specific attention to equity and (b) an environment which

- emphasizes evidence-based student success strategies,
- stimulates the creation of new academic programs and infrastructure,
- supports high-impact retention strategies,
- supports faculty mentor and student advisor relationships, and
- builds a culture of collaboration and care for students and colleagues.

GGC is taking this action in recognition of the importance of holding a Cabinet-level position accountable for student success metrics and deliverables. This individual will work closely with the Vice-President for Enrollment Management Services and the Senior Vice-President of Academic and Student Affairs/Provost to review, develop, implement, and assess programs that build on a combination of student engagement efforts both inside and outside the classroom. Metrics and deliverables will focus on overall increases in retention and graduation rates along with measures of student progression and on closing gaps in student success across entering levels of academic preparation, race/ethnicity, income, and first-generation student status, along with other as-yet-unidentified areas of achievement gaps. This renewed focus on clear accountability and well-defined metrics is expected to enhance student achievement and success and support GGC’s well-known level of commitment to its mission and students.

## STUDENT SUCCESS AND COMPLETION TEAM

For the 2018-2019 academic year, GGC’s efforts involved a broad spectrum of individuals and offices across campus as can be seen from the descriptions of the specific efforts detailed above. These efforts are monitored, managed, and assessed by a core team of professionals, whose names and titles are provided here:

Name	Title
<b>Dr. TJ Arant</b>	Provost
<b>Dr. Rachel Bowser</b>	Associate Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Associate Professor of English
<b>Dr. Tom Lilly</b>	Director of Academic Assessment and Associate Professor of English
<b>Dr. Justin Jernigan</b>	Dean, School of Transitional Studies
<b>Dr. Catherine Thomas</b>	Associate Dean for Student Success, School of Transitional Studies and Professor of English



<b>Dr. Karen Jackson</b>	Associate Dean for Advising Programs, School of Transitional Studies and Assistant Professor of Education
<b>Dr. Tyler Yu</b>	Dean, School of Business
<b>Dr. Dymaneke Mitchell</b>	Interim Dean, School of Education
<b>Dr. Diane White</b>	Dean, School of Health Sciences
<b>Dr. Laurel Holland</b>	Interim Dean, School of Liberal Arts
<b>Dr. Joseph Sloop</b>	Interim Dean, School of Science and Technology
<b>Dr. Juliana Lancaster</b>	Executive Director, Office of Plans, Policies, and Analysis