

Georgia State University

College Completion Plan 2012

Executive Summary

With an undergraduate student body that is 30% first generation, 87% on federal financial aid, 53% Pell recipients, 60% non-white, 58% transfer, and 26% adult learners, Georgia State University is not only a microcosm of the emerging post-secondary demographics of the state of Georgia; it is also a collection of the very populations that higher education has traditionally failed. The *New York Times* recently reported that the percentage of Americans in the top income quartile who by the age of 24 hold the baccalaureate degree has risen 42 points from 40% in 1970 to 82% today. In contrast, during the same four decades, baccalaureate completion rates for Americans in the lowest income quartile have moved only 2 points, from 6% to 8% [see table 1]. In other words, it is now *ten times* more likely that an upper-income American will attain a college degree than a low-income American, a gap wider than 40 years ago. Meanwhile, the large achievement gap that exists between white and non-white college students is also growing rather than shrinking, and first-generation students who enroll in college are only one-third as likely to earn a baccalaureate degree as are students whose parents have completed college.

We must do better. If the state of Georgia is to reach its ambitious goal of graduating 250,000 more Georgians with post-secondary credentials over and above the current rates by the year 2020, it will not be primarily through efforts with upper- and middle-class students from college-educated families; the vast majority of these students are already completing college. It will be through finding innovative, impactful, and scalable ways to succeed with the types of students that Georgia State enrolls.

This Completion Plan builds upon the growing national reputation of Georgia State as a place where students who struggle elsewhere are able to succeed. In 2010, the Education Trust lauded GSU for having the second-highest increase in graduation rates for underrepresented students of any university in the nation--an 18.4 point improvement over the past four years [table 2]. In the past year, the University had a graduation rate for Pell students that was 12 points above the national average, conferred more baccalaureate degrees to Latinos than any institution in the state of Georgia, ranked among the top 50 schools in the nation for the number of undergraduate degrees conferred to Asian Americans, and, with a 17% one-year increase, conferred more undergraduate degrees to African Americans than any non-profit college or university in the nation [table 3]. At Georgia State, there is no achievement gap.

There is, however, still much work to be done, including significantly raising the success rates for all Georgia State students. This Completion Plan maps out the next steps. The plan centers on a series of five overarching goals, each to be attained by 2020 (with intermediate benchmarks set for 2015):

- We will improve institutional graduation rates by 12 points for both full-time and part time students.
- We will enhance our reputation as a destination for students from all backgrounds by increasing by 30% the number of students enrolled from key underrepresented groups.

- We will significantly lower the time and number of credit hours that it takes for the average Georgia State undergraduate to earn a degree, thus lowering both drop-out rates and the level of debt that students might otherwise assume.
- We will raise the total number of degrees conferred annually to undergraduates from the current level of 4,383 to 5,500 per year.
- We will put tens of thousands of additional Georgians on a path to greater success by conferring 66,000 degrees between now and 2020. Among these will be 42,000 undergraduate degrees.

There are clear challenges to meeting these goals. Perhaps most significantly, Georgia State students often lack financial resources sufficient to get them to the point of graduation. High levels of unmet need among our students lead them to work multiple jobs, enroll in fewer courses, stop out for semesters, or drop out entirely. Because of their finances, students who graduate often take longer to do so, running up more debt in the process. Nationally, graduation rates typically rise by 2 to 3 points between students' 6th and 8th years. For some populations at Georgia State, the increase tops 20 points.

This Completion Plan outlines 16 specific strategies that will allow Georgia State to address these challenges and to reach our completion goals. To reduce the effects of unmet need, we will more than double the institutional scholarship dollars awarded by Georgia State annually and implement a new Panther Retention Grant program to re-enroll students who drop out because they cannot pay for tuition. We also will greatly expand our successful Keep Hope Alive program for students who have lost the Hope scholarship. To raise graduation rates, we will grow the size and impact of Freshman Learning Communities, Supplemental Instruction and other programs that have proven to increase significantly the rates at which our students progress through their studies. Under the leadership of our new Center for Instructional Innovation, we will work with faculty to reinvent the way we deliver course content and will use technology to reach students who grew up amid new modes of learning. To reduce the average time it takes Georgia State students to complete their degrees, we will completely redesign our system of academic advisement, implementing a cutting-edge, web-based advising technology that uses years of GSU retention data to identify when a student has fallen off the path to graduation. Further, we will create an incentive grant program for students who agree to follow an individualized, course-by-course plan to get them to the point of graduation in the most timely manner possible. To help current high-school students realize the dream of a college education and to increase access to GSU, we will institute a Summer Success Academy for at-risk prospective students and grow our partnerships with K-12 through enhancing Early College and instituting a new, large-scale mentoring program for Latino high school students. With the support of grants from the Goizueta and the Coca-Cola Foundations, we will create unique, self-sustaining leadership pipelines that direct deserving Latino and first-generation students from high school through the point of college graduation.

Through these and additional initiatives outlined in this plan, Georgia State University takes the next step in its long-standing and deep commitment to the success of all students. As pledged by President Becker in his inaugural address to the campus community and echoed in the 2011 GSU Strategic Plan, approved unanimously by the University Senate: ***Georgia State will become a national model for undergraduate education by demonstrating that students from all backgrounds can achieve academic and career success.***

I. Data Analysis: What the Data Tell Us—Five Key Observations

1. Money matters. For the past four years, Georgia State has analyzed with considerable detail the correlation between the financial resources of our students and their completion rates. Unmet need refers to the difference between the costs of being a full time student at GSU and the resources that can be identified for each student through the combination of scholarships, grants, loans, family contributions, and the income derived from the student working 20 hours per week [table 4]. By tracking the level of unmet need of every GSU undergraduate, we have been able to learn several things:

- *Problems of unmet need are chronic.* During the fall of 2011, 63% of our undergraduates (over 14,000 students) had some level of unmet need. In hundreds of instances, students had over \$10,000 in unmet need for the academic year, meaning that half of the resources needed to be a full time student at GSU were unaccounted for. Students in such circumstances have to drop out, stop out, reduce their credit hours, skip buying books, skimp on meals, and/or work full time or multiple jobs.
- *The levels of unmet need are growing.* With GSU undergraduates losing over \$30 million in state and federal aid over the past twelve months due to cuts to Hope, Summer Pell, ACG, Smart Grants and other programs, the average level of unmet need for GSU undergraduates has risen 31% in the past year: it has more than doubled since 2005. Today, the *average* Georgia State undergraduate lacks almost one third of the resources that are required to be a full time student [table 5].
- *There is a direct correlation between unmet need and academic performance.* Even when we control for incoming GPA, a GSU student with some level of unmet need is only half as likely to maintain a 3.0 GPA as is a student who has sufficient resources. As levels of unmet need grow, academic performance declines correlatively [table 6].
- *Unmet need is one of the leading challenges to retention, progression and completion at Georgia State.* Precisely because of its impact on GPA, unmet need greatly impacts Hope retention, and GSU students who lose the Hope scholarship graduate at rates 40 points below students who maintain Hope. In addition, as unmet need rises, the stop-out and drop-out rates grow and the number of credit hours taken by students who do manage to enroll decline. With the rapid increase in levels of unmet need this past year, Georgia State saw a 54% one-year increase in the number of students who had to be dropped for non-payment at the fall fee drop and a 198% one-year increase in the number of credit hours dropped for non-payment, meaning that hundreds of students who were able to stay in school reduced their course loads in order to lower their costs [table 7]. Needless to say, stopping out and reducing the number of course credits taken are behaviors that have devastating impacts on completion rates. As such, addressing the challenges posed by unmet need constitutes a major component of GSU's Completion Plan.

2. Georgia State students are becoming more diverse in just about every way. This past fall, Georgia State set new records for the number of African American, Asian, Latino, first generation, and Pell students enrolled. The freshmen class was 38% African American, 16% Asian, and 11% Latino, with the latter two numbers constituting all-time highs. The percent of Pell students has risen from 31% in

2007 to a record 53% in 2012, and Georgia State now enrolls more than 12,000 Pell students every semester [table 8]. This past fall, the University also enrolled over 6,000 undergraduates who are adult learners and approximately 6,500 first generation undergraduates; while the University has not historically tracked first-generation students in a consistent fashion (a problem we are correcting), these enrollments, too, are believed to be at record levels. It should be noted that, while the data we utilize as an institution are often segmented by racial, ethnic and economic groups, the programs that we implement are, we believe, effective precisely because they do *not* segment the student population but rather identify and address problems that cross all racial and economic categories and hence that impact the majority of GSU students.

3. Georgia State consistently defies the conventional wisdom with regard to Retention, Progression and Graduation (RPG). Last year, the 6-year graduation rate (rolling three-year average) for Georgia State was 48.7% for full-time students and 32.5% for part-time students, while the rates were 51.1% for full-time Pell students and 39.1% for part-time Pell students. In short, our Pell students are succeeding at consistently higher rates than are our non-Pell students [table 9]. Since 2004, GSU's overall 6-year graduation rate for full-time students has risen by 16 points. During this same period, the rate for full-time Latino students has risen 34 points, from 25% to 59% [table 10]. Latino students are now not only outperforming all other ethnic and racial groups in their graduation rates, their one-year retention rates also exceed those of the overall student body by 6 points (89% compared to 83%). Graduation rates for both Latino and African American students at GSU top those for white students. The total number of degrees conferred by Georgia State has risen from 5,774 in 2007-2008 to 7,001 in 2011-2012, a 21% increase over the past five years [table 11]. When one disaggregates these numbers, one once again sees that the most marked improvements come from student populations who often struggle nationally. Over the past twelve months, the number of degrees conferred to undergraduates overall grew by 6%, but conferrals to underrepresented students increased by 13% and conferrals to African American students grew by 17%. Georgia State now confers more baccalaureate degrees to African Americans than any non-profit college or university in the nation.

4. Despite exceptional progress, Georgia State still has much work to do. Georgia State's one-year retention rate for full time students (83%) is 9 points above national averages for four-year public institutions, but its six-year graduation rate for the same students is almost 10 points *below* national averages. The data show that the primary sources of this phenomenon are: (a) the financial base of GSU students (students with large amounts of unmet need are less able to sustain their enrollment over multiple years), and (b) the transient nature of the GSU student population, especially in the current economy (if one includes the students who, after six years, are still enrolled in college or who have graduated from another institution, Georgia State's six-year success rate with full time students rises from 48.7% to 78.5%, a 30 point increase) [table 12]. Nevertheless, there are still too many obstacles that Georgia State puts in the way of its students. For instance, the academic advising system on campus is currently woefully understaffed and largely uncoordinated--an unacceptable situation on a campus with large numbers of first-generation and low-income students who need proactive help to navigate the college landscape. In addition, a series of academic policies and requirements have been instituted over time, often with the best of intentions, but without careful analysis of their implications for student completion (see *Objective 7*, below). The cumulative result of these obstacles is that, in recent years, the average number of credit hours at completion has increased for both native and transfer students at Georgia State

[table 13]. Additionally, while the graduation rates for part-time Pell students are comparatively strong, it is clear that the University still has much work to do in raising the completion rates for its other part-time students, for whom the six-year graduation rate sits at only 32.5%. (Please note: Georgia State has an LSP population that is too statistically insignificant to track--typically fewer than 8 students per year.)

5. We must find ways to reduce the time it takes GSU undergraduates to earn their degrees. One of the most striking findings evidenced by the data is the large increase in graduation rates of nearly all categories of students between their 6th and 8th years. While the national average for four-year public universities is a 2 to 3 point increase over this period, Georgia State's numbers improve 7 points for full-time students (from 48% to 55%), 13 points for part-time students (from 32.5% to 45.9%) and an incredible 26 points for part-time Pell students (from 39% to 65%) [table 9]. These numbers reflect an important reality about low-income students who have significant amounts of unmet need: even when they are performing well academically and are making good progress towards completion, they take longer to graduate. Regardless, since our data also show that students with unmet need are more likely to drop out and to run up additional debt, we need to find ways to get these students to the point of completion sooner--another central focus of our completion plan.

II. Goals and the Process that Led to Their Adoption

Process. Through a multi-year, campus-wide and data-driven process involving the Strategic Planning Committee, the University Senate, Administrative Council, deans and department chairs, hundreds of faculty and staff, the Student Government Association, and led by President Becker and Provost Palm, Georgia State has made a commitment to student success as its highest institutional priority. The broad dialogue has also involved other important stakeholders including members of the GSU Foundation Board, alumni, donors, business and political leaders, representatives from K-12, and leaders of private foundations. The University commitment that emerged from this process is most prominently evidenced in the 2011 University Strategic Plan, but it extends far beyond this one document. It is evidenced in what has become the top priority of the GSU Foundation: the raising of scholarship dollars in an effort to address what our data show is the leading cause of student attrition, financial need. It is evidenced in the University's budget, with significant new allocations going to programs that have been successful in raising completion rates such as Keep Hope Alive, Supplemental Instruction, University Assistantships, Panther Retention Grants, and the Grades First early alert system. The commitment is evident in the a large and multi-faceted plan to overhaul student advisement on campus--a plan involving every college, cutting-edge new advising technologies, and a doubling of the number of professional advisors on campus over the next 6 months. It is evident in the completion metrics used to track the work of all deans and department chairs annually and in recent GSU property acquisitions to create space to accommodate the Honors College, the new University Advising Center, and--in the years ahead--a Student Success Center to bring together student support services from across campus.

Goals. Georgia State University has adopted five overarching and ambitious completion goals, a number of which were set forth in the 2011 Strategic Plan:

- We will confer 66,000 degrees between now and the year 2020. Among these will be 42,000 undergraduate degrees.

- We will increase the total number of degrees conferred annually institution-wide from the current number of 7,001 (FY12) to 7,700 in FY15 and 8,650 in FY20. We will raise the number of undergraduate degrees conferred annually from the current total of 4,383 (FY12) to 4,900 in FY15 and to 5,500 in FY20.
- We will improve the institutional 6-year graduation rate for full-time students (currently at 48.3%) to 52% by FY15 and to 60% by FY20 and increase the institutional graduation rate for students entering part time from the current rate of 38.2% to 42% by FY15 and to 50% by FY20.
- We will increase the number of undergraduates enrolled from each of the following groups by 15% by FY15 and by 30% by FY20: (a) first generation students, (b) students eligible for federal financial aid, and (c) adult learners, including military learners.
- We will lower the average number of credit hours at completion from the current levels of 140 for native students and 148.7 for transfer students (FY12) to 136 for native students and to 145 for transfer students by FY15.

To reach these overarching goals, the University will pursue a series of 16 intermediate objectives that are critical to addressing the problems that contribute to student attrition at Georgia State. It is to a discussion of these objectives that we next turn.

III. Strategies and Objectives

Strategy A: Lower the Levels of Unmet Need

Objective 1: We will double the numbers and amounts of need- and merit-based scholarships.

Georgia State has made it the highest fund-raising priority to increase scholarship dollars for students. Led by President Becker and the GSU Foundation, the University has raised over \$10 million in new scholarship monies over the past twelve months, led by a \$4.98 million grant from the Goizueta Foundation (\$4 million in scholarships for Latino students and \$998K for support of retention programming) and a \$1.15 million grant from the Coca-Cola Foundation (\$1 million in scholarships for first-generation students and \$150K for support of retention programming). Individual donations for student scholarships have more than tripled from a year ago. GSU just opened a fully staffed Scholarship Resource Center and created a searchable data base of scholarship opportunities for students. *Impact:* Disbursements to students from institutional scholarships and grants increased 71% over the past year, helping to mitigate some of the impact of cuts to Hope, Summer Pell, and other aid programs. In its first 6 months of operation, the new scholarship data base was used by over 7,000 students. *Lead Units:* President Becker, the GSU Foundation, Scholarship Resource Center.

Objective 2: We will enhance the size and effectiveness of the Panther Retention Grant program. With a large increase in the number of GSU students dropped for non-payment this past fall and spring, GSU's division of Enrollment Services initiated a new program. Within hours of the fee drop, call center personnel in the One Stop Shop and Admissions were proactively reaching out to hundreds of students who had been dropped. Financial Aid reassessed aid packages for these students to see if additional funding could be located. Based on an analysis of each individual student's level of unmet need, staff members offered grant monies. In some cases, shortages of only a few hundred dollars were preventing students from being able to re-enroll--a surprising claim until one realizes that over 30% of

Georgia State students come from households with annual incomes of \$30,000 or less. *Impact:* Several hundred students were brought back into their classes post-drop by means of this experimental program during the 2011-2012 academic year. By spring 2012, and largely due to the program, the fee drop was *lighter* than had been the case the previous spring [table 14]. Because of its success as a pilot program in FY12, the University has committed more than \$1 million to the Panther Retention Grant program in FY13. *Lead Units:* AVP for Student Retention, Director of Financial Aid.

Objective 3: We will decrease the negative effects of the loss of Hope through growing the reach and impact of GSU's signature Keep Hope Alive program. At Georgia State, 74% of the freshman class comes into the University supported by the Hope Scholarship, and the scholarship is worth over \$8,000 per year. Several years ago, 51% of Hope freshmen lost the scholarship by end of their first year. Of these students, only 9% ever gained the scholarship back again. For those who remained without the scholarship, their likelihood of graduating dropped 40 points, from 61% to 21% [table 15]. Sadly, the vast majority of students who dropped out after losing Hope left Georgia State in good academic standing; they were on the path to graduating, they just lacked a 3.0 GPA. In 2009 we piloted a program offering students \$500 a semester for the first two semesters after they had lost Hope. In return for the funds, they signed a contract agreeing to attend a series of academic skills and financial literacy workshops and to meet with their academic advisors several times during the year. *Impact:* While the overall rate of Hope recovery for GSU students not in Keep Hope Alive is 9%, over 60% of the students in the program last year recovered Hope by their next check point [table 16]. The program has helped to raise Hope retention rates on campus from 49% in 2008 to 68% last year and has proven so effective that the Goizueta and the Coca-Cola Foundations both directed funds to the initiative as part of their recent gifts to GSU. In 2009, the program started with \$40K in Foundation dollars; this coming year, it will be supported at the \$250K level and hence will be able to impact hundreds of additional students. The financial literacy workshops have proven so successful that they are now included in every freshmen orientation session. *Lead Units:* AVP for Student Retention, Office of Undergraduate Studies

Strategy B: Reduce the Time and Credit Hours to Degree

Credit hours taken over and above the minimum number needed to complete the degree add an estimated 14% to the final costs of a degree for the average GSU undergraduate. Strategies for reducing the number of credit hours at completion are critical to improving completion rates at GSU.

Objective 4: We will redesign academic advising. Georgia State currently has an academic advising system that has developed piece-meal over time. The University and its colleges maintain six different advising offices. There is little coordination between them, no common record keeping, and no common training. The current student-advisor ratio of more than 700-to-1 on campus is more than double the recommended national standard. As prescribed by the 2011 Georgia State Strategic Plan, Georgia State is in the process of hiring 42 additional academic advisors over the next six months, bringing our student-advisor ratio to the national standard of 300-to-1. We have established a campus-wide University Advising Council to coordinate advisement. We will adopt a common electronic record keeping system this fall for all advisors campus-wide, and all advisors will undergo regular University-level training. In addition, we have accepted an invitation from the Education Advisory Board in Washington to be one of four universities nationally to collaborate on the development and implementation of a state-of-the-art, web-based advising system that will utilize years of Georgia State's RPG data to determine when advising

interventions are most needed. For instance, data show that if Political Science majors get an A or B in their first courses in the field, more than 75% of the students graduate in six years; if students receive a C, their likelihood of graduating in six years drops to 25%. The new system will alert the advisor of the C student immediately so that the student can be directed to workshops and tutoring needed to develop skills critical to success in the discipline. In some cases, students may be counseled to pursue other majors. The key is to provide help at the earliest possible stage, before students have wasted credit hours and damaged their GPAs. Hundreds of markers, some specific to every major on campus, are being programmed into the web-based system. *Impact:* All undergraduates will be assigned an advisor and will be tracked by the new system, so the impact will extend to all student populations. The system will help increase the effectiveness of other RPG programs. For example, a marker has been developed which will notify central offices when Hope students have GPAs declining towards 3.0 so that appropriate interventions may be pursued, hopefully before Hope is lost. A study at Florida State found that proactive advising has disproportionately large impacts on first-generation and low-income students--groups who often lack the context to self-diagnose the academic problems that they may be having and who are reluctant to seek help on their own--making Georgia State an ideal candidate for an advising program of this sort. With higher staffing levels and a new, central location, the University Advising Center will be open for evening hours, a particularly important service to adult learners and students with jobs. *Lead Units:* Assoc. Provost for Academic Programs, University Advising Council.

Objective 5: We will expand our successful Transition and Graduation Advisor program. In addition to hiring more professional advisors assigned to individual students, since 2010 GSU has been hiring a team of advisors dedicated to specific challenges faced by groups of students collectively. 6-year graduation rates for students who change majors after the completion of 75 hours can be 10 to 20 points lower than overall rates. Additionally, in the final semesters before graduating, many students fail to select the courses they need to complete requirements efficiently or they find that the course sections they need are full. Transition and Graduation Advisors work with students and departments to help ease the transition between majors and to resolve roadblocks to graduation. Because of this initiative, Georgia State already knows that it will set a new record for its institutional six-year graduation rate in October 2012; our Graduation Advisors have tracked 49.7% of the 2005 cohort to the point of graduation by the end of spring 2012 and have helped another 23 students from the cohort register for the courses they need to graduate this summer. Assuming these students perform well in their summer courses, the overall 6-year graduation rate will rise to 50.74% by this fall [chart 17]. *Impact:* In the first two years of the program, the advisors have saved over 700 students from having to enroll extra semesters in order to graduate, have brought more than 370 students to the point of graduation, and have counseled 40 students into new majors because of inadequate grades in their initial fields. We are increasing the total number of advisors in the program from four to six during FY13. *Lead Unit:* AVP for Student Retention.

Objective 6: We will implement a Graduation Incentive Grant program to encourage timely graduation. The program will offer grants of \$500 for seniors who agree to complete and adhere to a written, individualized plan that charts a course-by-course path to graduation in the most timely fashion possible. *Impact:* Our graduation advisors have found that too many seniors fail to plan ahead. They fail to take courses they need when they are offered or decide to drop a course that they need to graduate. A structured plan developed with an advisor the spring before the senior year may save these students added semesters and thousands of dollars. *Lead Unit:* Advising Center, Office of Undergraduate Studies.

Objective 7: We will revise academic policies that impede student progression and success. In recent years, as Georgia State enrollments have climbed to record levels, a series of academic departments implemented special admission requirements as a means of controlling over-enrollment in their majors--many times with unforeseen negative impacts on RPG. With the extensive use of data and the collaboration of the University Senate and departmental faculties, we are in the process of revising each of these policies. We are instituting, for instance, a pre-Health major that will lead not merely to the B.S.N. but also to new baccalaureate degrees in Health Information Technology, Public Health, and Health Management. The courses previously required of pre-Nursing students will be fully applicable to these new majors, and, by using data to create a predictive model, we have developed a formula to allow Nursing faculty to make decisions about who will be admitted into the B.S.N. program at the end of the freshman rather than sophomore year. Eligibility requirements for Business, Journalism and other high demand majors are also being reworked. *Impact:* Precisely because these policies were developed to control enrollments in over-subscribed majors, they impact a disproportionately large number of students. In the fall 2011, approximately 8,000 GSU undergraduates were enrolled (or seeking to enroll) in Nursing, Business and Journalism alone. The newly introduced majors in health fields will direct students to careers in areas that currently suffer from critical workforce shortages in the state of Georgia. *Lead Units:* Admissions and Standards Committee of the University Senate, College Deans.

Strategy C: Improve Access for Underserved Student Populations both through Innovative GSU Programs and Partnerships with K-12.

Objective 8: We will institute Summer Success Academy and a fall program for at-risk freshmen. In recent years, Georgia State has received far more applications than the number of students that can be accommodated for the fall semester. Meanwhile, our data have shown that there are identifiable characteristics of admitted students that correlate highly to academic struggles and attrition. This summer, GSU is piloting its first-ever Summer Success Academy for over 120 freshmen. These students were admitted for the fall on the condition that they attend the Academy, a seven-week long, 7-credit hour program in which all students are enrolled in Freshman Learning Communities (that will extend into fall and spring) and are exposed to intensive academic support, including Supplemental Instruction, our Grades First early alert system, and the programming and workshops that have made the Keep Hope Alive program successful. For at-risk freshmen who start in the fall semester, we have created a parallel program to be piloted in 2012. *Impact:* These programs, which are expected to grow in size beyond their current pilot levels, will provide much greater access to GSU for first-generation, low-income and underrepresented students who have strong abilities but who may lack adequate college preparation to start their careers taking a full load of 5 or 6 courses in the fall. When piloted in the summer of 2012, 132 of 135 of the students enrolled--all of whom were at-risk freshmen--completed the program with GPAs of 2.5 or above. *Lead Units:* AVP for Student Retention, Office of Undergraduate Studies.

Objective 9: We will create self-sustaining Leadership Pipelines for Latino and first generation students. With the support of almost \$5 million from the Goizueta Foundation, Georgia State will create a self-sustaining pipeline from high-school through graduation and then into the workplace for many of the state of Georgia's promising Latinos. As a condition of accepting the scholarship, Goizueta scholars will sign a contract agreeing to serve as tutors to current college students through GSU's successful Supplemental Instruction program and as mentors to Latino high school students to help to support the next generation of Latino college students. We have come to an agreement with the Cobb County System

for GSU students to serve as mentors to current Latino high school students in Cobb during the coming academic year. GSU's Latino alumni, in turn, will help to mentor the current group of Goizueta scholars. The Coca-Cola Foundation so liked this model that they have funded a parallel program for first generation students. Both programs will begin fall 2012 and are funded through at least 2017. *Impact:* By design, each Goizueta and Coca-Cola scholar at GSU will touch dozens of other students through tutoring and mentoring current college and high school students. Significantly, our data show that tutoring programs also markedly increase the retention and completion rates of the tutors, themselves. *Lead Units:* Office of Latino Student Support and Outreach, Undergraduate Studies, the Honors College.

Objective 10: We will create an integrated system to recruit, enroll and support military learners.

President Becker has appointed a task force with a charge to unify military support services on campus, develop military web pages across the spectrum from admissions to financial aid to counseling, develop tracking systems for military learners in our student data systems, and produce a feasibility study of various models of scholarship support for military learners. *Impact:* We have not tracked military learners through the same retention systems that we use to track other underserved populations, and, as a result, they have not specifically been targeted for many of the programs that have proven so successful in raising success rates for other groups. As such, the potential is high for future improvement in completion rates for our military learners. *Lead Unit:* Associate Provost for Academic Programs.

Objective 11: We will strengthen existing Early College partnerships through a focus on college completion.

Georgia State has had an Early College agreement with Atlanta Public Schools since 2008. Over this period, more than 700 students from two APS high schools have attended GSU under Early College. The rates at which these students graduate from high school have been high and many of the students are admitted to college. As part of Complete College Georgia, we need to begin to track whether the students are being retained in and graduated from college. If not, we need to strengthen the program so that this goal can be attained. *Impact:* Early College students are almost exclusively from underserved student populations. While most of these students do not meet minimum BOR admissions requirements to attend research institutions such as Georgia State after high school, the program could contribute substantively to System- and state-wide goals for college completion and workforce development by preparing students to attend schools throughout the USG. *Lead Unit:* Dean of the College of Education.

Strategy D: Restructure Instructional Delivery to Improve RPG and Degree Conferrals

Objective 12: We will increase the numbers and diversity of students who graduate in STEM fields.

Georgia State recognizes the importance to the Georgia economy of producing more graduates prepared to be leaders in the fields of math, science, and technology. Toward this end, we have appointed a campus-wide STEM coordinator (a tenured full professor); totally re-worked the curricula in pre-Calculus courses using a hybrid delivery model with instruction designed around state-of-the-art interactive labs (and, in the process, have lowered DFW rates in these courses by 10 points); successfully secured funding for STEM initiatives from the NSF, BOR, and TRIO; connected Supplemental Instruction to a series of science courses in which students previously struggled; hosted for the past four years an innovative BRAIN summer-long program for promising science students; and implemented a large-scale and coordinated K-12 outreach program in which students taking AP high-school courses in STEM fields from area high schools are brought to campus to experience university-level science research and

instruction. *Impact:* We will increase the number of GSU students graduating in STEM fields by 10% by FY15 and 20% by FY20. *Lead Units:* STEM Coordinator; science, math and computer science chairs.

Objective 13: We will employ the resources of the newly established Center for Instructional Innovation to increase the success of students through hybrid courses and the enhanced use of instructional technology. Under the direction of the new GSU Center for Instructional Innovation, faculty members were awarded summer grants this year as part of a new program to fund the transition of existing lecture courses into technologically-enhanced, hybrid courses. All GSU freshmen now register for their classes on iPads at orientation. As part of the iPad initiative, faculty members who submit successful proposals are assigned a set of these iPads for their students to use for the entire semester, with dozens of different applications--from video journals to virtual tours of art galleries--having been utilized in the first semesters of the program. *Impact:* We are tracking whether these alternate means of delivery prove effective, particularly with certain student populations who do not do well in more traditional learning environments. *Lead Units:* Center for Instructional Innovation, IS&T, Office of Undergraduate Studies.

Objective 14: We will increase the percentage of freshmen enrolled in Freshman Learning Communities from the current level of 61% to 70% of the freshmen class by FY15.

Objective 15: Using data on course-completion ratios and DFW rates, we will expand the scope of Supplemental Instruction from its current reach of 18 courses to 25 courses by FY15.

Objective 16: We will expand the University Assistantship program through which all students who are awarded University-level scholarships are given a paid assistantship working for a faculty member, lab, or project team in their chosen field of study.

Impacts: On average, even when one controls for incoming GPA, students who participate in FLCs are retained and graduate at rates 4 points higher than those who do not [table 18]. Students who participate in at least five Supplemental Instruction sessions per semester are retained at a rate 7 points above those who do not [table 19]. Students who participate in the University Assistantship program are retained at a rate 10 points above the University average (93% compared to 83%) and graduate at a rate 27 points above the University average (75% compared to 48%) [table 20]. The number of University Assistantships has more than doubled since 2009. *Lead Units:* AVP for Student Retention, Office of Undergraduate Studies, academic departments, the Honors College

IV. Implementation and Evaluation of the Plan

None of the initiatives outlined in this plan (and there are probably a dozen other undertakings that could have been discussed if space had allowed) are speculative. All of the strategies have at least been piloted, data has been collected, and resources have been secured. A clear example is our highly ambitious advising initiative. President Becker personally presented a 7-point advising coordination plan in a meeting with advising leadership in March, \$2.2 million in new funding has been secured to hire 42 new academic advisors over the next six months, space for these advisors in a new University Advising Center is currently under renovation, the University Advising Council had its first meeting in June, and the Education Advisory Board web-based product went live in August.

Absolutely essential to the success of the new advising system and all other initiatives outlined in this plan is unprecedented campus-wide support, from the very top of the University administration to individual faculty and staff members. President Becker has made very clear his expectation that Georgia State will succeed in significantly increasing the success rates of its students, and he has backed his words up with strong actions and an even stronger commitment of resources. Provost Palm has applied college completion metrics such as graduation rates and degree conferrals to her regular performance reviews for all deans (and they, in turn, will use the metrics to track the work of department chairs), thus embedding the culture of data-based decision making in the day-to-day operations of the colleges. The University Senate--constituted by faculty, staff, students, and administrators--has unanimously supported the primary components of our completion plan, knowing very well that their votes would, at times, direct resources away from their home units and personal projects. And faculty and staff have worked willingly to make radical changes in long-standing practices, policies and systems--many of which they, themselves, instituted--in order to better serve the students.

Another component critical to the success and implementation of the plan is the fact that the University has consciously and systematically constructed an extensive infrastructure for academic student support over the past decade. During this period, offices essential to the recruitment, financing, registration, retention, and graduation of students have all been brought together in a single division under a common director. These offices include Undergraduate Admissions, Financial Aid, Student Accounts, the Office of the Registrar, the One Stop Shop, Undergraduate Studies, First-Year Programs, the Student Advisement Center, and the Graduation Office. In the past three years, two newly created offices were added to the portfolio: the Scholarship Resource Office and the Office of Student Retention, both of which (along with the Student Advisement Center and Undergraduate Studies) are overseen by an Assistant Vice President for Student Retention, a tenured faculty member. By the end of FY13 there will be over 250 employees in the eleven offices that now constitute Enrollment Services at GSU. When an unexpected challenge emerges such as the sudden loss of hundreds of additional students during the fall 2011 fee drop, a large network of personnel and systems, organized under a single administrative structure, can be mobilized quickly to help. Similarly, when a major strategic undertaking such as the advising initiative is launched by the President, key implementation structures already are in place.

IPOINT, the Georgia State online data mart, features nightly feeds of data from Banner and other student systems and now offers up-to-date and publicly accessible tables on many key completion metrics to the entire Georgia State community 24/7. The division leader overseeing all of the enrollment and retention offices provides daily, in-person updates to the Provost about progress with regard to key aspects of the plan, and the President includes college completion discussion items on the agenda of almost every administrative meeting and makes the goals of student success a central theme of regular retreats with campus leadership. All deans, vice presidents, and other campus leaders review the latest data, receive verbal updates, and discuss next steps regarding campus progress towards the attainment of University enrollment and completion goals on at least a monthly basis. Department chairs do the same during regular lunches hosted by the Provost and in meetings held by their deans.

The GSU commitment to achieving the goals outlined in this plan is not only philosophical. It is evident in the very structure and practice of the University.

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Table 1

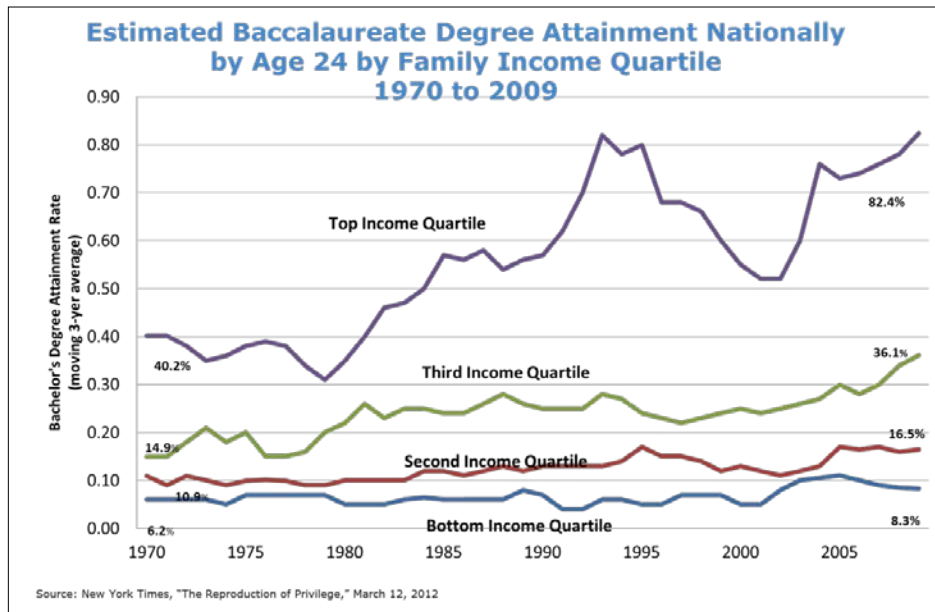


Table 2

Second Fastest Increase in Graduation Rates for Underrepresented Minorities in the Nation
Education Trust, 2010

	Undergrad Enrollment Fall 2006	URM Six-Year Grad Rate 2007	Change in URM Grad Rates 2002-07
1 Michigan Technological University (MI)	5,630	60.9	19.0
2 Georgia State University (GA)	19,109	50.7	18.4
3 University of Louisville (KY)	14,995	37.1	17.2
4 University of Utah (UT)	23,983	46.6	17.0
5 University of Missouri-St Louis (MO)	12,459	33.3	16.8
6 George Mason University (VA)	18,221	62.2	15.7
7 Missouri University of Science and Tech (MO)	4,515	57.5	15.4
8 University of California, Santa Barbara (CA)	18,212	75.2	13.2
9 University of Nebraska-Lincoln (NE)	17,371	46.7	12.7
10 University of GA (GA)	25,437	74.6	11.8

Table 3

Top 100 Degree Producers
2012 African-American Bachelor's - All Disciplines Combined

2011 Rank	Institutions	State	%		
			Total	Grads	%Chg
2010-2011					
1	Georgia State University	GA	1262	31%	17%
2	FAMU	FL	1224	94%	5%
3	North Carolina A & T State University	NC	1172	90%	-6%
4	Jackson State University	MS	966	94%	4%
5	Howard University	D.C.	953	93%	-10%
6	University of Central Florida	FL	939	9%	10%
7	University of Memphis	TN	862	32%	0%
8	Troy University	AL	859	32%	4%
9	University of Florida	FL	859	10%	11%
10	University of South Florida-Main Campus	FL	845	12%	6%
11	University of North Texas	TX	835	13%	11%
12	Temple University	PA	831	15%	-5%
13	University of Maryland-University College	MD	809	25%	11%
14	Florida Atlantic University	FL	808	18%	-3%
15	Virginia Commonwealth University	VA	805	19%	13%

*Online For Profit Schools Excluded
Source: Diverse: Issues in Higher Education

Table 4

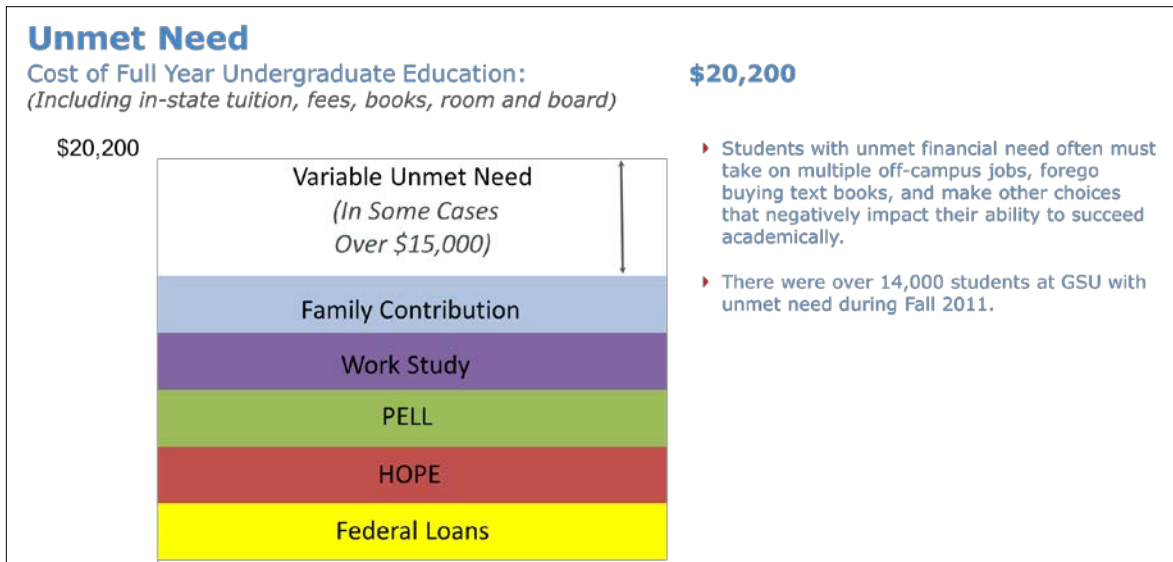


Table 5

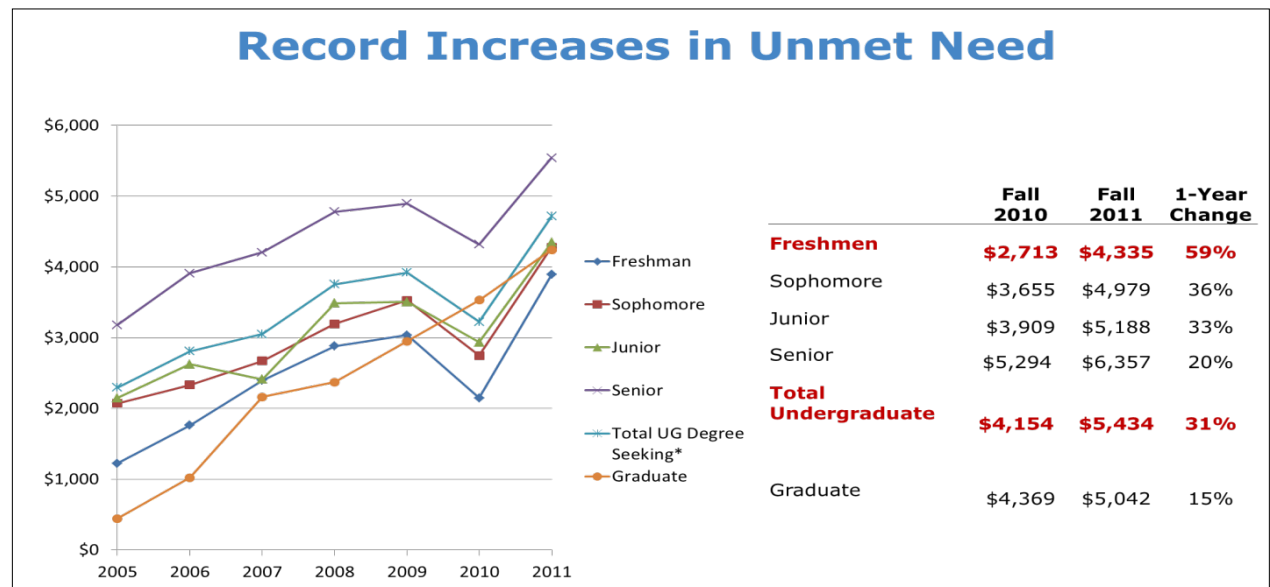


Table 6

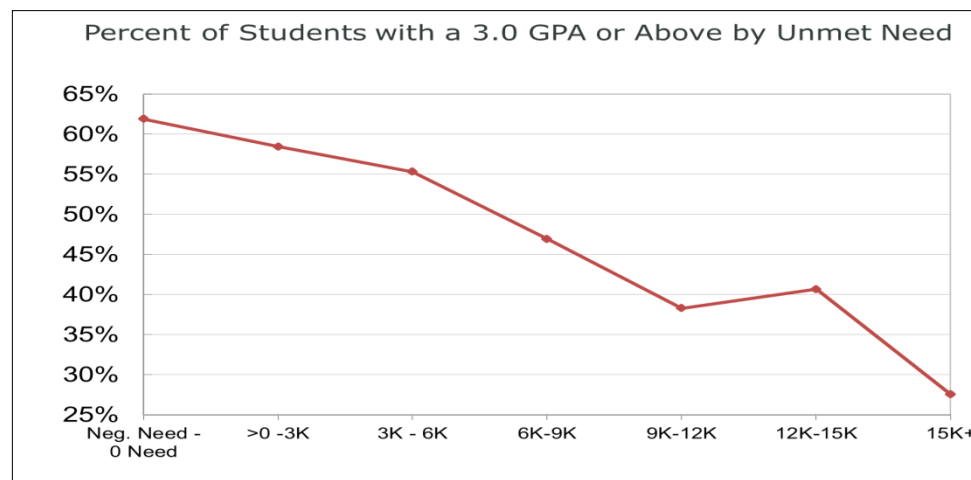


Table 7

Record Increases in the Number of Students Being Dropped for Non-Payment			
FALL	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	1-Year Change
Students Dropped	2,887	3,359	16%
Credit Hours Dropped	26,944	32,248	22%
Students Net Loss at Census	282	434	54%
Credit Hours Net Loss at Census	815	2,432	198%

Table 8

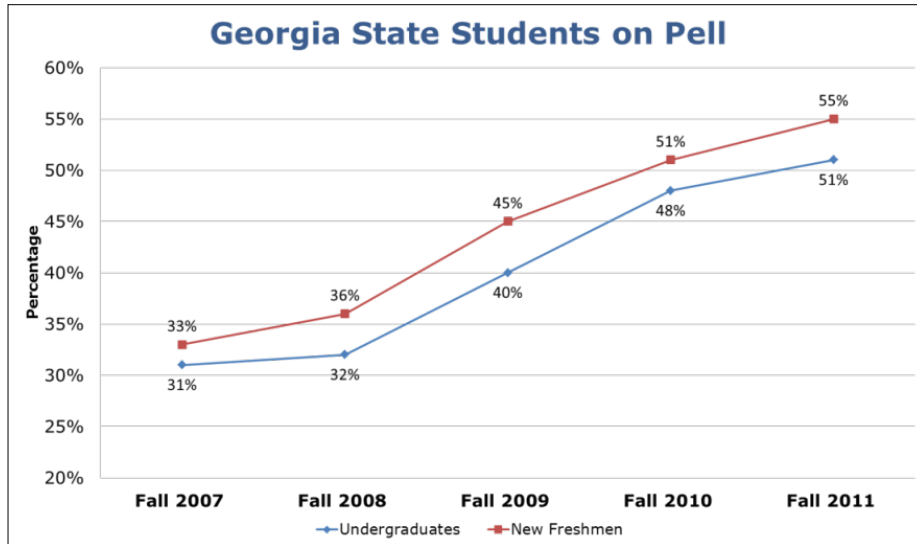


Table 9

Rolling 3-Yr Average Four and Six Year Graduation Rates									
PELL AND NONPELL									
	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	2003-05 Avg.	2004-06 Avg.	2005-07 Avg.	
OVERALL									
First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen									
Cohort N	1917	2256	2254	2156	2507				
4-Yr Grad. Rate	18.0%	17.2%	18.0%	20.7%	21.6%	17.8%	18.6%	20.1%	
6-Yr Grad. Rate	49.7%	48.2%	48.0%	n/a	n/a	48.7%	n/a	n/a	
8-Yr Grad. Rate	55.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	55.1%	n/a	n/a	
First-Time, Part-Time Freshmen									
Cohort N	74	79	95	74	95				
4-Yr Grad. Rate	6.8%	5.1%	5.3%	5.4%	9.5%	5.7%	5.2%	6.7%	
6-Yr Grad. Rate	35.1%	32.9%	29.5%	n/a	n/a	32.5%	n/a	n/a	
8-Yr Grad. Rate	45.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	45.9%	n/a	n/a	
PELL RECIPIENTS									
First-Time Freshmen									
Cohort N	570	776	692	731	831				
4-Yr Grad. Rate	17.5%	17.0%	17.8%	18.6%	20.7%	17.4%	17.8%	19.0%	
6-Yr Grad. Rate	51.9%	52.1%	49.4%	n/a	n/a	51.1%	n/a	n/a	
8-Yr Grad. Rate	59.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	59.1%	n/a	n/a	
First-Time, Part-Time Freshmen									
Cohort N	20	18	24	22	31				
4-Yr Grad. Rate	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	9.1%	6.5%	2.8%	5.8%	8.0%	
6-Yr Grad. Rate	45.0%	22.2%	50.0%	n/a	n/a	39.1%	n/a	n/a	
8-Yr Grad. Rate	65.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	65.0%	n/a	n/a	

Table 10

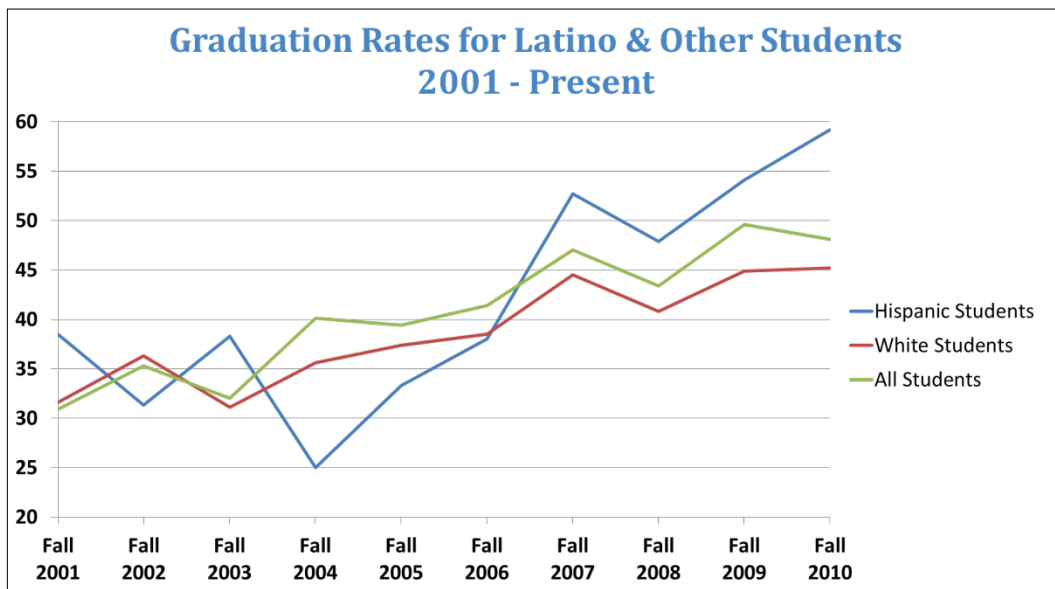


Table 11

Georgia State Degree Conferrals: 5-Year Trends

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	1-Yr Change	5-Yr Change
Undergrad*	3627	3834	3890	4154	4383	+6%	+21%
Grad	2147	2026	2159	2227	2618	+18%	+22%
Total	5774	5860	6049	6381	7001	+10%	+21%

**Excludes certificates and specialist degrees*

Table 12

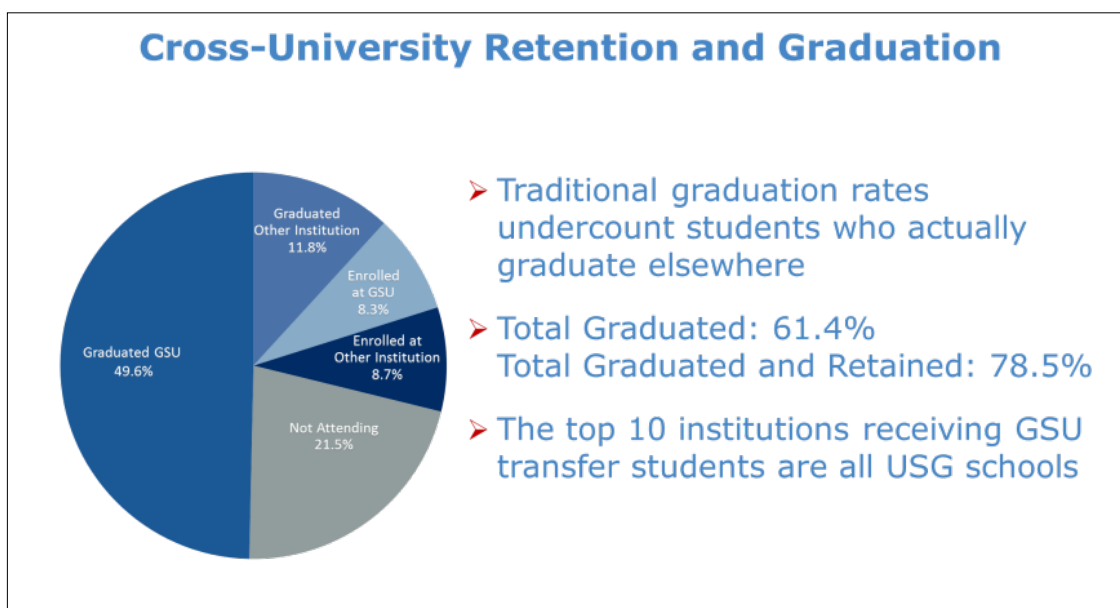


Table 13

Average Total Credit Hours at Time of Degree Completion					
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Native Students	136.3	137.1	138.8	140.1	140.0
3-Yr Avg.			137.4	138.7	139.6
Transfer Students	145.5	148.6	149.1	150.0	148.7
3-Yr Avg.			147.7	149.2	149.3
All Students	141.5	143.7	144.7	145.9	145.0
3-Yr Avg.			143.3	144.8	145.2

Averages are based on All Credit Hours Earned towards degree (transfer + institutional) for students who are pursuing their first bachelors degree

Table 14

IMPACT OF NEW FEE-DROP GRANTS			
SPRING 2012: \$263,000			
	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Change
Students Dropped: 1 st Drop	-1,134	-2,452	116%
Credit Hours Dropped: 1 st Drop	-19,077	-23,279	22%
Student Net Change: Prior 1 st Drop to Census	-66	119	+185 students
Credit Hour Net Change: Prior to 1 st Drop to Census	1,559	4,089	162%
Program Saved			
184 Students total			
3% of the Fall Freshman Class			
1% of Graduating Seniors			
Program generated \$664K in tuition and fees			

Table 15

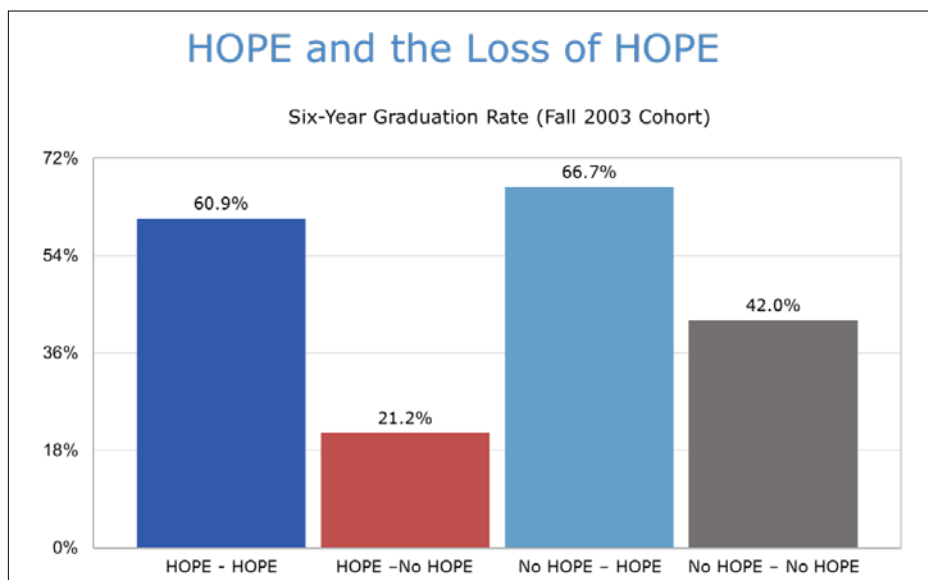


Table 16

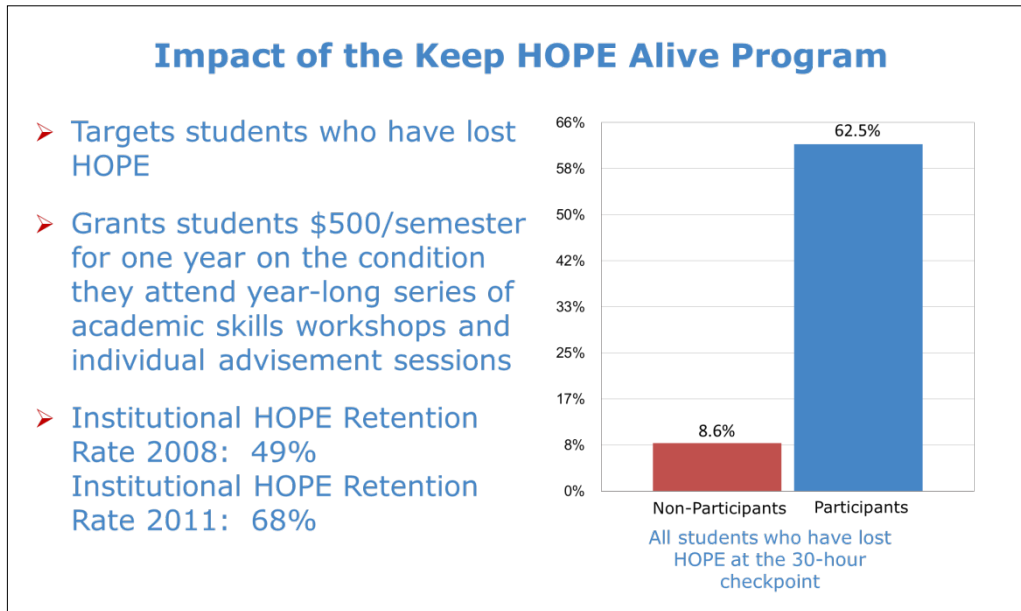


Table 17

RETENTION AND GRADUATION WEEKLY REPORT

AS OF JUNE 6, 2012

2006 Cohort	Graduation 4 th year	Graduation 5 th year	6 th year-Fall 2011	6 th year-Spring 2012	6 th year-Summer 2012 projected
Number of graduates	410	488	84	59	23
Total Cohort Graduates	440	928	1012	1071	1094
Cohort Graduation Rate %	20.40%*	43.04%	46.9%	49.7%	50.74%

Table 18

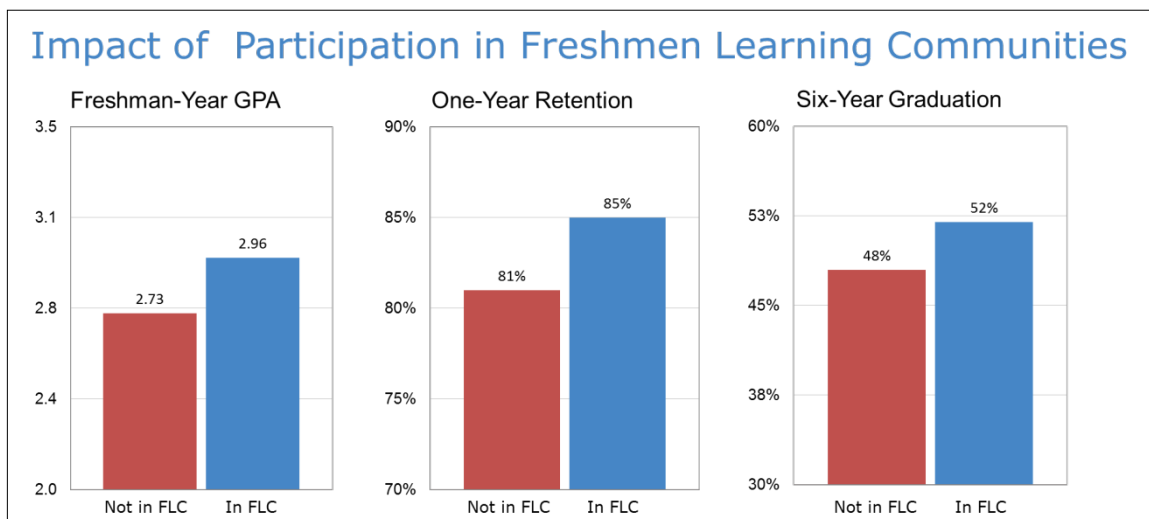


Table 19

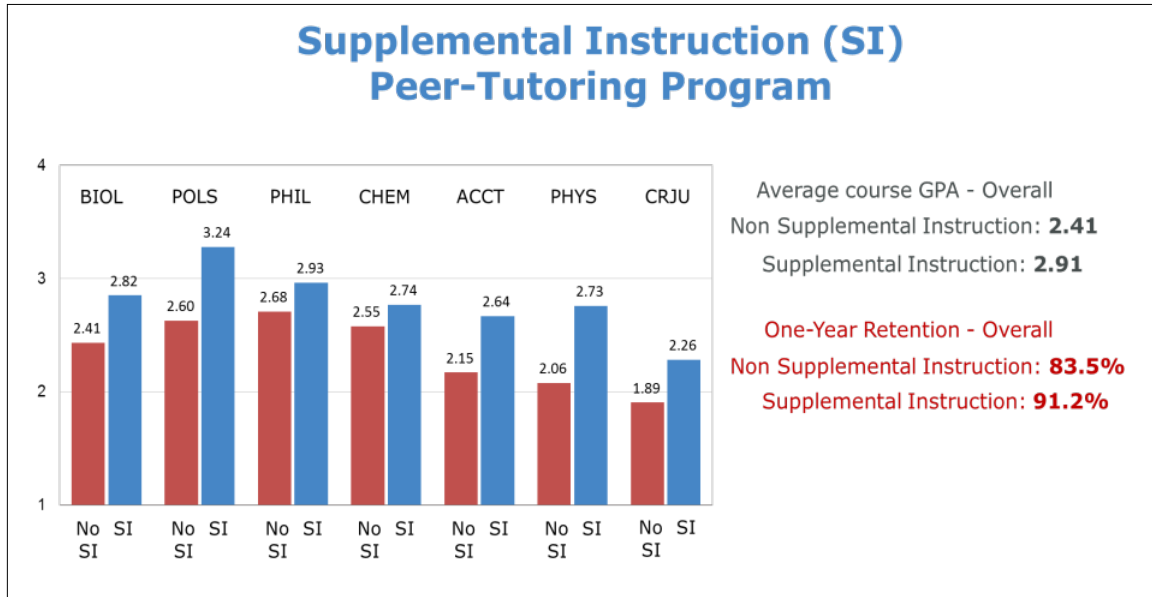


Table 20

