



Gordon State College

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Gordon State College’s mission is to ensure affordable, supportive access to high quality post-secondary education. As an access institution, we provide engaged faculty-student interaction through intimate classroom experiences, innovative and effective teaching strategies, excellent advising and mentorship programs, and effective student support services. GSC offers baccalaureate and associate degree programs, and the institution has focused more in recent years on meeting the needs of adult, underprepared, low income, military, and dual-credit students.

After a peak enrollment of 5,009 in 2010, enrollment has stabilized at approximately 4000 students. While we have not included “first-generation college” as a characteristic in our tracking of students, GSC does enroll a significant number of first-generation college students as an access institution. Of first-time students in fall 2015, 55% had one or two learning support requirements (19% of the overall student enrollment have learning support requirements), and 58% of the entire student population are Pell-eligible. This semester, 19% of the overall student population are adult learners. These numbers indicate a significant percentage of students who are considered to be in the high risk group. Accordingly, Gordon State College was one of the first institutions in the USG to take remediation transformation to scale. In addition, we developed a Weekend College for a bachelor’s of science in Human Services, using hybrid course delivery. The course meetings are held at our teaching site in Henry County, a high-population area, to provide adult learners with a convenient path for finishing a college degree in a high-demand industry. Overall, we have targeted traditionally underserved populations for increases in access and completion.

At the same time, our institution has increased its population of students taking courses on a dual-credit basis. In the semester of our peak enrollment, fall 2010, we enrolled 36 dual-credit students. By fall 2015, that population has increased 408%, to 183 students. We have worked extensively with high schools in our area to provide more opportunities for dual credit. In addition, we reviewed our policies for accepting AP credit and brought them into alignment with national norms.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS, HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The following high-impact strategies were undertaken at Gordon State College after reviewing data on completion indicators, our institutional mission, and our available resources.

High-impact Strategy	1: Provide services and support to students that will help them engage in the college culture and succeed in their academic programs.
Related Goal	1: Increase in the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions.
Summary of Activities	<p>For the purpose of improving retention and completion for all students, in the past year Gordon State College has provided</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Always Alert intrusive advising for disengaged and poorly performing students. Faculty report students of concern as early as the first week of the semester. 2. Supplemental Instruction, in which students who have passed a course with a high grade and have an aptitude for working with other students sit in on the course and provide tutoring sessions with current students. 3. Individual tutoring in math, English and a number of other disciplines. 4. Success/academic skills workshops. 5. A Career Services Center which helps students understand how academic success and personal development are tied to career goals, assists students in preparing for the job market, and helps students and employers connect. <p>These forms of student support are provided through the Student Success Center, which is an important component of our efforts to accomplish our mission as an access institution. The SSC is staffed by a director, who reports to the Provost, three professional advisors, a Minority Advising Program coordinator, a program assistant, and student tutors. The Career Services Center, which comes under the director of the SSC, is staffed by a coordinator and two part-time student assistants.</p> <p>FYE: GSC requires first-term students who have Learning Support requirements to take the Gordon First Year Experience course and pass with a C or better. This course focuses on student engagement in the college culture, academic success, career planning, and financial literacy, and it is overseen by the Director of Student Success, Advising, and Testing. This one-hour course is taught by faculty members and staff. For full-time faculty members, the course is an overload.</p> <p>Policies: To remove unnecessary hurdles to student success, GSC formally revised policies regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Renewal, which became less stringent and, therefore, broader in application.

- Required High School Curriculum guidelines, which now enable students to count a course both as fulfillment of a high school deficiency and as a college graduation requirement. In addition, the stipulation that students must earn a C or higher in the course for it to fulfill a high school deficiency has been removed. Because the grade of D or higher is required for students to pass a course at Gordon State College, that is now the grade requirement for the course to fulfill a high school deficiency.

Baseline Status

Five-year change in degrees conferred:

- Associate's: -11.6% (456 to 403)
- Bachelor's: +100% (74 to 148)

See table below, **Degrees Conferred by Academic Year.**

Metric	Degrees Conferred by Academic Year				
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
1.3 Associate Degrees	456	488	500	454	403
1.4 Bachelor's Degrees	74	102	124	155	148

Interim Measures of Progress

1% annual increase in degrees conferred. (See Lessons Learned.)

Measures of Success

5-year history of number of associate degrees conferred, by underserved population
 5-year history of number of bachelor's degrees conferred, by underserved population

Lessons Learned

As we have grown services and support for student success, funding has proven to be a challenge in these years of tight budgets. Limited resources have caused us to be judicious in choosing the initiatives we undertake, which is good, but they have also kept us from providing the level of support we would like. Our President and our Vice President of Business Affairs have worked diligently with Academic Affairs and the Student Success Center to provide funding of resources to the level possible.

With the decline in enrollment over the past six years (10.9%), our 2012 goal of 3% annual increase in degrees conferred has been revised to a 1% annual increase.

High-impact Strategy

6.1: Participate in dual enrollment programs for high school students

Goal

6: Shorten time to degree completion through programs that allow students to earn college credit while still in high school and by awarding credit for prior learning that is verified by appropriate assessment

Summary of Activities

6.1: In the past year, GSC has worked with four public school systems in our area to facilitate dual enrollment. The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Director of Admissions, and the Director of Financial Aid are the primary contacts with the schools systems, but the President, Deans, Department Heads, and staff members in several offices have also been instrumental in making the program work well for students.

1. Pike County High School: Planned the bussing of students accepted into the Accel program to the GSC campus. The high school provides transportation at specific days and times, and we schedule needed classes and reserve seats. We also work with the school personnel to promote dual credit with students and parents.
2. Jackson High School (Butts County): Beginning fall 2014, our partnership has followed the approach developed with Pike County.
3. Mary Persons High School (Monroe County): In 2013-2014, GSC offered classes for students in the Accel program at the Monroe County Education Center. Beginning fall 2014, the partnership has followed the Pike County approach.

In addition, GSC

- Participated in the steering committee for a regional college and career academy involving Griffin-Spalding Schools, Pike County Schools, Butts County Schools, Southern Crescent Technical College and the University of Georgia (Griffin campus). The Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs now represents GSC on the Board of Directors for the Griffin Region College and Career Academy. The GRCCA opens its doors in August 2016.
- Participates in the Academy for Advanced Studies, the college and career academy in Henry County. Henry County Schools, Southern Crescent Technical College, and Clayton State University are partners. GSC offers on site evening and day classes that are available to students in the dual-credit program. The Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs represents GSC on the Board of Directors for the Academy.
- Participates in the Lamar County College and Career Academy. Lamar County Schools and Southern Crescent Technical College are partners. The Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs represents GSC on the Board of Directors for the LCCCA and on the

- Lamar County Schools Strategic Planning Postsecondary/Career Academy.
- Has continued to refine academic advising and general assistance to dual credit students.
- Has developed, this summer, improved procedures for Move On When Ready students. Enhancing advising and course registration practices, along with developing an in-house textbook loan program, has facilitated college learning at almost no cost to dual-enrollment students.

Baseline Status

Six year change in dual enrollment headcount: +346% (41 to 183)

Dual-Enrollment Headcount by Academic Year

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16*
41	57	70	155	172	183

- Five year (2010/11 to 2014/15) change in credits awarded to dual enrollment students: +562.4% (441 to 2480)
- Five year change (2010/11 to 2014/15) in average credits awarded per student: 33.3% (10.8 to 14.4)

Interim Measures of Progress

Dual enrollment headcount: 10% average annual increase
 Dual enrollment credit awarded: 10% average annual increase
 Dual enrollment average credit per student: 1% average annual increase

**Measures of Success
 Lessons Learned**

6.1: Number of enrolled dual-credit students and total number of credit hours

Changes in state Board of Education policy have had a significant positive impact on dual enrollment participation at GSC. Perhaps as importantly, budget constraints in the public high schools have made credit earned in college classes more attractive. Some local high schools cannot afford to offer a wide array of AP classes with low enrollments, and dual enrollment is an attractive alternative. The Summary of Activities lists the partnerships we have developed to allow a greater number of high school students to take advantage of dual credit. We expect the number of dual-credit students to increase for at least the next two years, until we reach the point that all eligible students have full opportunity to engage in dual credit.

In some local counties, the customary perspective of many parents and students must change if high school students are going to take advantage of this opportunity to the extent possible. Parents must be aware of the importance of their students preparing for and taking the SAT or ACT exam early enough in their high school careers. In at least some of these counties, counselors tell us that they promote the exams (and preparation) so that students could take them by at least their sophomore year of high school, but many students delay until late in their junior year.

The average number of credit hours awarded per student is also an important indicator of the success of dual credit.

High-impact Strategies

7.1, 7.2, and 7.3: Enroll most students in need of remediation in gateway collegiate courses in English and mathematics, with corequisite Learning Support; combine English and reading remediation; and ensure that all remediation is targeted toward supporting students in the skills they need to pass the collegiate course.

Related Goal

7: Increase the likelihood of degree completion by transforming the way that remediation is accomplished

Summary of Activities

After piloting corequisite remediation in English and math, GSC went to scale with full transformation of remediation in spring 2015. We have all students with Learning Support requirements taking either a Foundations course or corequisite remediation. The majority of students needing remediation are now placed in corequisite remediation. Students with a math requirement are placed in a support lab for either Quantitative Skills and Reasoning or College Algebra, based on their COMPASS score, and take the appropriate gateway course as a corequisite. Reading and English are combined in English Learning Support.

Baseline Status

For students admitted in fall 2014 with an English and/or Reading Learning Support requirement,

- 70% taking corequisite courses passed English 1101 in their *first* semester, and another 16% in their second semester.
- 61% taking a stand-alone remediation course passed ENGL 1101 in their *second* semester of college, and another 2% passed the course in their third semester.

For students admitted in fall 2014 with a Math Learning Support requirement,

- 70% taking corequisite courses passed a college-level math course in their *first* semester, and another 9% in their second semester.
- 45% taking a stand-alone remediation course passed a college-level math course in their *second* semester of college, and 0% passed the course in their third semester.

Interim Measures of Progress	We have completed the interim goal of fully implementing the new learning support model.
Measures of Success	7.1 through 7.7
Lessons Learned	<p>With overall enrollment declining slightly, our number of students with Learning Support requirements has also declined. However, the strategies are proving successful, as shown above. The corequisite classes clearly help students who are eligible for them progress faster towards a degree.</p> <p>We expect that the Goal 7 strategies will have the greatest impact of any of the strategies on retention and completion at Gordon State College. As an access institution, a significant percentage of our students have one or two Learning Support requirements: 33% of our incoming freshman class in fall 2014. Prior to using the corequisite model, no students placed into remediation would have had a chance to complete a corresponding college-level class in their first semester. Typically, only between a half and three fourths of the students placed into the <i>upper</i> level Learning Support course would have passed their LS requirement in the first semester and been able to take the corresponding college-level course in their second semester.</p> <p>The challenges at the institutional level have primarily been training faculty and making the necessary alterations in curricula, published information, and policies.</p>
High-impact Strategy	<p>9.1 Target increases in access and completion for students traditionally underserved in postsecondary education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time students • Adult learners (undergraduate students 25 or older) • Military and former military students • Underserved minority (African American males) • Low income (Pell recipients)
<p>Related Goal</p> <p>Summary of Activities</p>	<p>9: Improve access for underserved and/or priority communities.</p> <p>GSC has continued to build on its efforts to attract, retain, and move to completion traditionally underserved students. Progress in this area has included the following efforts:</p> <p>Part-time Students:</p> <p>GSC's efforts have focused on flexible course delivery. We have expanded the online course offerings, especially during the summer term, and created more hybrid courses, including half semester classes (8 weeks). In addition, we have increased the number of classes offered two days a week.</p> <p>Adult Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekend College: Adult learners with at least some college credits (including completion of General Education Area A Core requirements), can earn a BS in Human Services in Weekend College. Students attend classes as a cohort – a group of adults with similar interests and occupations – that meets one weekend per month at Gordon State College at McDonough (Henry County High School Complex). Remaining coursework is completed online. Unlike traditional college degree programs, Weekend College may assign up to 24 credits of prior learning acquired through work experience, educational experience, workplace training or courses that did not carry college credit. The human services bachelor's degree prepares students for a wide variety of occupations in a fast-growing field. The National Organization for Human Services reports that "employment of human services workers is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations" • Our AL Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developed and enhanced <u>new student orientations specifically for adult learners</u> and planned events to connect adult learners to college campus, culture and resources. ○ Established <u>tutoring sessions to cater to AL needs</u>, including weekend math and writing tutoring. ○ Established an <u>AL mentoring program</u> to assist students with getting adjusted to college life. The AL coordinator worked with several of our adult students to put together a mentoring program that has been well received and is a meaningful experience for both mentees and mentors. ○ Coordinated <u>faculty training in assessing Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)</u> and worked with those faculty to create <u>departmental policies</u>. • Another support mechanism for adult learners created this past year is OWLs (Older Wiser Learners), a support group offered through our Counseling and Accessibility office. • GSC has required all first-year students with Learning Support requirements to take our 8-week First Year Experience course. We offer an online section of the course strictly for adult learners each term. This section was adapted to fit the needs of this student population. <p>Military and former military:</p>

GSC main campus and off-campus sites are not located near a military base, and the main campus is not in or near a high-density population area. We have very few military (current and former) students.

We have continued, however, to find ways to attract veterans and active duty service members in our service area. A staff member in the Counseling and Accessibility Office is our Veterans Coordinator, and she represents GSC on the Regents Advisory Committee on Military Education. As part of our efforts to be military friendly, we give credit for formal courses and tests connected to the workplace and validated by the American Council on Education (ACE), including DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) as well as through portfolio evaluation.

Gordon State College became an active member of SOC (Servicemembers Opportunities College) in 2012. In addition, the Student Veteran Association assists in the development of military programming and supportive services such as Veteran Memorial Services and fundraisers to meet the needs of the veteran population.

Underserved Minority (African American males):

AAMI: In 2009, the college implemented a component of the African-American Male Initiative (AAMI) through the Brother to Brother Chapter of Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB). This AAMI program includes academic advising, community service, and personal development. Additional features include study skills workshops, team-building activities such as the Challenge Course and bowling, career boot camp, and participation in relevant conferences.

Historically, African-American males enrolled at our institution have had to overcome challenges such as inadequate academic preparation and the inability to navigate the college setting. In 2009, African-American males accounted for almost 16% of the student population; however, increased admission standards, especially in the area of learning support requirements, have negatively impacted this demographic; enrollment dropped to 11% in Fall 2013. To that end, this initiative would serve as a catalyst to increase the educational productivity and academic success of African-American males.

Low Income (Pell recipients):

As a state college and an access institution, GSC offers quality education at a great value, and the college emphasizes that fact in its advertising and communications to students and their families.

Once students are enrolled, we support them regarding financial needs:

- **Payment plans:** In past years we would lose some low-income students because they had not planned their finances well or did not have enough information (FAFSA results, for example) to plan well. They might have a relatively small balance that they could not pay, yet they were dropped from classes. Beginning this fall, GSC has partnered with Nelnet to allow students to pay their balances over time.
- **Financial education:** GSC has added a Financial Literacy component to the Gordon First Year Experience course. The Office of Financial Aid has promoted Financial Literacy resources to our students for many years.
- **Supplies and meals:** GSC allows students to use their aid to pay for textbooks, school supplies, and meal plans. Students are better equipped to work and to succeed in their classes.
- **Affordable Learning Georgia:** Our ALG Campus Champion and Library Coordinator work to inform faculty, staff, and students about Affordable Learning Georgia and the benefits of open educational resources. Before ALG, a number of our faculty were already exploring ideas to reduce textbook costs for students. More faculty have been creating free online resources, placing textbooks on reserve in the library, and creating less expensive published materials. Two faculty members received a grant to create an online writing handbook for students.

Baseline Status

Access: With the decline in enrollment over the past six years (10.9%), our access numbers have dropped across all categories with the exception of dual enrollment (see Goal 6).

Retention: By fall 2014, we had exceeded our Completion Plan goals for one-year retention rates for the following student subpopulations:

- Pell-eligible: 56.9% (goal was 54%)
- Learning Support: 55.6% (goal was 54%)

Retention Rate by Cohort

Metric	Retention Rate for Cohort Beginning Fall of				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
First-time Pell-eligible	42.20%	47.20%	48.30%	52.80%	56.90%
Learning Support					55.60%

Completion: Five year change in degrees conferred by underserved population and type of degree:

- Adult learners:

- Associate, -27.5% (138 to 100)
- Bachelor, +66.7% (45 to 75)
- Underserved minorities:
 - Associate, -23.9% (138 to 105)
 - Bachelor, +190% (10 to 29)
- Financial aid (Pell-eligible):
 - Associate, -13.6% (221 to 191)
 - Bachelor, +153% (32 to 81)

Metric	Completion by Academic Year				
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Associate Adult Learners	138	155	167	117	100
Bachelor's Adult Learners	45	52	72	81	75
Associate's Underserved Minority	138	146	145	148	105
Bachelor's Underserved Minority	10	20	35	31	29
Associate Pell	221	269	246	243	191
Bachelor's Pell	32	51	68	73	81

Interim Measures of Progress

Access goal: 2% average annual growth in all populations
 Progression goals: 2% annual increase in one-year retention rate for the following student subpopulations:

- Adult learners
- Underserved minorities
- Financial aid (Pell-eligible)
- Learning Support requirements

Measures of Success

5-year history of number of entering students, by underserved/priority population
 5-year history of one-year retention rates for students by underserved/priority population
 5-year history of number of associate and bachelor degrees conferred by underserved population

Lessons Learned

Prior to the CCG initiative, this institution had focused on full-time students much more than on part-time and had given no special attention to adult learners and veterans as populations with characteristics and specific needs. By focusing on these populations, we have come to understand better how we can provide:

- flexible course delivery that meets students' scheduling needs
- enhanced academic and non-academic support within the context of
 - limited time on campus for many part-time and adult students
 - specific needs of these populations
 - assessment of prior learning gained through work/military experience

The development of half term courses, hybrid courses, credit for prior learning and additional online courses required the revision and alignment of computer system and departmental processes as well as additional training and review of courses to ensure high quality is maintained regardless of location, delivery method or duration. While GSC has significantly increased adult learner populations, we note that we are not located near a military base nor in a high-density population area. This has caused our efforts to recruit more military students to be less productive.

The biggest challenge in creating and growing the Weekend College is funding the resources—specifically, faculty. In meeting instructional needs, fulfilling other traditional faculty responsibilities, performing scholarship, and providing leadership and support in a variety of college initiatives, our faculty members have full plates. Adding faculty positions is a challenge.

GSC has a long history of serving African American and low-income populations. Perhaps the chief challenge is trying to combat circumstances outside the college's control. As the Summary of Activities above describes, GSC has completed or is continuing a number of initiatives aimed at providing access and completion support for these populations, although some initiatives benefit all student populations. These two traditionally underserved populations are the largest of the targeted groups and those in which we have the opportunity to make the most difference in retention, progression, and completion efforts.

For an institution of our type, counting degrees awarded at GSC provides only part of the completion success picture at this institution. Many of our students plan to transfer to a state

university or research university and do so successfully. Students who transfer take with them not only academic credits but the experience that comes with developing as a student and as a person.

5-Year Conferred Degrees and Student Transfers to USG Institutions

	<i>FY2010</i>	<i>FY2011</i>	<i>FY2012</i>	<i>FY2013</i>	<i>FY2014</i>
Conferred Degrees					
Associates	433	452	486	499	443
Bachelors	52	73	101	124	153
Total	485	525	587	623	596
Transfer to other USG Institution					
Research University			83	100	92
Comprehensive University			118	118	98
State University			225	173	148
State College			362	301	246
Total	664	773	788	692	584
Total Degrees + Transfers	1,149	1,298	1,375	1,315	1,180
Unduplicated FY Enrollment	5,798	6,430	5,761	5,081	4,996
Percent	19.8%	20.2%	23.9%	25.9%	23.6%

OBSERVATIONS

- Our most successful strategy and activities to this point have come under Goal 6, shortening time to degree completion by facilitating access to dual credit opportunities. GSC has worked with public high schools, private schools, and homeschooling associations in our service area for many years to promote dual credit. When circumstances made dual credit more attractive to the public high schools, those working relationships made expanding access to approved college classes much easier. Policy changes at the state level and tight budgets have caused the public high schools, in particular, to turn to dual credit as an effective strategy for solving problems. Many superintendents, principals, and counselors also recognize the benefits to students and their families. By working together in scheduling the right classes at the right times, in promoting dual credit to students and parents, and in giving close attention to managing day-to-day operations, these partnerships are helping students earn degrees more quickly, at a significant cost savings for families.
- In terms of overall GSC numbers, it appears that transforming remediation is going to be the strategy to have the greatest impact on retention, progression, and completion.
- To date, efforts at attracting targeted populations to enroll at GSC in greater numbers have not been successful, with the exception of dual credit students. In the past three years, GSC has intensified its marketing and recruiting efforts. We employed The Schapiro Group, an Atlanta-based marketing consulting firm, to help us better understand our students, institutional strengths and weaknesses, and perceptions of the institution. Paskill, Stapleton, & Lord, a firm that specializes in higher education enrollment marketing, worked with GSC to improve the College's brand identity and our communications with targeted populations. Enrollment management strategies have improved GSC internal processes, as well. We hope that we will see higher numbers as a result of these efforts, and we recognize that our enrollment could have declined more without them.
- In regards to progression and completion, GSC has studied and made changes in course delivery formats and time frames; it will take more time to get us where we want to be in that area. We have implemented strategic decisions in developing new academic and student support programs. For both flexibility in course delivery and enhancement of student support, funding personnel and other resources is a key challenge.
- As an access institution, GSC has the major challenge of trying to change long-term habits in a short timeframe for a significant portion of our student population. Such habits include time management, financial management, study skills and work ethic. We must assist students with developing good habits before they lose academic eligibility and/or become financially bereft.
- The overall institutional retention rate has shown modest improvement over the past six years, but several subpopulations have improved significantly including first time freshmen, first-time full-time freshmen, first-time part-time freshmen and first time Pell-eligible students.

5-year history of one-year retention rates					
	Retention Rate for Cohort Beginning Fall of				
Metric	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1.1 Institution All Students	45.00%	47.30%	50.30%	50.10%	52.70%
1.2 First-time Full-time	46.20%	52.40%	52.30%	55.40%	58.80%
1.3 First-time Part-time	35.00%	37.30%	43.50%	48.60%	51.90%
1.4 First-time Pell-eligible	42.20%	47.20%	48.30%	52.80%	56.90%
1.5 Learning Support					55.60%

- With the addition of baccalaureate programs, we have seen a growth in the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded along with an increase in baccalaureate degrees awarded to the subpopulations of adult learners, underrepresented minorities and Pell-eligible students.