



INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

The University of Georgia (UGA) is large and diverse: a public, research, land- and sea-grant institution with statewide commitments and responsibilities. It is the state's oldest, most comprehensive and most diversified institution of higher education with almost 35,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students and a history of more than 200 years of teaching, research and service. Its motto—"to teach, to serve and to inquire into the nature of things"—reflects UGA's integral role in the conservation and enhancement of the state's and the nation's intellectual, cultural and environmental heritage. According to its mission statement, the University of Georgia endeavors to prepare the University community and the state for full participation in the global society of the twenty-first century. Through its programs and practices, it seeks to foster the understanding of and respect for cultural differences necessary for an enlightened and educated citizenry. It further provides for cultural, ethnic, gender, and racial diversity in the faculty, staff, and student body. The University is committed to preparing the University community to appreciate the critical importance of a quality environment to an interdependent global society. It shares with other research universities in the system a number of core characteristics, including dedication to excellence in research, scholarship, and creative endeavors, to teaching and learning, to serving a diverse student body and to promoting student success.

With 170 undergraduate majors, as well as minors and certificate programs, there is no single student profile. UGA is a tapestry constructed of a diverse population of students with widely varying backgrounds, interests, experiences and challenges for whom the University offers a broad range of academic and co-curricular opportunities. In fall 2014, the UGA undergraduate population numbered just under 27,000 students; 94% of those undergraduates were enrolled full time, 43% were male and 28% were of racial/ethnic minority status. In 2014, UGA conferred 6,514 bachelor's degrees. The typical UGA undergraduate is of traditional age (≤ 24), enters as a first year student, lives on campus for the first year, and is seeking a first undergraduate degree. In addition to its undergraduate population, over 6,700 graduate students and over 1,500 professional students enrolled at UGA in fall 2014.

UGA is a highly selective school with an academically well-prepared undergraduate student population. In the fall of 2014, it once again attracted the most academically qualified class of students in its history. The entering class had a mean SAT score of 1913 and high school GPA of 3.90. UGA enrolled approximately one in 20 Georgia high school graduates. The class is 13% non-Georgian, and 29% of the students self-identified as non-Caucasian (7.6% African-American, 12.3% Asian, 5.3% Hispanic and 3.8% other). The class also includes first generation students (6%), Pell recipients (25%) and students from families where English is not the first language (almost 7%).

All of the Complete College Georgia goals that UGA is pursuing are aimed at improving retention and graduation rates, with particular attention on increasing the four-year graduation rate to the mean of our aspirational institutions (68%) by the year 2020. Data indicate an upward trajectory for UGA retention and four-year graduation rates. Our first-year retention rate has been holding steady at 94.2% for the entire student population while the 2014 retention rates for underrepresented populations has improved. These increased from 93.2% to 95% for Black/African-American students and from 91.5% to 93.1% for Hispanic students. Our average first-year retention rate puts us well above the average (89%) of our comparator peer institutions and virtually on par with the average (95%) of our aspirational peer institutions; in fact, the fall 2015 census shows that our first year retention rate for fall 2014 was 95.2%. Our six-year completion rate for the 2008 cohort was 84.6% and 85.3% for the 2009 cohort, both historic highs. The four-year completion rate is also climbing—from 62.4% for the 2009 cohort to 63.1% for the 2010 cohort. UGA continues to invest in faculty, staff and innovative programs to ensure that UGA students have an unparalleled learning experience; this upward trend in first-year retention and six-year completion rates show that these investments are having a positive impact on student success.

UGA has a high performing and academically strong student body. Some students, however, do have difficulty staying on track to completion. In fall 2014, 846 (3.14%) of our 26,882 undergraduates were identified as being in less than "good" academic standing; 724 were on academic probation and 122 were on academic dismissal. This year's update includes our strategies for addressing the needs of these students and for advising them more pro-actively.

UGA also supports a number of high impact programs that affect student success, including our very successful First Year Odyssey program (which is required of all first-year students), first-year learning communities, undergraduate research opportunities, study abroad programs, internships, and service learning courses. In fall 2016 we will launch the Experiential Learning requirement for all UGA undergraduates, a program that will offer all students the kinds of hands-on experiences that enhance learning and position them for success after graduation. We know that these kinds of programs engage our students and that engaged students are more likely to be successful and to stay on track for completion. To take one example, in spring 2015 almost 4,900 undergraduate students took a course with a service learning component, and 73% of those students who responded to a survey reported that the service-learning component of the course positively influenced their intention to complete their degree (see Table 7). Similarly, our Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) supports an open educational resources program for classes with large enrollments and traditionally expensive textbooks in addition to holding workshops to help faculty design or redesign courses to include high impact strategies such as flipped and blended classrooms, "Reacting to the Past" pedagogy, active learning, and problem-based learning. The Department of Mathematics has initiated a supplemental instruction program to increase student success in the pre-Calculus class that is often an early barrier for many students and thus impacts retention and completion. And UGA is investing \$4.4 million annually to reduce class sizes by hiring faculty and

creating more than 300 new course sections in 81 majors across campus; these include high-demand courses in growing fields such as engineering, business and public health, courses that historically have high failure rates, and “bottleneck” courses that students must take but have a hard time getting into because of limited classroom slots. We will be tracking these new initiatives to see what impact they have on retention and completion and whether the supplemental instruction program might serve as a model for other units across campus.

UGA’s completion strategy combines programs targeted to specific populations as well as those that impact the entire undergraduate population. Our completion strategies were implemented with UGA’s high performing, academically strong student body in mind—to challenge, engage and support students on their way to timely completion.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The University of Georgia is pursuing the following *Complete College Georgia* goals:

Goal 1: Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions.

Goal 2: Increase the number of degrees that are earned on time.

Goal 4: Provide targeted, pro-active advising to keep students on track to completion.

Goal 8: Restructure instructional delivery to support educational excellence and promote student success.

Goal 9: Improve access for underserved communities.

Other Goal: Provide a number of high impact curricular opportunities that support student success at UGA and beyond.

To meet these goals, the University of Georgia has implemented a number of strategies that are synergistic and designed to advance multiple goals simultaneously. Some are targeted to specific populations; others impact the entire undergraduate population as a whole. In addition to making sure that students understand the financial benefits of taking 15 credit hours per semester through the Regents’ flat-rate tuition policy and to improving the quality of the First Year Odyssey Seminar that is required of all first-year students (both of which were reported on in previous years), we are also pursuing the following strategies to meet our goals.

Strategy 1: Hire additional advisors and restructure advising to be more pro-active and to offer additional interventions for students to stay on track to timely graduation (Goal 1, 2 and 4).

Strategy 2: Expand online course offerings, particularly in the summer sessions, to give students more flexibility in planning their programs of study and keep them on track for timely completion (Goal 1, 2, and 8).

Strategy 3: Increase funds for merit-based scholarships and, in particular, for need-based scholarships to increase accessibility among under-represented groups (Goal 1, 2 and 9).

Strategy 4: Reduce the number of students on academic probation and move them toward timely degree completion (Goal 1, 2 and 4).

Strategy 5: Provide both a range of high impact curricular opportunities, including service learning, undergraduate research, study abroad, internships, a first-year experience, and learning communities, and additional resources such as supplemental instruction, flipped classrooms, and open educational resources to promote student success (Goal 1, 2 and Other).

MATRIX OF INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES

Strategy 1	Hire additional advisors and restructure advising to be more pro-active and to offer additional interventions for students to stay on track to timely graduation.
Related Goals	Goal 1: Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions. Goal 2: Increase the number of degrees that are earned on time. Goal 4: Provide targeted, pro-active advising to keep students on track to completion.
Summary of Activities	<p>Meaningful relationships with advisors are critical elements of excellent undergraduate education and degree completion. On a campus with over 26,000 undergraduate students, students may sometimes feel lost especially in those first few semesters when they often take large lecture classes of 300+ students. Advisors are an important point of personal contact for virtually every student. Advisors at UGA are remarkably well qualified, most holding graduate degrees and many holding terminal degrees; many of them have taught as adjuncts and graduate assistants, or bring other skills, such as counseling backgrounds, to the position; and many have developed special programming for students, such as “50 Things To Do With A Science Major” or “Know Yourself, Find Your Major.”</p> <p>In recognition of the key role played by advisors on campus, UGA hired 25 new advisors; in the summer of 2014 they received extensive training and were distributed among several different schools and colleges on campus. In addition, upon the recommendation of a task force, UGA hired a Director of Academic Advising Services who is providing leadership for university-wide academic advising initiatives and ongoing support for college-level advising services. She is tasked to plan, manage and participate in academic advising initiatives, with an emphasis on university-level projects that advance student counseling and career counseling services at UGA; to oversee assessment of advising campus-wide; to recommend policy to increase retention and degree completion; to help develop best practice guidelines and training for academic advisors across campus; and to advise the administration on ways</p>

to communicate with “millennials” to increase their likelihood to stay on track to completion.

Baseline Status

UGA currently employs 115 professional advisors/program coordinators: of these, 81 are full time with an average case load of 325-350 students each; 22 are 75% time with an average case load of 235 students each; 5 are Lead Advisors at 80% time with an average of 225 students plus additional duties as Leads; 2 are 60% time with an average of 225 students; and 5 are full time but split their time between departmental advising and graduation certification and have an average of 75 students to advise. On average, each advisor advises too many students and most advisors do not stay with a student more than 1-2 years. The goals are fourfold: 1. enriching advisor-student relationships through creating an advisor assignment schedule that allows for a single advisor-student relationship throughout the student’s academic career to the extent possible and using predictive analytic models to match first-year students with appropriate advisors; 2. matching defined student populations with appropriately trained advisors through, in part, developing predictive analytics to assign incoming first-year students into cohorts based on their predicted success; 3. reducing time to an appropriate major choice based on students’ skills and aspirations through providing an Exploratory meta-major option and Exploratory Center for undecided students and students not fully committed to their major; and 4. enhancing the professional image of academic advising at UGA through improving initial training, expanding professional development opportunities for advisors and enacting a career ladder for advisor recognition and promotion.

Changes in the advising structure are expected to improve retention (especially second and third year retention) and completion rates. Targets for 2020: first-year retention rate to improve from 94.2% to 96% and four-year graduation rate to improve from 63.1% to 68%.

Interim Measures of Progress

We are in the process of restructuring advising this year to include pre-enrollment testing to determine before classes begin if a student’s study skills, support, commitment and self-efficacy are robust so that, if needed, an advisor can provide the earliest possible intervention to help that student get and stay on track to completion. We are also developing some predictive analytics solutions to help identify students who may have difficulty staying on track and to help students understand their likelihood of success in particular degree programs. We expect this restructuring will help us both retain first-year and transfer students at even higher levels and improve our four- and six-year graduation rates.

Measures of Success

New advisor hiring, initiated in 2013, has been completed and 25 new professional advisors were deployed in fall 2014 across UGA’s schools and colleges to work directly with students. Although first-year retention rate had been holding steady at 94.2% for several years, it increased to 95.2% the fall following this significant increase in the advising corps at UGA.

A newly created “Director for Advising” position, that will oversee all student advising on campus, has been filled. Plans for restructuring advising are currently in review and will be launched in fall 2016.

Lessons Learned

Because we are in the early stages of planning and implementation, no metrics directly related to student data are available as yet. We will be monitoring and measuring these metrics for future reports.

Strategy 2	Expand online course offerings to give students more flexibility in planning their programs of study and keep them on track for timely completion.
Related Goals	Goal 1: Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions. Goal 2: Increase the number of degrees that are earned on time. Goal 8: Restructure instructional delivery to support educational excellence and promote student success.
Summary of Activities	In 2013, OOL launched the Online Learning Fellows Program to provide faculty with the training and support to design, develop and teach high-quality online courses. Through this initiative UGA has developed over 170 online-only courses or online versions of high-demand courses that fulfill several areas of degree requirements (see Table 6). In addition to individual online courses, recent efforts have focused on creating and delivering online degree programs, most of which are at the graduate level. By offering high-demand, required courses in an online format during the summer, students have flexibility in course scheduling and have access to courses in high-demand areas that allows them to meet degree requirements in a timely manner, ultimately contributing to increased degree completion and reduced time-to-degree.
Baseline Status	Since 2012, the Office of Online Learning (OOL) has partnered with Schools and Colleges to develop online course offerings at UGA. Although the majority of credit hours are still earned in residential, face-to-face courses, the roster of online courses continues to grow. These courses offer students more flexibility in planning their programs of study and allow students who are studying or interning off campus or who must return home to work fulltime during the summer to stay on track for graduation. Increasing the availability of online courses is expected to improve retention and completion rates. Greater flexibility in fulfilling course requirements through online courses is also expected to increase second and third year retention rates. Targets for 2020: first-year retention rate to improve from 94.2% to 96% and four-year graduation rate to improve from 63.1% to 68%. Future reports will include greater analysis of second and third year retention rates.
Interim Measures of Progress	Since the summer of 2013, enrollments in online courses in the summer have steadily increased, as has the number of online courses offered in the summer (see Table 6). In summer 2013, 1,496 undergraduate students were enrolled in online courses; in 2014, 2,230 students took online courses; and in 2015, the number was 2,822. Of all 6,575 bachelor's degrees awarded in 2014, 695 (10.6%) were awarded to students who completed at least one online course. Of all the undergraduates who were awarded degrees in FY2015, 16% took summer-online courses in Summer 2013; that number more than doubled in Summer 2014 to 38.5%.
Measures of Success	It is clear that online courses contribute to student credit hour production and to progress toward degree completion. Reduced time-to-degree for participants in online courses is the ultimate measure for success and we will continue to track this data for future reports.
Lessons Learned	UGA has seen significant increases in summer enrollment, especially in online courses over the past two summers. It seems clear that increased communication across campus helped drive these increases and that effort will continue. UGA is continuing its program to support the creation of additional online courses, in particular courses that fulfill core requirements, major requirements, or are in high demand. In addition, the Registrar is using the wait-list feature in Banner to help departments identify high demand courses early enough to be able to add more sections to accommodate students.
Strategy 3	Increase funds for merit-based scholarships and, in particular, for need-based scholarships to increase accessibility among under-represented groups
Related Goals	Goal 1: Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions. Goal 2: Increase the number of degrees that are earned on time. Goal 9: Improve access for underserved communities.
Summary of Activities	UGA launched the Gateway to Georgia Scholarship program in 2012 in response to the increased need for student financial support in general and for aid for under-represented groups in particular. Gateway to Georgia is an effort designed to meet the increasing need of students who are academically qualified but have financial circumstances that might otherwise prevent them from pursuing a UGA degree. The scholarship program hopes to improve access to college and increase retention and graduation rates at Georgia's first land-grant university. As frequently cited in higher education literature, financial need is one of the greatest barriers to college completion. By reducing the amount of unmet financial need, the Gateway program improves the likelihood of completion for students. Staff members are actively soliciting funds, and almost \$1.9M has been received to date. The three scholarships under the Gateway to Georgia program are Georgia Access, a need-based scholarship program awarded by the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA); Georgia Opportunity, a merit-based program awarded by Undergraduate Admissions; and Georgia Gateway General, a general scholarship with more flexible award criteria (but which does not yet have a spending budget). The Georgia Access Scholarship has grown over the past few years thanks to additional support from donors. In 2014, the Georgia Department of Revenue

Baseline Status	allocated \$339,940 of UGA license plate sales to the Georgia Access Scholarship Fund; the Georgia Athletic Association allocated \$625,000 toward the Georgia Access Scholarship; and in 2014, UGA partnered with the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation to award \$205,000 to 205 students which has helped under-represented students at UGA. An estimated 43% of the Georgia Access Scholarship recipients are from first-generation families as reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and 42% are from ethnic households. The average Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of the Georgia Access scholar is \$179 per year. Since 2011, UGA has experienced dramatic growth in the Georgia Access Scholarship program. An important goal is to decrease the amount of unmet financial need for Georgia Access scholars by 2020.
Interim Measures of Progress	During the first year of the program (2011-12), UGA awarded \$316,000 to 141 undergraduate students. In 2014-15, UGA awarded over \$1,356,000 to approximately 600 undergraduate students. This represents a 325% increase in Georgia Access Scholarship recipients and a 329% increase in award amounts; despite this rapid increase, the average amount of the award (approximately \$2200) is inadequate since the average financial aid gap for Georgia Access scholars is \$8,200 after the Federal Pell Grant and gift aid is taken into account.
Measures of Success	Once data on the first cohort of students receiving the Georgia Access Award are available, OSFA will create metrics to measure the success of this program. In fall 2013, OSFA developed financial aid recipient profiles for each of UGA's colleges/schools. These profiles have been finalized for the 2012-13 academic year and will help individual academic units gauge the financial needs of their students. OSFA plans to make the profiles available on an annual basis.
Lessons Learned	As frequently cited in higher education literature, financial need is one of the greatest barriers to college completion. The assumption is that reducing the amount of unmet financial need will impact retention and completion rates. The OSFA will track this for each cohort moving forward and will report it as data become available.

Strategy 4	Reduce the number of students on academic probation and move them to timely degree completion.
Related Goals	Goal 1: Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions. Goal 2: Increase the number of degrees that are earned on time. Goal 9: Improve access for underserved communities.
Summary of Activities	An essential component in the effort to reduce the number of students on academic probation and to move them to timely degree completion is the Division of Academic Enhancement (DAE) which is housed within the Office of the Vice President for Instruction. Over the last three years DAE has continued to expand the Collaborative Academic and Retention Effort (CARE) program, an early intervention program designed to address the individual needs of students placed on academic probation, which is used by most schools and colleges at UGA who refer students to the program; these participating schools and colleges account for 98% of UGA's undergraduate student body. CARE participants experience significant increases in GPA and often return to good academic standing within one semester of participation. By identifying struggling students early and helping them return to good academic standing, retention and completion become more realistic outcomes for these students. CARE participants benefit from one-on-one consultations with academic specialists. Prior to the initial CARE appointment, students fill out a survey describing their study habits and identifying roadblocks to academic success. Using the information from the survey, CARE specialists create a personalized improvement plan and provide valuable resources for each student. Students who are served through the CARE program include those who fall on scholastic probation for the first time; are on continued probation and are re-admitted (post-dismissal); and students who self-select into the program, seeking to heighten or improve academic performance. Faculty can also refer students who need academic assistance through the Early Alert Program; those students receive the same services as CARE students.
Baseline Status	Some UGA students do have difficulty staying on track to completion. In fall 2014, 846 (3.14%) of our 26,882 undergraduates were identified as being in less than "good" academic standing; 724 were on academic probation and 122 were on academic dismissal. Early intervention programs, such as the CARE program, play an important role in returning students to "good" academic standing. The CARE program has grown over the last several years to include most of the undergraduate schools and colleges at UGA. In fall 2015 the Division of Academic Enhancement began reaching out to pre-identified students before they failed a course to offer them academic support. Predictive analytics will be used in future to work more aggressively with students before they are placed on academic probation.
Interim Measures of Progress	CARE students in spring 2014 had an average increase of 0.94 (vs. 0.89 in spring 2013) in their term GPAs. When comparing the participants' GPAs for the semester that placed them on academic probation to the participants' GPAs for the semester they received CARE assistance, the overall increase was found to be significant (t = 12.14, p < 0.001). By contrast, those who delayed participation or did not participate at all displayed an average increase of 0.05 (vs.

	0.03 in spring 2013) in their term GPAs. A t-test revealed that students who were required to participate in CARE had a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) increase in their GPAs compared to students who were eligible but did not participate. The control group for this interim measure of progress consists of eligible students who did not participate. An additional control group determined by the non-participating schools and colleges is not feasible, as only three schools/colleges (all with a small number of undergraduate students) do not actively participate in the CARE program. Therefore, such a comparison would not yield beneficial measurements.
Measures of Success	Forty-one percent (vs. 46% last year) of students who participated in CARE in spring 2014 cleared probation by spring's end as expected. Only 7% (vs. 6% last year) of students who delayed participation or did not participate at all cleared probation by spring's end. Helping students on academic probation return to good academic standing should lead to improved retention and completion rates.
Lessons Learned	Staff in the Division of Academic Enhancement is puzzled by the 5% decrease between this year and last in the number of students participating in CARE who cleared probation by spring's end. They will continue to track these students to determine what other factors may impact their return to "good standing" to see what other services may be required.

Strategy 5	Provide both a range of high impact curricular opportunities, including service learning, undergraduate research, study abroad, internships, a first-year experience, and learning communities, and additional resources such as supplemental instruction, flipped classrooms, and open educational resources to promote student success.
Related Goals	Goal 1: Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions. Goal 2: Increase the number of degrees that are earned on time. Other Goal: Provide a number of high impact curricular opportunities that support student success at UGA and beyond.

Summary of Activities

UGA's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) supports a number of initiatives that impact student success and completion. For example, it coordinates an Open Education Resources (OER) program for classes with large enrollments and traditionally expensive textbooks. CTL staff also hold regular workshops to help faculty design or redesign courses to include high impact teaching strategies such as flipped and blended classrooms, "Reacting to the Past" pedagogy, active learning, and problem-based learning; and they run a variety of fellows and mentoring programs that help faculty utilize these and other high impact strategies. In addition, the Department of Mathematics has initiated a supplemental instruction program to increase student success in the pre-Calculus class that is often an early barrier for student success and delays time to completion. UGA is also investing \$4.4 million annually to reduce class sizes by hiring faculty and creating more than 300 new course sections in 81 majors across campus; these include high-demand courses in growing fields such as engineering, business and public health, courses that historically have high failure rates, and "bottleneck" courses that students must take but have a hard time getting into because of limited classroom slots.

Supplemental Instruction in Pre-calculus: The Department of Mathematics has, for the past several years, offered several sections of Intensive Pre-calculus (MATH 1113) for at-risk students (those who matriculate with low scores on the departmental placement test). These sections meet two extra hours each week and are smaller in size (25 students vs. 40). Students take the same exams as students in the regular course and receive three credit hours as in the regular course. The homework and (proctored) exams are administered online through WebAssign; thus grading standards are nearly uniform across sections. Data show that these intensive courses are successful, and that there is a need for more of them. Therefore in spring 2015, the department piloted a program that used an undergraduate peer teaching assistant (UTA) to conduct the extra class hours in close contact with the course instructor. In this pilot, much of the extra time was spent working on worksheets or at the computer, usually in small groups. Beginning this academic year, the pilot is being expanded and three of the intensive sections will use UTAs to provide supplemental instruction. In addition, CTL will help train the UTAs. Small Class Size Initiative: Beginning this fall and continuing next year, UGA will hire 56 new faculty members to enhance the learning environment by reducing class sizes. The addition of these new faculty will add a total of 319 new course sections across campus. Faculty will be strategically placed to affect 81 majors, about 59% of the areas in which students can major at UGA. A significant number of these classes are high-demand courses in growing fields, courses with high "Drop/Fail/Withdraw" rates, and "bottleneck" courses that students must take but have a hard time getting into because of limited classroom slots or scheduling problems. The smaller class size and increased number will help students be more successful and decrease the time it takes for many to graduate. Other Programs: This summer UGA used the waitlist feature in Athena to help academic departments keep abreast of course demands/bottlenecks when building their

course schedules to prevent students from being shut out of courses they needed for degree completion. We will continue to use this feature during the academic year. In addition, we expect finally to launch the DegreeWorks Planner sometime this fall. This program offers students an online set of academic planning tools that help them and their advisors see what courses and requirements they need to complete their programs of study; once students learn how to use the Planner effectively we expect that it will both increase the number of degrees awarded overall and decrease excess credits accumulated by students. Also see Appendix B for a complete description of the programs sponsored by CTL that support Strategy 5

Baseline Status	MATH 1113 is a prerequisite course for several majors on campus and has a high DFW rate. Improving the pass rate for this particular course will impact several students and help UGA reach its retention and four-year graduation targets.
Interim Measures of Progress	The preliminary data for the MATH 1113 pilot (see Table 9) is very promising; the retention rate for the pilot sections is higher than the averages for the other intensive sections and the test scores are generally higher as well. As MATH 1113 is a gateway course for many students who pursue degrees in STEM fields, this new approach could have a significant impact on retention in those disciplines and the graduation rates of these students.
Measures of Success	We will monitor this pilot and track these students for future reports. If the preliminary data hold up, we will be studying how to extend this model to other large classes with high DFW rates. We will also be monitoring the impact of the smaller class size initiative and the launch of the DegreeWorks Planner.
Lessons Learned	As this is a new program, lessons learned will become apparent in future years.

Observations

UGA's retention and completion plan is focused both on having an engaging and supportive environment designed for the success of all students and on providing specific programs for students who are at risk. UGA students are being retained and are completing bachelor's degrees at exceptional rates. UGA's first-year retention rate for all students has hovered around 94.2 % every year from 2004 through 2013; this rate far exceeds the average (89%) of our comparator institutions and is virtually on par with the average (95%) of our aspirational peer institutions (see Tables 2-4). Of particular interest is the fact that the first-year retention rates for underrepresented populations increased from 93.2% to 95% for Black/African-American students and from 91.5% to 93.1% for Hispanic students. Our four-, five- and six-year completion rates also outpace most peer institutions and many aspirational institutions (see Table 5). Over the past 10 years, for example, completion rates have increased by several percentage points. For the 2007 cohort, the four-year completion rate was 58%; but for the 2010 it was up to 63.1% (vs. 62.4% for the 2009 cohort). Similarly, the average time to degree for entering freshmen has steadily declined, from a high of 4.28 years for those graduating in 2005 to an historic low of 4.02 years for those graduating in 2015 (see Table 8). Our goal is to boost our four-year completion rate to 68%, the mean of our aspirational peer institutions, by 2020.

An important part of our effort to create an engaging and supportive environment designed for the success of all students is the First Year Odyssey Seminar (FYOS) that has been discussed in our previous updates. This program is entering its fifth year; 100% of all incoming freshmen take an FYOS that connects first-year students with tenured/track faculty in a small class environment. According to student surveys, 58% of students said their seminar helped them make plans for future learning, 59% learned about an opportunity to participate in UGA research and 81% said they were introduced to faculty members' roles at UGA. These surveys also indicate that a majority of students believe their experience in their FYOS helped them understand 1) the importance of taking responsibility for their learning experience, 2) their personal goals for learning and 3) their plans for their future learning. The seminar has clearly been effective at introducing students to UGA and integrating them into the campus.

Previous reports have also specific programs available to students who are at risk, in particular the Collaborative Academic and Retention Effort (CARE) program, an early intervention program housed in our Division of Academic Enhancement. We are encouraged by the progress that students on academic probation who participate in that program make towards returning to good academic standing. Students who participate in CARE see significant increases in their GPAs and are often back in good academic standing within one semester of participation. Because of the success of this program, we are considering offering a special UNIV course with additional academic coaching that would be mandated for students who return from academic dismissal to help them stay on track. By identifying struggling students early and helping them get back into good academic standing, retention and completion become more realistic outcomes for these students. This strategy has been effective and will continue as part of UGA's efforts to reach our retention and completion targets.

An increase in online courses, especially those offered in the summer, has also been reported on in previous years. Over the last two summers, UGA has seen dramatic increases in online summer offerings and more and more students are graduating with at least one online course in their dossier. This strategy is paying benefits and will continue to play a part in UGA's retention, progression and completion plans.

This year's report focuses on several new strategies and initiatives to help reach those targets. These initiatives include 1) a pilot program in Pre-calculus to offer supplemental instruction as just-in-time remediation for students enrolled in a difficult class that is often a gate-keeper course; 2) a plan to hire faculty to teach more than 300 new course sections in high-demand courses, in courses that historically have high failure rates, and in "bottleneck" courses that students must take but have a hard time getting into because of limited classroom slots; 3) a new advising model that will use predictive analytics to assign incoming first-year students into cohorts based on their predicted success in order to provide them with more intrusive, pro-active advising; and 4) more high impact practices that support University of Georgia

educational excellence and promote student success, including the Experiential Learning requirement that will begin in fall 2016. As we implement these initiatives this year, we will be putting assessment, evaluation and data collection procedures in place to judge the effectiveness of these initiatives. Improved metrics and better methods for identifying students with multiple risk factors will be essential to our retention, progression and completion efforts. These initiatives will help UGA reach its targets for 2020: first-year retention rate to improve from 94.2% to 96% and four-year graduation rate to improve from 63.1% to 68%. We will be tracking and reporting on these four strategies and initiatives in next year's report.

As we near the end of the implementation process for Banner, we are looking forward to being better able to collect more data on student retention and progression; we will use this information track students on an individual basis and to create predictive models that will help us identify different factors affecting student success. In addition to Banner, we hope to be able to launch the DegreeWorks Planner in spring 2016 if the vendor can resolve the numerous issues we are experiencing with the software. Once this program is launched, we will have informational sessions available for students and academic advisors to make sure they know how to use the program effectively to stay on track to degree completion.

This year the UGA Retention, Progression and Graduation Group will be reinstated and will include representatives from financial aid, institutional research, academic enhancement, instruction, student affairs, and various schools and colleges. This group will meet frequently to discuss the progress of various new initiatives, evaluate new initiatives, and discuss data collected for all of our strategies. We may decide to appoint a Retention and Graduation Coordinator to oversee all of our retention efforts and help implement new initiatives.