



AUGUSTA
UNIVERSITY

Augusta University

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

As one of the state of Georgia’s four research institutions, Augusta University has the unique designation as the state’s only public, academic health center. Augusta offers a broad range of traditional liberal arts, education, business, allied health sciences, nursing, dental medicine, and medicine programs – making Augusta one of handful of institutions in the United States with this curricular array. Further, in the higher education arena, we are one of the few institutions to undergo a major organizational transformation and blending of two institutional cultures in the 21st century. Less than four years into this transformation, Augusta University has become a dynamic, responsive institution that places student success at the core of our vision to become a top-tier university that is a destination of choice for education, health care, discovery, creativity, and innovation. Guiding this vision is our mission.

“Our mission is to provide leadership and excellence in teaching, discovery, clinical care, and service as a student-centered comprehensive research university and academic health center with a wide range of programs from learning assistance through postdoctoral studies.”

Our mission statement explicitly states that we are student-centered, and we believe firmly in holding student success at the core of all our educational activities. As such, we explicitly focus on our students within our education mission strategic plan. The plan guides our new initiatives both as a dynamic institution and as they relate to retention, progression, and graduation of our undergraduate student body.

In fall 2015, Augusta University enrolled 4,976 undergraduate students at the institution, representing a decline of 248 students from fall 2014. The decrease came primarily from non-returning students as we saw a 4% increase in new freshmen for fall 2015. Of the undergraduate students enrolled in fall 2015, 64% were female and 36% were male. The enrollment of females versus males remains comparable to previous years. The ethnic diversity of the student body also remains constant: 56% White; 25% Black (Non-Hispanic origin); 6% Hispanic; 4% multiracial; 2% Asian; <1% American Indian or Alaska Native; <1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and 7% unknown or non-disclosed. The average age of our undergraduate student body is 24. A slightly smaller percent of students (41%) received Pell grants in fall 2015 compared to fall 2014. Maintaining diversity is important to the institution as we further develop into a student-centered comprehensive research institution.

The incoming cohort of new freshmen in fall 2015 had a higher freshman index than previous cohorts with more than 75% meeting or exceeding the research institution minimum (2500). While the increasingly higher freshman index means some local students who would have had access traditionally to Augusta University are not eligible for admission, we judiciously use the opportunity to offer Limited Admission as well as promote our partnership with East Georgia State College (EGSC) who operates on our campus. EGSC provides an access point for local students who may not meet Augusta’s admissions criteria with the expectation that those who continue into a baccalaureate program will enroll with Augusta. To date, 168 students have benefited by successfully transferring to Augusta. These enrollment patterns and demographics of our undergraduate students continue to inform the development of Augusta University’s student success initiatives.

SELECTED

EDUCATION MISSION PLAN GOALS

Enhance and expand first- and second-year experience programs to assist students with transitions, connections, and adjustments during their early years with Augusta University.

Continue enhancing the effectiveness of the advising center and its efforts to advise students especially using technology such as First Alert and the EAB Student Success Collaborative

Increase the number of students who engage in academic enrichment programs including the Honors Program, CURS, and Study Away/Abroad.

Assess performance of all student cohorts and use the results to institute and enhance programs for successful degree completion intentionally targeting efforts to reduce performance gaps among them

Implement high-impact educational practices to enrich student learning experiences such as those defined by the AAC&U as High Impact Practices.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS, HIGH IMPACT STRATEGIES, AND ACTIVITIES

We continue to refine our Complete College Georgia completion goals, high impact strategies, and activities to meet the needs of current and future students. Our four goals are slight modifications from our original goals proposed in “Our Path Forward” (2012). The faculty and administration see these goals and activities as a means to enhance the culture of the institution and the way Augusta University supports the success of our undergraduate students. Our strategies fall within four of the overarching goals defined by Complete College Georgia:

- Goal 1 Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded,
- Goal 2 Increase the number of degrees that are earned “on-time,”
- Goal 3 Decrease excess credits earned on the path to getting a degree, and
- Goal 4 Provide intrusive advising to keep students on track to graduate.

GOAL 1: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES AWARDED

Augusta University’s aim is to increase the number of all undergraduate degrees awarded across all constituent groups (i.e., first generation, gender, race/ethnicity, age, military) aligning with the University System of Georgia’s goal for all institutions. We have intentionally chosen not to focus on a particular demographic group because we recognize there are needs across all our populations. In general, the total number of undergraduate degrees awarded has increased steadily. Our data analysis for the drop in degrees awarded in 2016 suggests the reasons for this drop are multifaceted.

Number of Undergraduate Degrees Awarded				
2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
898	985	1036	1042	934

Over the past four years, we have maintained our original goals and strategies in the pursuit of higher rates of retention, progression, and graduation. Many of the strategies have now become part of institutional culture. We have used this opportunity to concentrate on certain programs we believe will have the greatest impact. We have discovered several high impact strategies and activities for Goals 2, 3, and 4. These are listed below.

GOAL 2

High-impact strategy	<p>I Chose 4 Years: To help keep students on target to graduate “on time” we implemented our “4Years4U” campaign in Fall 2013, which was rebranded “I Chose 4 Years” in 2016 to align with other enrollment initiatives. The campaign has created an institutional culture shift in course load expectations. Student expectations that they must take 15 credit hours per term or 30 credit hours per academic year to progress in four years are set at orientation. Expectations are reinforced through a request for students to sign a pledge to take at least 15 credit hours per semester and yard signs posted around campus.</p> <p>Further, students are encouraged to take full course loads through a “flat tuition” model where students enrolled in 10 or more credit hours pay the full-time equivalent rate for 15 credit hours. Students who might have only registered traditionally for 12 hours now have a financial incentive to take more.</p> <p>Faculty support has come from openly sharing data on the success of professional academic advising in the first two years and the ability of faculty to concentrate on advising their majors.</p>
Related Goal	Goal 2—Increase the number of degrees that are earned “on time”
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	At consolidation, the faculty and administration of Augusta University identified a need to increase undergraduate retention, progression and graduation rates. By highlighting the “I Chose 4 Years” campaign, registering freshmen for 15 credit hours in their first semester, and seeing successful completion of these hours, the students view this load as the normal course load and continue to register this load in subsequent terms. In determining the schedule of each student for those first 15 credit hours, the professional advisors take into consideration the student’s declared major or meta-major area, if undeclared, to ensure that appropriate math and science pathways are being achieved.
Primary Point of	Katherine Sweeney, Assistant Vice President for Student Success and Director of Academic

Contact	Advisement, ksweeney@augusta.edu																																																			
Summary of Activities	Beginning with Fall 2013, all freshmen and sophomore students are advised and registered through the Academic Advisement Center. At convocation new students sign the “I Chose 4 Years” pledge. During subsequent advising sessions, students and advisors continue to focus on enrolling in 15 hours for the upcoming term.																																																			
Measures of Progress and Success																																																				
Measure, metric, or data element	<p>% of students who attempt 15 or more credit hours in the fall term of first year</p> <p>% of students who earn 30 or more credit hours by the start of their second year</p> <p>% of students who earn 60 or more credit hours by the start of their third year</p> <p>% of students who earn 90 or more credit hours by the start of their fourth year</p>																																																			
Baseline measures	<p>Fall 2012—8.0% of undergraduate students attempted 15 or more hours in fall term of first year</p> <p>Fall 2012 – 14.2% of undergraduate students earned 30 or more credit hours by the start of their second year</p>																																																			
Interim Measures of Progress	<p>The “I Chose 4 Years” campaign is a continuation of an initiative that began in fall 2013. In spring 2017, the first cohort of students will meet the four-year graduation milestone and be used to set a new benchmark.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="456 884 1487 1035"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">Percent of Freshman Cohort Enrolled in 15 or More Hours Each Fall of First Year</th> </tr> <tr> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> <th>2014</th> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>8%</td> <td>72%</td> <td>89.5%</td> <td>86%</td> <td>81%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The “I Chose 4 Years” campaign also provides leading indicators to reach the benchmarks of earning 30, 60, and 90 credits by the start of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year respectively. The attainment of these credit hour benchmarks is more important due to how individual semester credit hour loads are balanced based on specific courses.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="456 1163 1487 1465"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="6">Credit Hours Earned</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Fall Freshmen Cohort</th> <th>Earned 30 Credits</th> <th>Earned 60 Credits</th> <th>Earned 90 Credits</th> <th>4-Year Graduation Rate</th> <th>6-Year Graduation Rate</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2012</td> <td>14.2%</td> <td>12.1%</td> <td>10.8%</td> <td>8.2%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>37.1%</td> <td>24.7%</td> <td>18.6%</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>47.1%</td> <td>33.0%</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>54.2%</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Percent of Freshman Cohort Enrolled in 15 or More Hours Each Fall of First Year					2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	8%	72%	89.5%	86%	81%	Credit Hours Earned						Fall Freshmen Cohort	Earned 30 Credits	Earned 60 Credits	Earned 90 Credits	4-Year Graduation Rate	6-Year Graduation Rate	2012	14.2%	12.1%	10.8%	8.2%		2013	37.1%	24.7%	18.6%			2014	47.1%	33.0%				2015	54.2%				
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Measures of Success	<p>The “I Chose 4 Years” campaign uses a series of metrics to determine the progress of students toward a degree “on-time” for those students beginning in the fall 2013 and later. The metrics are based on the entering fall freshmen cohorts each year. By 2020, we intend on having 60% of 1st year students (fall 2019 cohort) earning 30 or more hours by the start of their second year, 39% of 2nd year students (fall 2018 cohort) earning 60 or more hours by start of their third year, and 24% of 3rd year students (fall 2017 cohort) earning 90 or more hours by the start of their fourth year. We want a 15% four-year graduation rate (fall 2016 cohort) and intend to have a 40% six-year graduation rate (fall 2014 cohort).</p>																																																			
Lessons Learned	<p>Sustaining the engagement of students to continue to pursue 15 or more credit hours past the first semester and into the major is the challenge. We continue to enhance our analytic capabilities to examine which populations of students need more targeted interventions. Once identified, we will provide additional programming for these student groups.</p>																																																			

GOAL 3: DECREASE EXCESS CREDITS EARNED ON THE PATH TO GETTING A DEGREE

<p>High-impact strategy</p>	<p>As reported previously, Augusta focused on multiple strategies to decrease excess credits earned on the path to getting a degree, including some strategies that encompassed parts of USG CCG Goal 3: Restructure instructional delivery to support educational excellence and student success. Collectively, these strategies included the redesign of courses with the creation of “stretch” sections of MATH 1111, ENGL 1101, and ENGL 1102, the alignment of math pathways with each undergraduate major, pre-determined schedules for first-semester students, and a redesign of core courses.</p> <p>Curriculum Review and Redesign: The redesign of core courses has now expanded to encompass every undergraduate academic program at Augusta. As such, the program has expanded to encompass entire academic programs rather than specific courses. Part of the curriculum redesign process focuses on bottleneck and low success rate courses to reduce instances of students needing to take remedial courses or enroll in course sequences that delay graduation.</p>																																			
<p>Related Goal</p>	<p>Goal 3 – Decrease excess credits earned on the path to a degree</p>																																			
<p>Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact</p>	<p>A careful review of curriculum and pedagogy that includes curriculum mapping and syllabus review is expected to reveal challenges to student progress that can be addressed with curriculum revisions, course redesign, and/or pedagogical solutions.</p>																																			
<p>Primary Point of Contact</p>	<p>Deborah South Richardson, PhD, Director for Faculty Development, derichardson@augusta.edu</p>																																			
<p>Summary of Activities</p>	<p>The faculty who teach in thirteen different gateway courses have made changes in courses and curricula through the curriculum review and redesign process, including core-level anatomy and physiology, chemistry, English, humanities, history, mathematics, political science, and psychology. The fall 2013 courses were selected based on high DFW rates, which include WFs. These courses have seen an average reduction of DFW rates of 6% compared fall to fall after going through the program. As reported in previous CCG status updates, these achievements have been sustained. The fall 2014 courses (in table below) were selected based on the numbers of students affected and the DFW rates, which include WFs. These courses have seen an average reduction of DFW rates of 4% in these courses compared fall to fall after going through the program. Although some programs show a small increase in DFW rates, those changes are smaller (average 3.5%) than the change observed in the direction of reduction of DFW rates (average 5.0%). The average rate of reduction for this cohort of programs is similar to the rate of for the previous cohort of courses.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="354 1163 1494 1461"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">Fall 2014 Curriculum Design Academy – D, F, W, WF Rates</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Course</th> <th></th> <th>Pre</th> <th>Post</th> <th>% Change</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CHEM 1211</td> <td>Principles of Chemistry I</td> <td>27%</td> <td>31.1%</td> <td>4.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CHEM 1212</td> <td>Principles of Chemistry II</td> <td>31%</td> <td>22.6%</td> <td>-8.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HIST 2111</td> <td>United States to 1877</td> <td>20%</td> <td>22.7%</td> <td>2.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>POLS 1101</td> <td>Introduction to American Government</td> <td>13%</td> <td>8.5%</td> <td>-4.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PSYC 1101</td> <td>Introduction to General Psychology</td> <td>26%</td> <td>13.6%</td> <td>-12.4%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>A pilot of the curriculum review and redesign process was undertaken during the 2015-2016 academic year with four undergraduate academic programs (Dental Hygiene, History, Physics, Psychological Science). Those programs are well on the way to the development of curriculum maps and are now identifying challenges that have been revealed. The programs will continue with syllabus review during the 2016-2017 academic year.</p>	Fall 2014 Curriculum Design Academy – D, F, W, WF Rates					Course		Pre	Post	% Change	CHEM 1211	Principles of Chemistry I	27%	31.1%	4.1%	CHEM 1212	Principles of Chemistry II	31%	22.6%	-8.4%	HIST 2111	United States to 1877	20%	22.7%	2.7%	POLS 1101	Introduction to American Government	13%	8.5%	-4.5%	PSYC 1101	Introduction to General Psychology	26%	13.6%	-12.4%
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<p>Measure, metric, or data element</p>	<p>Average number of credit hours earned at graduation for students who begin as freshmen with Augusta (should equal number of credit hours required for degree)</p> <p>Average number of credit hours earned at graduation for transfer students (should be close to the number of credit hours required for degree)</p> <p>DFW rates across major courses</p> <p>% of students who earn 30 or more credit hours by the start of their second year by major</p> <p>% of students who earn 60 or more credit hours by the start of their third year by major</p>																																			

	% of students who earn 90 or more credit hours by the start of their fourth year by major
Baseline measures	Baseline will be established at the start of the year in which each academic program implements the curriculum redesign.
Interim Measures of Progress	Interim measures will include tracking average hours earned toward degree objective at the appropriate benchmark for each program (i.e., 30 hours in the first year for a 120-hour program) and the monitoring of core and major courses to achieve a DFW rate of 10% or less.
Measures of Success	Success for this program will come in a higher rate of success in all core and major courses and students graduating with no more than the required number of courses needed for their degree objective. All undergraduate degree programs will be reviewed and redesigned within the next four years.
Lessons Learned	With 41 undergraduate academic programs, Augusta University will need to develop a strategy for efficient support of the curriculum review and design process to ensure scalability. We will move from a one-on-one program support/consultation model that we employed for the pilot programs to group training model with individual program consultation as needed.

GOAL 4: PROVIDE INTRUSIVE ADVISING TO KEEP STUDENTS ON TRACK TO GRADUATE

High-impact strategy	Professional Academic Advisement: To keep students on track to graduation, we enhanced our Academic Advisement Center in the summer of 2013. The center now provides dedicated professional advising support to all freshmen and sophomore students and to upper classmen who are returning from academic difficulty.
Related Goal	Goal 4—Provide intrusive advising to keep students on track to graduate
Demonstration of Priority and/or Impact	At consolidation, increasing retention, progression and graduation rates were identified as very high priority for our undergraduate population. By requiring students advised within the center to see their advisors at least once per semester so we can provide early intervention and support.
Primary Point of Contact	Katherine Sweeney, Assistant Vice President for Student Success and Director of Academic Advisement, ksweeney@augusta.edu
Summary of Activities	<p>Students advised in the center must see an advisor to register for classes, change a schedule, change a major or withdraw from class. The advisors work closely with the faculty in the departments for whom they advise to ensure sound advice is provided for each major. This creates continuity of program expectations as students transition from the center to their faculty advisors. By having all professional advisors located within the center we are able to provide seamless transition as students change majors during their first two years.</p> <p>The Academic Advisement Center uses an early alerts system to identify and support students exhibiting signs of academic distress in their courses. Augusta University currently uses indicators such as time management issues, test performance, assignment issues, number of absences, or more general comments such as sleeping in class. Faculty teaching students in the two most current freshmen cohorts are sent notices each semester asking that they report students for whom they have concerns. The advisors then reach out to the students with academic supports and referrals, as appropriate.</p>
Measures of Progress and Success	
Measure, metric, or data element	Success of the advisement center comes from indirect metrics such as retention and progression.
Baseline measures	<p>Fall 2012—20.9% of all undergraduate students enrolled in 15 or more hours</p> <p>Fall 2012 Cohort</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 66.3% were retained from first to second year 2. 48.3% were retained from second to third year

	<p>3. 40.8% were retained from third to fourth year Fall 2012—93.1% of new freshmen were full-time</p>
Interim Measures of Progress	<p>Fall 2013—39.4% of undergraduate students enrolled in 15 or more hours Fall 2013 Cohort</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 69.8% were retained from first to second year 52.9% were retained from second to third year <p>Fall 2013—97.6% of new freshmen were full time Fall 2014—46.5% of undergraduate students enrolled in 15 or more hours Fall 2014 Cohort</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 75% were retained after the 1st year <p>Fall 2014—97.9% of new freshmen were full time Fall 2015—49.0% of undergraduate students enrolled in 15 or more hours Fall 2015—98.7% of new freshmen were full time</p>
Measures of Success	<p>The metrics used for academic advisement are the same as those used in the “I Chose 4 Years” campaign with the Academic Advisement Center being responsible for students earning up to 60 hours.</p>
Lessons Learned	<p>We found that the transition from the very rigid structure of the Academic Advisement Center to academic departments with varying faculty advising protocols was sometimes difficult for students. We are working now with the Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence to identify mentoring and other learning opportunities for faculty advisors to streamline and make more seamless the transition of students from the Advisement Center to their major departments at 60 hours. A new retention coordinator position is being established as well. The retention coordinator will be housed within the Academic Advisement Center but work with faculty advisors to monitor student progress and develop programming that will help students further engage in their major once they transition to the department.</p> <p>We continue to learn how to most effectively use the EAB SSC Campus platform to leverage early intervention to ensure students are retained and progress appropriately. In addition to the platform, analyses will be done to examine if students who are “treated” more than once per semester by an academic advisor have higher progression and retention rates. These analyses will include regular contact for advisement and specialized contact for tracking early warnings and the type of intervention used with the early warning.</p>

OBSERVATIONS

Our activities focus on a triad of student engagement, faculty engagement, and administrative support to achieve higher rates of retention, progression, and graduation. The high impact strategies listed above have proven to be successful for Augusta University and our students. We have already begun to see major improvements as shown in the metrics above. This success is the result of implementing programs that tackle multiple issues at once. As our student success initiatives have grown, we have also appointed an Assistant Vice President for Student Success to monitor our activities and plan for innovative programs to help us achieve even greater student success.

In addition to the high impact strategies above, we have several original student success strategies related to AAC&U’s high-impact practices that have become part of institutional culture. In the initial Complete College Georgia plan, we set strategies to create a required first year seminar program, place more emphasis on academic enrichment activities for high ability students, analyze any policy that was perceived to hinder retention, progression, and graduation, and redesign our undergraduate core curriculum. In 2015 – 2016, we continued our Convocation program and had a nearly 78% participation rate from our incoming freshman class. Our academic enrichment areas (study abroad, honors, and undergraduate research) continued to see increases in student participation. Study Abroad has seen an increase from 291 students in 2014 – 2015 to 345 students in 2015 - 2016. Our Honors Program enrolled 290 students in fall 2015, compared with 101 students in fall 2012. The Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship Summer Scholars program served 41 undergraduate students with 16 mentoring faculty members compared with 21 students in 2013 – the first year of the program. We continued to offer the first INQR 1000: Fundamentals of Academic Inquiry course in 2014 – 2015, a required course in Area B of the common core, which engages a small group of students with a committed faculty member to pose and answer a question of interest. Over 1,500 students have successfully completed

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the course with many students reporting INQR 1000 as one of their favorite courses in their first year, and faculty from every undergraduate college are enjoying the opportunity to connect with incoming students. As an institution, we have engaged with the LEAP state initiative and are actively working to promote and include high impact practices in upper-division major courses.

Making improvements in student success takes sustained and collaborative efforts. Changes were made when analysis showed potential for improvement. For example, as a result of our assessing the curriculum review and redesign and advisement processes, we determined that more structured peer-to-peer tutoring, supplemental instruction, and life skills coaching was needed to help students become more academically successful their first two years of college. This led to the creation of the Academic Success Center, scheduled to open late fall 2016, which will provide dedicated services to helping students become more academic successful and resilient as students. We intend to report on the successes of this center in next year's CCG report. During the analyses we take the time to reflect on what did not work, what did work, and celebrate our accomplishments and successes. These celebrations help individuals see the positive effects of their efforts and stay committed to them. Augusta University is at the forefront of creating what comes next in undergraduate student success for the state, nation, and higher education.