Transition Improvement Plan   **Institution: Georgia Southern University**

Key Elements (indicate your priorities below):
- ❏ Scope of Transition
- ❏ <mark>Orchestrated Guidance</mark>
- ❏ <mark>Purposeful Choice</mark>
- ❏ Course Registration

- ❏ <mark>Differentiation</mark>
- ❏ Academic and Social Integration
- ❏ Build A Support Team
- ❏ Begin with the End In Mind

- ❏ Taking Care of Business
- ❏ Designed for Humans

Priority Areas and Key Changes

Identify your top priority areas for improvement from the list of Key Elements above. For each priority area, identify the primary change or improvement that you will implement for the incoming fall 2019 cohort.

<mark>**Use a new table for each priority area you will work on.**</mark>

# Priority Area 1	*<mark>Orchestrated Guidance</mark>* To be successful, students need a guide along the path from inquiry to graduation. While the nature of this guidance changes over their academic experience, and the individual or individuals who provide the guidance may change throughout the process, students should make personal connections with campus representatives who remain resources for them as they transition from one phase to another. This guidance provides applicants and admitted students with clarity on who to contact when they have questions and begins to establish vital connections on campus to cement a transition.

	Current Status: Needs improvement. Addressing our concerns in this area will also help us improve in the areas of taking care of business and designing our processes and procedures for humans.
	Goals (what do you want to accomplish): 1) Be more intentional about using peer leaders/mentors/connectors in orientation, major and career exploration, college information sessions, etc. 2) Determine clear pathways for information sharing and student assistance between units (i.e. financial aid, Registrar's Office, Advising, Career Services, Bursar's Office). Reduce the runaround. Commit to being the last referral. 3) Communicate clearly and transparently what do we want students to do and know. Provide clearly articulated success transitions. First and foremost, we want to create a guide of key resources, contact information, and "go-to" information that can be provided to frontline office staff and student success personnel to better triage when students call or stop by with questions. We also want to provide students with better information and more accessible human resources (advisors,

	peer connectors/leaders/mentors) at the beginning of their interactions with the institution.
	Strategies (what will you do to change): 1) Incorporate upper-class student leaders/peers into all academic sessions/advisement at SOAR 2) Training for staff in best service possible and knowing the resources, policies, key players to solve problems. Ensure students know their "success team." a) Create a success team flow chart - one stop shop for staff resources so they can best aid students. 3) Create transition tasks for all levels of students. Some program specific; some all students must do within a particular time frame in order to continue successful progress (FAFSA, paying tuition; registering for classes by priority registration date; advising appointments). Display prominently in many different formats and locations. Make available to students using the GS mobile app and the EAB Navigate app.
	Responsible person/unit: Strategy 1: The Associate Provost for Student Success, Advisement Coordinators, Associate Deans, and the Director of Admissions will be responsible for creating and implementing a plan to incorporate peer leaders and peer mentors into all academic sessions and advisement at SOAR (orientation) Strategy 2: The Institutional "Enrollment Squad" is composed of leaders in Advising, Financial Aid, Admissions, Student Accounts, the Bursar's Office, Housing, and the Registrar's. This team will create a success team flow chart and a training module for student-facing offices that can be accessed and assessed through Human Resources. Strategy 3: The Institutional Enrollment Squad will create transition tasks for all levels of students.
	Success indicators: 1) More students are incorporated into orientation activities, such as college and university academic information sessions and advising. 2) Structured unit response teams - front line (answers and assistance), supervisors (escalation of concerns), director/AVP/VP (large scale problem solving and accountability). Ensure that offices are structured to respond to student questions and concerns efficiently and effectively and in a timely manner. Empower employees to make decisions that assist students. a) Resource guide created and distributed to offices on campus. 3) Greater student interaction - proactive - with financial aid, advising, career services, etc.

Priority Area 2	*Differentiation* Not all students need the same structure and support for their transition to college. Institutions can differentiate this process in a variety of ways for a host of different communities, including varying degrees of online and in person activities, extended orientation, and/or intensive support for specific populations. In person orientations may differ depending on a range of characteristics (e.g., residential and commuter students, transfer and non-traditional students, military students, honors students or less prepared students, early or late cycle orientations; daytime or evening).

Current Status: Needs improvement. On one campus, we tend to presume all students are adult learners and commuters. On another campus, we presume that the vast majority of students are "traditional". Neither presumption is true according to our data.

Goals (what do you want to accomplish):
1) Foster understanding in campus units that our student body is diverse and that various student populations may utilize services and resources differently.
2) Identify institutional barriers to success, focusing on barriers for identified student populations (i.e., first generation, adult learner, military affiliated, transfer).
3) Help students find their connections to the campus community. "Let us help you find the CONNECTIONS you need to succeed."
4) Create a Connections Campaign.

Strategies (what will you do to change):
1) Be more deliberate about providing access for students to resources they need and the connections they need to form on campus.
   a) Meet the students where they are (i.e., residence halls, classroom buildings, student union, library) instead of requiring them to seek out individual offices all the time.
   b) Create and integrate flexibility in programming and engagement modalities
2) Use our data to identify students/student types that are not being well served by our current structures, policies, procedures and who may be underperforming as a result.
3) Create a Connections Campaign. Use traditional marketing approaches, as well as social media, and our EAB Navigate app to encourage broader student participation in campus social and academic activities and in high impact practice activities.
4) Eventually move towards offering extended orientation opportunities that have a high impact practice focus.

	Responsible person/unit: Associate Provost for Student Success and Advising AVP Enrollment Management AVP Student Affairs
	Success indicators: 1) Greater diversity of students participating in high impact practices, such as undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad. a) Elimination of barriers (i.e., fees, mandatory camps, GPA requirements) for participation in high impact practices, where applicable. 2) Increased traffic in service units with expanded hours and differentiated opportunities for appointments, workshops, and resources.

Priority Area 3	***Purposeful Choice*** Institutions support students making a purposeful choice of a program or focus as part of the process of transitioning to college. Support for student choice occurs in three stages: *Inform* – Students are informed about the academic and career connections of their initial choice, for those students who apply with a choice in mind or about the range of options available and their career connections. *Discern* – Students and institutions engage in a process of reviewing student's interests, aptitudes, and backgrounds to consider the appropriateness of the fit and, if necessary, alternative pathways. *Affirm* – Students engage in a personal process of affirming their choice of program or academic focus area that helps students frame their reason for being in their program and at the institution. For some students, their process of identifying and selecting a program of study may be iterative as they develop and refine their goals. As students consider changing programs or focus areas they should be guided through this process to inform, discern, and affirm their choices.

Current Status: Fairly strong in providing information although there is room for improvement. Needs improvement in "discern" and "affirm."

Goals (what do you want to accomplish):
1) Enable students to feel confident and knowledgeable about their major choices.

Strategies (what will you do to change):
1) Evaluate Orientation (SOAR) with a fresh eye. Start with a blank schedule and have the conversations about what is essential for students to know the first day they walk on campus as a student.
2) Redesign academic elements of Orientation (SOAR)
    a) Redesign pre-SOAR online modules (academic focus area instead of college)
        i) Include short student/faculty videos; career and US Bureau of Labor Statistics data
        ii) Include aptitude assessment
        iii) Include survey to affirm focus area/major and gather information about barriers students may encounter while creating a class schedule (ex. job, child care, commute).
            (1) Create block scheduling for first-year students (FTFTF) that includes 15 hours per term and completion of Area A requirements in the first 30 hours.
                (a) Preliminary schedule created based on student input on survey (12-13 hours)
                (b) Adjustments made at orientation based on conversations with students

	(c) Students learn registration process by adding final class(es) to schedule (3-6 hours) (2) Facilitate deliberate conversations about the courses on students' schedules and how these classes get students to their personal and professional goals when students are at orientation and later in advising. b) Change College Academic Information Sessions to Academic Focus Area Information Session c) Emphasize finding joy in your major and program of study; don't focus on policies and procedures i) Implement new student meetings in first couple of weeks (major/focus area specific) to more clearly articulate policies/procedures; follow up in first academic advising meeting
	Responsible person/unit: Strategy 1: The Director of Orientation and Family Programs, with guidance from the SOAR Advisory Committee, the Associate Provost for Student Success, and the AVP Enrollment Management, will be responsible for evaluating Orientation (SOAR) and implementing changes that emphasize a supportive transition through the first year. Strategy 2: The Associate Provost for Student Success, Deans, Associate Deans, and Advisement Coordinators will be responsible for redesigning the academic elements of Orientation, including the pre-SOAR online modules and the College-based academic sessions. The academic units will need to partner with the Director of the Office of Career and Professional Development and with the AVP Student Affairs to identify and include labor statistics data and appropriate aptitude assessments in the online pre-Orientation modules.

	Success indicators:
	1) Decreased numbers of change of majors:
	    a) At Orientation
	    b) In first year
	    c) In second year
	    d) In third year
	2) Increased number of students who attend SOAR comfortable with academic focus area choices.
	    a) Fewer exploratory students after pre-orientation; further decreased after orientation
	3) Increased student retention:
	    a) From first year to second year
	    b) Mitigate sophomore slump and increase persistence to third year