

## **Middle Georgia State University Transition Improvement Plan**

In Fall 2017, Middle Georgia State University (MGA) experienced a 4.8% decline in enrollment (from Fall 16 to Fall 17 semesters). In response, President Christopher Blake formed and chaired an Enrollment Action Team (EAT) focused on increasing enrollment, retention and student success. The cross-divisional team concentrated on supporting students as they transitioned by building contact points at each stage of the enrollment cycle and removing impediments for students. MGA increased enrollment for Fall 2018 by 6.7% in headcount and 7.5% in credit hours. In addition, the President created an Enrollment Management division in the Summer of 2018, under the leadership of a Vice President, from existing units and resources and without additional expenditures. Our transition plan for Fall 2019 is to build upon the work completed over the past year and under a new organizational framework. The EAT has been transitioned to the Enrollment Taskforce and is now chaired by the Provost and by the new Vice President for Enrollment Management. The sharing of Academic and Enrollment oversight of the group is intended to sustain that collaboration.

Our enrollment goal for Fall 2019 is an increased headcount of 3.75%. For Middle Georgia State to increase retention rates and meet enrollment goals, it becomes imperative we fulfill the following initiatives.

### **Provide support and assistance for students by facilitating a MGA Circle of Success for each student**

- Create an MGA Circle of Success for each student - Assign each student an advisor, financial aid counselor, student life coordinator (by campus), career services, disability services, department heads, orientation leaders, etc. Introduce the student to these representatives and provide contact information for each.
  - This group will support the students on their pathway to success through the Academic Navigator system (introduced below), face-to-face meetings, emails, text and phone calls.
  - The Academic Navigator system will be implemented for the Fall 2019 entering class. The oversight of the “Circle of Success” will be a joint effort between enrollment management, student affairs, and academic affairs.

### **Embed the Momentum Year Initiatives in our Orientation and On-boarding Program**

- Develop and launch “Academic Navigator” by February 2019 - This online orientation and onboarding “course” will be developed in D2L/Brightspace by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTLE) and outside vendors, as needed. It will teach students habits for success. It will:
  1. begin as an on-boarding tool
  2. serve to provide orientation
  3. continue as a retention tool
- Require orientation - The face-to-face orientation will be available to all students, including students taking fully online classes. There will also be a transfer student orientation, which will include some early evening options to accommodate those who work in the day. Online orientation will be required for students taking fully online classes who cannot attend a face-to-face orientation and also in situations where on-campus students cannot attend the traditional orientation.
- The online orientation and face-to-face orientations will include an Academic Insights component in which faculty /advisors guide students to making purposeful choices when selecting a degree program. Students will work with orientation leaders and advisors to build their sequence or courses ensuring full time students are taking 30 semester hours in their first year, which include focus area courses.
- Guide students through their year – Connecting students to their MGA Circle of Success and providing them important information to support their academic and social development will occur through

both face-to-face advising and through the Academic Navigator. This dual-pronged approach will increase retention of current students and decrease summer melt of new students.

- New students will be sent their log in information at the end of May prior to enrolling in August. For each Academic Navigator task completed, students will earn points and be rewarded at different levels.
- Orientation and transitioning initiatives/events along with the Academic Navigator will provide students information on how to access resources to help them be successful, educate them on how their GPA is calculated, what is “good Standing” and whom to contact if they need counseling, academic support career advice or have questions about paying for college, etc.
  - Host on-boarding events to help students successfully transition to academic success - For example, host events specific to adult learner, transfer, freshman and dual enrollment students. The President’s Welcome Reception as well as sessions for accepted students at Open House that assist them with advisement and registration are two examples of events.
- Develop Student Goals- Provide a clear degree pathway for each student from application to graduation by setting goals and recognizing accomplishments. At the end of completing 30 semester hours, including focus hours, within their first year, students will receive a certificate. (Note: this is not a certification but a certificate noting the accomplishment). Ongoing recognition points would include attaining an associate degree, bachelors, etc. These goals within the students’ pathways serve as milestones and are strategically placed at points where retention proves difficult.

#### **Identify at-risk students both at admission and as they continue on their academic pathway**

- Analyze historical data and student success rates based on students’ academic criteria when accepted to MGA
- Utilize this data to identify students at risk and begin intervention at the time of acceptance – This will include using the Academic Navigator, early meetings with advisors and outreach from Student Affairs inviting students to participate in student activities.
- Survey new students prior to orientation allowing them to “self-identify” their needs/assistance to be successful at MGA
- Assess all students at the end of weeks two and four at the beginning of the semester by surveying students and formalizing an early intervention system for faculty to assist students at-risk before mid-term grades are due. Academic Affairs will administer the survey and provide Academic Affairs and Student Affairs with contact information and reason the student is being asked to be contacted. Academic Affairs will develop an early intervention system where faculty can identify students at-risk and facilitate assistance for the students.
- Identify student stressors that prevent them from completing the semester. Academic Affairs will conduct a survey of students who withdrew completely from a semester or who stopped out to identify commonalities for why students didn’t complete.

#### **Anticipated Outcomes:**

The majority of these efforts are targeted toward increasing the success of first-time full-time students. MGA one-year retention for students who begin full time has remained fairly stable since consolidation (F14 – 61.6%, F15 – 60.3%, F16 – 61.2%, F17 – 60.1%) It is anticipated that these rates will increase by at least 3% per year based on the improved transition plans noted above.