



Georgia Gwinnett College

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) is the **only access institution within the University System of Georgia that offers only baccalaureate degrees**. The GGC mission states that the College “provides access to targeted baccalaureate level degrees that meet the economic development needs of the growing and diverse population of the northeast Atlanta metropolitan region.” Founded in 2005, Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) operates, and has always operated, in the context of a clear strategic plan derived from its mission. From its inception, access to and success in baccalaureate education have been at the center of the College’s efforts. GGC’s growth and its success in serving a challenging population are evidence of the College’s commitment to providing not only access to post-secondary educational opportunity but also support structures that engender success.

A review of the basic demographic characteristics of the GGC student population shows a preponderance of those who are traditionally underserved and for whom substantial support structures are essential.

GGC students tend to have relatively low levels of academic preparation. The mean high school GPA of GGC’s Fall 2013 entering freshman cohort was among the lowest in the USG State Colleges. Each cohort of first-time entering students at GGC has had a consistent academic profile with a mean high school GPA of between 2.69 and 2.82, with over a third requiring remediation in at least one core subject (Math, English, Reading). New transfer student cohorts have traditionally entered with a mean transfer GPA between 2.3 and 2.8 and transfer in an average of 40-45 semester hours.

GGC enrolls a substantial number of first-generation college students. Results from four consecutive years of the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) show that 40-50% of the entering first-time students are from families in which neither parent has a college degree. A more detailed study of recent entering classes has consistently shown that 22% have no parent with any college experience, and an additional 22% have a parent with college experience, but no degree, which is consistent with the BCSSE data. These findings suggest a substantial portion of the student population may enroll without having had a model of college attendance as a regular part of their formative educational experience.

GGC is a majority-minority institution. GGC enrolls a highly diverse student population and has been majority-minority since 2009. GGC has been recognized by *US News and World Report* as the most diverse college in the South. For Fall 2013, the College’s race/ethnicity data show that its student population is 42.4% White, 29% Black/Non-Hispanic, 14% Hispanic, 9% Asian, and 4% multiracial. This pattern of racial/ethnic enrollment has been consistent for several years. As of Fall 2014, GGC has become an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution, with a student population that is 15% Hispanic.

GGC enrolls a high percentage of Pell Grant eligible students. For the past four years, over 50% of each entering freshman cohort has been eligible for Pell grants, and over two-thirds have received financial aid of one form or another.

GGC students are primarily traditional-aged and full-time. For each of the past three years, 98% of GGC’s incoming

freshmen have been under 24 and 84% of the student population as a whole is of traditional age (18-24). Further, over 70% of the student population is enrolled full-time, taking 12 or more credit hours per semester. However, **GGC students are more likely to work over 20 hours per week than most traditional-aged, full-time students.** The 2013 NSSE data show that 28% of GGC’s first-year students and 41% of prospective graduates work over 20 hours per week in comparison to national results of 12% and 33%, respectively. Similar results were found in the 2011 NSSE data.

These consistent characteristics of GGC’s student population, along with the mission’s focus on providing both opportunity and support, have shaped the College’s specific strategies for promoting completion. GGC’s key priorities in support of Georgia’s college completion goals are focused on increasing enrollment among typically underserved populations, supporting students through a successful transition to higher education, and providing tools that enable early successes for our students. GGC has focused first on increasing access and success for the traditionally underserved. The specific strategies and activities pursued in GGC’s Completion Plan are oriented toward supporting the transition to higher education, early academic success, and the formation of strong relationships with faculty, staff, and other students. These three factors are well documented as strong predictors of persistence and success, particularly in underserved populations. A successful transition to higher education is facilitated by the College’s focus on student engagement and student success in the first year, most notably through advising programs, faculty mentoring and block scheduling. Early successes are fostered by the provision of tools such as academic advising for students enrolled in Learning Support pre-college courses, concurrent remediation, the multi-faceted tutoring program available to all students through the Academic Enhancement Center, and programs tailored to the needs of specific sub-populations of first-year students. Finally, the overall commitment to active learning and authentic experiences for all students supports ongoing success, deep learning, and preparation for post-graduate careers and study.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Block Schedules

GGC has invested significantly in designing and using block scheduling as a strategy for addressing Goals 3 (Decrease excess credits) and 8 (Restructure instructional delivery) of the Complete College Georgia effort. For Fall 2014, the College has committed to enrolling all First-time, Full-time students with less than 12 hours of prior credit in block schedules. To date, 2600 students have been successfully placed into block schedules for Fall 2014.

This strategy addresses the overall goal in two meaningful ways. The first is that block schedules serve to enroll and focus entering students on optimal set of courses for first semester based on the student's academic status (Learning Support or Non-Learning Support) and intended major or meta-major (STEM or non-STEM). Second, this strategy addresses the goal by promoting strong relationships between students in that it creates a cohort of students who are enrolled in a common set of classes, which facilitates the formation of social bonds between students and of study groups. Thus, enrolling entering students into block schedules is expected to impact both first-semester academic success and first-semester retention positively. Since these factors are known to impact first-year retention and overall progression, this strategy is seen as essential to establishing a solid base from which to increase the number of students who persist in college and complete their degrees.

The decision to expand GGC's block schedule strategy to cover the majority of entering students created a substantial set of challenges for the institution. The most substantive of these included: the need to create the overall master schedule to support block schedules; the need to design and implement a communication plan that would inform entering students about the block schedules and about their options and choices; and the need to allocate sufficient human resources to schedule all students. A task force was formed to plan and oversee the block registration process, and included decanal and administrative representation from key functional areas. Through this task force, 21 unique types of full-time blocks were identified to meet the needs of incoming full-time GGC students. These block types varied by factors such as learning support requirements (English/Math/Reading) and types of majors (STEM vs. non-STEM, etc.), and each block was comprised of 12-13 credit hours. In addition, three new administrative positions were allocated to support this effort: an academic advisor position was created within each of the Schools of Liberal Arts and Science and Technology, the two schools most responsible for courses in the blocks. These individuals play a key role in building the blocks and serving as resources to students who had questions or may require adjustments to their blocks once assigned (for example, students wishing to take more than 12 credit hours). A third position was created within the Registrar's office to manage the block registration process and communications with students, and to also serve as a resource to students who had questions or concerns about the block registration process.

While the College has met these immediate challenges,

there are a number of remaining needs that must be addressed for this strategy to continue. In particular, the program maps for all majors and meta-majors must be completed and made more widely available; block scheduling policies and procedures for students entering with prior credit need to be developed; and the necessary policies & processes to support this strategy on a long-term basis must be developed.

Advising Programs

GGC has pursued development and implementation of intrusive and proactive advising programs to meet Goal 4 of the Complete College Georgia effort. In its first full year of operation, the Advising Programs office served over 1000 regularly-enrolled students and 50 students in the Grizzly Renewal Opportunity Workshops (GROW) program.

This strategy addresses the overall goal by providing support and outreach to students at higher academic risk, specifically to students required to enroll in Learning Support classes through typical advising services and to students who have been placed on academic suspension through the GROW. Success in this endeavor is predicted to result in increased academic success and retention for academically underprepared students.

As is common in commuter student populations, the primary challenges faced by this effort are relational. Persistent work by the staff is required to engage students who are already busy and who may not recognize their need for support and to build working relationships with the students early in semester. Meeting this challenge requires a significant financial investment in staffing and in appropriate and inviting physical spaces. A further challenge lies in identifying the "right" students to target for the advising programs, which is a challenge of analytics. The primary need to address this challenge is the development of predictive analytics that are appropriate to a high-need student population.

Concurrent Remediation

GGC has also invested heavily in supporting Goal 7 (Transform remediation) by developing and deploying a strong program of concurrent remediation. GGC offers concurrent remediation to eligible students in mathematics, reading, and English.

This strategy addresses the overall goal of increasing college completions supporting the needs of academically underprepared students while enabling them to earn graduation-eligible credits during their first semester of enrollment. Effective, well-designed concurrent remediation options are expected to lead to increased academic success and confidence and increased retention in academically underprepared students.

The primary challenge for GGC in implementation of this strategy is one of capacity building. While our data show that the concurrent remediation effort is successful and there is a clear need to grow the programs to serve more students, there are significant costs associated with hiring and preparing sufficient faculty to maintain implementation fidelity as this effort scales up. A second significant challenge is to match remediation approaches to students based on careful analyses

of historical success patterns.

Active Pedagogy with Authentic Experiences

GGC's primary strategy to address Goal 8 (Restructure instructional delivery) is focused on creating classroom experiences for students that are engaging, provide authentic experiences, and promote deep learning and transferrable skills. The three flagship efforts at GGC are the Undergraduate Research Experience initiative across all STEM programs, the programmatic structure of the Education programs, and the programmatic structure of the new Nursing program.

These efforts address the overall goal by connecting classroom instruction to future study and careers and by promoting active and deep learning. They further address Georgia's completion goals by promoting strong relationships between students, between faculty and students, and between students and potential future employers. These factors are known to contribute to student persistence and success and are expected to result in stronger than predicted academic performance, retention, progression, and graduation.

The primary challenges in implementing this strategy across the institution rest in curriculum development, faculty development, and faculty-student ratios. Instruction based in active learning and authentic experience requires a skilled teacher and a well-designed curriculum. GGC's faculty have dedicated extensive time to professional development to acquire the skills in curriculum design and teaching that are needed and maintaining the College's commitment to faculty professional development is essential. Another primary need for the success of this strategy is a network of relationships with local companies, schools, and medical facilities so that ample opportunities are available for student internships, placements, and other experiences.

SUMMARY OF GOALS, HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

High-Impact Strategy -- Block Schedules

Goals addressed: Goal 3 – Decrease excess credits; Goal 8—Restructure instructional delivery

Summary of Activities

GGC began offering block schedules to incoming full-time first-time students on a voluntary basis in Fall 2012 with 40 course blocks available. With preliminary data showing a positive impact on academic performance and retention, the College again offered 40 course blocks to incoming students on a voluntary basis in Fall 2013. In these two semesters, students were informed of the option to select a course block at the time of registration and were given a list of available choices. Students self-selected a course block and were enrolled in those courses by the Registrar's office staff. Data from Fall 2012 again showed a strong positive impact of block enrollment.

Based on these findings, the College has expanded the pilot and enrolled all full-time first-time students with no college-level credit in course blocks designed to support the student's anticipated major. In essence, course blocks have been

developed for each meta-major and specialized for possible learning support requirements. Upon acceptance, students are informed of the block scheduling process and given a limited set of appropriate blocks to use in selecting options. Registrar's Office staff then enroll students in one of their chosen blocks. Students are given their schedule when they attend new student orientation.

Interim Measures of Progress

Basic activity and output measures are used to track progress in implementation of this strategy. As noted above, the College offered 40 course blocks in the Fall semester of 2012 and 2013 during its pilot implementation and test of this strategy. For the full implementation in Fall 2014, 122 course blocks were prepared based on 20 different possible configurations derived from meta-majors and learning support placement options, providing spaces for 2520 students in course blocks. As of August 1st, 2163 students were enrolled in course blocks, filling 86% of the available seats. Since all first-time students will be enrolled in blocks, future analysis to determine progress for this initiative will focus on efficiencies in scheduling and communication with students. Specific metrics will be identified and targets established during Academic Year 2014-15.

Measures of Success

As noted earlier, the block schedules are predicted to yield improvements in academic success and retention for enrolled students. For Fall 2012 students, a comparison of those in blocks to those not in blocks showed that the students in blocks had a mean GPA 0.3 points higher and retention rate 7% higher. A similar comparison for Fall 2013 replicates this finding, with students in blocks having a mean GPA 0.26 points higher, a fall-to-spring retention rate 4.5% higher and a fall-to-fall retention rate 8.6% higher. Table 1 shows the specific figures for Fall 2013 students. These results provide strong support for the College's decision to implement block scheduling on a campus-wide basis and have led to the decision to apply the same model to incoming students for Spring semester. Further, based on these data, the feasibility of second-semester blocks is under investigation. Since all first-time students will be enrolled in blocks, future analysis to determine success for this initiative will compare performance and retention to the non-block student data for the Fall 2013 cohort and to the College's overall targets for retention and academic success.

TABLE 1: BLOCK VS NON-BLOCK ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND RETENTION FOR FALL 2013 COHORT

	N: First-time, full-time freshmen	Mean Fall GPA	Mean Fall credit hours earned	First semester retention rate (N)	Spring Cumulative GPA	Spring credit hours earned	First year retention (N)
In block Fall 2013	744	2.70	13.23	91% (678)	2.66	13.18	71.6% (533)
Not in block Fall 2013	1225	2.44	12.07	86.5% (1060)	2.42	12.55	62.4% (765)

High Impact Strategy: Advising Center

Goal addressed: Goal 4 -- Provide intrusive advising

Summary of Activities

Based on the overall academic characteristics of GGC's student population, as summarized above, GGC has established an Office of Advising Programs. The Office is staffed by a Director, Assistant Director and 4 professional advisors. Students who are required to enroll in Learning Support classes are assigned to one of the professional advisors for support and guidance during their first year of enrollment. In addition, during Spring 2014, the Office initiated a pilot implementation of the Grizzly Renewal Opportunity Workshop (GROW) program. This program is designed to support students who have been placed on academic suspension. The program engages participants in activities designed to help them improve their academic success skills, get back on track, and improve their academic standing.

If they choose to participate, students must agree to the conditions stated in the Grow Program Contract. Students who do not participate in the program in the fall/spring semester immediately following their suspension will have to sit out the following semester and will need to appeal to the Admissions Committee for readmission.

Interim Measures of Progress

The initial measures of progress for this initiative have focused on evidence that the Office of Advising Programs is functional and contributing to the well-being of the GGC student population by providing services and designing appropriate programming. Evidence that the Office is meeting those progress measures can be seen in the fact that the Office of Advising Programs served 1,071 students through its general programs and 50 students in the GROW pilot program during its first year of operation. Further progress will be assessed based on the College's success in meeting staffing and service targets for the Office of Advising Programs. Over the next three years, the Advising Center will expand to provide services to the all of the following: Learning Support students, English for Academic Purposes students, conditional admits, committee admits, and provisional readmits. By 2017, this is expected to create a service population of approximately 3000 students and the Advising Center will be staffed with ten professional advisors.

Measures of Success

As noted above, the efforts of this office are expected to impact both early academic success and retention in the populations of students that are served by the office. Data from the first year of operation clearly show that the advising programs are meeting these expectations. Since all Learning

Support students were referred to the Office of Advising Programs, a direct comparison of equivalent groups of student who did and did not receive advising services is not possible. However, a year-to-year comparison is feasible. Learning Support students in Fall 2012 had a mean GPA at the end of their first semester of 1.75 and a fall-to-spring retention rate of 74%. In contrast, Advising Center advisees in Fall 2013 had a mean GPA of 2.19 at the end of their first semester and a fall-to-spring retention rate of 92%. Although progress has been made in retaining these high-risk students at higher rates, the fall-to-fall retention of Advising Center students lags behind that of the full first-year student cohort with retention rates of 59% and 68% respectively, and the Advising Center students have a lower average first-year GPA than the overall first-year cohort (2.08 and 2.51, respectively). The long-term goal for this initiative is for Advising Center students to have retention rates and GPAs that are not more than 5% below those of the full first-year cohort in any given year.

Data for the GROW program is equally encouraging. Of the 50 students in the pilot GROW program, 50% were able to continue their enrollment. Ten students achieved an end of term GPA that returned them to good academic standing and exited the program. Another 15 earned a semester GPA of 2.0 and were able to continue in the program but did not reach good academic standing. As this initiative moves from a pilot program to full implementation, specific long-term metrics and targets will be established.

High Impact Strategy: Concurrent Remediation

Goals addressed: Goal 7 -- Transforming remediation;

Goal 8 -- Restructure instructional delivery

Summary of Activities

GGC has continued to invest heavily in developing and offering remediation through a concurrent delivery model to qualified students. Developed by faculty, the model is based on successful models such as the Accelerated Learning Program used by Baltimore Community College. The College has successfully implemented programs for English (Segue English) and mathematics (ACCESS Math), pairing remedial support and instruction with the appropriate college-level class. Further, GGC is developing a program pairing remedial support in reading with ENGL 1101, thus making concurrent remediation available to an expanded population of students.

Interim Measures of Progress

Progress for this initiative is measured by tracking the number of sections offered, which provides a measure of the number of students served. GGC has increased its investment in concurrent remediation each year. In Academic Year 2012-13, the College offered 12 sections of Segue English and 8 of

ACCESS Math. This was increased to 19 sections of Segue English and 12 of ACCESS Math in the 2013-14 Academic Year serving 113 students in English and 138 in mathematics. For Fall 2014, over 200 students are enrolled in ACCESS Math classes and 144 in Segue English. GGC will continue to increase the scope of this initiative in compliance with new

policies of the University System of Georgia. Table 2 projects likely targets for Academic Year 2015-16 under two possible scenarios, incremental progress toward maximal enrollment in concurrent remediation (51%) and immediate maximal enrollment (67%). GGC projects achieving maximal enrollment within three years if not immediately.

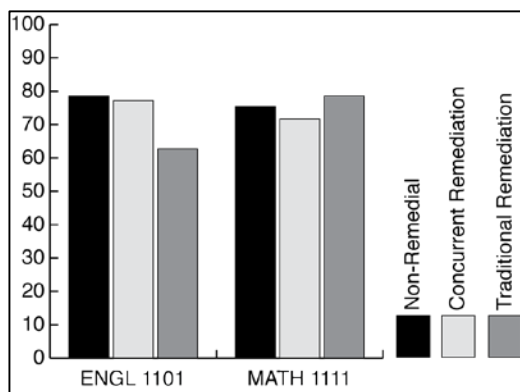
TABLE 2: REMEDIATION

Concurrent Remediation Course	FA 2014 # sections	FA 2014 enrollment	New Concurrent Remediation Course	Projected # sections FA15 at 51% in concurrent course	Projected enrollment FA15 at 51% in concurrent course	Projected # sections FA15 at 67% in concurrent course	Projected enrollment FA15 at 67% in concurrent course
ENGL 0099	9	144	ENGL 0999	19	304	25	400
(Segue English)			Total concurrent ENGL	19	304	25	400
MATH 0111	11	189	MATH 0997	23	460	31	620
(Access Algebra)			MATH 0999	23	460	31	620
			Total concurrent MATH	46	920	62	1240

Measures of Success

The critical measure of success for this initiative is the overall success of the students, both immediately in the Learning Support and college-level courses and in subsequent related classes. The results from the early implementation showed that students in the Segue English and ACCESS Math classes were able to exit Learning Support at higher rates than their peers in traditional Learning Support and passed ENGL 1101 and MATH 1111 at comparable rates to their non-Learning Support peers. For the 2013-14 Academic Year, the data continue to show that students in the Segue and ACCESS classes perform well. Figure 1 shows that students in the concurrent remediation classes successfully complete ENGL 1101 and MATH 1111 at rates comparable to their peers who did not require remediation and substantially higher than their peers who completed a traditional sequence of remediation followed by the credit-bearing class. As GGC increases enrollment in concurrent remediation, the target for success metrics is to maintain performance of students in concurrent remediation at the same level as performance of non-remedial students.

FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PASSING GATEWAY COURSE BY REMEDIATION STATUS



High Impact Strategy: Active Pedagogy with Authentic Experiences

Goal addressed: Goal 8 -- Restructure instructional delivery

Summary of Activities

A primary focus of GGC’s efforts in restructuring instructional delivery has been the development and delivery of active, engaging courses that include authentic discipline-based experiences. The primary efforts on this initiative have been housed in the STEM disciplines and in teacher education. The new nursing program has also crafted a curriculum that invests heavily in active learning and authentic experiences in the field.

The STEM disciplines have been working collaboratively over several years to redesign classes and laboratory exercises to involve students in authentic research every semester of undergraduate enrollment beginning with the laboratory component of class in the first STEM course and building toward an independent or directed research project prior to graduation, known on campus as the Four-year Undergraduate Research Experience (URE). These experiences range from individual lab exercises to study-abroad data collection and analysis opportunities. In addition, a service learning course that engages GGC STEM students with local K-12 teachers and classrooms is now offered every semester.

GGC’s Teacher Education programs have also been carefully designed to provide opportunities for students to engage in authentic classroom-based activity every semester. Pre-education majors are provided an opportunity to work in after-school tutoring programs, which expose them to children at various levels of development and academic attainment. Majors are placed in field settings each semester with the level of responsibility and complexity of expectations set at a developmentally appropriate level each term. This immersive experience coupled with a curriculum designed to support meaning-making to apply lessons learned from

classroom experiences provides GGC students with a rich and engaging program and prepares them well for their future roles as classroom teachers.

GGC is continuing to invest in this strategy. The faculty within the Schools of Business and Liberal Arts engage in continual professional development in course design and pedagogy to create engaging courses and promote deep learning and development in their students. GGC's new Nursing program, which began offering classes in Fall 2014 will place students into clinical settings with appropriate responsibilities and tasks in a design similar to that of the Teacher Education programs. As with Teacher Education, the Nursing curriculum will support connections between classroom instruction and professional application as a way to enhance the learning experience and education of our students.

Interim Measures of Progress

Progress for this initiative is measured by tracking the extent to which the curriculum efforts impact students and involve them in active and authentic learning experiences. The joint STEM URE effort at GGC has been firmly established as part of the institution's programs. Across all disciplines, this program now involves 212 faculty teaching over 250 class sections and, in the most recent academic year, directly impacted 3232 individual (unduplicated) students.

Similarly, progress in the Teacher Education programs is measured by monitoring the success of the program in placing its students in appropriate settings. During the Academic Year 2013-14, 231 pre-education majors were placed in afterschool settings. In addition, the program placed 566 students in over 90 Gwinnett County public schools for field experiences and student teaching. Tables 3a and 3b show the breakdown of student placements for the academic year.

TABLE 3A GGC TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS BY TYPE OF EXPERIENCE

Field Experience I	178
Field Experience II	174
Field Experience III	109
Student Teaching	105

Grand Total	566
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TABLE 3B GGC TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS BY SCHOOL LEVEL

Elementary School	64
Middle School	13
High School	13
Grand Total	90

Measures of Success

The critical measures of success for this initiative, aside from the broad College-wide measures of retention and progression, are measures that reflect the effectiveness of engagement and deep learning on student behavior and measures that reflect post-graduation success. Within the STEM majors, GGC has seen steady growth in the number of students engaged in undergraduate research, with 82 students enrolled in the senior research class during the past academic year, 8 students in the inaugural sophomore-level research class and over 40 students presenting at regional or national conferences.

Similarly, the Teacher Education programs have seen students successfully complete the program prepared for the demands of their careers can be seen in the fact that approximately 10% of the new teachers hired by the Gwinnett County Public Schools for 2014-15 are GGC graduates.

A broader measure of success for this metric, as for others, is the overall success of GGC students in their academic careers and the degree to which students report being deeply engaged in their courses and with their faculty. At Tables 4 and 5 below show, GGC is achieving strong retention and graduation rates relative to peer institutions and expects to see these rates continue to improve. Further, data from the National Survey of Student Engagement indicates that GGC students report educational experiences that are challenging and engaging. As Table 3 shows, GGC seniors place GGC in the top 10% of institutions nationally on five of ten Engagement Indicators and in the top 50% of institutions nationally on an additional two. GGC's long term goals for retention and progression are shown in Table 4. The College's overall goal for NSSE indicators is to maintain its strong results.

TABLE 4: NSSE ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS FOR GGC SENIORS

	GGC	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2013 & 2014	Top 50%	Top 10%
Academic Challenge					
Higher-Order Learning	43.1	41.7	41.2	43.3	✓ 45.3
Reflective and Integrative Learning	39.6	39.2	38.9	41.1	43.1
Learning Strategies	44.0	40.9	40.3	42.5	✓ 44.9 ✓
Quantitative Reasoning	32.1	29.4	29.9	31.3	✓ 33.0 ✓
Learning with Peers					
Collaborative Learning	34.5	32.2	32.4	35.4	✓ 37.7
Discussions with Diverse Others	45.8	40.0	41.8	43.9	✓ 45.8 ✓
Experiences with Faculty					
Student-Faculty Interaction	25.3	25.8	23.7	29.5	34.4
Effective Teaching Practices	43.9	41.7	40.9	43.0	✓ 45.1 ✓
Campus Environment					

Quality of Interactions	43.6	43.6	42.5	45.3	47.4
Supportive Environment	37.5	33.9	33.3	36.1	✓ 39.0

Other Strategies

GGC is continuing to pursue the additional strategies that were discussed in our 2012 plan and 2013 report including its intentional outreach to and collaboration with the Gwinnett County Schools. The An example of the depth and quality of the relationship between GGC and the Gwinnett County Schools is their upcoming joint presentation to the upcoming conference for Georgia Education Preparation Providers (EPPs) and their P-12 Partners titled “Transforming Educator Preparation: Building Capacity to Positively Impact P-12 Student Learning. College is also pursuing expanded new student orientation with differentiated sessions for specific sub-populations, clear and consistent information about degree requirements, dedicated faculty mentoring, and hybrid course schedules. Further, the College is continuing to emphasize faculty mentoring and student engagement as a universal expectation for all faculty.

Other “high-engagement” strategies are in use by individual disciplines and programs. While not “official” initiatives of GGC’s Completion Plan, these efforts are consistent with the general theme of GGC’s overall effort. These initiatives include peer tutors and other outreach and support activities in Information Technology, service learning and experiential capstone classes in the School of Liberal Arts and School of Business. As with the STEM programs, the disciplines in Liberal Arts have aggressively pursued involvement of students in research and saw 8 students present at regional and national conferences in the last academic year.

In addition, the College is continuing to invest in developing a predictive analytic model of students at unusually high risk within our high-risk population that will inform efforts to direct specific students to the programs and opportunities most likely to support that individual student’s success. Future plans include expanding the block scheduling to Spring semester admits, continuing to expand the number of students enrolled in concurrent remedial courses and participating in the Undergraduate Research Experience, and exploration of the value of awarding associate degrees to students who complete all the requisite coursework.

OBSERVATIONS

Data on the core metrics GGC has elected to track are encouraging for this reporting year as shown in Table 4 below. The College met its targets for most metrics in Academic Year 2013-14. Notably, first-year retention has begun to improve, indicating that the joint efforts in orientation, advising, and transformed remediation are having an impact on student success and persistence. Since early success, which is known to predict progress and persistence, is a primary focus of several of GGC’s efforts in the Completion Plan, GGC will continue to monitor this closely. Early data on graduation numbers are also encouraging, as can be seen in Table 5. While the proportional graduation rate has declined slightly, the number of students graduating in each cohort has continued to climb.

The data on first generation and Pell Grant eligible students continue to show that GGC is maintaining its strong focus on providing access to underserved student populations. The increases in first semester exit rates for Learning Support students, and particularly the rates for students in the concurrent remediation classes (Segue English and ACCESS Math), provide evidence that GGC’s efforts to strengthen and transform remediation are having the intended effects. As GGC implements the proposed new models for remediation, we expect to see differential exit rates in foundations-level and co-requisite Learning Support courses. Table 4 shows projected exit rates for each course level.

The common theme across the four high-impact strategies discussed here, along with other efforts that have shown an impact at GGC is that they are all high engagement, individual focused efforts, which is perhaps not surprising given the high-need population that GGC serves. In addition to the four specific strategies discussed in this report, differentiated orientation, faculty mentoring, and relationship-building with the Gwinnett County Public Schools continue to show a strong impact on enrollment, success, and retention.

TABLE 5: COLLEGE-WIDE METRICS FOR GEORGIA GWINNETT COLLEGE

Metric	AY 13 Actual	AY 14 Target*	AY14 Actual	AY15 Target	AY16 Target	AY17 Target	AY18 Target	
One year retention (at GGC)	61.7%	73%	63.16%	64%	65%	66%	67%	
Degrees conferred	281 (Sp 13)	290 (Sp14)	304 (Sp 14)	375 (Sp15)	400 (Sp16)	425 (Sp17)	450 (Sp18)	
Six-year graduation rate (within institution)	27% (2007 cohort)		22% (2008 cohort)	29% (2009 cohort)	30% (2010 cohort)	31% (2011 cohort)	32% (2012 cohort)	
% First Generation students enrolled (neither parent earned postsecondary credential)	48%	44%	44%	44%	44%	44%	44%	
% Pell Grant eligible students enrolled	52%	50%	52%	50%	50%	50%	50%	
First semester exit rate: Learning Support English	77%	77%	78%	79%	Foundations	78%	79%	80%
					Co-requisite	81%	82%	83%

First semester exit rate: Learning Support Math	52%	44%	59%	60%	Foundations	61%	62%	63%
					Co-requisite	71%	72%	73%
First semester exit rate: Learning Support Reading	81%	75%	79%	80%	Course to be phased out due to USG policy changes			
First attempt completion rate: College Algebra	66.5%	67%	70%	70%	71	72	72	
First attempt completion rate: Intro to Computing	81.2%	77%	82%	82%	82	83	83	

TABLE 6: OFFICIAL GRADUATION RATES FOR GGC STUDENTS (IPEDS FTFTF COHORTS)

		4 Year				5 Year				6 Year			
		Institution		System		Institution		System		Institution		System	
Cohort Year	# FTFR Cohort	N	Rate	N	Rate	N	Rate	N	Rate	N	Rate	N	Rate
Fall 2007	335	18	5.4%	27	8.1%	59	17.6%	84	25.1%	80	27.12%		
Fall 2008	465	23	4.9%	37	8.0%	65	18.01%	77	25.93%	80	22.16%		
Fall 2009	708	28	3.9%			83	11.72%						

Efforts that are focused on wide-scale communication have shown less impact and less penetration into the mind-set and practice of the institution. While DegreeWorks has been implemented and has moved into common use on campus, we are aware that this tool could be more beneficial with more extensive and enhanced training opportunities. In addition, while the potential value of a technology-supported early alert system is clear, efforts to identify and deploy such a tool across campus have not yet been successful.

Two primary factors have contributed to the challenges in implementing strategies based on technology tools and communication. The first is the necessity of prioritizing initiatives in the context of budgetary limitations presented by the current economic climate. Faced with choices between funding direct student intervention efforts and funding other initiatives, GGC has consistently chosen to prioritize the former, to good effect. Thus, investment in early alert technology and implementation of some capabilities of DegreeWorks have been delayed. GGC expects to increase efforts on these initiatives as its funding improves.

The second factor impacting implementation of

communication and technology initiatives arises from the limitations presented by GGC's hosted software environment for Banner. The hosted environment introduces complexities in implementing some initiatives that rely on communication across software systems and platforms, including those owned by Ellucian that are designed to integrate with Banner. Thus, implementing these solutions requires extensive human resource investment in consultation with ITS and Ellucian to create locally-developed solutions and increases the likelihood of errors, so additional time working toward implementation is necessary.

GGC's overall Completion Plan is a living and responsive effort continually enhanced by new activities and initiatives that emerge from the committed work of the campus community. These activities and initiatives include workshops for middle and high school teachers that strengthen the relationship between the Gwinnett County schools and GGC, development of a resource handbook for faculty to provide information on concurrent remediation, along with block schedules and other scheduling options.