



# Fort Valley State University

## INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

The mission of Fort Valley State University (FVSU) is to advance the cause of education with emphasis upon fulfilling commitments that our community members have undertaken collectively. As an institution of the University System of Georgia, Fort Valley State University naturally embraces the principles articulated by the Core Mission Statement for State Universities as approved by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The university's primary commitments include, among others, enhancement of teacher training programs grounded upon a liberal arts foundation, as reflective of over 120 years of experience and tradition. As Georgia's only 1890 Land Grant institution, FVSU offers academic programs in a variety of disciplines which include agriculture, family and consumer sciences, technology, and a new program in supply chain management just to name a few. FVSU has a commitment to continue to further its traditions of excellence in programs in the liberal arts and humanities, social, natural and physical sciences.

### STUDENT BODY PROFILE

FVSU enrollment now stands at approximately 2700 students. The student retention percentage has grown over the last academic year to approximately 68%. FVSU administrators believe this increase is due to many initiatives that have been implemented. The majority of FVSU students are African-American (94%) and as of 2014, 84% of FVSU students received Pell Grant Funds. Approximately only 5% of the incoming freshmen class were considered adult learners (25 years or older), therefore the majority of the student body is comprised of high school graduates who are products of lower-performing high schools in the inner cities or rural areas. However, a shift has occurred in the enrollment practices and the reward for this is a higher retention rate and, hopefully, a future increase in graduation rates. Our slightly higher female population is consistent with national trends. These indicators were used as the committee devised the Complete College Georgia Plan for FVSU as benchmarks and as points of reference for strategies that should be developed to increase student success outcomes for the institution.

### HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY: IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

#### RELATED GOAL

**Goal 1:** To achieve a 77% retention rate for first-time freshmen by observing an increase of two percentage points each year.

**Goal 2:** Engage 80 % of freshmen and sophomore students in academic advising by the end of each academic year.

**Goal 3:** Engage 80% of first and second-year students in student engagement programs and services (e.g. civic engagement, service learning, lecture series, symposiums, first & second-year experience programs, and mentoring programs, etc.)

#### DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT

This priority demonstrates FVSU's commitment to increase its annual retention rate of first-time freshmen, increasing efforts that enhance academic advisement services and student engagement initiatives.

#### PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

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#### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

During the fall of the 2017-18 academic year, FVSU will implement a comprehensive University College (UC). The (UC) is an innovative, interdisciplinary approach to achieving student success and engagement outcomes for undergraduate students. The UC will serve as the entry point for students, an innovator of new academic initiatives, and a catalyst for student success and retention throughout the campus. The UC will include academic advising, academic counseling and disability services, civic engagement, service learning, student leadership development, tutorial services, supplemental instruction, reading and writing lab services, and first & second-experience programs.

The UC will provide direct intensive support to entering freshmen who are admitted under the provisions of the limited admit status, however services will be provided to all incoming undergraduate students. Establishing the UC will serve as a transformative endeavor for the institution's ability to promote student success, engagement, and retention.

## MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

### MEASURE, METRIC, OR DATA ELEMENT

As a method of evaluation, FVSU will assess the following student success outcomes:

- Increase the number of students achieving a grade of "C" or better in general education courses by 10%.
- Engage 75% of freshmen and sophomore students in academic advising and registration sessions provided by their academic advisor in the UC.
- Engage at least 80% of first and second-year students in first- student engagement programs and services. (e.g., civic engagement and volunteerism, tutorials, first and second year experience courses)

### BASELINE MEASURES

The current retention rate for first time freshmen is estimated to be approximately 67%.

### INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS

The Center for Retention Services serves as the current academic support model for the university. This method has worked for quite some time, however including the elements of civic engagement, leadership development and professional as components to complement services already in place will provide a more comprehensive model for student success for the student demographic FVSU serves.

### MEASURES OF SUCCESS

With implementation of the UC, first-time freshmen retention is expected to increase by a minimum of two percent each year over the course of the next five years, providing for a rate of 77%.

### LESSONS LEARNED

FVSU has found that although there are academic support services in place, it is essential to enhance those services with other components of student development such as civic engagement, leadership development and professionalism in an effort to effectively serve the student body.

## HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY: STRENGTHENING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

### RELATED GOAL

**Goal 1:** Increase in the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG

### DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT

This particular strategy addresses a priority for FVSU as it complements Priority 3.1.1 of the strategic plan, which seek to increase student involvement. This high impact strategy has the potential to increase active participation in campus activities, increase faculty participation with student in service learning, internships, study abroad and increase undergraduate research opportunities.

In relation to this, FVSU has implemented the iHelp Center for Civic Engagement and Volunteerism. During the 2017-18 academic year 30% of the freshmen class will be identified as a pilot group to complete community service and volunteerism hours within the surrounding community in an effort to increase their leadership and professionalism capacities.

Research related to student development by Astin and Sax (1998) emphasize the importance of this type of student engagement and its positive influence on student success outcomes. In the 2018-19 academic year, FVSU will fully launch a new requirement for all undergraduate students to complete at least 30 hours of community service and volunteerism before graduation.

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#### **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

Currently 30% of the freshmen class are being identified to engage in community service and volunteerism to determine the implications these types of student development concepts have on student success and retention.

#### **MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS**

##### **MEASURE, METRIC, OR DATA ELEMENT**

After implementation of this initiative during the 2017-18 academic year, data will be provided which highlights the implications of civic engagement, volunteerism and community service on student success and retention.

##### **BASELINE MEASURES**

Data provided from the last administration of the National Survey on Student Engagement in 2014 revealed that approximately 46% of first year students indicated that they were involved in some form of community service and/or service learning project.

##### **INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS**

N/A

##### **MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

The National Survey of Student Engagement.

##### **LESSONS LEARNED**

Through implementation, expected barriers will be how to ensure that students complete the require service hours.

#### **HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY: INTRUSIVE FINANCIAL AID ADVISING**

##### **RELATED GOAL**

**Goal 1:** Increase in the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG

##### **DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT**

As over 90 % of the student body at FVSU receive some form of federal student aid, it is essential that the university provide intrusive financial aid advising. The university has taken steps to implement technology that enhances customer service in this area; specifically with the implementation of Qless and CampusLogic software packages. These technology upgrades have tremendously improved the process for awarding financial aid for students and the university expects to continue to experience success in this area.

##### **PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT**

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 Director, Financial Aid  
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#### **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

The university continues to have a commitment to enhancing technology and providing training for the financial aid staff in order to increase the level of intrusive financial aid advising for students.

#### **MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS**

##### **MEASURE, METRIC, OR DATA ELEMENT**

The university will conduct annual reports and analysis of the number of students who receive federal and state student aid. In addition, comparisons related to the efficiency of the technology upgrades will be conducted by determining the number of students who are able to receive, accept, and apply their financial aid award by the specific deadline each academic year.

**BASELINE MEASURES**

Identify the number of students awarded, accepted and applied financial aid to their cost of attendance during the 2016-17 academic year, with that of the 2017-18 academic year.

**INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS**

With consideration given to the technology upgrades in this area, the institution has seen significant gains in the number of students who successfully completed the financial aid process during the fall 2017 semester by an increase of approximately over 200 students.

**MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

Measures of success would include the percentage of students who successfully complete the financial aid process each academic year.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

The university continues to experience barriers with the ability to successfully convey information to first generation college students and their parents about the financial aid process. Especially as it relates to the process for applying for Federal Direct Plus Loans.

**HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY: INTRUSIVE ACADEMIC ADVISING****RELATED GOAL**

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

**Goal 4:** Provide intrusive advising to keep students on track to graduate.

**DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT**

This specific strategy contributes greatly to the number of students who persist to graduation in a timely manner to graduation. Intrusive advising is tremendously important, as it ensures that students understand their degree requirements and follow them closely. Essentially, it also contributes to providing a better understanding of their undergraduate core curriculum.

Therefore, through implementation of the University College, FVSU has proven its commitment to providing intrusive academic advisement services. Furthermore, the University has implemented Degree Works to aid in the academic advising process, along with providing degree maps for students as a guide for better understanding and following academic degree program requirements.

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**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

The current structure for academic advising is twofold at FVSU. The Center for Retention Services (CRS) provides academic advising services for freshmen and sophomore students (0-60 credit hours). There are a total of five staff persons who provide academic advising services for this student population. Each advisor is responsible providing academic advising for specific majors. Students undergo a two step advising process which includes pre-advising just before registration begins in an effort to assess their progress in their current classes, and once registration begins, they undergo a the process for actually registering for classes each semester. In addition, advisors monitor the progress of their students each semester.

**MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS:****BASELINE MEASURES**

Eighty-percent (80.2%) of credits attempted were successfully completed.

**INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS**

Increase the percentage of GEC credits successfully completed by two percentage points each year over the next five years.

**MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

Realizing these goals will provide for a higher quantity of students graduating within a four or five year timeframe.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

None at this time.