



# Gordon State College

## INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Gordon State College's mission is to ensure affordable, supportive access to high quality post-secondary education. As an access institution, we provide engaged faculty-student interaction through intimate classroom experiences, innovative and effective teaching strategies, excellent advising and mentorship programs, and effective student support services. GSC offers baccalaureate and associate degree programs. The institution has focused more in recent years on meeting the needs of underrepresented populations and dual-enrollment students.

Final Fall 2016 enrollment was 3901; as of August 14, 2017, Fall 2017 pre-midterm census enrollment is 4,054. Of entering freshmen in fall 2016,

- 50% had learning support requirements, down from 55% in Fall 2015.
  - 26.3% of entering freshmen had only a Math requirement (N=231), down from 30% in Fall 2015
  - 12.3% had Math and English and/or Reading requirements (N=108), down from 19% in Fall 2015
  - 5% had English, Reading, or both requirements (N=45)
- 59% were Pell-eligible, down from 65% in Fall 2015
- 43% were African-American
- 23% self-identified as first-generation college students, roughly the same as Fall 2015

To better serve our student population, Gordon State College was one of the first institutions in the USG to take remediation transformation to scale. To help more adult learners complete a college degree, GSC developed a Weekend College for a B.S. in Human Services degree, using hybrid course delivery. The course meetings are held at our teaching site in Henry County, a high-population area and Gordon's biggest "feeder" county, to provide adult learners with a convenient path for finishing a college degree in a high-demand field that offers many options. Overall, we have targeted traditionally underserved populations for increases in access and completion. At the same time, our institution has increased its population of students taking courses on a dual-enrollment basis. In the semester of our peak enrollment, fall 2010, we enrolled 36 dual-credit students. In fall 2016, that population increased 775%, to 315 students.

## INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS, HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

### HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY

- A. IMPROVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ADVISING THROUGH INTRUSIVE ADVISING
- B. ENGAGEMENT AND ADVISING TRAINING FOR NEW FACULTY MEMBERS
- C. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

### RELATED GOAL

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

### DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT

Effectively engaging and advising students are critical factors in success for many students, and in an access institution these factors receive considerable attention.

### PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

For strategies 1.A and 1.B, Prof. Peter Higgins, Assistant Vice-President for Academic Excellence, [phiggins@gordonstate.edu](mailto:phiggins@gordonstate.edu).

For strategy 1.C, Dr. Anna Higgins-Harrell, Coordinator of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, [a\\_higgins@gordostate.edu](mailto:a_higgins@gordostate.edu)

## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

### A. Provide Always Alert intrusive advising for disengaged and poorly performing students.

GSC restructured its Always Alert program during the 2015-2016 academic year. Due to significant program growth, Always Alert decentralized the academic interventions in order to handle the increased demand. From Always Alert's inception up through the 2014-2015 Academic Year, Student Success Center staff were solely responsible for conducting all of the Always Alert academic interventions. As faculty began to buy in and the number of referrals and interventions increased, the Director of Student Success began recruiting academic coaches from 6 departments on campus who had interest in retaining students in their major.

During the 2016-17 academic year, 19 faculty members from 6 departments (and two schools) volunteered to be academic coaches in addition to the Student Success Center Staff. These academic coaches included faculty from the following departments: Biology/Physical Science; Business/Public Service; Fine and Performing Arts; History/Political Science; Humanities; and Math/Computer Science. The School of Nursing and Health Sciences also contributed faculty volunteers. In total, academic coaches conducted 724 Always Alert interventions for 480 unique students, up from 434 Always Alert interventions for 310 unique students during the 2015-2016 academic year. Perhaps most encouragingly, non-SSC staff (faculty volunteers) performed 42% of all Always Alert interventions during the Spring 2017 semester, up from only 13% in Spring 2016.

In addition to decentralizing academic interventions, Academic Coaches began conducting walk-in Always Alert advisement in 2015-2016 in an effort to improve accessibility to academic coaching and remove scheduling difficulties that come with working around both students' and faculty members' schedules. That initiative continued in the 2016-17 academic year, with walk-in Always Alert advising being made available in a central location on campus (the Student Center) and in the campus's largest residence hall.

### B. Improve training of new faculty members in student engagement and advising.

In 2016-17, Gordon State expanded and improved its academic advising training program for new faculty. The training was provided by the Student Success Center professional advisors and was informed by the principles of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). The workshops focused in depth on the following topics:

- Learning Outcomes
- DegreeWorks, Banner, and Academic Summaries
- Core Curriculum and Academic Plans
- Learning Support
- Academic Standards and Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Always Alert Intrusive Advising
- Working with Student Success Center Advisors

At the conclusion of the workshops, new faculty members participated in an overview session and then engaged in independent reading of advising literature. Faculty began advising students in the SSC, mentored by experienced advisors and referring to the advising handbook developed by the College.

### C. Increase and improve learning opportunities for all faculty members in the knowledge and practice of excellence in teaching and learning.

While the GSC Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has existed for a number of years, Dr. Johnson, who was appointed coordinator in spring 2015, took an aggressive approach to adding and improving learning opportunities. The 2016-17 CETL Schedule of Events included:

- Multiple CETL Lunch conversations and "After Hours" events
- Multiple Open Classroom opportunities, where faculty members invite others in to observe and share ideas about pedagogy
- Affordable Learning sessions
- Teaching Symposia on the following topics:
  - Different Approaches on Teaching Writing
  - Tackling Tense Topics in the Classroom
  - Improving Attendance
  - Classroom Management and Dealing with Confrontation with Director of Public Safety
  - Faculty Well-Being and Excellence in Teaching
  - Getting Students to Come to Class Prepared
  - What is LEAP?
  - Writing Across Disciplines: Teaching Structure and Self-Assessment

CETL continued the annual Teaching Matters Conference that draws participants from the eastern United States.

### D. Hold an on-campus student success conference to engage faculty and reinforce the message that everyone on campus is responsible for student success.

In August 2016, GSC held its first Student Success Summit, an on-campus conference-style event that drew campus-wide participation from both faculty and staff. A nationally-known leader in the field academic advising, Charlie Nutt, kicked off the SSS with a lunch-time keynote address, which was followed by two sets of student success-related presentations and

discussions put together by faculty and staff. Although its impact on completion rates will not be known for some time, the Summit received overwhelmingly favorable feedback, and the Always Alert program (see above) saw a 46% increase in the number of volunteer Academic Coaches, and a huge increase in the number of Always Alert interventions performed by faculty volunteers.

**MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS**

**MEASURE, METRIC, OR DATA ELEMENT**

Combined number of degrees conferred and students who transfer to other USG institutions. As an access institution offering both associate and baccalaureate degrees, we measure “completion” by the number of degrees conferred and the number of students who transfer to a university or college. We have reliable transfer data only for USG institutions.

**BASELINE MEASURES**

1315

**INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS**

One-year changes:

- Associate’s: -3.4% (436 to 421)
- Bachelor’s: +3.3% (181 to 187)
- Transfer Outs: No Change (464 and 464)

See table below, Degrees and Transfer Outs by Academic Year.\*

<b>Metric</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
<b>Associate Degrees</b>	500	454	403	436	421
<b>Bachelor's Degrees</b>	124	155	148	181	187
<b>Transfer to other USG Institutions</b>	692	584	509	464	464
<b>Total</b>	1315	1180	1057	1081	1072

**MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

Increase in combined number of degrees conferred and transfer outs.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

**Always Alert:** De-centralizing much of the Always Alert advising continues to make the work load manageable and is perhaps contributing to campus culture change regarding student success.

**NFO Training:** Many new faculty come with insufficient training in engagement and advising, so it becomes an important responsibility on the College’s part to get them prepared, relying on existing resources. We are confident that the orientation pieces developed prior to and for 2015-2016 will ultimately help us reach our completion goals.

**CETL:** These activities have a less direct but still important connection to completion goals. There have been no significant challenges to increasing and improving CETL learning opportunities.

**Completion Goals:** Decreases in enrollment after 2010/11 eventually caused a corresponding decrease in degrees conferred and transfer outs, and after an increase in degrees conferred in 2015-16, we were disappointed but not totally surprised to see a small decrease in 2016-17. We are, however, pleased to see that the number of baccalaureate degrees increase once again.

**HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY:****INCREASE HIGH SCHOOL DUAL ENROLLMENT PARTICIPATION****RELATED GOAL**

6: Shorten time to degree completion through programs that allow students to earn college credit while still in high school and by awarding credit for prior learning that is verified by appropriate assessment

**DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT**

For some years, Gordon State College had built on its strong relationships with service area high schools to provide access to post-secondary education through dual-enrollment. In 2015, Georgia SB 132 and SB 2 provided a boost to dual enrollment opportunities for high school students, primarily through financial support.

**PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT**

Prof. Samantha Bishop, Move On When Ready Coordinator, [sbishop@gordonstate.edu](mailto:sbishop@gordonstate.edu)

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

In 2015-2016, Gordon State added the position of Move On When Ready Coordinator. The Coordinator works closely with Admissions, Academic Affairs, and Financial Aid at the College to strengthen customer service. Most importantly, the Coordinator is a central point for communications with students, parents, and high school counselors, advising and registering all new MOWR students. The College added the Coordinator position to better meet the needs of a growing dual-enrollment population and of area high schools.

For the 2016-17 year, GSC continued to work with public school systems in our service area to facilitate dual enrollment, through a variety of strategies:

- vigorous recruiting at high schools,
- evening information sessions for students and parents at the high schools and at Gordon State College campuses
- partnering in three College and Career Academies

**MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS****MEASURE, METRIC, OR DATA ELEMENT**

Increase in dual enrollment.

**BASELINE MEASURES**

At the peak of GSC's overall enrollment, in fall 2010, dual enrollment was 41.

**INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS**

<b>Dual-Enrollment Headcount by Academic Year</b>					
<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
57	70	155	172	194	315

**MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

The maximum dual-enrollment headcount will be determined primarily by the maximum number of students in service area high schools who meet enrollment requirements.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

- Customer Service! With the increase in dual enrollment, GSC's decentralized advising became less effective. The establishment of a MOWR Coordinator, a central point for related communications and MOWR academic advising, has made a significant, positive impact on customer service. High school counselors have communicated only positive feedback, and the creation of a customer service survey this year will help us track the quality of service.
- Family preparation for college: In many families within the rural
- counties of our service area, planning for college is inadequate. Regarding MOWR, families do not often recognize the need for their students to prepare for and take in timely fashion the SAT/ACT exams. GSC Admissions director and recruiters continue to collaborate with high school counselors in providing general college and specifically MOWR information sessions for students and parents. Also, the college's Testing Center offers several ISAT's (institutional SAT's) for prospective MOWR students who missed national test administrations.

**HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY:**

ENROLL MOST STUDENTS IN NEED OF REMEDIATION IN GATEWAY COLLEGIATE COURSES IN ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS, WITH COREQUISITE LEARNING SUPPORT; COMBINE ENGLISH AND READING REMEDIATION; AND ENSURE THAT ALL REMEDIATION IS TARGETED TOWARD SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN THE SKILLS THEY NEED TO PASS THE COLLEGIATE COURSE.

#### RELATED GOAL

7: Increase the likelihood of degree completion by transforming the way that remediation is accomplished

#### DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT

Gordon State College is an access institution in the USG, and 44% of our first-time, full-time freshmen in fall 2016 had one or more learning support requirements.

#### PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

Dr. Steve Raynie, Director of College Readiness: [sraynie@gordonstate.edu](mailto:sraynie@gordonstate.edu)

#### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

GSC continued its transformation of remediation in the 2016-17 academic year. All students with Learning Support requirements took either a Foundations course or corequisite remediation. The majority of students needing remediation were placed in corequisite remediation. Fall 2016 entering students with a math requirement were placed in a support lab for either Quantitative Skills and Reasoning or College Algebra, based on their COMPASS score, and took the appropriate gateway course as a corequisite. Reading and English were once again combined in English Learning Support.

#### MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

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

Number of semesters to pass collegiate course for corequisite and stand-alone remediation

##### BASELINE MEASURES

Students admitted in fall 2012 with LS requirements could take only stand-alone LS courses, so passing a college course in the first term was not an option. The table below reflects the percentages of students who passed in two, three, or four semesters:

	<b>2 Terms</b>	<b>3 Terms</b>	<b>4 Terms</b>	<b>Not Passed</b>
<b>English</b>	29%	10%	1%	59%
<b>Math</b>	20%	13%	6%	60%

##### INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS

For students admitted in fall 2016 with an English and/or Reading Learning Support requirement,

- 64% taking corequisite courses passed English 1101 in their *first* semester, and another 7% in their second semester.
- 43% taking a stand-alone remediation course passed ENGL 1101 in their *second* semester of college, and another 4% passed the course in their third semester.

For students admitted in fall 2016 with a Math Learning Support requirement,

- 71% taking corequisite courses passed a college-level math course in their *first* semester, and another 5% in their second semester.
- 56% taking a stand-alone remediation course passed a college-level math course in their *second* semester of college, and 0% passed the course in their third semester.

##### MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Students in the corequisite courses will meet or exceed, within two semesters, the overall pass rate for the corresponding collegiate course in the fall term (ABC rate for English, ABCD rate for Math).

- The overall ENGL 1101 ABC rate was 72%. The ABC rate for corequisite English students was 71% within two semesters.
- The overall MATH 1001 (Quantitative Skills and Reasoning) ABCD rate was 73.8% and the MATH 1111 (College Algebra) rate was 68.2%. The ABCD rate for all corequisite Math students was 76% within two semesters.

##### LESSONS LEARNED

The success rates in the corequisite classes are encouraging. We have moved to eliminate the Foundations (stand-alone) courses, and for the current 2017-18 academic year, we have all students with Learning Support requirements in corequisite courses.

**HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY:**

DEVELOP A WEEKEND COLLEGE TO OFFER ADULT LEARNERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EARN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN A FLEXIBLE PROGRAM DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE THEIR NEEDS.

**RELATED GOAL**

9: Improve access for underserved and/or priority communities.

**DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT**

About 12% of the GSC student population in any recent year has been adult learners. As the USG's primary access institution in this part of state, we believe that we can help a greater number of adult learners complete their college degrees.

**PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT**

Dr. Barry Kicklighter, Department Head for Business and Public Service, [bkicklighter@gordonstate.edu](mailto:bkicklighter@gordonstate.edu)

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

GSC established the first cohort for a Weekend College Human Services degree in spring 2015. Human Services is a multidisciplinary profession integrating the fields of psychology, sociology, government and administration. Gordon's program is unique among Human Services degrees in incorporating business, government, and economics courses in addition to the customary sociology and psychology curriculum. The primary emphasis of the curriculum is to provide practical, real-world training so that graduates can gain immediate employment.

Weekend College students meet one weekend per month at Gordon State College-McDonough and complete the remainder of their coursework online. McDonough is located in Henry County, from which 23% of GSC's total enrollment comes and 30% of our adult learners.

The Weekend College in Human Services established two more cohorts during the 2015-2016 academic year.

**MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS**

**MEASURE, METRIC, OR DATA ELEMENT**

Cohort enrollment

**BASELINE MEASURES**

20 enrolled in spring 2015 (initial) cohort

**INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS**

<b>Weekend College Enrollment by Cohort</b>			
<b>Fall 2015</b>	<b>Spring 2016</b>	<b>Fall 2016</b>	<b>Spring 2017</b>
19	11	19	5

**MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

The cohort enrollment goal is 25 students.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

We have had two related challenges: reaching our enrollment goal for each cohort and allowing convenient program entry when applicants have already earned some of the program credits and are ready to enter. We have decided to go to one cohort per year, in the fall, and we have altered policy and process so that we can add students to an existing cohort without their having to wait until the next fall term, when that will work to the student's advantage.

Prior Learning Assessment continues to be a challenge for fire fighters, police officers, and government managers, students who are interested in a Human Services degree. There does not appear to be a template for linking training competencies to our courses in business and management. A DANTEs-type assessment tool is needed.

**HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGY**

CREATE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR APPLICANTS WHO FALL JUST SHORT OF GSC'S ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS TO ACCESS A COLLEGE EDUCATION THROUGH A STRUCTURED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

**RELATED GOAL**

9: Improve access for underserved and/or priority communities.

**DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY AND/OR IMPACT**

As an access institution in the USG, Gordon State College has the responsibility of developing innovative methods for providing students the opportunity to earn a degree.

**PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT**

Dr. Steve Raynie, Director of College Readiness; [sraynie@gordonstate.edu](mailto:sraynie@gordonstate.edu)

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

ACCESS stands for Admissions Course through Collegiate Excellence and Student Success. The ACCESS Institute provides an alternative admissions pathway to applicants identified as having the potential to succeed in college but who do not otherwise meet regular admissions criteria. This program is available by invitation only through the Gordon State College Office of Admissions. Not all applicants will qualify, but those who are admitted participate in a designed curriculum with extra advising and tutoring support.

Students enter in a cohort taking the same, carefully-planned set of classes and must meet the following contractual requirements to remain in the Institute:

1. All students must earn at least a C in all courses during both terms.
2. All students who remain in the program after the first term must take a set of prescribed classes together (i.e., remain in a cohort) for at least one additional semester.
3. All students agree to meet regularly with academic coaches, advisors, and tutors appointed by the college and to follow their guidelines and recommendations.

The first ACCESS Institute cohort was enrolled in the summer 2014 term, and our enrollment goal was 25 students for the first three cohorts. For the fourth cohort in fall 2015, we were prepared to push the enrollment goal to 50, which we exceeded.

In Fall 2016, we began a second ACCESS program in conjunction with Fort Valley State University (FVSU GAP, or Gordon Access Program), focused on students who do not quite meet FVSU admission standards. These students were guaranteed full admission to FVSU if they successfully completed the two-semester FVSU GAP program. Seventeen of the 23 did so, which was very encouraging. We have expanded the program greatly in Fall 2017 (see note in Observations below).

**MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS**

**MEASURE, METRIC, OR DATA ELEMENT**

Cohort enrollment

**BASELINE MEASURES**

No students were admitted who did not meet admission standards in the prior year (other than Presidential Exceptions)

**INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS**

<b>Institute Enrollment by Cohort</b>			
<b>Fall 2014</b>	<b>Su 2015</b>	<b>Fall 2015</b>	<b>Fall 2016</b>
17	10	58	51

**MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

The long-term enrollment goal is 75 students.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

The ACCESS Institute experience confirms that students’ obstacles to success tend to have far less to do with comprehending the academics than they do with building successful habits in thought and action. For that reason, the College now includes STAR 0098 (Students Taking Academic Responsibility for College Success, a one-credit hour course focused on the individual learner’s motivation and success skills) in the second-semester curriculum. This change was implemented in fall 2016 for the current Summer Institute cohort. (The first-semester curriculum already includes the one-credit-hour GFYE 0097/Gordon First Year Experience course that focuses on engaging the student in the college culture.)

**OBSERVATIONS**

- Our most successful strategy and activities to this point continue to come under Goal 6, shortening time to degree completion by facilitating access to dual credit opportunities.

- In terms of overall GSC numbers, it appears that transforming remediation has the potential to have the greatest impact on retention, progression, and completion.
- Despite intensive efforts to improve branding and communicating, general efforts at attracting more students to a college education have been less effective than marketing to targeted populations: adults who wish to complete a degree, young people who fall just short of admission standards but are motivated, and dual credit students.
- As an access institution, GSC has the major challenge of trying to change long-term habits in a short timeframe for a significant portion of our student population. Such habits include time management, financial management, study skills and work ethic. We must assist students with developing good habits before they lose academic eligibility and/or lose financial support.
- To that end, for the Fall 2017 semester, we held our Second Annual Student Success Summit, and we are initiating our “Gordon First” program, which provides both faculty and peer mentoring for our significant first-generation population.
- Expectations: GSC expects to continue the high-impact strategies described above for at least the next year, with at least annual evaluation of effectiveness. We will continue to explore methods for improving access and completion, such as
  - expanding the ACCESS initiatives, including our Fort Valley State University GAP program, begun last Fall, which grew from 23 students in Fall 2016 to over 90 in Fall 2017 (as of August 14, 2017). We are also happy to report that our on-campus ACCESS initiative enrolled 67 students for Fall 2017, an all-time high.
  - improving advising through timely, appropriate, and focused advising contact with students
  - exploring other partnerships with USG institutions, Southern Crescent Technical College, area public schools systems and private schools, and area businesses and industries