



Georgia Gwinnett
COLLEGE

Georgia Gwinnett College

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) is **one of two access institutions within the University System of Georgia that primarily offer baccalaureate degrees**. The GGC mission states that the College “provides access to targeted baccalaureate and associate 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) operate has always operated in the context of a clear strategic plan derived from its mission. 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.

GGC’s game-changing model of education reflects our values of access, attention, and affordability. We use a coordinated care model of learning and progression, integrating efforts across campus to ensure that we best serve our students. Further, we provide intersectional programming for student success, understanding that layering high impact practices both addresses the widest audience and has the greatest effect on students reaching their academic and personal goals. Coordinating care and providing intersecting student success programs coincide with our attentive teaching and learning model. We discuss below our strategies and activities in clusters that work in tandem towards promoting the values at the heart of GGC’s mission: coordinated care; intersectional student success programming; and attentive teaching and learning. These strategies form the basis of our institutional culture, affirming our commitment to supporting the success of every student.

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. These characteristics of GGC’s student population shape the College’s specific strategies for promoting completion. GGC continues to enroll significant numbers of students who have historically not had access to higher education: those who have relatively low levels of academic preparation, are first-generation college students, are low income, and are members of racial and/or ethnic minorities. The mean high school GPA of entering freshmen continues to be between 2.69 and 2.82 and over one-third require remediation in at least one subject. Approximately 40% of each entering cohort is a first-generation student and over 50% of each entering cohort is eligible for a Pell grant. GGC remains a majority-minority institution and the proportion of Hispanic students continues to increase.

GGC’s key priorities in support of Georgia’s college completion goals are increasing enrollment among typically underserved populations, aiding students with 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. An effective transition to higher education is facilitated by the College’s focus on student engagement and student success in the first year, most notably through a network of support structures, careful course design and pedagogy, and advising. 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. The College’s overall commitment to active learning and authentic experiences for all students nurtures ongoing success, deep learning, and preparation for post-graduate careers and study. Finally, GGC’s commitment to maintaining an affordable environment makes continuation and completion more possible for our student population.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY: COORDINATE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO ENSURE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

GOALS ADDRESSED

Goal 1: Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions; Goal 9: Improve access for underserved and/or priority communities

PRIMARY POINTS OF CONTACT

Dr. Melinda Spencer, Sr. Associate Provost for Operations; Dr. Justin Jernigan, Dean, School of Transitional Studies.

STATEMENT OF PRIORITY AND IMPACT

As the student body profile above indicates, GGC has sought, recruited, and enrolled a highly diverse population that draws strongly from traditionally underrepresented groups. These results arise from the efforts of both Enrollment Management, through their recruitment, admissions, and financial aid efforts, and the School of Transitional Studies, which is responsible for programs and services to bring students into the college and support their academic and personal transitions while enrolled.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

GGC has focused intentionally on creating deep and meaningful relationships with the Gwinnett County Public Schools, recognizing our mission to serve our immediate geographic region and the size and scope of the population in Gwinnett County. Similar sustained attention is dedicated to other schools from which GGC attracts students. These relationships are developed and sustained through ongoing events and visits. GGC's Admissions Counselors have built working relationships with guidance counselors at 202 individual schools in Georgia and are committed to visiting each school 2 -3 times a year.

The College invests in student-focused activities accessible to all prospective students, including:

GGC's Open House event welcomed approximately 196 guests for the Spring (April 29) 2017 event, which included a special Spanish-language session. Additional Open House events are planned for September and October 2017.

Access-focused admissions criteria and recruiting are central to the College's mission. GGC complies with the access mission institution admission standards established under University System of Georgia Board of Regents policies, and is committed to ensuring that our admissions procedures implement these standards.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE (ELI)

The English Language Institute (ELI) at GGC in Fall 2016 satisfied the English language training needs of 23 non-native speakers of English, and in Spring 2017, and additional 9 attended ELI classes. Several of the participants indicated plans for enrollment as GGC students in upcoming semesters. At least 4 former participants in past ELI sessions or short-term programs have enrolled as students at the College.

GGC also provides a collection of programs designed to meet students where they are, introduce them (and their families) to college culture, and connect them with resources that will promote their successful progression to graduation. Some of these programs and activities include:

- Grizzlies Helping Grizzlies/Beyond Financial Aid support offerings
- Bear Essentials Orientation sessions for students and families
- March Through the Arch (first year student convocation)
- Grizzly Days (welcome week activities)
- Community partnerships and future gains in public transportation

BEYOND FINANCIAL AID SUPPORT OFFERINGS

GGC has committed to the *Beyond Financial Aid* framework of the Lumina Foundation. Following a comprehensive review of current campus knowledge and programs, GGC has identified several ongoing efforts that fit under this umbrella. Further, the College has included consideration of what was learned from the BFA assessment in its current strategic planning processes. The existing support structures on campus are listed below, sorted into the type of support offered.

Prediction: Efforts to identify in advance students who may be at risk

- Intrusive advising for academic risk, which creates a relationship
- Financial aid monitoring

Prevention: Efforts to provide ongoing support to all students that can avert a crisis of need

- Dress for Success clothing bank,
- Subsidized child care,
- Money Smart week,
- Subsidized auto repair
- "Last dollar" funds

Mitigation/Recovery: Efforts that respond when a student is facing a crisis

- Emergency grants,
- Emergency housing,
- *Grizzlies Helping Grizzlies*, a campus-funded emergency funds program.

BEAR ESSENTIALS

Bear Essentials (BE), one of the School of Transitional Studies' key programs, offers students a robust one-day orientation to GGC and campus culture. During the AY16-17 pilot, registration was separated out from BE into B.E.A.R. (Beginning Enrollment and Registration), a two-hour program to explain core requirements and ensure student registration into blocks or other appropriate courses as necessary. BE refocused this extra time in its one day format to include more acculturation programming, such as the "Day in the Life of a GGC Student" skit and debrief, which illustrates and then opens conversation about different issues and challenges that first-year students commonly face, and the inclusion of a faculty panel, with faculty

representatives of each of GGC's academic Schools. BE also absorbed several functions of the annual "Path to Success" event, including students receiving their Claw Cards (student IDs) and parking permits and touring campus to review class locations. All of these efforts aim to integrate students into the GGC community and to prepare them with practical knowledge to successfully start the school year.

Bear Essentials programming also includes parent/family orientation meetings to enculturate families to college life and GGC in particular. For the past two academic years, BE offered bilingual parent orientation sessions in Spanish, and this type of offering is likely to increase to address the needs of GGC's diverse student body.

FIRST GENERATION STUDENT PROGRAMMING

Over 40% of GGC students self-identify as first generation (FG). GGC is committed to serving the needs of this special population, creating more equitable access to college knowledge, and promoting progression and student success. To these ends, GGC staff and faculty have created several initiatives to develop self-efficacy and establish a strong sense of Grizzly community with our first generation students:

- **Make Your Mark Event during Grizzly Days** A two-hour event during the second week of classes to welcome new students and especially our FG population. The event will include time management workshops, Student Success Resources Bingo, College Knowledge Jeopardy, and dissemination of brochures and bookmarks regarding the GGC Lexicon.
- **GGC Lexicon** We know that one way we can provide access for incoming students into the college community is by demystifying and clarifying the many terms and acronyms used in academia. The GGC Lexicon is an online, searchable database of commonly used terminology, available at <http://www.ggc.edu/lexicon>. In addition, a shorter, targeted list of must-have terms for the first semester of college has been designed into brochure form, the College Terms and Acronyms User Guide. These brochures will be publicly available in high traffic offices and at student events. Bookmarks listing the website of the lexicon are also in circulation.
- **Grizzly First (G1) Scholars** A G1 Scholars learning community is launching this fall with one section. We hope to expand the numbers of sections of this LC offering and to provide student scholarship support as the program develops.
- **Faculty/Staff FG Community Campaign** Many of our faculty and staff are first generation college graduates. To create a visible community and encouragement for our FG students, this fall FG faculty and staff will be encouraged to take and display one of our FG doorcards. They state "I'm a first generation college grad" and have a place for faculty and staff to list their school name and year of graduation. GGC's student-focused team is committed to supporting our FG cohort and especially wants to emphasize the reality of their ability to graduate with a college degree.
- **Student Success Professional Development Badge** To better prepare our faculty and staff to support the needs and strengths of our learning support (including FG) students, STS is partnering with the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) to offer workshops in the Student Success Badge. These include Understanding the Whole Student, Building Rapport and Relationships, Placement and Pathways in Student Success, Best Practices in Working with Multilingual Students, and Best Practices in Learning Support Beyond: Math Instruction and Reading and Writing Instruction. The first three workshops will be offered for the first time Fall 2017, with the other three rolling out Spring 2018.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

The primary measure of GGC's success in providing an **accessible** learning environment is the student demographic profile presented in the introduction of this document. The combined efforts of Enrollment Management and the School of Transitional Studies have enabled GGC to continue to attract and enroll a student population that reflects the region it serves and that focuses on serving the entire spectrum of levels of prior academic and/or social preparation for college.

LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

It is clear from both the data specific to each individual effort and the overall enrollment data that GGC is succeeding in providing genuine, realistic opportunities for higher education to students from the metropolitan Atlanta region. Further, GGC's focus on access has supported recruiting efforts more broadly, bringing the college a meaningful number of international and out-of-state students who expand and enrich the campus diversity. GGC is committed to continuing to enroll a diverse population as the College exits its rapid-growth start-up phase.

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY: PROVIDE AN ATTENTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT RETENTION AND PROGRESSION

GOALS ADDRESSED

Goal 3: Reduce excess credits, Goal 4: Provide proactive advising, Goal 6: Shorten time to degree completion, Goal 7: Transform remediation, Goal 8: Restructure instructional delivery

POINT OF CONTACT

Dr. T J Arant, Sr. Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Provost

STATEMENT OF PRIORITY AND IMPACT

GGC’s committed faculty and staff provide students with the support and tools they need to be successful in college and in life, from the first day of class until graduation. *Attention* to our students’ learning and personal needs occurs across campus and takes many forms: from programming and proactive advising through our award-winning Mentoring and Advising Center, extensive tutoring offerings and success workshops through the Academic Enhancement Center, and robust Student Success/learning support course paths focusing on concurrent remediation, to development and practice of active pedagogies, undergraduate internships, research, practicums, and intentionally small class sizes. The following section discusses these efforts in four broad areas.

MULTIMODAL AND INTRUSIVE ADVISING AND MENTORING

GGC has pursued development and implementation of intrusive and proactive advising programs as an element of GGC’s attentive learning environment, providing support and outreach to all students. Faculty mentors engage with the majority of students, particularly those who have declared majors; the Mentoring and Advising Center focuses attention on students who are at higher academic risk, specifically, students required to enroll in Student Success (learning support) classes through typical advising services and those who are on academic probation or facing academic suspension.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

All GGC faculty serve as mentors to students. Upon enrollment, students are assigned to an advisor or mentor based on their academic background and expressed interests. Upon declaration of a major, students are assigned a mentor in their major discipline. Students identified as at increased academic risk are assigned to an advisor in the Mentoring and Advising Center (MAC). The MAC is staffed by a Director, Associate Director, and 8 professional advisors. Advising efforts address students’ academic, social, and/or emotional needs, since successful retention, progression, and graduation are contingent upon recognizing and supporting the interconnectivity between these dimensions of students’ lives. In the 2016-17 academic year, 2035 students were served by the Advising Center in the Fall, with 1896 students served in Spring 2016.

In addition, focused support is available to students who have been placed on academic probation or suspension through Grizzly Renewal Opportunity Workshop (GROW) program. The program allows students to remain enrolled despite their academic standing provided they agree to and comply with the conditions stated in the GROW Program Contract. The program engages participants in activities designed to help them develop their academic success skills, get back on track, and improve their academic standing. Students who do not elect to participate in the program in the fall/spring semester immediately following their suspension will have to sit out the following semester and need to appeal to the Admissions Committee for readmission.

Faculty mentors and professional advisors regularly refer students enrolled in learning support courses to tutoring services available in GGC’s Academic Enhancement Center (AEC), as well as to student success workshops on topics such as time management, handling stress, and preparing for exams. MAC Advisors also sometimes instruct these student success workshops. When appropriate, they connect students with other offices around campus, such as Counseling and Psychological Services and Financial Aid, for follow-up support.

INTERIM MEASURES OF PROGRESS

The measures of progress for the MAC and the GROW programs focus on evidence that they are effectively contributing to the well-being of the GGC student population by providing services and designing appropriate programming. Since opening in fall 2013, the number of students served by the Mentoring and Advising Center has grown from 1,087 students to 1896 in Spring 2017. The GROW program has likewise increased from serving 55 students on academic probation or suspension in Fall 2016 to serving 100 in Spring 2017.

Further progress will be assessed based on the College’s success in meeting staffing and service targets as the Advising Center expands to provide services to additional populations.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Data continues to show that the advising programs are meeting expectations. A review of data over time continues to show strong retention and academic performance among Learning Support students. The retention data show progress toward the long-term goal for Advising Center students to have retention rates and GPAs not more than 5% below those of the full first-year cohort in any given year. Since Fall 2013, the gap in GPA between the full first-year cohort and advising center students has dropped from 17% to 10%, a remarkable amount of progress in a fairly short time period. Retention data for the Fall 2016 cohort is not yet available.

Data for the GROW program are equally encouraging, as shown in *Table 1*.

GROW PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS*

| | # participants | # eligible to continue in the program** | Number exiting the program*** | # eligible to return to GGC the following semester | # enrolled the following semester |
|--|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|----|------|----------|----------|
| Spring 2014 | 50 | 15 | 10 | 25 (50%) | 20 (40%) |
| Fall 2014 | 58 | 24 | 10 | 34(59%) | 30 (52%) |
| Spring 2015 | 86 | 32 | 18 | 50(58%) | 39(45%) |
| Fall 2015 | 54 | 20 | 13 | 33(61%) | 29 (54%) |
| Spring 2016 | 52 | 22 | 6# | 28 (54%) | 16(30%) |
| Fall 2016 | 55 | 26 | 12 | 38 (69%) | 18 (33%) |
| Spring 2017 | 100 | 34 | 16## | 50 (50%) | TBD |

* 343 students have participated in the program. Some students participated more than one semester.

** Earned a semester GPA of at least 2.0 but not back in overall good academic standing

***Earned a semester GPA of at least 2.0 and back in overall good academic standing

3 additional students exited during summer semester

2 additional students exited during summer semester

LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

The data indicate the success of the MAC and GROW programs for engaging and facilitating increased levels of success among GGC's most at-risk students. A key lesson learned from our experience is that we need to expand the reach of support for all students via the implementation of effective, timely mentoring.

COMPREHENSIVE AND PERVASIVE TUTORING SUPPORT

Recognizing that, for some students, the structure and format of their class section may not be sufficient for mastery of the course material, GGC has invested deeply in tutorial services. Extracurricular tutoring provides a safety net for students who are academically underprepared, who struggle with self-organization and management, or who find their instructor's pedagogical approach incompatible with their own learning style. Tutoring support also benefits students who actively wish to develop their skills in a particular area through supplemental learning experiences.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

GGC's investment in tutoring services has been a feature of the college since its opening. As of the most recent academic year, tutoring services are offered in a central campus location, in classrooms, online, and at a variety of other campus venues, including the campus Residence Halls. The on-campus tutoring center is open 64 hours per week and offers support in high-demand subject areas in either a face-to-face or an online platform. The tutoring center, known as the Academic Enhancement Center (AEC), employs two coordinators (one for Writing, one for Math/Science), 1 Lead Tutor, 25 professional tutors, 10 student/peer tutors, and 7 student assistants. In addition, more than 88 faculty volunteers and a small number of community volunteers donated time to the center each academic year. In the 2016-17 academic year, the AEC tutored 3,114 students a total of 14,359 sessions indicating that each student utilized the AEC an average of 4.6 times in the academic year

GGC offers tutoring outside of the AEC through its TIC-TAC-TOE program. The TIC program embeds Tutors In the Classroom for selected courses (over 40 sections during the 2016-17 academic year). The TAC program provides Tutors Around Campus, professional tutors who provide drop-in tutoring in a variety of well-populated locations on campus. During AY16-17, 13 TAC tutors supported 157 unique students with a total of 283 visits. TOE offers Tutoring Online Everywhere through a partnership with Smarthinking (a Pearson service), which provides access any time of the day or night to online tutoring for GGC students. In the 2016-17 academic year, 1,390 unique students utilized 3,016 tutoring sessions and/or submitted essays for review in multiple courses. One hundred eighty-eight students used Smarthinking for assistance with more than one class.

AEC staff offer student success workshops across campus. The workshops cover topics as diverse as exam preparation and time management techniques, to stress relief strategies and how to use learning style preferences to improve study methods. For AY 16-17, 90 workshops were offered and 294 students attended. This past year, the AEC began to offer in-class writing workshops for a variety of writing concerns, such as APA and General Essay Organization. In the 2016-17 academic year, 10 faculty members required numerous in-class writing workshops involving a total of 377 students. The AEC regularly participates in campus-wide events for prospective and current students and maintains a social media presence. These efforts invite students to engage where they are and reinforce that GGC is committed to supporting the whole student, academically and otherwise.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Increased Grade Point Averages (GPA) is a valuable measure of success for the implementation of expansive and available tutorial support services at GGC. It is not possible to provide a baseline figure for this strategy as GGC has always invested heavily in making tutoring available and accessible to all students. Further, since students often access multiple forms of available tutoring support, it is not feasible to conduct a fine-grained comparison across the various options. For this year's report, GGC has focused on the impact of the AEC on student performance in two critical gateway courses: MATH 1111 and ENGL 1101, comparing course performance across two variables: whether or not the student was enrolled in a corequisite learning support course or not and whether the student made use of the AEC or not. *Table 2* shows the percentage of students in each group earning a grade of C or better and documents a clear benefit to the AEC support.

TABLE 2: COURSE SUCCESS IN GATEWAY MATH AND ENGLISH BY LEARNING SUPPORT STATUS AND AEC USE

| Course and LS Status | Fall 2016 | Fall 2016 | Spring 2017 | Spring 2017 |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|

| | Use AEC | Not Use AEC | Use AEC | Not Use AEC |
|--------------------------------------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------|
| MATH 1111 No Learning Support | 75.4% | 74% | 75.4% | 74.5% |
| MATH 1111 CoRequisite LS | 67.9% | 61.2% | 68.6% | 67.8% |
| ENGL 1101 No Learning Support | 89% | 74.4% | 90% | 75.9% |
| ENGL 1101 CoRequisite LS | NA | NA | 85.9% | 72.9% |

GGC 1000 FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR

GGC 1000 First-Year Seminar (FYS) is a course designed to promote first-year students' success by providing the knowledge and practical skills necessary to reach their educational and personal objectives. GGC 1000 supports first-year students in developing academic goals, fostering a greater sense of personal responsibility, engaging in intentional learning, and participating in campus culture. Anecdotal evidence from the SGA, faculty, and staff call for this model of FYS to help provide incoming students with valuable "college knowledge" and study and time management skills, as well as holistic care strategies. For students with under 30 credits, GGC 1000 may count for 1 credit in the "Additional Requirements" section of degree program plans.

Upon successful completion of GGC 1000, students will be able to:

- **Demonstrate** awareness of campus resources that address various academic, psychological, and social needs.
- **Describe** expectations of their degree programs and develop a realistic plan for achieving academic success.
- **Examine** challenges to achieving their goals and develop a plan to navigate individual circumstances.
- **Identify** relevant and reputable sources of information for academic and personal success.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

This 1 credit extended orientation FYS was revised and reintroduced in Spring 2017. Four sections were offered and 45 students completed the course. Of the 45 students who completed the course, 78% (35) earned a grade of A, B or C and 8.5% (3) received a grade of D. Four signature assignments were included, to evaluate student progress in the four learning outcome areas: the Campus Resources Scavenger Hunt, the DegreeWorks Evaluation Activity, the Career Research Reflection, and the Letter to a Future Grizzly (advising future GGC admits of things to definitely do and take advantage of and which to avoid for success). After reviewing samples of the four assignments (constituting ~60% of assessed work submitted), initial results suggest the success of the course in helping students meet or excel in all learning outcomes, as shown in *Table 3*.

Table 3: GGC 1000 Signature Assignments

| Signature Assignment | Scale | Average Score | Notes |
|---|--|---------------|---|
| 1: Campus Scavenger Hunt | 0-4 | 3.6 (90%) | Scoring was based on a campus resource quiz. |
| 2: DegreeWorks Evaluation Activity | 0-9 (3 point scale per dimension, total 9 points possible) | 8.45 (94%) | Dimension performance averaged between 2.6 and 2.95/3 |
| 3: Career Research Reflection | 0-6 (3 point scale per dimension, total 6 points possible) | 4.93 (82%) | Dimension performance averaged between 2 and 2.9/3. |
| 4: Letter to a Future Grizzly | Narrative coding | N/A | 20 samples of SA4/29 submitted were coded for patterns of developed mention. Four areas emerged as areas of repeated, developed discussion: success skills (especially time management), relationships (with faculty and each other), solutions to problems, and campus resources. These results demonstrate that the focus of GGC 1000 is aligned well with our students' needs and concerns. They also suggest the course's ability to foster growth mindset (in terms of problem-solving vs. quitting) and connection between students, faculty/staff, and campus resources. |

GGC 1000 provides another valuable strategy towards GGC's coordinated care model of student success and commitment to access and attentiveness. Four stand-alone sections of GGC 1000 are offered for Fall 2017, with additional sections embedded in learning communities. Further scale-up is intended as part of the next strategic plan and its foci on communities of learners and equity approach to programming.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Alongside the GGC 1000 effort, GGC is piloting a series of learning communities (LC) for first-time freshmen in Fall 2017. Some are thematically based (those sponsored by the School of the Liberal Arts--SLA) and others are cohort-based. SLA is partnering with the School of Transitional Studies (STS) to transform several blocks of core curriculum classes into thematic learning communities, anchored by sections of GGC 1000. Each LC consists of three or four core courses + FYS and includes important first semester offerings such as ENGL 1101 Composition I. **SLA LCs** will coordinate two integrated assignments and include one or more co-curricular activities for their participants as a way of building community.

Summary of Activities

STS is sponsoring two different cohort-based LCs: **PASS (Promoting Access to Student Success)** and **Grizzly First (G1) Scholars**. **PASS LC's** consist of intentionally linked sections of Segue/corequisite Student Success English courses (ENGL 1101*/ENGL 0999) and Access/corequisite Student Success Math courses (either MATH 1001*/MATH 0997 or MATH 1111*/MATH 0999). These courses share an integrated assignment, have both Math and English tutors embedded in the classroom, and have a dedicated Student Success advisor who also serves as mentor to all of the students in the cohort. **Grizzly First Scholars** is a learning community targeted to incoming first generation students who need to take Student Success English Segue (ENGL 1101*/ENGL 0999). The G1 Scholars LC intentionally pairs Segue English with GGC 1000, includes a dedicated Student Success Advisor as mentor to the group, and involves students in an integrated community service project. These various LC efforts provide coordinated academic and personal support, campus acculturation, and challenge to our incoming students.

AUTHENTIC LEARNING

GGC focuses on delivering active, engaging instruction that provides authentic experiences and promotes deep learning and transferrable skills. They address Georgia's completion goals by fostering 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.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

GGC faculty have dedicated extensive time to professional development in acquiring skills in curriculum design and teaching needed to promote authentic experiential learning. This requires sustaining partnerships with local companies, schools, and medical facilities so that ample opportunities are available for student internships, placements, field study and research, and similar real-world experiences.

GGC implements active and authentic learning through its disciplines and major programs.

GGC's STEM programs' peer supplemental instruction program (PSI) meets specific academic needs of GGC's STEM students by providing peer-assisted study sessions for subjects that are traditionally considered difficult, exposing students to active learning competencies specific to STEM education, and strengthening students' confidence in STEM learning. GGC's Educator Preparation programs provide opportunities for students to engage in authentic classroom-based activity. 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. GGC's Nursing program has implemented a similar immersive design, placing students in clinical settings beginning in their first semester in the major. The Nursing program uses a flipped instructional model for all courses, making extensive use of state-of-the-art simulation classrooms to engage students in additional experiential learning. Faculty of 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. The Liberal Arts programs, like their STEM counterparts, encourage students to participate in internship programs through their curriculum.

Faculty participating in these or other active teaching initiatives can receive support and training from GGC's Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE). One innovation in professional development is the CTE Scholars Program, a digital badging initiative that tracks and promotes active learning pedagogies. CTE also offers badging initiatives in service-learning and student engagement.

Interim Measures of Progress

Progress for this initiative is measured by tracking the extent to which the faculty act to build their pedagogical expertise and the extent to which the curriculum involves students in active and authentic learning experiences. Nursing program students in the School of Health Sciences logged 47,520 clinic instructional hours during the 2016-17 academic year, and 555 students in GGC's Educator Preparation programs were placed in field experiences ranging in depth from entry-level teacher assistance to student teaching practica. Also, during the 2016-17 academic year, 218 students from across majors in the Schools of Business, Science and Technology, and Liberal Arts were placed in internships as part of courses or for course credit.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

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. Over the last three years, the Nursing Program and Educator Preparation program have seen nearly 100% of graduates successfully placed in employment positions predominantly in Gwinnett County.

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. Tables 4 and 5 show the College's baseline data for AY13 and the related figures for each year since. As can be seen, GGC is achieving strong retention and graduation rates relative to peer institutions and expects to see these rates continue to improve. These results, while indirect, provide strong evidence that GGC's commitment to active pedagogy is creating an engaging, challenging, and supporting environment for students. GGC's long term goals for retention and progression are shown in *Table 4*.

LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

GGC is succeeding in engaging, retaining, and graduating a high-risk, high-need population of students. Both the quantitative data reported here and the anecdotal data available indicate that the GGC educational experience, which is highly relational, active, and authentic, is providing the environment and context necessary to support student success and development. The College is moving forward with additional initiatives rooted in its commitment to an attentive teaching model and educational environment. We expect to see positive results from these expanding programs in continuing improvements in course performance, retention, and graduation.

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY: PROVIDE AN AFFORDABLE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

GOALS ADDRESSED

Goal 1: Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions; Goal 9: Improve access for underserved and/or priority communities

PRIMARY POINTS OF CONTACT

Ms. Laura Maxwell, VP for Business and Finance; Dr. T J Arant, Sr. Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Provost

GGC offers a high-quality, accessible, and attentive education for less money than most other schools in the USG. GGC controls costs through a variety of measures aimed at not sacrificing the quality of education but assessing which services are essential to the College's core mission and which to outsource for savings. Thus, support services such as grounds and facilities maintenance and food services are outsourced for a lower cost. In addition, GGC maintains a relatively flat organizational structure and a commitment to lean staffing to maximize fiscal flexibility and investment in the mission, vision, and core competencies.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Affordability is not just about costs and prices, though; it is about helping students understand their needs, access available financial resources, and improve in their financial literacy. To do this, GGC has promoted events and programming such as:

- **Money Smart week activities** during which the College offers workshops and information on financial literacy, budgeting, and financial planning.
- **FAFSA Fridays** during which the College offers targeted financial aid assistance in completing the FAFSA form.
- **Parent Orientation sessions** that focus on Financial Aid and Student Accounts information designed to engage parents and to enhance their ability to support their students in sound financial decision making.
- **Scholarships and Grants** including "last dollar" funding to allow students with low balances to remain enrolled and emergency grants to support students who face unexpected expenses during a semester.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

In 2015, GGC had the lowest tuition and fees rates of any rated Georgia public college, making a 4-year degree as affordable as possible for its constituents. Further, GGC students graduate with relatively little debt. The average debt load at graduation of GGC students is \$18,612 which is \$7000 - \$10,000 lower than all available estimates of a national average. This commitment to keeping the out-of-pocket price for students as low as possible is both critical to maintaining affordability and central to sustaining accessibility for traditionally underserved populations. Further, GGC's state fund cost, \$4763 per FTE, is substantially lower than the USG average of \$6787 per FTE. GGC continues to be ranked second in the southern regions for lowest graduate debt among both public and private institutions (*US News and World Report*, 2017 rankings)

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

GGC has established a functional business model that maintains affordability for all students. The College remains committed to this model and to ongoing attention to fiscal responsibility and excellence in core competencies.

OBSERVATIONS

Data on the core metrics GGC has elected to track are encouraging for this reporting year as shown in *Table 4* in the Appendix. While overall figures fell slightly short of targets for many metrics, GGC continues to document strong performance by students entering the College with academic challenges. Further, early data suggest that, since hitting a low of 61.5% for the Fall 2010 cohort, first-year retention continues to steadily, indicating that GGC's integrated efforts to ensure access,

attentiveness, and affordability 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 much of GGC's innovative educational model, GGC will continue to monitor this closely.

Early data on graduation numbers are also encouraging, as can be seen in *Table 5* (also in the Appendix). Data for the Fall 2012 cohort shows a slight increase in 4-year graduation rates, which is consistent with the turnaround in retention rates seen for the same cohort. Further, the number of students graduating in each cohort has continued to climb, reflecting GGC's rapid growth rate. In addition, GGC's role as a starting point for many students is reflected in the system-wide graduation rates, which continue to show that substantial numbers of students who transfer out of GGC continue to successful completion. As reflected in *Figures 1, 2, and 3*, the slight declines in the College's graduation rates also mirror declines in system-wide graduation rates over that same time. Yet despite that, the difference between the system's 4- and 6-year graduation rates and the College's 4- and 6-year graduation rates nonetheless has shrunk.

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 continuing improvements 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 specific elements of GGC's **attentive learning model** is that they are all high engagement, individual focused efforts. The level of impact of these efforts is perhaps not surprising given the high-need population that GGC serves. GGC's commitment to meeting students where they are and providing the kind of high impact scaffolds and supports that are known to engender success is continuing to bear fruit as can be seen in the performance metrics in Tables 4 and 5.

Efforts that are focused on wide-scale communication and technology have shown less impact and less penetration into the mindset and practice of the institution. 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.

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. 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 game-changing combination of inclusive access, an attentive teaching model, and consciously- controlled affordability means a high-quality educational experience, without crippling debt, for a greater number of students. GGC provides a comprehensive, integrated environment in which the success of students is the core focus. In so doing, GGC not only opens the door to higher education to an expanded population, but also supports those students to graduation, thus contributing to the needs of Georgia and to the goals of Complete College Georgia.