



Middle Georgia State University

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Middle Georgia State University (MGA) is a five campus institution providing selective undergraduate and graduate education throughout the middle Georgia region. MGA serves a diverse student body through traditional, online, and hybrid delivery of curriculum. It is the mission of MGA to educate and graduate inspired lifelong learners whose scholarship and careers enhance the region through professional leadership, innovative partnerships, and community engagement. The institution's vision is to transform individuals and their communities through extraordinary high learning. Four core values underscore this vision: stewardship, engagement, adaptability and learning.

Middle Georgia State University offers nineteen programs at the baccalaureate level and four at the master's level. An additional baccalaureate program will be offered in fall 2018. The University awarded 1079 degrees in the 2017-18 academic year which represents an increase of 2.96% over the 2016-2017 academic year. The number of baccalaureate degrees awarded increased from 675 in FY 2017 to 703* in FY 2018, an increase of 4.1%.

Census data define the fall 2017 student body to be Georgia residents (94.95%), predominantly White Non-Hispanic (60.33%) and Black/African American Non-Hispanic (35.92%), and under 25 years of age (72.39%). 61.58% of the student body were enrolled full-time. Females comprised 57.82% of the student body and males 42.18% of the student body.

In fall'17, 95.62 % of enrolled students were Georgia residents representing 139 counties with the majority of the in-state students coming from Houston, Bibb, Laurens, Peach, Dodge, Bleckley, Henry, Monroe, Jones, Fulton, DeKalb, Gwinnett and Pulaski counties. 111 out-of-state counties were also represented in the fall'17 enrolled student body. There were 268 students that came from out-of-state primarily from Alabama, Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina. International students represented 0.74% of the total fall'17 enrollment.

The number of MGA students eligible for the Pell grant in fall'17 was 3650 (49.77 %) of total enrollment as compared to 3971 (51.60 %) for the 2016-17 academic year. The fall 2017 enrollment was also comprised of 268 (3.65%) first generation college students and 2025 (27.61%) adult learners. In fall 2017, there were 401 military students that comprised 5.92% of the total enrollment as compared to 434 students (5.64%) of the total enrollment in fall'16. The ethnic minority student population in fall 2017 was 3073 (41.90%) as compared to 3461 (44.87%) in fall 2016.

MGA has a blended mission-it serves both the academically gifted students in dual enrollment, bachelor's and master's degree programs while also serving as a point of access to higher education for all underrepresented populations. Quality and distinctiveness of student success are 2015-2018 strategic priorities for MGA. Each of these attributes is dependent on data-driven decision making, better service to students, more efficient use of faculty and staff resources, and utilization of tools to measure and communicate performance. Keeping students on track to program completion is the CCG goal most closely aligned with MGA's strategic priorities. Outcomes for this goal include improved persistence and retention rates and increase in the number of students completing their degree on-time. In order to fulfill its' vision of "transformation of individuals and their communities through extraordinary higher learning", MGA has identified the following high impact strategies to enhance retention and graduation.

INSTITUTIONAL HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Institutional CCG Goals and their associated strategies are summarized in the appendix. Description of each strategy, the activities involved, the outcomes and the lessons learned are explained below.

HIGH PRIORITY CCG GOAL 1: EXPAND ACCESS AND PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 1: STRENGTHEN THE DELIVERY AND SUPPORT OF ONLINE INSTRUCTION

ACTIVITIES:

- Online courses were designed and developed by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) staff in collaboration with faculty
- A website was developed for the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

- The Exam Proctoring Widget was updated and maintained to support proctoring of mathematics exams on-campus and at external locations as needed by students

OUTCOMES:

- The number of courses offered in a fully online mode increased in AY17 by 14.8 % from 782 in AY16 to 898 in AY17
- The number of distinct students in online classes increased from 5612 in AY16 to 5866 in AY17, an increase of 4.5%.
- Four 3-day workshops and online training were offered with 32 courses developed or redeveloped each scoring above 85 on an internal Quality Matters review
- The Exam Proctoring Widget supported live proctoring of 861 students; Macon 364, Warner Robins 170, Cochran 142, Dublin 53, and 132 in remote locations throughout the US and overseas

LESSONS LEARNED:

Quality instruction is the heart of any academic institution. As online courses and programs have become more common, the need to provide assistance to faculty to migrate or create materials to teach students at a distance has become critical to student's experience and achievement. It is difficult to broadly disseminate information and provide assistance to faculty with the design, development, and management of their courses. Constraints on time and the logistics of supporting an institution with 5 campus locations makes aligning schedules a challenge. To address this problem, the CETL is planning workshops for specific departments, developing common course templates, and will be creating an online course promoting strong online instructional practices for faculty who cannot attend face-to-face training.

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 2: CHANGING THE ADVISING MODEL TO PROVIDE AN INTRUSIVE, DECENTRALIZED PROCESS

ACTIVITIES:

- Professional advisors were assigned to all academic units
- An in-depth self-assessment of the advising process was conducted for each unit and modifications in processes were proposed to remove barriers
- Caseloads were established for each academic advisor, professional or faculty, so every MGA student has the same professional advisor or faculty advisor or both from enrollment till graduation
- All professional advisors were trained to use Degree Works. Training of faculty in different academic units is underway.
- Advising with mentoring were integrated to establish a more meaningful and impactful relationship between the student and the advisor

OUTCOMES:

- Every student has an assigned advisor in Banner as soon as they are enrolled
- Every student has a professional advisor or a professional advisor along with a faculty advisor or faculty advisor only in units that use only faculty for advising
- Every advisor has a defined caseload; professional advisors have up to 250-300 students per advisor.
- Students will be advised from the time of enrollment until graduation by their advisor

LESSONS LEARNED:

Since MGA moved to a decentralized advising process only by the end of spring'18, the impact and the barriers experienced will be more visible after another academic year. Some of the case loads are not very distinct based on campus since MGA students can take classes at more than one campus in a given semester.

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 3: FOCUS ON CAREER GUIDANCE

Career Services collaborated with community partners to meet the twofold purpose of 1) providing students/alumni career-focused, leadership development training and 2) connecting employers seeking full/part-time and internship candidates to students/alumni of MGA who are ready to enter the workforce.

ACTIVITIES:

- Academic advisors were trained to provide career-focused resources to "undecided" students
- A *Student Success Series* was created to provide 100 business cards, a leather portfolio and a Certificate of Completion as incentives for students or alumni who attended 3 or more events
- Additional support was sought from outside agencies in delivering full-time, part-time, internship, co-op, job shadowing, and volunteer opportunities to students and alumni of MGA

- Specialized student-focused professional development programs were offered

OUTCOMES:

- Six academic advisors were trained to provide career-focused guidance to “undecided” students in spring 2018 supporting the two person team of the Career Center
- 124 students/alumni attended more than three professional development programs since fall 2017
- Forty outside agencies were confirmed for the spring 2018 career fair compared to 28 agencies in spring 2017
- While the number of opportunities for engaging in professional development and networking activities decreased from 43 in 2016-2017 to 35 in 2017-2018, the 35 offered were more evenly administered across all five campuses to include morning, afternoon, and evening programs

LESSONS LEARNED:

Career Services provides professional development to students and alumni on five campuses, during various times of the day and evening, in addition to serving an active online population. Additionally, this office supports the development of employer relationships nationwide. Maintaining a balanced schedule of program offerings on all campuses is very challenging with limited staff and funding but the Center has continuously accepted the call to collaborate with various academic units in an effort to increase retention, progression, and graduation rates university-wide.

HIGH PRIORITY GOAL 2: SHORTEN THE TIME TO DEGREE AND DECREASE EXCESS CREDITS

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 1: 15 TO FINISH

ACTIVITIES:

- Trained all the professional advisors to encourage students to take 15 credits per semester
- Provided financial incentives to students to take “free” credits over 15 hours
- Improved core course scheduling to enable students to create a 15 hour schedule

OUTCOMES:

- 1508 students (20.56%) were enrolled in 15+ hours in fall 2017 as compared to 1497 (19.45%) students in fall 2016
- 40.38 % of students earned fewer than 30 hours at the end of spring 2018
- 27.80 % of students earned between 30-59 hours at the end of spring 2018
- 16.56 % earned between 60-89 hours at the end of spring 2018
- Of the AY18 graduates who earned an associates degree, 13.86% earned it in two years;
- Of the AY18 graduates who earned the bachelor’s degree, 20.19% earned it on time
- The percentage of credits successfully completed versus attempted at the end of fall’17 semester was 79.75 as compared to 77.86 at the end of fall’16.

LESSONS LEARNED:

MGA serves students on five campuses as well as online. Maintaining a balanced core and upper level course offering on all campuses is very challenging with limited faculty resources. The Division of Academic Affairs has recently identified distinct associate and bachelor’s degree programs that will be offered on each campus which will enable more focused planning of course offerings that will allow students in those degree programs to take 15 credits per semester and maintain a four year graduation timeline. Taking 15 credits per semester sometimes does not work for all majors (for example nursing and other allied health programs) and individual differences may exist. The impact of this strategy on retention and graduation rates will be more visible after MGA has used it for another couple of years.

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 2: TRANSFORM REMEDIATION TO ENABLE STUDENTS REQUIRING LEARNING SUPPORT (LS) TO TAKE THE REMEDIAL AS WELL AS THE GATEWAY ENGLISH AND/OR MATH COURSE IN A CO-REQUISITE MODEL.

ACTIVITIES:

- Meetings were held with the LS professional advisors team, Math and English faculty who teach the co-requisite support and gateway courses, and the Office of Admissions director and staff to inform them of the new LS guidelines.
- Revised co-requisite courses were submitted to the Academic Affairs committee and the Senate for approval.

OUTCOMES:

- The Foundation course for English was phased out in fall 2017 and students were placed in English composition along with its corequisite class
- The Foundation course for Math will be phased out in fall 2018 and students will be enrolled in a co-requisite support class and the corresponding gateway course.
- Co-requisite courses changed from 2 credits to 3 credits
- Redesign of co-requisite courses is underway .
- Admission process for Spring 2018 applicants was revised to be consistent with new LS placement guidelines.
- LS dismissals decreased from 38 in AY 2016 to 11 in AY 2017.

LESSONS LEARNED:

With the termination of LS Foundation courses, Fall 2018 will be the first semester when all LS students will be enrolled in co-requisite and the corresponding gateway course. Students' progress will be closely tracked. Effectiveness of the co-requisite model will be evaluated particularly for students who would previously have been placed in a Foundations course.

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 3: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT**ACTIVITIES:**

- Dual enrollment was offered for both non-residential as well as residential students (GA Academy)
- Classes for dual enrolled students were scheduled at appropriate timings and seats reserved
- Program maps were used for the GA Academy students to enable completion of both high school graduation requirements as well as the course requirements of an associate's degree
- Dual enrollment nights at the high schools were attended to provide information on MGA
- Communication with the high school counselors were strengthened to streamline processes and remove barriers for students
- 'Elite Scholar Days' were planned for students and parents interested in the GA Academy
- A 5-day orientation was developed and offered for the GA Academy students

OUTCOMES:

- 56 students participated in the GA Academy in 2017-18
- 28 students graduated from the GA Academy with an Associate's degree in spring 2018
- 537 students were enrolled in the non-residential dual enrollment program in 2017-18
- 5 students in the non-residential program graduated with an Associate's degree in spring 2018
- 22 dual enrolled students continued in baccalaureate programs at MGA in 2017-18

LESSONS LEARNED:

Efforts to expand the dual enrolled population must continue. Marketing efforts for the GA Academy are necessary to build that population of students. Additional opportunities for GA Academy students to participate in experiential learning like undergraduate research, co-ops and internships must be offered to make it more attractive to the students. For both the residential and the non-residential populations, students need to be linked to their major and department of interest at the time of enrollment in the program so they get more involved and more engaged with the faculty and the department.

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 4: DEVELOP MATH PATHWAYS FOR STEM AND NON-STEM STUDENTS:

MGA planned clear math pathways for STEM and non-STEM majors to ensure students take the appropriate math classes for their program of study.

ACTIVITIES:

- Math Modeling was offered for non-STEM majors to satisfy the Area A math requirement
- Algebra was offered for STEM majors
- For students who did not meet the SAT requirement to take the Algebra class, an alternate pathway was provided via Math Modeling

OUTCOMES:

- 1405 students in non-STEM majors took Math Modeling to satisfy the Area A requirement in 2017-18 academic year
- 551 students in STEM majors took Algebra or a higher math course to satisfy the Area A requirement

HIGH PRIORITY GOAL 3: IMPROVE PERSISTENCE AND RETENTION RATES

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 1: IMPLEMENTING COURSE REDESIGN

ACTIVITIES:

- Two courses-Introduction to Psychology and American Government-were redesigned and offered to two sections each
- POLS 1101 redesign involved the inclusion of “town hall” meetings to apply course content knowledge outside the classroom.
- PSYC 1101 redesign involved the use of in-class activities – at least one per course unit – to encourage and enhance student engagement and understanding as well the use of active, learner-centered, web-based program - Learning Curve- to gives individualized assistance, ongoing assessment, and prompt automated feedback. A more affordable textbook was adopted that included the Learning Curve-adaptive learning system.

OUTCOMES:

POLS 1101 DFW rate:

Fall 2017: redesigned sections DFW rate: 12.2% (9 out of 74 students), non-redesigned sections DFW rate: 27.2% (273 out of 1003 students)

Spring 2018: redesigned sections DFW rate: 35.0% (7 out of 20 students), non-redesigned sections DFW rate: 31.5% (211 out of 669 students)

PSYC 1101 DFW rate:

Fall 2017: Redesigned sections DFW rate: 24.3% (17 out of 70 students); non-redesigned sections DFW rate: 20.6% (174 out of 845 students)

Spring 2018: Redesigned sections DFW rate: 15.6% (7 out of 45 students); non-redesigned sections DFW rate: 19.5% (102 out of 523 students)

LESSONS LEARNED:

Uncontrolled, confounding variables (e.g., course time, lack of uniform tests/assessments) preclude from arriving at statistically valid, convincing conclusions about the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of the intervention. For example, the DFW rate for PSYC 1101 was much higher in 8 a.m. course sections than other course times (e.g., 11 a.m.).

The level of effort and training that would be required to maintain the fidelity/reliability of the redesign may not be easily transferred across all course sections (e.g., because of numerous part-time faculty, diverse faculty teaching styles and preferred levels of autonomy).

Additional assignments/activities may actually decrease course grades for some students because of the sheer number of assignments (which some students did not do) that account for a significant portion of the course grade. Further investigations may explicitly consider individual differences (e.g., past academic performance) that may moderate the influence of the intervention.

Implementing town hall meetings is probably not feasible in fully-online sections of POLS 1101.

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 2: PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The Office of Experiential Learning continues to oversee the implementation of *Experiential Learning @MGA* - the Quality Enhancement Plan of the institution. *Experiential Learning@MGA* strengthens student learning and engagement by increasing participation in an array of experiential learning opportunities – opportunities which involve students in practical application of their learning. These high-impact practices can include internships, undergraduate research, and service learning that shape our efforts to build the most meaningful educational experience possible for all students, in all disciplines, on all campuses. The initiative encourages “exploration and application beyond the classroom,” transforming students’ perspective, their career trajectories, and our shared communities. *Experiential Learning@MGA* initiative provides opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning – formal, guided, and authentic experiences outside the classroom which: improve the students’ knowledge of the subject matter, and increase their ability to apply their learning in new situations; promote the development of new and practical skill sets; and create an atmosphere of learning as students share their experiences with other students in their fields of study.

ACTIVITIES:

- Experiential Learning Course Redesigns
- Faculty Professional Development

- Student Conference and Travel Funding
- Experiential Learning Speaker Bureau and Honorarium Funding
- Regional History Conference Hosting and Institutional Undergraduate Conference Hosting

OUTCOMES:

The following shows our historical graduation data – Total Graduates – 982

- AY 2015/2016 – 143 Total (Silver = 126; Gold = 17)
- AY 2016/2017 – 351 Total (Silver = 231; Gold = 101; Platinum = 20)
- AY 2017/2018 – 487 Total
 - Dec 2017 Graduation – 199 Total (Silver = 107; Gold = 55; Platinum = 37)
 - May 2018 Graduation – 288 Total (Silver = 103; Gold = 79 ; Platinum = 106)
 - 288 of the 546 undergraduates (51.6% of the graduating class) will walk with designation
 - 103 of the 288 received silver (participating in 1 High Impact Practice)
 - 79 of the 288 received gold (participating in 2 High Impact Practices)
 - 106 of the 288 received platinum (participating in 3 or more High Impact Practices)
- AY17/18 EL Graduates up 38% from AY16/17

LESSONS LEARNED:

The QEP was developed with constituency input and mindfully crafted to maximize student learning outcomes that support the mission and reflect the strategic priorities of the institution. In its third year, we have seen a significant impact on the culture of the institution – manifested as a focus on undergraduate research. The academy's interdisciplinary collaborations is a result of strong penetration within the academic pathways. The increase in student participation can be directly attributed to the gamification model and the intentionality of critical reflection and the cumulative value and competitive advantage proposition shared with students.

HIGH PRIORITY GOAL 4: PROMOTE ACADEMIC SUCCESS FOR DIVERSE POPULATIONS

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 1: ENHANCING THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF ATHLETES

ACTIVITIES:

- Additional duties were assigned to three coaches to serve as academic advisors for athletes
- Training in the use of Banner, Degree Works and EAB Student Success Collaborative as well as workshops to understand the core curriculum, institutional and USG policies, and advising and registration procedures were offered to the academic advisors for athletes
- Academic success of athletes was recognized by the department and the university.
- Athletes were encouraged to register for 15 hours per semester

OUTCOMES:

- Team GPA's have remained relatively constant with 5 of 10 teams maintaining a 3.0+ team GPA again this year.
- 88% and 83% of student athletes earned 15+ hours in fall and spring semesters respectively.
- Percentage of athletes with a 3.75+ GPA increased from 15.30% in fall 2016 to 20.65% in fall 2017 and from 20.44% in spring 2017 to 24.86% in spring 2018.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Reinforcement and refinement of best practices each year will be an essential element in the continued academic success of student athletes. The role of athletic staff to provide academic intervention for players who may be struggling is important. The need to get assistance in various forms (Student Success Center, peer mentor from team, faculty resources, etc.) as early as possible has been recognized and stressed to the athletes.

Athletes have responded in an overwhelmingly positive way to the awards ceremony and equal emphasis being placed on academic success.

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 2: IMPLEMENT DIVERSITY/GLOBAL LEARNING TO SUPPORT AN INCLUSIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT THAT RESULTS IN EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND STUDENT SUCCESS

ACTIVITIES:

- The first Unity Project Public Art Installation was hosted to celebrate diversity at MGA
- Speakers were invited to lecture on issues of diversity, including lunch and learn opportunities
- The Office of Diversity collaborated with the offices of Student Life and Career Services to host the first MGA Student Leadership Conference for two years

OUTCOMES:

- Over 200 participants from the MGA campus community participated in the Unity Project
- Over 20 students who participated in the Unity Project received bronze level status or higher through the Office of Experiential Learning
- 100% of the students surveyed learned at least one diversity and inclusion concept as a result of the MGA Student Leadership Conferences both years

LESSONS LEARNED:

MGA is a diverse and inclusive campus. Diversity issues that are reflected or discussed on the larger stage of our country are usually the same issues that are of concern in higher education. The Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity is working to increase learning and conversations around the diversity and inclusion issues that could affect retention, progression, and graduation if students do not feel that their differences are welcomed.

The impact of this strategy on retention and graduation rates will be more visible as the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity develops more programs and receives more feedback from the students who attend MGA over the next few years.

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 3: IMPLEMENT THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE INITIATIVE

The African American Male Initiative (AAMI) enhances retention, progression, and graduation of African-American males at Middle Georgia State University.

ACTIVITIES:

- AAMI coordinators provided weekly academic guidance through study hall and one-on-one meetings with AAMI participants.
- Peer mentors helped to connect AAMI participants to academic resources, acclimate them to the collegiate environment, and provide them with emotional support while at MGA.
- AAMI participants participated in at least one community service opportunity per month.

OUTCOMES:

- Average cumulative GPA for AAMI participants seeking a Bachelor's degree in Fall 2017 was 2.52 compared to 2.30 during Fall 2016.
- Average cumulative GPA for AAMI participants seeking a Bachelor's degree in Fall 2017 was 2.52 compared to the 2.46 cumulative GPA for all African American males attending MGA.
- Average cumulative GPA for AAMI participants seeking an Associate's degree in Fall 2017 was 2.8 compared to 2.4 during Fall 2016.
- Average cumulative GPA for participants seeking an Associate's degree in Fall 2017 was 2.8 compared to the 2.2 cumulative GPA for all African American males attending MGA.

LESSONS LEARNED:

The AAMI is a very effective program that is vital to the retention of African American males. One of the major challenges the program faces is staffing. Student Affairs has addressed the staffing issue by working with Academic Affairs to identify faculty who could assist with the program. As the program grows and more faculty and staff get involved, we expect to see the AAMI program make a huge impact at MGA. The current data suggests that the men who are a part of the AAMI program are performing at a higher level academically than African American men who are not in the program. This validates that the program is impactful and that we should continue to grow and develop it.

CCG METRICS AND OUTCOMES FOR 2017-18

Table 8 in the appendix highlights the CCG goals and outcomes for the 2017-18 academic year.

CCG METRICS AND OUTCOMES FOR 2018-19

The CCG metrics for Academic Year 2018-2019 will include: (a) Increase Bachelor's degrees conferred by 3%, (b) Improve retention rates among all students by 3%, (c) Increase the number of students taking 15+ credit hours by 1%, (d) Increase need based aid by 3%.

UPDATE ON MOMENTUM YEAR

The following goals and strategies have been planned and are in the initial stages of execution in this Momentum Year:

Goal 1: Build program maps in Degree Works whereby year 1 will include completion of thirty credit hours, core English and the required mathematics courses, as well as nine credits in the selected major

Update: Professional advisors have already been trained in the use of DW; faculty training has begun. Templates for all the degrees are being designed in DW that will establish a 4 year program map for the student in that major.

Goal 2: Establish various teams to develop recommendations for building an academic mindset

Update: Three teams have been built to work on recommendations on incorporating an academic mindset into 1) the curriculum, 2) the advising sessions, and 3) student life activities

Goal 3: Revamp orientation to include an academic introduction to the program/major, building relationship with departmental faculty and integrating career advising with academic advising

Update: An academic showcase was built into the summer'18 orientations. In addition, each academic department presented information about the major to the students prior to advising and registration.

Goal 4: Provide intrusive advising and mentoring by establishing and tracking caseloads for professional and faculty advisors

Update: Professional Advisors have been assigned to each academic School/College and have been assigned caseloads. Faculty advisors in some units have also been assigned caseloads of students for the purpose of tracking as well as mentoring towards graduation.

Goal 5: Transition students in the 'Undecided' major into defined majors/programs of study

Update: Students declaring 'Undecided' as their major were linked to career services during the orientation process. Several advisors were also trained to use the career exploration software for helping students select a major. The goal is to completely transition all 'Undecided' students into defined programs of study

Goal 6: Implement co-requisite remediation for English and Math

Update: A corequisite support course for English Composition I as well as Math Modeling has been offered. The Foundations course for students in Learning Support English was discontinued in the 2017-18 academic year. The Foundations course for students in Learning Support Math Modeling will be discontinued from fall'18 onwards.

Goal 7: Redesign selected gateway courses to improve student outcomes

Update: Two courses were redesigned and offered in the 2017-18 academic year. Two additional courses are being redesigned in the 2018-19 academic year-Algebra and the support course for English Composition I.