



SAVANNAH STATE UNIVERSITY

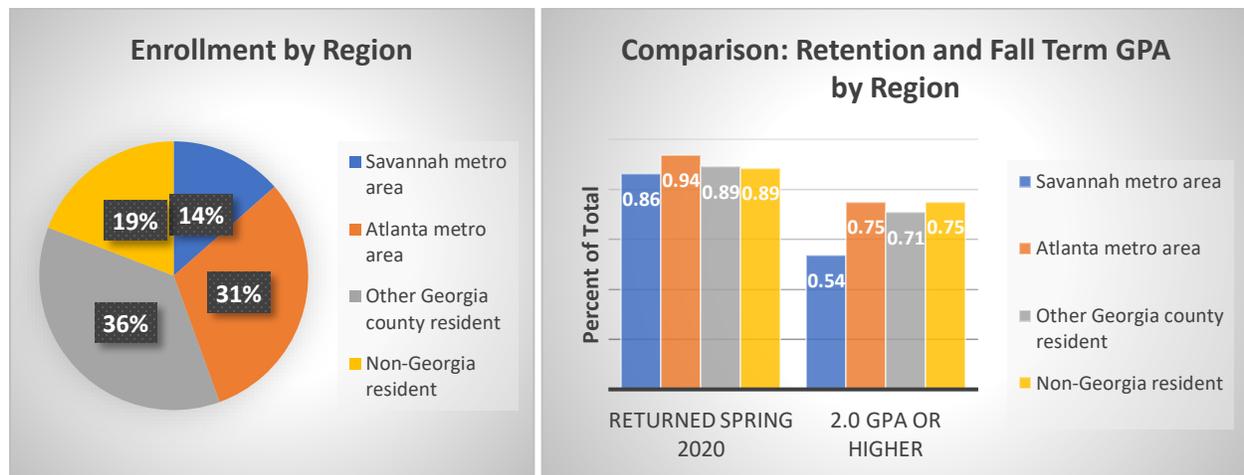
INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Savannah State University (SSU), as a member of the state university sector, offers a portfolio of academic programs that reflects the unique needs of the region and the state. The approved mission and vision statements can be found at [SSU Mission and Vision Statement](#).

SSU continues to respond to the educational needs of the state and region by providing opportunities for differently prepared students an opportunity to seek a college education. And, while this reporting period saw rapid adjustments in instructional delivery because of the pandemic, SSU was able to successfully transition its students and support their instructional needs. Support services (to include personal technology) were deployed to successfully meet the needs of students.

Total headcount and total full-time enrollment (FTE) dropped from 3688 and 3067, respectively, in 2019 to 3488 and 2773, respectively, in 2020. However the respective percentage declines were much smaller compared to those for the 2018-19 time period. A more nuanced and sanguine picture emerges from disaggregating the two aggregates. The number of full-time graduate students grew by 42% and the number of part-time students grew by 15% in the 2019-20 time period. This is reflective of a high-touch, personalized enrollment strategy developed and implemented for graduate students and a similar approach for all other students.

Another disaggregated view enrollment is presented below along with discussion on associated retention rates (Fall 2019 to Spring 2020).



Savannah metro area (Chatham, Effingham and Bryan counties) accounts for the smallest percentage of enrollment. It also has the lowest fall-to-spring retention and lowest fraction of students with a fall term GPA of 2.0 or higher. These outcomes support the need for an intentional pipeline program for Savannah area students (test preparation, summer bridge and intensive academic support services) as part of the regional access mission of the institution.

Given the access mission of the institution, a relatively large cohort of students falling short of regular admission requirements was admitted in Fall 2019 (44% of the Freshman class). For Fall 2020, however, a much smaller cohort was admitted (10% of the Freshman class). To raise retention rates and particularly help with the academic success of the less prepared cohorts of students, a strong advising and mentoring support model was developed and implemented in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. This is discussed in the sections below.

IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES

As mentioned above and in last year's CCG Report, a new advising model was designed to support the students' academic success (with a greater focus on underprepared students).

The redesign was implemented in Fall 2019 and spring 2020 with the launch of the new Center for Student Success and Retention. EAB Navigate analytics is used for data collection, review and assessment at the end of every term. Below is a listing of all that was implemented:

- Program maps for every program
- Pre-enrollment survey for incoming students
- Advisement meeting prior to New Tiger Enrollment (NTE) session to discuss pre-enrollment survey
- Students were registered prior to attending New Tiger Enrollment
- Block schedules to include English, math for designated program and college first year experience (FYE) courses
- New Tiger Enrollment contained academic portions on advisement, academic support, program maps, focus areas, faculty mentor, block schedules and more
- Week of Welcome contained academic portions on advisement, academic support, program maps, focus areas, faculty mentor, block schedules and more
- Advisement was centralized with professional advisors cross trained with focus on providing appreciative advisement and academic support (3 tiered program based on admission status or EAB predictive analytics)
- Faculty advisors shifted roles to faculty mentorship
- Tutorial program was redesigned with higher emphasis on appointments with targeted proactive campaigns
- EAB Navigate was rolled out to all students with training sessions during NTE, WOW and FYE
- Students were paired into student success teams visible on EAB Navigate to include: professional advisor, faculty mentor and peer coach for incoming student
- Advising coordinators managed caseloads, advisor assignments, and Banner coding

We had gains with:

- Increased rates of students in schedules aligned with program maps
- Increased rates of students in 15 credit hours
- Increased rates of students in Momentum Year courses (math, English)
- Decrease in the number of students not assigned to an advisor
- Decrease in the number of students unaware of their advisor
- Increase in number of students in the current term registered for upcoming term prior to departing campus
- Higher grade point averages and cumulative grade point averages for pilot students and incoming freshmen
- Increase advising appointments and decrease in drop in appointments
- Increase tutorial sessions appointments
- For students who met with a tutor 2-3 times for a course they had higher grades for the courses than their counterparts who visited once or not at all as well as higher overall GPA/CUM
- Higher GPA/CUM for pilot students who met regularly (at least 6x per term) with their assigned advisor or peer coach
- Increase in number of students, advisors and faculty using EAB Navigate

Areas still in need of improvement:

- Not all program maps are final, some are still in draft form, not all programs use the same format
- Faculty mentor program still needs to be developed and refined
- Not all students have complete student success teams with an advisor, peer coach and faculty mentor
- Banner coding for advisor and faculty mentor still needs to be updated
- Course offerings limited for courses on program maps causing delay or for students not to be on track with map
- EAB Navigate access for new faculty or staff still needs to be developed
- Increase return rate for faculty of progress reports for students in core courses

MOMENTUM UPDATE: OBSERVATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

SECTION 3.1 EXISTING MOMENTUM WORK

PURPOSEFUL CHOICE

Strategy or activity	Ensure incoming students have made a purposeful choice regarding their academic program. The goal is to decrease the number of students changing their schedules and their major at the end of term.
Summary of Activities	NTE presentation, advisor session, pre-enrollment survey, Focus 2, Tiger Academy workshops: Focus2, program offerings, colleges at SSU, program maps
Outcomes/Measures of progress	Still a work in progress but advisors reported less schedule changes due to earlier interaction between students and advisors. The survey provided advisors a “starting point” for these interactions. Students were made aware of the “language” of academic programs, maps, advisement, etc.
Lessons learned and plans for the future	Higher engagement and participation from virtual sessions by both parents and students. Teams may not be the best platform for recording and disseminating information as students sometimes reported being unable to view the recording. Students have two accounts in Teams causing confusion as to switching between accounts.
Changes due to COVID-19	Sessions and workshops were virtual and recorded for later dissemination.

TRANSPARENT PATHWAYS

Strategy or activity	Ensure students at SSU are aware of degree requirements for graduation for the program they declare. The goal is to create self-sufficient students who understand the requirements of their designated degree program.
Summary of Activities	Faculty mentor period, advisement period, Academy workshop on program maps and colleges, program maps online
Outcomes/Measures of progress	Still a work in progress but advisors and faculty reported a more engaged incoming student aware of programs and colleges.
Lessons learned and plans for the future	Faculty mentor program is still being developed. Many faculty were unaware still of the shift in roles and what their role was. Program maps still need to be fully developed as some were still in draft form or had errors. The process of having the program map vetted was long and some programs were unaware when approvals were made. Advisors were receiving mixed messages in terms of the finalized program maps.
Changes due to COVID-19	Virtual sessions made available for students and to social distance. Meetings to discuss updates were also virtual.

ACADEMIC MINDSET

Strategy or activity	Ensure students have an academic growth mindset; understand the purpose and value of their degree program and courses; and feel they socially belong to the SSU community.
Summary of Activities	Training on GPS for advisors, peer coaches and tutors along with opportunity for a book club, Tiger Academy workshop for students.
Outcomes/Measures of progress	Still a work in progress but staff knowledge on the topic has increased.
Lessons learned and plans for the future	Advisors were offered the opportunity for a book club whereas peer coaches and tutors were told this was an expectation of employment. Advisor participation and engagement were low. Whereas, peer tutors and coaches explained they enjoyed the opportunity for professional development.

The Tiger Academy workshops shifted from face-to-face in the fall and mid-spring to online. We created TEAMS in Microsoft Teams to communicate the workshops to first year students. This worked well in terms of marketing the workshops. We saw higher engagement from first year students than with the face-to-face. We also recorded the workshops and sent the links to instructors and students. However, there are issues with Teams itself with students unable to view the recordings at times.

Changes due to COVID-19	Advisor book club was placed on hold mid-spring but will most likely resume the spring of 2021. All workshops were virtual and recorded with recordings sent to FYE instructors for posting and to students.
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GENERAL OVERVIEW AND OBSERVATIONS

Frequent and early-on (prior to registration) interactions between students and advisors seem to have worked well in bringing stability to student scheduling – especially as program maps in certain areas are still in the process of being updated. As all maps become current, advising issues around scheduling would be further reduced and the faculty mentor role in the form of career guidance can take on greater prominence.

When the University closed campus in mid-March, all sessions shifted to virtual using WebEx and then Microsoft Teams. We saw an initial decrease in student engagement for both advisement, tutorials and peer coaching sessions. However, this fall we are seeing students resume and even exceed engagement from fall 2019. We offer the same modalities as with instruction - virtual and face-to-face sessions for all services.

SECTION 3.2 FOLLOW UP FROM MOMENTUM SUMMIT III - “CAMPUS-WIDE” MOMENTUM APPROACH ACTIVITIES (BEYOND THE CLASSROOM)

PURPOSEFUL CHOICE

Priority Work	New Tiger Enrollment Sessions/ Open Campus Day
Description of Activities	To provide incoming students with information regarding SSU to include programs and student services
Activity status and plans for 2020	Both programs introduce prospective and enrolled students to the academic programs and provide an opportunity to meet with faculty to discuss courses and possible career opportunities.
Lessons Learned	Ongoing discussions with Academic Affairs and the Center of Student Success and Retention to assess.

MINDSET

Priority Work	GPS Staff Training, NACADA Webinar, Mindset book club
Description of Activities	Two separate trainings, one in person and one online, the book club was offered to all staff
Activity status and plans for 2020	Completed both workshops, book club was interrupted due to COVID
Lessons Learned	More trainings on activities to implement would help as the foundation is set.

Priority Work	Week of Welcome
Description of Activities	Part of this week includes an “Academic Day” where students speak with members of our Academic Enterprise about expectations in addition to meeting alums to talk about their careers post college.
Activity status and plans for 2020	This initiative is in its second year of implementation and the response from Academic Affairs, alumni, and students proved positive.
Lessons Learned	Working with Student Affairs to assess effectiveness and discuss if adjustments are needed.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND COMPLETION TEAM

Name	Title	email
Mr. Raymond Clarke	Vice President for Enrollment Management	clarker@savannahstate.edu
Ms. Danita Townsend	Executive Director, Center for Student Success	townsendd@savannahstate.edu
Mr. Brian Dawsey	Director, Admissions	dawseyb@savannahstate.edu
Dr. Sametria McFall	Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	mcfalls@savannahstate.edu