



**Georgia Gwinnett College:
Advance – Enhance – Thrive**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 – 2022

April 2017
Georgia Gwinnett College
Office of Plans, Policies and Analysis

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Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) has had a remarkable first decade and has become a “full-fledged member” of the University System of Georgia (USG) and the higher education landscape. The College has much to be proud of, including its focus on students, its rapid enrollment growth to over 12,000 students with commensurate staff and faculty growth, its diversity, its f w (ol)-2 *a7, its w (g64s)-1 (w-2 (d 5it)-10 p)t2(.c)4 (l)4

Key Insights from the Strategic Analysis

GGC Students are at the Heart of Everything the College Does

GGC students represent an amazing array of cultures, life experiences, preparation, life obligations, and dreams for the future. In a superficial sense, many GGC students are like other college students - fresh out of high school and young - the “traditional college student.”

However, these students are not homogenous. Many are less well-prepared academically, first-generation students, and have obligations outside of college (both work and family). The large majority are commuter students making the traditional residential campus and college life experience rare. The majority depend on significant amounts of financial aid. A third are part-time students. Many do not have a complete appreciation of what college will be like and have difficulty managing aspects of college ranging from financial aid to working with mentors. In total, the student body is the most racially and ethnically diverse of any USG institution. For most GGC students, college is a part of their lives; it is not the central focus of their lives. A third of GGC students came to GGC with strong high school GPAs, conceivably more ready to take on the rigors of a college education.

Every year GGC brings in over 5,000 new students – over 40% of current enrollment. Unfortunately, too large a percentage of them do not retain into the second or third years. First-year retention is 67%, and second year retention is 64%. In GGC’s early years, first-year retention was in the mid-70s, then dropped to the low 60s, but has now been stable for the last two years. Second-year retention has been consistently lower than first year retention.

GGC has a conceptual framework for introducing students to the College and college life. However, results indicate that the College is not doing enough, and more concentrated efforts will be required to help more students remain and progress at GGC and in college. The conceptual framework and its elements are solid, but the resources provided for them, and the execution of many aspects of the framework, need to be enhanced.

In today’s world, college students and their families expect students to be “job ready” when they graduate. It is no longer enough to have a strong liberal education that prepares young adults to be contributing citizens over the full length of their lives. Students want, need, and expect to have the skills necessary to gain meaningful employment, or to continue on graduate studies, when they graduate. GGC students and their families are no exception. Job-placement statistics are now the most important indicator of the value of a college education for high school students and their families looking at colleges. This is a new reality that GGC must address for all its students. Co-curricular support, opportunities to learn outside the classroom, and opportunities to experience the real world need to be provided along with the academic experience.

Effectively teaching today’s college students, including GGC’s, requires engaged and trained faculty in every class. GGC’s faculty are a teaching faculty, but in their formal education,

few faculty are trained to teach. Today's students have more diversions available that can keep

External Forces that Could Influence the College

Strategic Framework

What it Means to be a Grizzly

Grizzlies selflessly attend to the strengths, needs, and uniqueness of everyone at GGC. We work together to build meaningful experiences, solve problems, and share resources. Grizzlies create

- Serve as a resource for innovation for the broader educational community

Operating Principles

- b. Create and implement extensive faculty and staff professional learning and development programs to ensure faculty and staff are enabled and inspired to develop this expertise.
- c. Create and support opportunities for faculty and staff to use/implement 21st century expertise they have developed.
- d. Ensure feedback systems/assessment are in place to evaluate and communicate successes and lessons learned throughout the respective communities.
- e. Ensure technology in and out of classroom is appropriate (for faculty, staff and students) and that faculty and staff are proficient in best practices for effective use.
- f. Assess, identify, and create spaces and environments that will support 21st century teaching, innovation, and mentoring.

Priority 3: We will establish a robust and sustainable resource model.

State and federal changes in resource allocation, increased competitiveness for grants and private

Priority 4: We will build and reinforce a collegial, collaborative, and innovative organization as GGC transitions from a rapid growth institution into a more sustainable model.

In the College's first decade, exponential student growth and constrained resources, juxtaposed against the backdrop of a relentless focus on students and the desire to establish GGC as a well-respected and transformative institution, resulted in natural organizational stress. As the College intentionally slows its growth, GGC has the opportunity to develop a high-performing, values-based organization that reinforces and rewards effective leadership, collegiality, collaboration, transparent communications, and innovation. The fourth priority in this plan focuses attention on

- d. Build a national alliance with institutions that share our values, to learn from others, and to promote and extend the GGC model which aspires to change the way that the “new