

Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW)
Momentum Plan 2021-22
April 9, 2021

The period from March 2020 through March 2021 certainly pressure tested the resilience of GSW's Momentum Plans. This difficult period tested both the student support aspects of our plans and the academic aspects, and both aspects of our plans suffered delays. During the past year, GSW has concentrated upon three specific areas that support student success: making a purposeful choice from clear pathways; creating and maintaining a productive academic mindset among all students, faculty, and staff; and extending the Momentum Approach beyond the first year.

The most important action supporting the making and maintaining of purposeful choices this past year has been the review of our Storm Track degree pathways. While this activity was delayed by the Pandemic, it is ongoing and should be completed this spring. We developed a checklist to facilitate this review that included five categories of review questions, including effectiveness of course ordering; inclusion of nine hours in the major or focus area in the first-year; flexibility of pathways for transfer students, students changing major, or student beginning in spring or summer; identification of catapult courses; and inclusion of academic and co-curricular milestones.

GSW also planned to develop defined advising processes designed to insure that students who are having difficulties with or doubts about their major choice are identified as early as possible so that changes can be made with as little adverse effect on degree completion as possible. This plan is part of a general movement towards advising that is centered more on the needs of the student. This part of our planning was interrupted by the Pandemic. When completed this plan will support not only purposeful choice, but also extend the Momentum Approach beyond the first year into the second. The Academic Advising Committee has also developed an Advising Handbook which will be used to provide training and serve as a resource for our academic advisors to ensure our students are following their Storm Tracks and remain on track for a timely graduation. An advising syllabus that was also created by the Academic Advising Committee that establishes expectations for both the students and the faculty/advisor sides of the advising relationship.

During the past year, we have also been working on encouraging more students to participate in internships and on improving our processes for finding and applying for internships. The Director of Experiential Learning has standardized our internship processes and has piloted the use of the Student Opportunity Center to expand internship and other experiential learning opportunities. The Director of Experiential Learning and the Office of Residence and Campus Life have worked to increase co-curricular cultural experiences for our students. This collaboration has increased the number of events available as part of the Windows to the World Program, which is designed to increase inter-cultural knowledge and competency. Planning for these activities were delayed last spring when the campus was shut down, but resumed as we returned to campus in fall 2020 despite the challenges presented by the need for physical distancing. These activities should improve career readiness and productive citizenship outcomes for all students.

Our plans to develop cross-disciplinary projects that involve more than one instructor and more than one course have been the most affected by the Pandemic. Faculty have been consumed with adapting their teaching first to a fully online environment, and then to a physically distanced environment, leaving little time and energy to develop high impact, cross-disciplinary

opportunities for students. We have identified the block schedules we use for incoming students as a possible missed opportunity to develop cross-disciplinary opportunities for students and will explore that more fully this year.

An important aspect of creating and maintaining a productive academic mindset has been the development of activities for the first day of classes that are designed to deepen engagement and to encourage productive academic mindset. Judy Grissett and Mark Grimes presented their *Sharing the Passion* first day class activities during the Momentum Summit this year and to that extent this plan has been successful. We still need to share these activities more widely across our campus and to develop recurring follow-up activities for classes already using the first day activities. Since these activities are adaptable to any class—general education, major, minor, or elective—they help extend Momentum Approach beyond the first year, as well.

Another part of maintaining a productive academic mindset is our implementation of the Clifton Strengths for all incoming students. They are instructed to take the test prior to orientation, and considerable time is spent during orientation week helping them discover their strengths and how they can utilize them to be more successful in and out of the classroom. We also discuss how to utilize the strengths of others around them and work together as a team to help everyone achieve the educational and leadership goals. Our co-curricular campus leadership programs also actively engage students in work around Clifton Strengths to better understand how they can draw from these strengths when needed to be more successful academically, socially and when leading others.

We continue to work on developing a productive academic mindset in faculty and staff so that they can approach students as role models of productive learning behaviors as well as facilitators and mentors. For the past couple of years we have concentrated on sending wise feedback messages to encourage students’ expectations of success.

The table below summarizes our progress during the last year on the priorities described above.

Action	Progress	Parties Responsible	Next Steps
Storm Track degree pathway review	Nearing Completion	Academic Affairs	Use reviewed pathways to develop templates in the Student Educational Planner Incorporate pressure testing into Comprehensive Program Review Process
Institute a defined process at start of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th semesters where we verify that student needs have not changed in ways that would justify a major change	Stalled by COVID	Academic Affairs, Student Engagement and Success, Advising Committee	Develop scripts for advisors to be used when students are “off-track” in the major, and define the meaning of “off-track” in measurable and specific ways

Develop and Advising Handbook for advisor development	Nearing Completion	Academic Advising Committee	Post manual on Advising Website Publicize the resource
Develop opportunities and encourage participation in internships, streamline and standardize application and reporting processes	Standard application complete, increasing opportunities and developing reporting process in process	Director of Experiential Learning	Develop and implement tracking process for internships; work with departments to increase internship options
Increase study abroad, study away, and cultural experiences	More field trips and other opportunities were available, will further develop Fall 2021	Office of Residence and Campus Life, Office of Experiential Learning	Expand and sustain the Windows to the World Program Develop more trip opportunities that are interesting and affordable, and that encourage cross-cultural involvement and interaction
Cross-disciplinary projects	Stalled by COVID	Academic Affairs	Find ways to take advantage of opportunities offered by block schedules
Develop first day class activities designed to deepen engagement and develop productive academic mindset	In progress	Academic Affairs	Get the word out to more instructors Develop recurring activities for use in courses already using the first day activities
Institute the use of the Clifton Strengths Talent Assessment	In progress	Academic Affairs, and Student Engagement and Success	Develop Lesson Plan for utilizes Clifton Strengths Assessment in UNIV 1000
Faculty-Staff development on Productive Academic Mindset	In progress	Academic Affairs and Student Engagement and Success	Working with Motivate Labs for professional development
Build experiential learning into 3000, 4000 level courses	Stalled by COVID	Academic Affairs and Office of Experiential Learning	Identify current High Impact Practices that involve experiential learning

			Work with faculty across programs to develop and scale Experiential Learning and High Impact Practices
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The big conclusion that GSW’s Momentum/Complete College Georgia (CCG) Steering Committee drew from our self-reflection is that effective communication of our Momentum goals and of our progress on reaching those goals has been a weakness in our efforts. GSW’s small campus environment where most decision makers and leaders have multiple responsibilities that touch multiple aspects of student support and academics has led decision makers and leaders too often to focus on meeting the current day to day priorities, sometimes making it difficult to keep the big picture in sight.

These time and priority pressures were exacerbated during the last year and made communication more difficult than it would typically be. Therefore, we are building the regular communication of Momentum goals and of our progress on reaching our goals into all aspects of Momentum and CCG planning and implementation. We began this part of our planning during a campus-wide town hall on April 8 where the Provost presented our draft plan and solicited feedback from the entire campus community on the goals and implementation of the plan.

GSW’s big idea for 2021-22 that will inform our overall approach during the next year is Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT), not just in the narrow academic sense but rather in the larger sense of infusing transparency and equity into all campus interactions between students, faculty, and staff. We see a strong and productive connection between TILT principles and the purpose and value aspects of a productive academic mindset. We see the use of TILT principles in a wider context as complimentary to our ongoing commitment to using a wise feedback approach to building a productive academic mindset in our students.

TILT in the academic sense has been an important part of redesigning ENGL 1101 Composition I, POLS 1101 American Government, and SOCI 1101 Introduction to Sociology during cohort two of Gateways to Completion (G2C), so we plan to extend the use of TILT principles to more Core general education courses and to selected upper-level major courses that are crucial to student success in the major and in graduating. While the participants in G2C have shared the results of TILT principles with a small group of interested faculty, we will need to make an effort to provide more faculty and staff development to infuse TILT principles into course and into co-curricular activities. To assist our assessment of progress on this goal, we added questions related to transparency and purpose to our regular course evaluations that are based on questions used in the Student Learning Gains survey for G2C and in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). These questions will be used for the first time during spring 2021 and will provide a baseline against which to measure future progress on this goal.

We are working to schedule a campus-wide workshop on TILT during April, perhaps to be conducted by Mary-Ann Winklemes’s TILT Higher Ed team. The plan is to use this workshop to foster campus-wide awareness and knowledge of TILT, and to recruit a number of faculty to work over the summer to apply TILT to their syllabi and assignments. We hope to recruit faculty teaching both lower-level and upper-level classes, as well as challenging all faculty to apply TILT principles to at least one aspect of one course they teach. We also plan to begin using productive academic mindset and TILT in the planning of co-curricular activities.

In addition to faculty and staff development in TILT principles, we plan to continue developing a productive academic mindset in faculty and staff through further faculty development opportunities. For instance, we plan to ask all our UNIV 1000 first-year experience instructors who have not already done so to take advantage of the Mindset Mini-Course developed by the USG and Motivate Lab. We also plan to organize synchronous discussions between UNIV 1000 faculty after the completion of the mini-course to share ideas for incorporating stronger mindset messaging in the course. In addition, Motivate Lab has made materials available that will be used by Student Engagement and Success to further infuse productive mindset principles into their ongoing operations and planning. Communicating the outcomes of these faculty-staff development plans will be part of our general Momentum communication plan.

To assess our success in meeting our Momentum Year goals related to insuring that students complete English and Mathematics courses within the first thirty hours, we plan to begin sharing the completion data on ENGL 1101 Composition I, MATH 1001 Quantitative Reasoning, MATH 1111 College Algebra, and MATH 1401 Elementary Statistics more widely among academic decision makers and leaders. Targeted groups will include the President's cabinet, the Momentum/CCG Steering Committee, as well as the Department of English and Modern Languages, the Department of Mathematics, and the University College. This increased transparency will also facilitate more data-based decision making on improving our success meeting this goal.

In the spirit of increasing transparency and data-driven decision making, the Director of Institution Effectiveness has begun to intentionally expand the awareness of existing data resources, including the Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) dashboards, the QLIK dashboards developed for the USG by the Carl Vinson Institute, NSSE data, and Mindset Survey data. Among the groups targeted for demonstration of these resources are the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, the Retention Committee, and the President's Cabinet. The chair of the Retention Committee has already requested and been granted access to the PDP dashboards.

As noted above, the review of our Storm Track degree pathways is ongoing, but should be complete this spring. The most immediate use that will be made of these pathways when they have been revised will be as templates for GSW's implementation of the Student Educational Planner add on to Degree Works. Review of our focus area pathways will lead naturally to the development of a defined process for encouraging student to make a purposeful choice of major before the end of their first 30 hours at GSW. We will also explore adding the pressure testing of pathways to the Comprehensive Program Review Process.

The USG High Impact Practice Implementation Team is currently collecting data on the number of courses that include High Impact Practices at GSW, including courses that involve experiential learning, like student research and internships. The team's results will illustrate where the High Impact Practice expansion can go next, including specific courses and program areas. The Office of Experiential Learning will work directly with faculty to increase the number of High Impact Practices by helping faculty enrich existing activities or develop new activities in their courses. This will involve collaborating with individual faculty, as well as providing more comprehensive faculty development on HIPs.

The table below summarizes the activities we plan to continue, to extend and to institute during the next year as part of the Momentum Approach at GSW.

Action	Parties Responsible	Projected Timeline
Faculty Development on TiLT, including workshop conducted by external group and small group workshops on-campus conducted by GSW faculty	Academic Affairs	Beginning spring 2021 and continuing through summer and fall 2021
Enroll 2021 UNIV 1000 faculty in USG Mindset Mini-Course and organize post course discussions	Academic Affairs	Summer through fall 2021
Begin sharing data on how many incoming first-year students complete ENGL 1101 and Area A2 Mathematics within first 30 hours at GSW more widely with more stakeholders	Academic Affairs	Fall 2021 and ongoing
Develop awareness of data resources, such as PDP dashboards and Qlik dashboards among more campus decision makers and leaders	Director of Institutional Effectiveness	Spring 2021 and ongoing
Implement Student Educational Planner to improve monitoring of student progress along defined pathways towards degree completion	Office of Academic Affairs, Deans' Council, and Office of the Registrar	Complete set-up and advisor training in time for early registration for spring 2022
Develop a defined process to encourage Focus Area students to make a choice of major within the first year on campus	Office of First Year Experience	Pilot during the 2021-22 academic year
Incorporate pressure testing of Storm Track degree pathways into Comprehensive Program Review Process	Director of Institutional Effectiveness	Pilot during the 2021-22 academic year
Increase course offerings that include High Impact Practices for all students	Office of Experiential Learning	Identify courses that currently include High Impact Practices 2021 and begin working with faculty across programs to scale High Impact Practices during the 2021-22 academic year

GSW's Momentum Plan for 2021-22 results from what we have learned over the past three years of planning of the Momentum Year and the Momentum Approach. We are confident that our plan will increase the resilience of our Momentum efforts by communicating our plans and results to students, faculty, and staff more intentionally and assessing the results more effectively.