



Georgia Southwestern State University Momentum Approach Development Plan

Proposal Overview

An important aspect of being a Part of the Storm at GSW is preparing students not only for careers, but also for fulfilling futures beyond their careers. Moreover, GSW's strategic plan calls for us to "provide opportunities for experiential learning and community engagement across the curriculum" and to "incorporate retention and progression efforts as a seamless integration to the learning environment and campus culture." Towards these ends, GSW will focus on creating clear Storm Paths that incorporate curriculum guidance with co-curricular and extra-curricular guidance to help students reach their short term and long term goals. Truly rich and comprehensive pathways will not only guide students, but will provide a framework to guide GSW's planning and implementation of support and assistance for each individual student to reach his or her goals.

Areas of Focus

Deepening Purposeful Choices

Description of need:

It is important that student have a clear purpose for pursuing a degree program or career choice, but it is clear from student experiences, such as changing majors and underemployment after graduation, that not all students find a path that suits them. Students need to be involved in an ongoing process of making and evaluating choices that will help them chart their own path to the right degree program, and ultimately to a fulfilling life after graduation.

Current situation:

GSW currently encourages students who do not choose a major during the admissions process to use the Focus 2 Major Exploration and Career Planning tool to select a focus area compatible with their interests, values, and personality. We do not currently, however, engage students who elect a major during the admissions process to engage in the same exploration and planning process, nor do we have an elaborated process for students to evaluate their previous choices.

Measurement:

GSW already monitors retention within degree programs for fall to fall for first-time full-time students. We also track the changed majors of students retained at the institution, but not in the initial degree program. We also keep track of time to completion for all graduates, as well as time to completion for all degree programs. It will only be necessary to expand and disaggregate these data in a couple of ways to measure the success of enhanced student major exploration and career planning. Retention in major

programs could continue to be tracked through 150% of time to degree for each incoming cohort of first-time, full-time students, and these data could be coupled with program specific completion data for each incoming cohort. Data on time to completion for degree programs could be disaggregated by students who declared the major at admission and continued, and students who elected the major sometime after admission. This latter group could also be disaggregated by those who were admitted in a focus area and those who changed from another major. Success in this element would be seen by higher numbers of completions in degree programs or reduced time to degree.

Plan for Change:

The plan is to facilitate early student engagement with Career Services in two ways. First, each degree program will be asked to identify a course from among the nine hours of major courses taken by students during their first year at GSW in which a class period will be set aside for a representative of Career Services to speak to students about career exploration and planning. Second, since GSW registers incoming students in UNIV 1000 the GSW Experience by major or focus area, early engagement with career services will take place in UNIV 1000 for focus area students. We will also identify practical ways for students to use career services, and specifically the Focus 2 Major Exploration and Career Planning tool as part of the change of major process. Moving Career Services to be housed in The Office of Academic Affairs will further integrate the use of these resources throughout the educational experience of students as we plan to integrate an element of Career Services into each year of the program map to increase student's intentional career choice and focus. The Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Career Services will be jointly responsible for this plan, and Academic Affairs will be responsible for keeping advisors informed about improvements in the change of major process.

Strategic Alignment:

This element aligns with GSW's current Strategic Plan as well as the ongoing institutional goal of increasing enrollment through recruitment, retention, and progression efforts. Specifically, this element aligns with 1.3.3 under Strategic Theme 1 Expanding High-Impact Teaching and Learning Experiences:

- 1.3 Incorporate retention and progression efforts as a seamless integration to the learning environment and campus culture.
 - 1.3.3 - Increase student retention, persistence, and timely graduation to support student success.

Cultivating Productive Academic Mindsets

Description of need:

While it is arguably possible to cultivate a growth mindset and the belief that schoolwork is valuable purely through curricular means, the third belief that contributes to a productive academic mindset, social belonging, must necessarily be cultivated collaboratively across a student's experience on campus. Further, only 33% of students reported that they "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that they feel connected to and involved on campus according to the work done on our campus by Motivate labs. Therefore,

GSW needs a coherent, broad-based plan for helping students find and reaffirm their place in the GSW community.

Current situation:

In the past year, GSW has made several changes to the way first-time full-time students are welcomed to campus. In August 2018 after the incoming students had completed a single day of orientation on the Sunday prior to classes starting Monday, they were gathered together for an inaugural Freshman Convocation at which they were welcomed to GSW by the administrative leaders of the institution. Afterwards they were led back to their dorm along a walkway lined with GSW students, staff, and faculty who were cheering and clapping in celebration of their entry into GSW. They were also given their presidential medallion by President Weaver which carries with it a charge for their time at GSW. Beginning in the summer of 2019, we have also made significant changes to summer Storm Days and have expanded the new student orientation to a three-day process that will involve events designed to promote social belonging. All of these changes have been made through collaboration between the Office of Student Engagement and Success and the Office of Academic Affairs. Of course, GSW also celebrates the students who complete degrees at its commencement ceremonies, but it is a long and winding road from the Freshman Convocation to Graduation.

Measurement:

USG reports on Retention, Progression, and Graduation-Completion will be used as one measure of a student's integration into the campus community both at the cohort and the program level. We will also look at the Mindset GPS survey for the freshman cohort to alter or develop programming for the sophomore year if needed based on beginning versus end of semester comparison data. Finally, we will use the information concerning social belonging from the NSSE to determine if our students feel engaged with the university across their time with us. Focus groups of juniors and seniors will be added if we feel we cannot determine the effectiveness of our current practices with the aforementioned measurements.

Plan for Change:

While we have made dramatic improvements in our efforts to integrate incoming students into the campus community, we feel there is much more that can be done for continuing students and transfer students. The plan is for Academic Affairs and Student Engagement and Success to extend their collaboration to fill in the blank spaces between the end of a student's first year and graduation by providing co-curricular pathways and experiences that will coordinate with and augment the curricular pathways of continuing students. In addition, a process for welcoming transfer students and integrating them into the campus community will also be created. This task will require at least three years to complete, beginning in the first year by focusing on the second year and transfer students, and continuing in the next couple of years by focusing on third year and fourth year students respectively. The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Student Engagement and Success will be responsible for overseeing this multiyear process.

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Increasing Momentum along Degree Pathways

Description of need:

In addition to creating pathways for incoming first-time, full-time students who begin during fall term, GSW must also create pathways towards degrees for students who begin during summer or spring terms, as well as for transfer students. Ideally, these efforts could also be useful to continuing students from the 2017 and previous first-time, full-time cohorts.

Current situation:

GSW implemented Degree Pathways for all degree programs during fall semester 2018. The pathways were distributed and introduced to first-time, full-time students in UNIV 1000, GSW’s mandatory First Year Experience class during fall term in the context of helping them understand how to plan for spring registration. The pathways have also been made available on the Office of the Registrar website. These pathways must now be created for students who enter in a different semester or in a different cycle.

Measurement:

As part of monitoring the progress of first-time, full-time students towards completing 30 credit hours during the first year, GSW has begun to monitor the progress of its cohorts at two points during each academic year, at the end of fall term and spring term. To measure this element of our plan, GSW will begin to track credit hour progression in the aggregate and disaggregated by degree program or focus area not only for first-year student, but also for second-, third-, and fourth-year students. The schedule will be as follows using the last four cohorts as examples.

	2018	2017	2016	2015
Spring 2019	Percentage of students with 30 or more credit hours completed by the end of term	Percentage of students with 60 or more credit hours completed by the end of term	Percentage of students with 90 or more credit hours completed by the end of term	Percentage of students with 120 or more credit hours completed by the end of term
	Percentage of students with fewer than 30	Percentage of students with fewer than 60	Percentage of students with fewer than 90	Percentage of students with fewer than 120 credit hours completed by the end of term

	credit hours completed by the end of term	credit hours completed by the end of term	credit hours completed by the end of term	
Fall 2019	Percentage of students with 45 or more credit hours completed by the end of term Percentage of students with fewer than 45 credit hours completed by the end of term	Percentage of students with 75 or more credit hours completed by the end of term Percentage of students with fewer than 75 credit hours completed by the end of term	Percentage of students with 105 or more credit hours completed by the end of term Percentage of students with fewer than 105 credit hours completed by the end of term	Percentage of students with 120 or more credit hours completed by the end of term (excluding those who graduated during spring or summer 2019) Percentage of students with fewer than 120 credit hours completed by the end of term
Spring 2020	Percentage of students with 60 or more credit hours completed by the end of term Percentage of students with fewer than 60 credit hours completed by the end of term	Percentage of students with 90 or more credit hours completed by the end of term Percentage of students with fewer than 90 credit hours completed by the end of term	Percentage of students with 120 or more credit hours completed by the end of term Percentage of students with fewer than 120 credit hours completed by the end of term	Percentage of students with 120 or more credit hours completed by the end of term (excluding those who graduated during fall 2019) Percentage of students with fewer than 120 credit hours completed by the end of term

Success on this measure both in the aggregate and by program will be indicated by rising percentages of students at or above the benchmarks of 30, 60, 90 and 120 credits hours.

Plan for Change:

The plan is to identify specific entry points and sequences of classes within degree pathways for first-time, full-time students who begin in spring or summer term. In addition, advisors of transfer students will be trained to use the degree pathways, Degree Works, and the Student Educational Planner to help transfer students make personalized degree plans based on their progress towards a degree before being admitted to GSW. Training transfer advisors to use tools such as degree pathways and the Student Educational Planner will then be adapted and applied to academic advising at all levels.

As a part of the academic planning process during the 2019-20 Academic Year, Deans and Department Chairs responsible for overseeing academic programs will identify the necessary entry points and sequences of classes for each degree program for implementation beginning summer term 2020. The Office of the Registrar and Office of Academic Affairs, in consultation with academic units and the Office of First Year Experience, will be responsible for planning and implementing the transfer advisor training for continuing students from the 2017 and previous first-time, full-time cohorts.

Strategic Alignment:

This element aligns with GSW's current Strategic Plan as well as the ongoing institutional goal of increasing enrollment through recruitment, retention, and progression efforts. Specifically, this element aligns with two parts of goal 1.3 under Strategic Theme 1 Expanding High-Impact Teaching and Learning Experiences:

- 1.3 Incorporate retention and progression efforts as a seamless integration to the learning environment and campus culture.
 - 1.3.1 - Improve curricular and student support infrastructure to enhance student access, student success, and educational quality.
 - 1.3.3 - Increase student retention, persistence, and timely graduation to support student success.

Heightening Academic Engagement

Description of need:

The value of high-impact practices on increased retention rates, increased rates of student engagement, better overall cumulative learning, and greater potential for future job attainment and career success is well founded. However, GSW has not had a systematic way of assessing the types of high impact practices available campus-wide, the quality of the interactions, or the participation of activities off campus such as internships, service learning or community-based learning projects, study abroad, participation in undergraduate research, or the use of living and learning communities.

Current situation:

While students at GSW have many opportunities to participate in high impact practices, there is no campus-wide understanding of what they are, nor resources available for faculty interested in increasing these types of activities inside or outside of the classroom with students. We had our second annual Undergraduate Research Showcase which has grown in participants each year, but we will continue to increase in size and scope. We also have multiple study abroad trips each year but they have minimal participation and need further advertisement and recruitment. Finally, we are in our third year of offering HIPO grant opportunities to faculty but need to better determine the impact of those activities on our campus community.

Measurement:

We will measure student participation in a wide variety of high impact practices and opportunities across campus for the 2019-2020 academic year and compare, when possible, with rates from the previous year. We will seek student feedback concerning the quality of both the experience and the implementation process for high impact activities when feasible.

Plan for Change:

We have created a new position called the Director of Experiential Learning which is housed in the Office of Academic Affairs. This person will develop and oversee the use of an MoA or MoU for all internship and practicum sites to ensure our students are participating in high engaging learning activities when in these environments, and will track where we have students placed in the local

community. This person will also work with study abroad on recruitment of students and quality of programs being offered. We will provide professional development for faculty in areas of interest to ensure they are aware of how to implement high impact activities for their students.

Strategic Alignment:

This element aligns with GSW's Strategic Theme 1 Expanding High-Impact Teaching and Learning Experiences:

- 1.1. Provide opportunities for experiential learning and community engagement across the curriculum
- 1.2 Support innovative curriculum that furthers academic excellence
- 1.3 Incorporate retention and progression efforts as a seamless integration to the learning environment and campus culture

Completing Critical Milestones

Description of need:

It is important that students and faculty in all degree programs be aware of the foundational courses that are crucial to student success in completing the program; i.e., catapult courses. Identifying the most important catapult course for each degree program will inform GSW's academic planning processes specifically in the areas of curriculum, academic support, and advising.

Current situation:

GSW has identified several critical course milestones as part of the Momentum Year process. UNIV 1000 the GSW First-Year Experience underwent a major overhaul during the 2018-2019 academic year and will be in the adjust-refine stage of this course redevelopment during the 2019-2020 academic year. MATH 1111 College Algebra completed the Gateway to Completion course redevelopment process during the 2018-2019 academic year. ENGL 1101 Composition I, POLS 1101 American Government, and SOCI 1101 completed year one of the G2C course redevelopment process.

Measurement:

GSW already collects grade distribution data and DFWI rates for all courses, so these data provide both benchmarks of past student performance in courses and a means of tracking whether planned interventions have positive effects on student success. GSW will also use future iterations of the Catapult Program Dashboard to monitor how levels of success in identified courses affect program completion.

Plan for Change:

The plan is to identify three to five crucial catapult courses for each degree program during the next year as part of GSW's regular assessment and planning process. In 2019-2020, all academic programs will be in the first year of a three-year cycle of program assessment. During the first year of the process, programs specify their plan for assessing program learning outcomes for the next three years in preparation for a three-year assessment trend report that will be due in fall 2021 during this cycle. As part of the assessment planning process for this year, deans and department chairs will be asked to

identify catapult classes in each degree program for special attention in the program assessment process.

During years two and three of the program assessment cycle deans, department chairs, and program faculty will be tasked to create data driven plans to redevelop each program's catapult courses with the aim of deepening learning and improving student success in the courses. The programs will be encouraged to consider supplemental instruction and advising as part of this course redevelopment process, and to adapt the lessons learned and pedagogies identified from the general education course redevelopment efforts to this process. The Office of Academic Affairs will coordinate with the Office of First Year Programs, which oversees tutoring and supplemental instruction, to implement improvements in supplemental instruction. The Office of Academic Affairs will also insure that any suggested improvements in advising related to catapult courses become part of ongoing advisor training.

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