# Momentum Plan for 2022
## Georgia Southwestern State University
## Section 1: Your Student Success Inventory

Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW) remains an institution with limited human and fiscal resources that is also beginning the process of SACSCOC Reaffirmation during the next year. Therefore, GSW will focus on three aspects of our Momentum work that are compassable and have had some success.

We will continue our work with Storm Tracks, GSW's degree pathways, and scale pressure testing of Storm Tracks as part of the Comprehensive Program Review process. Training faculty advisors in using Storm Tracks and the Student Educational Planner templates for which Storm Tracks were used to develop is a key to future development and effective use of these resources.

A crucial part of our Momentum work will be helping students develop a sense of social belonging at GSW. This aspect of a productive academic mindset has been affected profoundly by the pandemic, since many of our incoming first-time students in the last two cohorts have experienced serious social disruptions as well as a loss of structure resulting from their experiences during the last two years of high school. These disruptive experiences will affect incoming cohorts for years to come.

GSW's Big Idea, TILT in co-curricular as well as curricular experiences, will be continued and extended to help students see not only the purposes of academic and student affairs activities, but also help them to see how GSW's purposes align with and compliment their own purposes. This Momentum work aligns with the GSW Experience as defined by our Post-Pandemic Task Force. The GSW Experience includes connecting students with people who will impact their lives, helping students develop their sense of purpose, and preparing them for their lives after graduation.

| Activity/Project Name | Storm Tracks |
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| Momentum Area (select all that apply) | ☐ Purpose<br>X Pathways<br>☐ Mindset<br>X Change Management<br>X Data & Communications |
| Activity/Project Overview or Description (what this is?) | Refine pressure testing of Storm Tracks (GSW's degree pathways) by using Curricular Analytics during Comprehensive Program Review. Also train faculty to use Storm Tracks and Student Educational Planner effectively. |
| Activity/Project Activity Status (where is this in process? E.g., studying, initiating, piloting, scaling, maintaining, retiring, etc.) | We piloted the testing of Storm Tracks as part of the Comprehensive Program Review process during the current academic year by analyzing the courses taken by students from the 2019 and 2020 cohorts majoring in Chemistry and History. The process we used was essentially manual, so we are excited about the possibility of incorporating the Curricular Analytics tool into our process. We will be scaling pressure testing to all CPRs during the 2022-23 cycle |

| Evaluation/Assessment plan (Key Performance Indicators, assessment plan, anticipated time period, reporting and review) | Evaluation Plan and measures: If students follow their Storm Tracks, they will presumably graduate within four years. Therefore, we would expect to see an increase in both four-year and six-year graduation rates within the next two to three years. A more reliable measure may be time to degree, both overall and by degree program. |
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| | Baseline measures: 2015 four- and six-year graduation rates, as well as average time to degree. |
| | Goal or targets: Increase 4 YR Graduation Rate to 25%<br>Increase 6 YR Graduation Rate to 40% |
| | Time period/duration: 3 years |
| Progress and Adjustments (what has been accomplished and what changes do you feel you need to make) | Storm Tracks for all majors have been reviewed and used as templates for implementing the Student Educational Planner. Now we need to make sure that the pressure testing process is scaled throughout our CPR process and that the curriculum underlying the pathways does not delay or block student success. |
| Plan for the year ahead (What steps will you be taking in 2022) | Work on identifying areas of unnecessary curricular complexity to help simplify pathways. For instance, our English program is already considering dropping the ENGL 1102 prerequisite for our Area C Literature classes. In addition our Biology and Chemistry programs are both working to simplify their curriculum. |
| What challenges will affect your ability to do this activity? What support do you need from outside your institution (e.g., the System Office or other institutions) to be successful? | Human and fiscal resources have been and continue to be GSW's biggest challenge to our momentum activities in general.<br><br>For this particular part of our plans, the system could help us by replacing the time to degree dashboard that was available from the Post-Secondary Data Partnership with a similar tool on QLIK. It would also be useful to have updated information on Catapult courses on QLIK. |
| Project Lead/point of contact | Bryan Davis, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs |

| Activity/Project Name | Increasing Social Belonging |
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| Momentum Area (select all that apply) | X Purpose<br>☐ Pathways<br>X Mindset<br>☐ Change Management<br>Data & Communications |
| Activity/Project Overview or Description (what this is?) | **Social Belonging** – helping students become connected and engaged on campus both socially and academically. |
| Activity/Project Activity Status (where is this in process? E.g., studying, initiating, piloting, scaling, maintaining, retiring, etc.) | FYE Check-In Meetings (maintaining), Events targeted to first-year students (maintaining), The Brotherhood Living and Learning Community for African-American males (piloting), administering the Clifton Strengths Assessment to all first-year students and then connecting them to like students during New Student Orientation (maintaining) |
| | Evaluation Plan and measures: |

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| Evaluation/Assessment plan (Key Performance Indicators, assessment plan, anticipated time period, reporting and review) | Retention numbers, event attendance, event evaluations |
| | Baseline measure – fall 2018 cohort retention rates |
| | Goal or targets – increased participation and retention |
| | Time period/duration - yearly |
| Progress and Adjustments (what has been accomplished and what changes do you feel you need to make) | -First-year students have been assigned an FYE advisor and an academic advisor who work together as part of the students' success team.  Students meet with both advisors throughout their first year.<br>-Communication to students has been increased and with intentionality.<br>-Diversified types of events are being planned to reach across different student groups.<br>-The UNIV 1000 First-Year Seminar course needs to be revamped to include essential skills training for students.  The students need to be taught how to socially acclimate to college and back to normal classroom behavior and expectations after the pandemic. |
| Plan for the year ahead (What steps will you be taking in 2022) | -Revamp Storm Registration Days to have specific days aligned with specific academic departments.<br>-Create a sophomore/2nd year retention plan.<br>-incorporate Mindset programs in LLC and residential hall programs |
| What challenges will affect your ability to do this activity? What support do you need from outside your institution (e.g., the System Office or other institutions) to be successful? | -The ongoing effects of the pandemic and lower admissions standards are still impacting the campus climate both socially and academically.<br>-More funding and standardized practices are needed.<br>- Centralized hub for seeking retention program ideas and implementation resources. |
| Project Lead/point of contact | Dr. Laura Boren, Executive Vice Present for Student Engagement and Success |

# GSW Big Idea: TILT

GSW's big idea for 2021-22 was to inform our overall approach during the academic 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. In spring 2021 we provided more faculty and staff development opportunities that infused TILT principles into course and into co-curricular activities, which included two campus-wide workshops on TILT, followed by a summer-long faculty learning community (FLC) surrounding TILT. A panel of faculty participants hosted a faculty development session during our faculty planning period, Southwestern Week, to share their work and insights regarding TILT, along with Kenn Barron from Motivate Lab, who presented on integrating mindset principles in the classroom. We have developed a TILT webpage dedicated to housing TILT resources, including past workshop recordings and helpful

links to TILT materials, and we have created a TILT Brown Bag Series, where faculty and staff gather together in informal, yet structured, settings to discuss topics surrounding TILT. Faculty participating in TILT efforts have been invited to contribute their findings to a special topics issue of a teaching and learning journal, *Perspectives in Learning,* which two TILT leaders at GSW will be co-editing in 2022.

The next steps of our Big Idea of TILT will be to adopt TILT into more co-curricular activities and involve more members of our Division of Student Engagement and Success to learn more about integrating TILT principles into student activities. We will be continuing much of the work we began last year (2021) with TILT, including continuing the TILT summer FLC series, TILT Brown Bag Series, and potentially a TILT Teaching Circle. We have seen strong interest in TILT among our faculty and staff, and it would be prudent for us to foster the interest and excitement surrounding TILT by continuing these efforts.

## Section 2: Reflecting on your Momentum Work & Minding the Gaps

Faculty have embraced our Big Idea and we are also getting significant traction with staff, especially the staff in Student Engagement and Success. Striving for transparency not only in curricular teaching and learning, but also in co-curricular teaching and learning helps students connect the underlying purposes for the experiences that GSW offers them making it possible for students to connect GSW's purposes to their own sense of purpose.

GSW has restarted a full slate of face-to-face campus events and co-curricular experiences during the second year of the pandemic. As planned, we have increased the number of study away opportunities for students and successfully launched the Brotherhood living and learning community for African American male students. These activities are designed to help students find their niches in the GSW community.

Related to our success with Storm Track degree pathways and the Student Educational Planner is our success in providing other tools to improve advising at GSW. We have completed and posted online our Advising Handbook that assembles most of the vital information advisors need in one place, and we have distributed Advising Checklists to all advisors to be used as they begin meeting with all their advisees each semester prior to early registration. One checklist provides a set of questions that can be used with any student during pre-registration advising and the other a set of questions that can be used with transfer students during their initial contact with their GSW advisor before they register for the first time.

As part of GSW's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) identification process, the QEP Subcommittee of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee has already identified lower than expected credit intensity as an ongoing issue. This area will be a priority because it has effects on several general measures of student success including retention, progression, and graduation. Since taking 15 credit hours or more per semester has a demonstrated positive effect on academic success, getting more first year students to reach or exceed the 15 credit hours per semester threshold should result in greater retention rates.

Getting students in the habit of taking 15 or more credit hours per semester should result in increased four-year and six-year graduation rates, as well.

By virtually every measure of student success, GSW's male students perform more poorly than our female students as you will see below in the Goal Setting Section. This performance gap holds true for all races and ethnicities, although underrepresented groups generally perform more poorly on the same measures than White students. Moreover, women in whatever racial or ethnic category generally perform better on the same measures as White males. Closing this gender gap will be crucial to reaching the goals set below.

GSW's continuing focus on effective degree pathways and straightforward curriculum that can be completed in four years is intended to have a positive effect on the progression and graduation of all students, but should also further our goals for increasing the performance of male students. Improving credit intensity for all students will also be facilitated by a close look at the messages we send about withdrawing from classes. We need to make sure that we take a nuanced, individualized approach to advisory conversations with students about whether or not to withdraw from a class in which they are underperforming at midterm.

Similarly, continuing to examine the effectiveness of our mechanisms for integrating all students into the GSW community and using those results to improve should positively affect all GSW students in general, as well as our male students in particular. For instance, as we continue the implementation of the GSW Brotherhood living and learning community for African American male students, we will gain insights that can be applied not only to all male students, but also all GSW students. The Brotherhood was implemented in fall 2021 with 15 first-year students, 13 of whom returned for spring 2022; two new students who began in spring 2022 were added to the program at that time. We are aware that our efforts to shrink gaps must not signal that we lack confidence in our students. All efforts to close gaps must send the wise feedback message that while college education is not easy, we are confident that all our students belong in college and have a place in the GSW Community.

Our Big Idea has the potential to extend transparency and equity throughout the GSW Experience. The act of examining the messages we send to students about our expectations to discern where we are making ineffective assumptions about our students as an audience and where we are using imprecise language will improve our understanding of ourselves as educators, as well as of our students. Such transparency will make our expectations clearer and more transparent to all our students a goal that also serves the cause of equity.

GSW no longer has access to the Post-Secondary Data Partnership (PDP) dashboards since the System grant funding ended, and we do not have the resources to pay for the service on our own nor does our Office of Institutional Research have the time and personnel to provide the necessary data to create and maintain our own dashboards. Therefore, it would be useful if the USG add several resources to the QLIK site. The most important resources for GSW would be related to credit intensity, since we have used in the PDP Credit Accumulation, First-Year Credit Accumulation, and Time to Credentials dashboards productively in the past year or so. These resources would help us monitor our effectiveness on our work to close credit intensity gaps between our male and our female students. Another resource that GSW has used in the past is the Catapult Course dashboards that the system provided. Since the resource was created using only the 2012 cohort of first-time full-time students (as we understand it) and curricula have changed over time, it would be useful to have data from the 2013, 2014, and 2015

cohorts now and for future cohorts in QLIK site, as well. If we had to choose between the two dashboards that were provided, the one for major programs would be more useful than the one for general education courses. Having these data will help with course improvement efforts, maintaining and improving Storm Tracks, and with identifying areas for potential curricular simplification.

The goals set below generally relate to our observations about the gender gaps in the performance of GSW students.

| Area | Baseline (year) measure | Time period/Time from now | Goal/Target |
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| Enrollment & Diversity | Enrollment = 3158 (Fall 2021)<br><br>GSW's racial and ethnic makeup closely mirrors the overall distributions for the state as a whole.<br><br>GSW Fall 2019 = 60% White; 28% African American<br><br>US Census for Georgia 2019 = 58% White; 32% African American | Two years | Enrollment = 3300 (Fall 2023) |
| Retention & Closing Retention Gaps | Retention = 54.1% institution specific; 62.1 system wide (Fall 2020).<br><br>Male Retention = 49.4% institution | Two Years | Retention = 69% institution specific (Fall 2022)<br><br><br>Male Retention = 65% institution specific |

| | specific;<br>53.2% system<br>wide<br><br>Female Retention = 56.4% institution specific; 66.5 system wide.<br><br>Close gap between male and female retention. | | |
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| Graduation & Closing Graduation Gaps (150% of time/100% of time) | 6 YR Graduation Rate = 33.96% institution specific; 48.13 system wide (2015 Cohort).<br><br>6 YR Graduation Rate Male = 24.2% institution specific; 34.0 system wide<br><br>6 YR Graduation Rate Female = 40.5% institution specific; 57.7 system wide.<br><br>4 YR Graduation Rate = 20% institution | Three Years | 6 YR Graduation Rate = 40% institution specific (2018 Cohort)<br><br>6 YR Graduation Rate Male = 30% institution specific<br><br>4 YR Graduation Rate = 25% institution specific |

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| | specific; 22.7% system wide | | |
| | 4 YR Graduation Rate Male = 11.1% institution specific; 13.1% system wide. | | 4 YR Graduation Rate Male = 15% institution specific |
| | 4 YR Graduation Rate Female = 26.1% institution specific; 29.3% system wide | | |
| | Close gaps between male and female students on both 4 YR and 6 YR Graduation Rates | | |
| Completion of Area A courses within the first two semesters | ENGL 1101 Completed First Year (2020 Cohort) = 76% | Four Years | ENGL 1101 Complete First Year (2023 Cohort) = 85% |
| | Area A2 MATH Completed First Year = 50% | | Area A2 MATH Completed First Year =60% |
| Credit Intensity for full time students and closing disparities | Credit Accumulation Rate (2019 | Four Years | Credit Accumulation Rate (2023 Cohort) = 38% |

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| | Cohort) = 30.6% | | |
| | Credit Accumulation Rate Male = 24.6% | | Credit Accumulation Rate = 32% |
| | Credit Accumulation Rate Female = 38.6% | | |
| | First-Year Credit Completion Rate = 23 credit hours | | First-Year Completion Rate = 30 credit hours |
| | First-Year Credit Completion Male = 22.5 credit hours | | First-Year Completion Rate Male = 29 credit hours |
| | First-Year Credit Completion Female = 24.9 credit hours | | |
| | Close gap between male and female Credit Accumulation and First-Year Credit Completion Rates | | |

# Section 3: Lessons from the Pandemic

There are two primary ways that we had to reimagine our services during the pandemic that we will continue for the foreseeable future. In classes, we had to make much more extensive use of videotaping than we had before the pandemic. Whether that video took the form of taping or streaming classes in real time with a live audience so to speak, or was taped for later sharing, video became a record that could reviewed by students multiple times if they wanted to do so. Having the capacity to provide this record to students proved to be useful during the recent surge of the Omicron variant when individual students had to quarantine, so we plan to continue making these records available to students. In student support services, we had to develop scheduling systems to allow students to meet with staff without having to wait in crowded waiting areas or long lines. We will continue to make these strategies routine so that students can receive support in safe and convenient ways.

Since the pandemic GSW has simply had to open as many lines of communication as possible with students. Before the pandemic, most communication with students was carried on through Radar email which was defined as the official line of communication between GSW and its students. While Radar email is still the official line of communication with students, since the pandemic we have been using text messaging and social media to augment email correspondence. We have learned, if we didn't already know, that some students who do not read email can be reached through a text message, an Instagram story, or a social media post. We learned that concise messages with live links to more information work best. And we learned that important communications, such as when registration or graduation will take place and how to prepare for those events require a specific plan to coordinate the messages and release dates of the messages through the various communication channels.

GSW has had a starkly bifurcated experience with the students we serve since the beginning of the pandemic. On the one hand, while the students who were already at GSW in March 2020 had their educational experience interrupted, they have largely overcome those interruptions to continue their education successfully. On the other hand, while we expected our new students to be affected by the pandemic, we were not really prepared for the extent to which these students' resilience and mental health have been affected as a result of their high school experiences, especially for the fall 2021 cohort many of whom had not been in a classroom physically for the last 18 months of high school. These students seem to have forgotten many of the expectations associated with face-to-face education, such as the importance of attending class and asking for help when needed, and to have been largely unaware of the challenge transitioning from high school to college. We need to double down on TILT principles to make the expectations clear and to open lines of communication to ask for help when necessary.

The important questions for GSW relate to sorting the triggers or causes for behaviors such as missing class or not submitting assignments on time, if at all. We need to be able to identify the differences between a student who missed class because he or she is unmotivated or disengaged, or because he or she is experiencing mental health issues, for instance.  Determining the cause of any specific student behavior has always been difficult, but has become increasingly crucial during the pandemic. In order to increase the success of all GSW students, we need to be able to target each individual student with the most effective intervention(s) at the most effective time.