Momentum Plan for 2023
Georgia Southwestern State University

Section 1: Reflecting on Momentum Work & Minding the Gaps

Areas of Strength

Georgia Southwestern State University's (GSW) primary areas of success over the last couple of years have been with First-Year Students, with Faculty Buy-in on TILT, and with Development of Student Leadership.

Like almost all institutions across of USG and the nation, GSW experienced a significant drop in retention from the 2019 (66.2%) to 2020 cohort (53.9%). However, by staying the course in our efforts to develop a Productive Academic Mindset in first-year students, we have begun to recover and feel that we are in a good position to continue our success with first-year students. The retention rate for the 2021 cohort increased to 59.7% and the fall to spring retention for the 2022 cohort (86.9%) increased by a little over 3% when compared with the 2021 cohort (83.7%). The work we continue to do in UNIV 1000, GSW's first-year experience course, on developing a growth mindset and metacognition in first-year students pays dividends. In addition, check in meetings conducted by the Office of First-Year Experience with all regular first-year students between week three and week six or seven of their first term helps students adjust to college and develops a connection to the advising staff. During fall 2022, 310 check in meetings were held. The ability to reestablish face-to-face co-curricular and social activities for student in fall 2021 has also made a huge difference in developing a sense of belonging.

Over the past year, GSW has continued to promote TILT activities across campus, though in a more grass-roots and organic way than in the prior year. "TILT" has become a household term for many faculty members across campus, as faculty who were at GSW when the campus-wide TILT initiative began are at least familiar with TILT, and many continue to actively use TILT strategies in their classrooms. New faculty have been introduced to TILT during their new faculty orientation and engage with faculty across the institution who are using TILT. One noteworthy accomplishment is that the journal Perspectives in Learning published a special topics issue on TILT that included empirical and reflective work written by GSW faculty across the institution. In fact, faculty from each of GSW's four colleges were manuscript authors in the special topics issue. The issue focused on the development and implementation of TILT as GSW's Big Idea and highlights faculty, faculty developers, and administrative perspectives.

The establishment of the President Jimmy Carter Leadership Program (PCLP) in 2019 launched GSW on a trajectory to develop a leadership curriculum that includes a requirement that students in the program join and seek leadership positions in student organizations. In addition, the Canes Leading Canes (CLC) leadership curriculum is available to other potential student leaders, including Storm Spotters (peer mentors for incoming students) and Residential Leaders (students who live in the residence halls). During fall 2022, the CLC curriculum was updated. Developing leadership skills contributes to students' sense of belonging to the GSW community and positions them for success after graduation.

Areas for Improvement

Two areas where GSW needs to improve are supporting students who are at risk academically and retaining second-year students.

A study done by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness during summer 2021 showed that fewer than half of the students who were academically reinstated after academic suspension were successful in completing a degree. Of the eleven students reinstated between fall 2017 and spring 2021, only three completed a degree by fall of 2022. Two others in that group did make it back to good standing, but only one of them is currently registered and the other left GSW without a degree. The other six left GSW and have not returned. The study did not look at students who left on either Academic Warning or Academic Probation. We concluded that at least part of the problem was inadequate support for students who are at risk of leaving school. The proposed solution has been the revision of GSW's Academic Standing Policy to have only two academic statuses: Good Standing and University Supported Enrollment (USE). Students who fall below good standing at any point are placed on USE. Students on USE status fill out a Student Support Questionnaire that aims to give an advisor information on the student, including academic behaviors and other factors that may influence academic success. USE students are assigned an advisor called a Success Champion who uses the data from the Support Questionnaire and the student's record to develop a Success Plan for returning to Good Standing. The new policy was implemented in Fall 2022, so the plan is still a work in progress. Nonetheless, during the period between the end of fall term 2022 and the beginning of spring 2023 over 100 success plans were completed and most of those plans included updates to class schedules designed to enhance student success as well as agreements on the part of the students to use academic supports.

For the 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 cohorts, second-year retention decreased between 12.2% and 20.6% from first-year retention, or an average of 16.2%. Some of the students who are lost leave because they lose financial aid, so many of these students will be helped by the changes in Academic Standing Policy described above, but we also have work to do the smooth to the transition from the first to the second year on campus.

Two areas that we will target for improvement are the transition for advising by the First-Year Experience staff to advising by faculty advisors that occurs near the end of the first year or the beginning of the second. Another area for improvement is the transition of students who are admitted to GSW's University College (UC) from being UC students to begin regular continuing students. In both cases we are hoping to develop the relational over the transactional aspects of advising. Major programs are also being challenged to create a sense of belonging in the majors through both curricular methods like second-year seminars and co-curricular methods, such as departmental social and service organizations or lecture series. As we study additional ways to improve second-year success, we will privilege strategies that are proven to improve success of male students and first- generation students, although any such strategies that are adopted will be applied to all students.

Goal Setting

Over the last year, as a part of GSW's SACSCOC Reaffirmation of Accreditation process as well as our Strategic Planning Process, we have developed updated targets for student achievement in the areas of Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation. The subcommittee of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee that proposed the targets chose to set five-year targets rather than year-to-year targets to coincide with GSW's current 2022-27 Strategic Plan. These targets we subsequently approved by GSW's Administrative Council.

Area	Time period/Time from now	Goal
Enrollment & Diversity	Five years from now (updated goal based on updated student achievement goals from fall 2022).	3300 with distribution of race mirroring the state population as a whole
Retention & Retention gaps	Five years from now (updated goal based on updated student achievement goals from fall 2022).	70% overall retention Close the gap of approximately 7-10% between retention of female and male students
Graduation & Graduation gaps	Five years from now (updated goal based on updated student achievement goals from fall 2022).	38% overall Close the gap of approximately 7-10% between female and male graduation rates
Completion of Area A courses in the first Year	Year Two of Four Years	Increase ENGL 1101 completion rate in first 30 hours to 85% Increase Area A2 Math completion rate in first 30 hours to 60%
Credit Intensity for full time students and closing disparities	Year Two of Four Years	Increase credit accumulation rate to 38 %

The best thing the system could do to help GSW would be to keep supporting Tableau and Qlik so that we have access to the data we need in a form that can be used by administrators, and academic and student support programs to monitor student success and plan for the future.

Section 2: Student Success Inventory

GSW remains an institution with limited human and fiscal resources that is also part of SACSCOC Reaffirmation class of 2024. Therefore, GSW will focus on two 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 three cohorts have experienced serious social disruptions as well as a loss of structure resulting from their experiences during the last three years of high school. These disruptive experiences will affect incoming cohorts for years to come.

Activity/Project Name	
Momentum Area (select all that apply)	☐ Purpose ☐ √ Pathways ☐ Mindset ☐ Change Management ☐ √ Data & Communications
Activity/Project Overview or Description (what this is?)	The project is to update our CPR process to include pressure testing of our Storm Tracks using Curricular Analytics. In addition, we plan to work to make the CPR process more focused on student success, to make the process a student success activity.
Activity/Project Activity Status (where is this in process? E.g., studying, initiating, piloting, scaling, maintaining, retiring, etc.)	This project is a continuation of last year's attempt to refine our CPR process to include pressure testing of our Storm Tracks and the use of Curricular Analytics. The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs is currently working with leadership in the College of Arts and Sciences to update our CPR process, but we are also working to make the process more focused on student success. We will implement the changes to the process during the 2023-24 academic year.
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. We will also look at time to degree, both overall and by degree program.
	Baseline measure: 2016 four- and six-year graduation rates, as well as average time to degree.

	Goal or targets: Four-year graduation rate = 25%, six-year graduation rate = 38%
	Time period/duration: Five years
Progress and Adjustments (what has been accomplished and what changes do you feel you need to make)	We want not only to examine the success of Storm Tracks and the complexity of our curricula, but also to place that examination in the context of student success in meeting program learning outcomes.
Plan for the year ahead (What steps will you be taking in 2023)	Update and implement an updated CPR process to identify unnecessary curricular complexity to help simplify pathways, while paying attention to data on student success in obtaining program learning outcomes. GSW is also considering participation in the Gardiner Institute's Curricular Analytics project.
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?	We do not have experience with using Curricular Analytics, although the activities related to the Pathways thread during the last two summits have been informative and useful. We considered joining the Gardner Institute's Curricular Analytics Community, but the cost was prohibitive during the current period of budget uncertainty.
Project Lead/point of contact	Dr. Bryan Davis, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

Activity/Project Name	
Momentum Area (select all that apply)	X Purpose ☐ Pathways X Mindset ☐ Change Management ☐ 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), hosting events targeted to first-year students (maintaining), The Brotherhood Living and Learning Community for African-American males (maintaining), administering the Clifton Strengths Assessment to all first-year students and then connecting them to like students during New Student Orientation (maintaining), revamping the University College program (initiating), creation of the Canes Leading Canes (CLC) program for student leaders including Orientation Leaders and Residential Leaders who work with first-time freshmen (piloting), Thunder Camp extended orientation for first-year students (piloting).
Evaluation/Assessment plan (Key Performance Indicators, assessment plan, anticipated time period, reporting and review)	Evaluation Plan and measures: Retention numbers, event attendance, event evaluations
	Baseline measure - fall 2018 cohort retention rates
	Goal or targets – increased participation in events and progress towards meeting the retention target for the 2027 cohort.

	Time period/duration – yearly
Progress and Adjustments (what has been accomplished and what changes do you feel you need to make)	-First-year students were assigned an FYE advisor and an academic advisor who work together as part of the students' success team. Students met with both advisors throughout their first year. -Communication to students was increased and with intentionality. -Diversified types of events were planned to reach across different student groups. -The UNIV 1000 First-Year Seminar course was revamped to include some essential skills training for students. -Storm Registration Days were aligned to specific college and academic departments with the College Deans presenting the academic session on the day that aligned with their area. -Mindset program have begun to be incorporated in LLC and residential hall programs. -The Canes Leading Canes (CLC) program was created as a joint venture with the Office of First-Year Experience and the Office of Residential and Campus Life to promote servant leadership development for student leaders working with first-year students including Orientation Leaders, Residential Leaders, and Thunder Camp Counselors. We will continue working on improving the program and training student leaders. -The University College program needs to be revamped to address the increase in enrollment in the program, curriculum needs, and student needs.
Plan for the year ahead (What steps will you be taking in 2023)	-Revamp University College program. -Continue to work on creating a sophomore/2nd year retention plan. -Continue to adjust the UNIV 1000 course curriculum to promote essential skills development, academic preparation, social maturity, and self-advocacy. -Continue to develop the Canes Leading Canes (CLC) program.
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?	-Academic preparation and social maturity of first-year students. -A large population of our students are first-generation students who come from a low socioeconomic background -Our male students struggle to perform well academically and to retain at the University.
Project Lead/point of contact	Dr. Laura Boren, Executive Vice Present for Student Engagement and Success