

GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

Unit Strategic Plan

2026 – 2031

*Aligned with **The Hurricane Promise**, the 2026–2031 Strategic Plan of Georgia Southwestern State University*

Unit:

Unit Mission:

Unit Head / Preparer:

Date Submitted:

Instructions for Completing This Template

Complete the fields below for each institutional goal that applies to your unit. For each applicable goal, state the unit objective, the strategy and timeline for achieving it, the method by which the unit will assess it, and the target the unit expects to meet.

Before You Start

- **Review all the strategic pillars and goals first** before drafting any responses, so your unit's plan reflects where you can make the most meaningful contributions that fit your unit's mission.
- **Mark goals as applicable or not applicable.** If a goal genuinely does not apply to your unit, please write “Not applicable” or “N/A” in the Unit Objective row rather than leaving the row blank. That way, reviewers can identify what strategic goals you intentionally skipped.
- **Read the sample reference points** under each goal. They are illustrative, not exhaustive — you can use them to brainstorm or calibrate your plans, but please make sure to describe your unit's actual, specific initiatives.

Filling In Each Field

- **Unit Objective:** Write one specific statement of what your unit will accomplish in support of the GSW goal. Keep it to a single sentence where possible and make sure it is something your unit controls.
- **Implementation Strategy & Timeline:** List the concrete actions your unit will take and when. Break multi-year work into phases (e.g., “Year 1: pilot with two sections; Year 2: scale to all sections; Years 3–5: sustain and refine”) rather than describing only the end state.
- **Assessment Method and Data Collection:** Name the specific instrument, data source, or process you will use (survey, enrollment report, rubric, focus group, etc.), who is responsible for collecting it, and how often.
- **Target:** State a measurable threshold, not just a direction of change (e.g., “85% of participants will report ...” or “increase from 40% to 55% by 2028,” instead of “increase participation”).

Writing Tips

- Use the SMART framework — Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound — for Unit Objectives and Targets.
- Keep language plain and specific; avoid restating the GSW goal language verbatim in your Unit Objective.
- Where a “Hurricane Advantage” benchmark is listed for a goal, make sure your unit's target is consistent with (or contributes to) that institution-wide benchmark.
- One unit objective per applicable goal is sufficient; add a short second sentence only if a single objective can't capture the work.

Review, Approval, & Submission

- Route the completed plan through your normal unit approval process before submission. Your academic Dean will submit the completed report to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness.
- Submit the final report to the Director on Institutional Effectiveness, Dr. Mark Laughlin, by the end of the last business day in October.
- Plans are reviewed and updated annually; you will be asked to report progress against each Target and update strategies each academic year, but additional updates may be needed as external requirements evolve.
- Questions may be directed to Dr. Mark Laughlin (mark.laughlin@gsu.edu).

STRATEGIC PILLAR ONE People

Cultivating a connected, supported community where every member belongs and succeeds

GOAL 1.1 Advance student belonging and connectedness to promote sustainable success

Hurricane Advantage: Every GSW student will actively engage in at least two (2) belonging or connectedness activities per academic year.

Sample reference points: Campus traditions, New Student Orientation, Greek life, athletics, FYE/SYE, academic clubs, registered student organizations, intramurals, on-campus student employment, housing programming, and online engagement.

Unit Objective aligned with Goal 1.1

Implementation Strategy & Timeline

Assessment Method & Data Collection

Target

GOAL 1.2 Strengthen academic and wellness support systems that help students problem-solve and thrive in educational and professional contexts

Sample reference points: UNIV 1000, NISS priorities (financial, advising, and communications), mental health services, early alerts, Title IX, scholarships, tutoring, and the Writing Center.

Unit Objective aligned with Goal 1.2

Implementation Strategy & Timeline

Assessment Method & Data Collection

Target

GOAL 1.3 Support faculty and staff belonging and connectedness through onboarding and ongoing integration Hurricane Advantage: Every new employee will participate in a structured onboarding process that spans the first year of employment. Sample reference points: Onboarding, new faculty orientation, new staff orientation, mentorship, Faculty Senate and Staff Senate, Southwestern Week, faculty and staff awards, and campus traditions.	
Unit Objective aligned with Goal 1.3	
Implementation Strategy & Timeline	
Assessment Method & Data Collection	
Target	
GOAL 1.4 Prioritize faculty and staff well-being and development to foster institutional quality and excellence Sample reference points: Center for Teaching and Learning, professional development, retention study, salary study, pathways for advancement, teaching circles, and book clubs.	
Unit Objective aligned with Goal 1.4	
Implementation Strategy & Timeline	
Assessment Method & Data Collection	
Target	

STRATEGIC PILLAR TWO Purpose <i>Advancing academic excellence through transformative learning that shapes students and communities</i>	
GOAL 2.1 Develop and expand high-impact experiential and integrative learning opportunities, particularly those related to critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and global and civic engagement Hurricane Advantage: Every GSW graduate will participate in two (2) high-impact experiential and integrative learning opportunities per year. <i>Sample reference points:</i> HAIL, Study Abroad/Away, PJCLP, Undergraduate Research Symposium, Humanities Symposium, capstone courses, and FYE/SYE.	
Unit Objective aligned with Goal 2.1	
Implementation Strategy & Timeline	
Assessment Method & Data Collection	
Target	
GOAL 2.2 Attain defined levels of enrollment, progression, and completion that demonstrate enhanced student success <i>Sample reference points:</i> NISS academic outcome priority; and enrollment, retention, and completion rates.	
Unit Objective aligned with Goal 2.2	
Implementation Strategy & Timeline	
Assessment Method & Data Collection	
Target	

GOAL 2.3 Drive economic, cultural, and workforce development in Southwest Georgia and beyond <i>Sample reference points: National First Ladies Day Commission, Chamber Concerts, art exhibits, economic impact, academic program portfolio, and community and business partnerships.</i>	
Unit Objective aligned with Goal 2.3	
Implementation Strategy & Timeline	
Assessment Method & Data Collection	
Target	

STRATEGIC PILLAR THREE Profession

Preparing graduates for workforce and civic success through coordinated career services, professional competencies, and communication mastery

GOAL 3.1 Establish a comprehensive, coordinated ecosystem for career services and development that engages every division, college, and unit to strengthen professional readiness and success

Sample reference points: Centralized Career Center, job fairs, resume workshops, mock interviews, Career Week, Senior Day, VITA tax program, and alumni networking.

Unit Objective aligned with Goal 3.1	
Implementation Strategy & Timeline	
Assessment Method & Data Collection	
Target	

GOAL 3.2 Emphasize discipline-specific skills and professional competencies — including digital and data literacy, leadership, adaptability, and collaboration — across curricular and co-curricular programming

Sample reference points: Etiquette workshop training, internships, practicums, ePortfolios, capstones, professional behaviors and dispositions, PJCLP, and HAIL.

Unit Objective aligned with Goal 3.2	
Implementation Strategy & Timeline	
Assessment Method & Data Collection	
Target	

GOAL 3.3 Build professional communication skills through intentional mastery of written, oral, and digital competencies Hurricane Advantage: Every GSW student will demonstrate mastery of at least three (3) professional competencies — drawn from digital and data literacy, leadership, adaptability, and collaboration — through a minimum of two (2) curricular or co-curricular experiences per year. <i>Sample reference points: General education, capstones, student presentations, undergraduate research, Regents' Debate Competition, and Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition.</i>	
Unit Objective aligned with Goal 3.3	
Implementation Strategy & Timeline	
Assessment Method & Data Collection	
Target	