GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSTIY

Strategic Plan Interim Progress Report: 2008-2011

Draft Report Presented to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee
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Prepared by Members of the IEC Subcommittee on Strategic Planning and Assessment:

Brian Adler
Gayle Alston
Andy Bosak
Tony Brown
Lisa Cooper
Lauren DiPaula
Joy McKenzie
Bryan McLain

"Moving Forward" is Georgia Southwestern State University's third strategic plan. Beginning with a revision to the Institutions' Mission Statement in 2008, the plan consists of three strategic goals with multiple action objectives directly related to GSW's mission to cultivate excellence in learning and teaching that encourages intellectual, personal, and social growth for students, faculty, staff, and the community.

Goal One: Cultivating Enrollment Growth

Objective 1: Carefully Increase Enrollment

- There has been a 12.1% increase in total enrollment for the fall terms from 2,717 students in fall 2008 to 3,046 in fall 2011. This enrollment growth occurred primarily in undergraduate enrollment, which increased from 2,420 to 2,811. Graduate enrollment, on the other hand, decreased from 297 to 235.

Fall Term Enrollment

	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	1 YR Change #	%		10 YR Change #	%
Undergraduates	2101	2094	2102	2238	2222	2221	2420	2659	2847	2811	-36	-1.3		710	33.8
Graduates	407	316	221	189	235	184	297	244	190	235	45	23.7		-172	-42.3
Total	2508	2410	2323	2427	2457	2405	2717	2903	3037	3046	9	0.3		538	21.5
Percent Change	-1.1%	-3.9%	-3.6%	4.5%	1.2%	-2.1%	13.0%	6.8%	4.6%	0.3%					

- The IEC Subcommittee surveyed departments in spring 2011 to find out how enrollment growth has impacted their areas. The departments who responded to the survey indicated that the primary impact of enrollment growth can largely be described as an increase in the need for services, space, and equipment. Most of the increases in services are accomplished without an increase in additional staff. Some examples from the survey responses include:

  o The Office of the Assistant Dean of Students handles more violations of student conduct
  o There are more students who require counseling services
  o The Financial Aid Office and the Admissions Office process more applications
  o The Registrar's Office process more VISA applications, transcript evaluations, and graduation checks
  o Additional sections of classes are needed, which requires additional full-time or part-time faculty
  o Scheduling spaces for classes, student activities, and orientation activities has become increasingly difficult
  o Need for more computers in the library and exercise equipment

Survey respondents also made some suggestions for maintaining the quality of services while continuing to increase enrollment. Some of the suggestions include:

o Update technology to improve departmental functions and increase IT support for the functional units
o Gain a better understanding of the relationship between student satisfaction and retention
o Examine the cost/benefit of maintaining low fees. Are we losing more students through a reduction in services than we are gaining through a lower fee schedule?
o Improve interactions between committees who are making similar decisions on similar topics without interacting
o Improve transparency in decision making on budget allocations so that departments understand how the resources gained through increased enrollment are distributed across the university

- In order to increase enrollment, several areas were identified for targeting recruitment efforts. These include recruiting traditional freshmen beyond the immediate Southwest Georgia region, aggressively recruiting transfer students, and expanding efforts to recruit and accommodate adult learners and military veterans.

   o The total number of new beginning freshmen who enrolled in the fall term decreased from 456 in fall 2008 to 392 in fall 2011. However, when the cumulative number of freshmen who enrolled each term during an academic year is examined, the total number of new freshmen increased from 494 in FY 2008 to 561 in FY 2011. The total number of visits to high schools in the counties for the targeted regions increased from 145 for fall 2008 to 245 for fall 2011.

   Although the number of visits to high schools increased during this time, enrollment of students from high schools in the Metro-Atlanta area decreased. Enrollment of students from the Metro-Macon area also decreased, while enrollment from the Metro-Columbus and Metro-Albany areas increased. The decrease in enrollment from students in the Metro-Atlanta region may be related to the decrease in the amount of money spent on advertising in that region. However, the beginning freshmen fall enrollment decreased in most regions from fall 2008 to fall 2011, so the decrease may also be tied to a more pervasive issue like the economy or increased pressure from competing institutions.

   We currently do not have the data for the preceding terms, so it is difficult to determine if enrollment from the targeted regions is currently higher than it was prior to implementation of the strategic plan.

Number of High School Visits by Region

Region	2008	2009	2010	2011
Metro-Atlanta	114	182	175	187
Metro-Macon	18	29	30	35
Metro-Columbus	13	9	19	23
Total	145	220	224	245

Fall Term Beginning Freshmen by County of Origin (Based on High School Attended)

Region	Counties Included:	Fall Term							
		2008		2009		2010		2011	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Metro-Atlanta	Barrow, Bartow, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dekalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Newton, Paulding, Rockdale, Walton	84	18.4	96	20.8	68	14.2	61	15.6
Metro-Macon	Bibb, Houston, Peach	27	5.9	24	5.2	37	7.7	22	5.6
Metro-Columbus	Muscogee, Harris	11	2.4	7	1.5	9	1.9	15	3.8
Metro-Albany	Dougherty, Lee	19	4.2	19	4.1	35	7.3	25	6.4
Metro-Savannah	Chatham, Effingham	6	1.3	5	1.1	8	1.7	3	0.8
Metro-Augusta	Columbia, Richmond	3	0.7	4	0.9	1	0.2	1	0.3
Local	Crisp, Dooly, Macon, Marion, Schley, Sumter, Terrell, Webster	151	33.1	142	30.7	151	31.6	113	28.8
Total Enrollment		456		462		478		392	

Amount Spent on Advertising (excluding Facebook advertisements) by Region

Region	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Metro-Atlanta	21264	31012	17271	16843
Metro-Macon	10424	10100	11035	21720
Metro-Columbus	480	7471	9475	9252
Total	32168	48583	37781	47815

o There was a 9% increase in the number of new transfer students, from 304 in fall 2008 to 331 in fall 2011. However, when the number of new transfers for each term in an academic year is examined, the increase was 47.9%, from 409 in FY 2008 to 605 in FY 2011. While the majority of new transfers enroll in the fall term, a fairly high number also enroll for the first time in the spring and the summer terms. As a result, in the last two years, the cumulative enrollment of new transfers in an academic year now comprise the majority of new students enrolled in an academic year, whereas the cumulative number of new freshmen were once the majority, primarily due to the large fall enrollment.

Number of New Transfers Enrolled in an Academic Year

	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Summer	52	53	50	61	69	84	84	100
Fall	246	248	267	242	233	304	362	362
Spring	95	125	97	121	107	139	154	143
Total	393	426	414	424	409	527	600	605

Number of New Students per Academic Year by Student Type
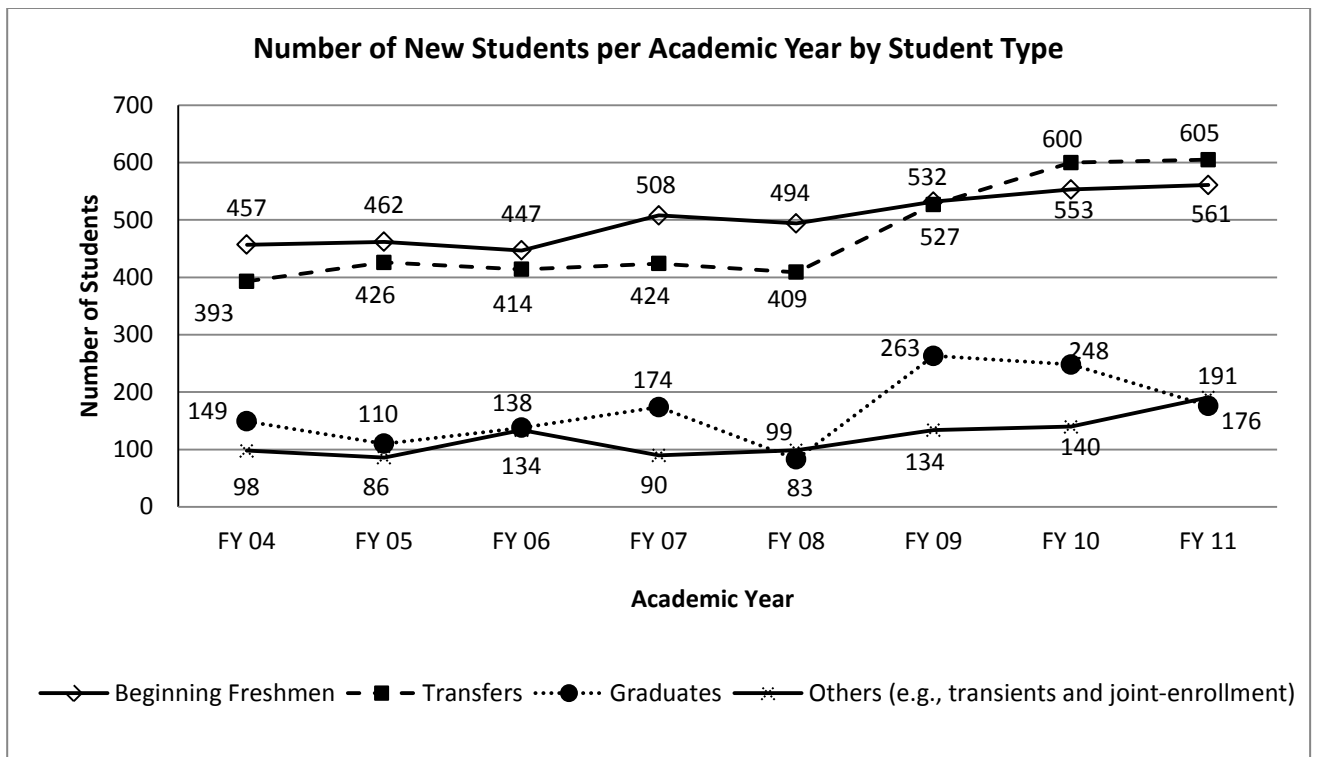
Growth in new transfer enrollment has occurred in every school over the last four academic years. Much of this growth is the direct result of relationships developed with two-year colleges in the University System of Georgia, as well as two-year private institutions and technical colleges, through various Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Transfer Articulation Agreements (TAGs). The School of Business, for example, offers transfer students at participating two-year colleges the ability to complete a Bachelors of Business Administration with majors in management and accounting through on-line classes. In many of these programs, students can receive advising and other services at the institution where they received their associate degree. The School of Computing and Mathematics and The School of Nursing also offer some students the ability to complete degree requirements through on-line courses. The School of Education, on the other hand, offers students face-to-face courses for a Bachelor of Science in Education with a major in early childhood education on the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College campus.

Monitoring the success of some of the programs established through agreements between GSW and other institutions can be somewhat problematic as it is often difficult to determine students who enroll at GSW as a result of the agreements versus those who did not. Currently, The School of Business and The School of Education use students' major codes to identify and track students who enroll through MOUs or TAG agreements. Most of the other students enrolled at GSW must be tracked through prior colleges attended, which can be complicated when students attend multiple institutions (sometimes simultaneously) prior to enrolling at GSW.

New Transfer Enrollment by School or Department and Academic Year

	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Arts and Sciences	108	95	92	92	73	86	81	94
Business Administration	84	109	123	157	144	221	243	232
Computer and Information Sciences	10	13	7					
Computing and Mathematics				23	15	21	19	29
Computing				*14*	*11*	*17*	*13*	*20*
Mathematics				*9*	*4*	*4*	*6*	*9*
Education	86	93	97	74	56	75	113	82
Health and Human Performance	18	26	21	20	19	17	23	20
Nursing	45	48	49	33	81	93	88	128
Unassigned Majors	40	41	25	25	21	14	33	20
Associate Degree Programs	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Transfers	391	426	414	424	409	527	600	605

MOUs and Transfer Articulation Agreements signed during the last four years:

- MOU for Bachelors in Early Childhood Education at ABAC
- Articulation Agreement for Associates of Business Administration to Bachelor of Business Administration with Andrew College
- Articulation Agreement of Pre-Nursing to Bachelor in Nursing with Andrew College
- MOU for Bachelor of Science in Nursing with Bainbridge College
- Course Articulation Agreement for Computer Programs with Columbus Technical College
- MOU for acceptance of credit hours from Columbus Technical College
- 2+2 Agreement in Math and Computer Science with Darton College
- Course Articulation Agreement for Computer Programs with Darton College
- MOU for Bachelor of Business Administration in Management with East Georgia College
- MOU for Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting and Management with Georgia Military College
- MOU for 3 year Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting and Management with Georgia Perimeter College
- Honors Articulation Agreement with Gordon College
- MOU for Bachelor of Business Administration in Management via on-line and at Gordon College Campus
- MOU for Clinical Nurse Leader with Medical College of Georgia
- Course Articulation Agreement for Computer Information Technology Courses with Middle Georgia Technical College
- MOU for Bachelor of Business Administration in Management with South Georgia College
- MOU for South Georgia College Entry Program at GSW
- MOU for acceptance of credit hours with South Georgia Technical College

o   While there are many ways to identify "adult learners," perhaps the most commonly held definition is "undergraduates who are age 25 or older." Another more specific definition is "undergraduates who enroll in college for the first time at age 25 or older." Both definitions identify a group of students who are older than those who traditionally enter college at age 18 and graduate in 4 or 5 years at the age of 22 or 23. Non-traditional students may have started college at age 18 and dropped out for various reasons only to return later. Or they may be students who did not enter college until they were out of high school for several years, which is the distinguishing element of the second definition. By either definition, these students are older and are therefore more likely to have issues, such as work or families responsibilities, which can be additional barriers in the students' path to graduation. However, as the two definitions demonstrate, all "non-traditional" students do not take the same path into college and therefore they do not all have the same needs.

Regardless of the definition used to identify non-traditional students, the numbers enrolled at GSW increased from 2008-2011. It is interesting to note that the percentage of undergraduate students who are non-traditional has remained relatively stable, although the percentage has increased slightly more for those who delayed entry into college until age 25 or older.

Number of "Non-traditional" Students Enrolled during the Fall Term

Undergraduates	Fall Term							
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Age 25 or older at time of first matriculation	421	453	444	454	512	612	650	643
% of Total	20.0	20.2	20.0	20.4	21.2	23.0	22.8	22.9
Age 25 or older	635	655	647	648	705	808	848	855
% of Total	30.2	29.3	29.1	29.2	29.1	30.4	29.8	30.4
Total Undergraduates	2102	2238	2222	2221	2420	2659	2847	2811

In spring 2009, GSW secured a $25,000.00 mini grant to propose projects to facilitate the degree completion of adult learners. Some of the projects outlined in the proposal were participation in the Adult Learning Consortium (ALC), participation in the Noel Levitz Adult Learner Survey (ALS), participation in the College Access Challenge grant research, and establishment of a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program.

PLA provides students with a process to identify and document areas of learning from their past experiences in a prior learning portfolio. The portfolios are evaluated by trained faculty assessors to determine if there is sufficient evidence to tie the student's learning experiences to specific course learning objectives to warrant awarding of course credit. A member of the GSW faculty was selected to coordinate the PLA program and faculty representatives from each school were trained to evaluate students' PLA portfolios. In fall 2010, GSW began to

offer PLA 2000, a course which helps students develop a portfolio for documenting their prior learning experiences. The course is a prerequisite for students applying for PLA credit. Eleven students enrolled in PLA 2000 from fall 2010 through fall 2011, although only seven students completed the course. We do not currently know if any of these students have received course credit for their prior learning experiences.

Non-traditional students who were enrolled in fall 2009 were asked to complete the Noel Levitz ALS. Of the respondents, 57% were married or had a domestic partner, 66% had dependents, and 58% were employed more than 30 hours a week. Some of the challenges identified from the ALS include:

- A need for the institution to explain what is needed for program completion
- Programs that allow students to pace their studies to fit their life and work schedules
- A need for instructors to provide timely feedback about students' academic progress
- Sufficient course offerings each term within the students' program of study
- Choices in course delivery that fit with students' life circumstances
- Help in staying on track with students' program of study
- Need for adequate information about available sources of financial assistance
- Need for receiving credit for learning derived from previous life and work experiences

The College Access Challenge Grant Research project was designed to inform a public outreach campaign to encourage adults to return to college. "Non-returning" student from a variety of USG and technical colleges in Georgia were interviewed and surveyed to determine why students initially enrolled in college, their satisfaction with their experiences, barriers to persistence, process of making decisions to stop out or drop out of college, what students did after leaving college, and what marketing messages best present the advantages of completing a college degree. Some of relevant findings from this survey include:

- Students most frequently identified personal and financial issues as their reasons for leaving college
- Students who have not returned to college were more likely to cite affordability and lack of time as reasons for not returning
- Students who resumed their education at another institution did so because it was more convenient, a better academic fit, more affordable, or they were accepted into a program of interest
- The most frequently cited personal reasons students had for leaving college included conflicts between jobs and studies, personal or health problems, family commitments, lack of time for school, unsure about or changed career goals
- Many of the students (24%) felt that the school could have done very little to help them remain in college, while some (15%) felt that the school could have offered more financial aid
- The majority (63%) of the students worked or looked for work immediately after leaving school

The number of students who receive VA Benefits, which includes spouses and dependents, increased from 37 in fall 2008 to 63 in fall 2011. This is currently the primary method by which

we can identify students who served in the military. However, it is possible that this number may be an under-representation since it includes only students who receive veterans' benefits. Additional coding may be needed to better determine the number of military students.

GSW is recognized as a Military Friendly School for our engagement in various activities, programs, and policies to accommodate military veterans. Some of the activities include:

- Membership in the Service Members Opportunity College Consortium
- Staff advisor to assist veterans with career planning
- Veteran's Student Association

Objective 2: Recruit More International Students

- The number of international students (defined as non-resident aliens) enrolled at GSW increased from 65 in fall 2008 to 108 in fall 2011. The majority of international students are enrolled as undergraduates and this number has steadily increased over the past four years and is the highest enrollment in the last 10 years. Enrollment of international students at the graduate level, however, has increased only slightly and remains below the highest enrollment of 24 students in fall 2007.

Fall Enrollment of International Students
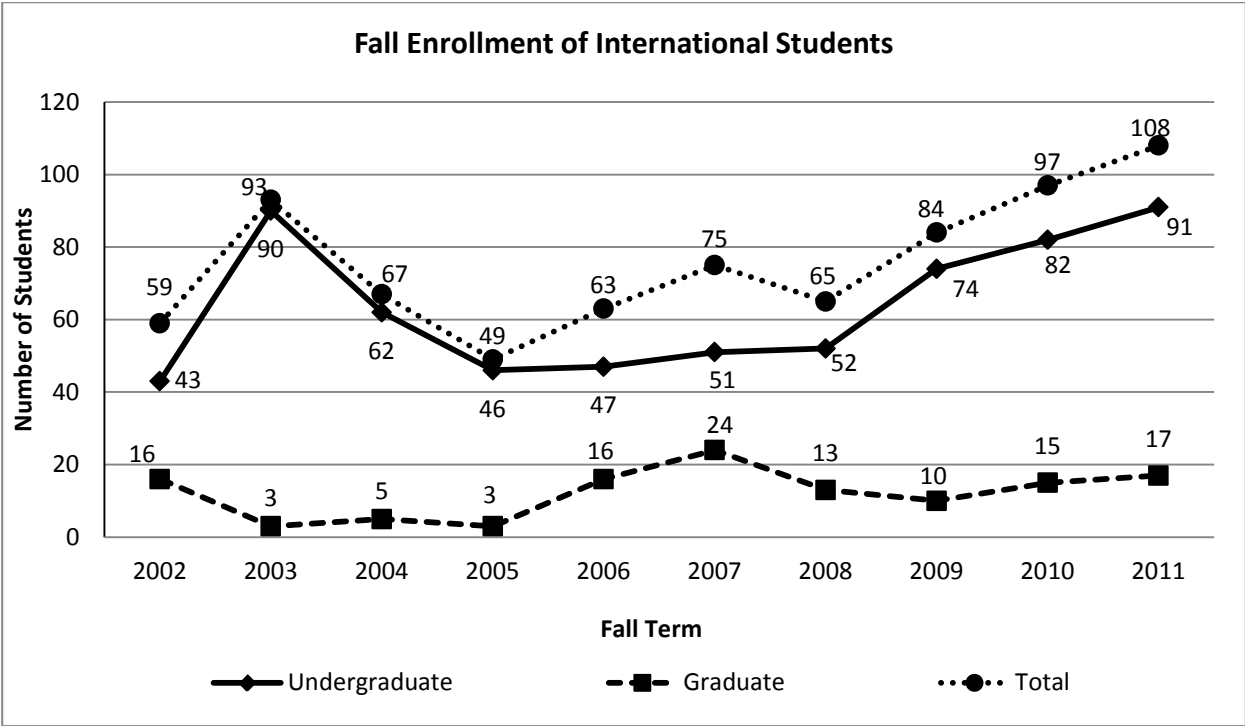
- International recruitment efforts have been focused on five countries, China, Nepal, India, Japan, and Korea. Of these countries, enrollment of international students from China increased the most, from 19 in fall 2008 to 47 in fall 2011. Enrollment of international students from India also increased from 4 to 10. For both of these countries, the number enrolled in fall 2011 is the highest in the past 10 years. Enrollment of students from Korea decreased from a high of 28 students in fall 2009 to 12 students in

fall 2011. As can be seen from the table below, the enrollment trend for students from Korea has increased and decreased over the past 10 years.

The number of different countries of origin for international students ranged from 16 to 26 during the past four years. In fall 2011, the majority of international students were from four of the countries targeted for strategic recruitment efforts, China, Republic of Korea, India, and Japan.

Number of Enrolled Students who are Citizens of Strategic Partner Countries

	Fall Term									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Non-Resident Aliens:										
China	3	3	2	1	14	25	19	26	43	47
India	7	2	2	3	3	2	4	5	9	10
Japan	7	31	18	10	8	10	2	0	3	4
Korea, Republic of	4	24	13	9	15	15	17	28	10	12
Nepal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

- A member of this IEC subcommittee met with staff and faculty who are very involved in the recruitment of international students: the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Dean of the School of Computing and Mathematics, and the Director of the English Language Institute and International Student Programs. The purpose of the meeting was to identify possible means for assessing the impact of various recruitment activities on reaching the goals of the strategic plan.

The process for recruitment is complex and multi-faceted. Primarily, it hinges on the building and sustaining of partnerships around the globe. Partnerships with the faculty of universities, with recruitment agencies, and alumnus/alumna acting as recruiters may be formalized through a memorandum of understanding or based on pre-existing personal relationships with current GSW faculty/staff. The various departments identified the following partnerships and specific recruitment programs aimed at recruiting and enrolling international students:

Partnerships:

- Faculty members of universities in targeted countries
- There are approximately 33 Memoranda of Understanding in place since 2008 with universities and organizations in targeted countries
- American Association for State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)
- Recruitment agencies employed by the English Language Institute
- China Center for International Education Exchange (CCIEE)

Specific recruitment programs:

- Reciprocal recruitment trips: partnering universities host GSW representatives while they meet with potential students and partners and send faculty/staff to be hosted by the GSW team while visiting this campus
- One + two + one program: students attend one year in China; two years at GSW; and final year in China. This program is a partnership with American Association for State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and China Center for International Education Exchange (CCIEE)

- Accelerated masters programs: MS in Computer Science, MA in English, MBA
- On the Horizon: A "Consulting Center" which will serve as a recruitment site placed in the targeted countries to increase enrollment in on-line/on-campus combination degrees. This concept is still in development but would address the problems with students acquiring a visa.

The departments also identified a number of barriers and challenges to the ongoing success in recruitment and enrollment of international students.   These include:

- Potential students' ability to secure student visas (many times an ambiguous process)
- Availability of waivers of out of state tuition
- Shifting economic balance between targeted country and the US which impacts costs of attending as well as employment opportunities. Ongoing international political issues can also impact enrollment trends.
- The process is currently fragmented, shared by individuals who do this work as an addition to the normal work of their respective offices. As a result of the lack of a centralized staffing, there is no formalized process of planning, coordination, documentation, or evaluation of the success of recruiting efforts.

Objective 3: Increase On-line Course and Program Offerings

- The number of on-line courses offered decreased from 126 courses in FY08 to 116 in FY11, which is a 7.9% decrease. The number of course sections decreased as well, from 288 in FY08 to 240 in FY11, a 16.7% decrease.

Number of On-line Courses

	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Arts and Sciences	26	29	26	25	23	21
Business	33	29	36	39	44	44
Computing & Mathematics	29	31	39	41	38	35
Nursing	9	4	8	10	9	10
Education	23	22	17	6	5	6
Total	120	115	126	121	119	116

Number of Sections of On-line Courses

	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Arts and Sciences	115	117	113	111	37	47
Business	53	62	81	95	102	110
Computing & Mathematics	48	50	61	70	48	50
Nursing	13	4	10	17	17	27
Education	27	29	23	15	5	6
Total	256	262	288	308	209	240

- The largest decreases occurred in the School of Education. During this time, the school made several major changes in their graduate degree programs, which contributed to a reduction of the number of on-line courses and sections.

- Large decreases also occurred in the School of Arts and Sciences, which changed from offering on-line core courses through eCore to offering on-line courses taught by GSW faculty. eCore, the University System of Georgia's electronic core curriculum, provides on-line courses in the general educational curriculum to students at participating USG institutions. Multiple sections of core courses were available through eCore each term, although participating institutions were allotted only a small number of seats (usually no more than 5) in each course section. GSW participated in eCore until the summer of 2009, when oversight of the eCore program was moved to the University of West Georgia. As a result, discussions regarding the merits for continued participation in eCore occurred and the decision was made to develop on-line core courses internally. To encourage development of new on-line courses, a proportion of faculty development funds was available specifically for faculty to either develop courses or to mentor faculty in the process of developing on-line classes. The funds were available to all faculty. Several faculty applied for and received funds to mentor others and approximately 12-15 faculty applied for and received funds to develop new on-line classes.

  The number of on-line core courses offered by the School of Arts and Sciences increased during Spring 2010 and the number is currently almost at the same level that existed when the courses were available through eCore. The primary exception occurs with the lab sciences, which are not currently available. This contributes to the decrease in the number of on-line courses offered through Arts and Sciences. In addition, the number of seats in the on-line courses offered by GSW faculty is equivalent to those offered in a face-to-face format, which results in fewer course sections being offered.

- The largest increases in the number of on-line courses and sections occurred in the School of Business Administration, primarily through the addition of marketing courses.

- Although the overall number of on-line courses and sections offered between FY08 and FY11 decreased, the number of students enrolled in on-line courses increased overall as well as in each of the schools. This overall increase in on-line course enrollment resulted in a 51.3% increase in the number of credit hours from 14,794 to 22,379. In addition, during the last four years, on-line classes accounted for 22.7%-26.8% of the total number of registration credit hours in an academic year. This is an increase from FY06 and FY07, when the percentage was 18.4% and 19.5%, respectively.

Credit Hours in On-line Classes

	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Arts and Sciences	2787	2819	2352	2099	1725	3699
Business	5328	6801	9453	10350	12471	13806
Computing & Mathematics	1626	1606	1671	1788	2322	2724
Nursing	578	55	580	837	1050	1337
Education	1404	1379	738	1083	1188	813
Total	11723	12660	14794	16157	18756	22379

Percentage of Total Credit Hours from On-line Courses

	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Undergraduate Credit Hours in On-line Classes	10400	11169	13549	14555	17028	21119
Total Undergraduate Credit Hours	60528	60691	60363	65176	70980	77888
% of Total from On-line Classes	17.18	18.40	22.45	22.33	23.99	27.11
Graduate Credit Hours in On-line Classes	1323	1491	1245	1602	1728	1260
Total Graduate Credit Hours	3327	4251	3528	5883	7320	5763
% of Total from On-line Classes	39.77	35.07	35.29	27.23	23.61	21.86
Total Credit Hours in On-line Classes	11723	12660	14794	16157	18756	22379
Total Credit Hours	63855	64942	63891	71059	78300	83651
% of Total from On-line Classes	18.36	19.49	23.16	22.74	23.95	26.75

- Increases in the number of students enrolled in on-line courses may result from increases in the numbers of students enrolled in existing programs, expansion of existing programs to additional institutions through MOUs, and development of new programs. Activities to increase enrollment in on-line courses through FY08-FY11 include:

    o   MOU for Bachelor of Business Administration in Management with East Georgia College
    o   MOU for 3 year Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting and Management with Georgia Perimeter College
    o   MOU for Bachelor of Business Administration in Management with Gordon College
    o   MOU for Bachelor of Business Administration in Management with South Georgia College
    o   Proposal to offer a Masters of Nursing on-line beginning in Fall 2012
    o   Plans for 25-49% of the courses for the Masters of English to be offered on-line
    o   Plans for the Bachelor in Business Administration in Marketing to be offered on-line beginning Fall 2012
    o   Plans for the Bachelor in Business Administration in Human Resources to be offered on-line beginning Fall 2012
    o   Plans to offer a on-line certificate in Information Technology beginning in Spring 2013
    o   Caregiving Issues and Management Certificate to be offered on-line

- o MOU for Bachelor of Science in Nursing with Bainbridge College
- o MOU signed with Georgia Military College to offer on-line Bachelor's degree in Accounting and Management
- o Participation in the WebBSIT consortium, which is an on-line Bachelor of Science in Information Technology degree program
- o Mathematics submitted proposals for two on-line certificate programs; Certificate in Mathematics for K-8 Teacher (to train K-8 teachers who are currently teaching mathematics out of field) and a Certificate for Teaching Mathematics in Two-Year Colleges and Technical Schools.
- o MOU to offer the On-line Master of Science in Computer Science through the Saurashtra University, India

Objective 4: Increase Retention and Graduation Rates

- One-year retention rates (from first fall to second fall) during FY08-FY11 decreased from 76% to 64.8%. Six-year graduation rates also decreased, from a high of 35% for the Fall 2003 cohort to a low of 30.1% for the 2005 cohort.

One Year Retention Rates

Cohort Year (students' first fall of enrollment)	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
% Returned One Year Later	71.8	65.6	65.6	70.3	64.7	63.9	76	68.9	66.4	64.8

Graduation Rates

Cohort Year	% Graduated in:				
	4 YRS	5 YRS	6 YRS	7 YRS	8 YRS
2001	14.4	30.7	37.3	40.9	42.2
2001	11.7	29.7	35.0	37.2	38.0
2002	13.6	25.8	32.7	35.5	36.4
2003	14.9	30.3	35.0	37.5	39.0
2004	11.4	26.1	30.7	32.1	
2005	10.4	25.0	30.1		
2006	13.0	26.8			
2007	15.2				

In November 2009, the Regent's Taskforce on Graduation required system institutions to develop a three-year plan for improving institutional retention and graduation rates which would be presented by campus presidents to the Regent's Taskforce early in the spring of 2010. A taskforce was formed and met multiple times to examine relevant data to determine the roots of the problems, identify successes and barriers to success, establish appropriate metrics and goals, and develop the three-year plan.

The final report was submitted to the Board of Regents in April of 2010.   Specific activities included in the plan may be found in the *Report on Retention and Graduation Rates*, but in general, the activities tended to be focused on the following areas:

- o Create a Presidential committee on retention and graduation rates
- o Implement early alerts and interventions for students who are at risk of failing to make satisfactory academic progress
- o Enrich the tutoring program
- o Improve advising
- o Restructure the office of learning support and the instruction of learning support courses
- o Fully identify "choke-point" courses and design alternative or redesign existing courses that are problematic
- o Expand intramural and campus activities for greater student involvement in campus affairs
- o Emphasize importance of graduating in four years to incoming freshmen through convocations, UNIV 1000, and "Presidential Challenge"

The President organized and met with members of the President's Committee on Retention and Graduation for the first time in April 2010. The committee subsequently met at the beginning of the fall and spring terms to discuss progress (or lack thereof) towards meeting the goals outlined in the plan and challenges in meeting the goals. An *Annual Report on Retention and Graduation*, which summarized the institutional progress on the activities outlined for the first year of the three year plan, was drafted in May 2011.

Goal Two: Cultivating Excellence in Undergraduate Learning and Teaching

Objective 1: Renew the Core Curriculum

- In fall 2009, the University System of Georgia (USG) adopted a new policy that mandated that individual system institutions have a core curriculum that includes general education learning outcomes and a plan for assessing those outcomes. In spring 2010, a faculty committee, chaired by the Interim Dean of Arts and Sciences, was formed to conduct a review of the GSW core curriculum and develop collegiate-level general education learning outcomes. The committee concluded its work in spring 2011, producing a set of general learning outcomes for each area of the core, including the three additional required areas of US Perspectives, Global Perspectives, and Critical Thinking.   All changes to curriculum were approved by the faculty and administration through GSWs faculty committee structure. The final core curriculum and general education learning outcomes were approved by the USG in summer 2011. The general education outcomes are:

    - o Area A1 – Communication Skills: Students will be able to write effectively for a variety of audiences to demonstrate collegiate-level writing development in various contexts.
    - o Area A2 – Quantitative Skills: Students will be able to analyze and apply mathematical concepts in various forms in order to solve a variety of quantitative problems.
    - o Area B – Institutional Options: Students will be able to evaluate information critically and will be able to understand cultural differences.

- Area C – Humanities, Fine Arts, Ethics: Students will be able to articulate factual and conceptual knowledge concerning literature and in one of the fine or performing arts.
- Area D – Natural Sciences, Math, and Technology: Students will be able to interpret symbolic representations of data relevant to the physical world and to evaluate the relationship between observation and inference in the natural sciences.
- Area E – Social Sciences: Students will be able to articulate factual and conceptual knowledge concerning societal dynamics.
- US Perspectives: Students will be able to articulate factual and conceptual knowledge concerning historical and societal dynamics within the United States.
- Global Perspectives: Students will be able to articulate factual and conceptual knowledge concerning world-wide societal dynamics.
- Critical Thinking: Students will be able to analyze and evaluate the main issues that relate to problems or texts, and then apply an organized, coherent and accurate response.

In fall 2011, the Deans of the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Computing and Mathematics worked with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and faculty members from each area of the core to develop a plan for consistent and ongoing assessment of the general education learning outcomes. Individual departments will assess the general education learning outcomes primarily through course embedded assessments utilizing common rubrics. The initial assessment began in fall 2011, with the assessment of critical thinking through essays obtained from ENGL 1101 classes. An analysis of the assessment results should be available in spring 2012.

Objective 2: Enhance Existing Academic Programs

Items from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provide students' self-reports perceptions of how their educational experiences have contributed to the development of the broad general skills that the general education curriculum is designed to improve. A faculty version of this survey, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) provides the faculty perspective.

Objective 3: Create New Academic Programs

- Approval for new academic programs has become more difficult due to a BOR requirement that new programs demonstrate "budget neutrality" or require no additional state funding. As a result, all costs for new programs must be absorbed by the institution, which has limited the approval of new programs at GSW during the past four years and will likely to continue to do so throughout the remainder of the current strategic plan. The following new programs were discussed, proposed, or approved:

  - BA in Communication has been discussed with no further progress.
  - BS in Criminal Justice has been discussed with no further progress.
  - BA in Spanish has been discussed and a minor in Spanish was approved to begin in fall 2012 as an initial step in developing a major in Spanish.
  - BSED in Sports Management has been discussed with no further progress.

- BS in Political Science with Teacher Certification has been proposed.
- Web BSIT was approved and began in fall 2011 with 2 students enrolled in the program.
- Online Accelerated BS in Math with GA Perimeter has been discussed.
- MS in Environmental Science was proposed but the proposal has been tabled because the program was too costly to implement.
- MA in English was approved and began in fall 2011 with 5 students enrolled in the program.
- MS in Nursing (on-line) was approved to begin in fall 2012.
- MS in Caregiving Management has been discussed with no further progress.
- MED in Curriculum and Instruction with tracks in early childhood education, general content, and special education were approved and began in Summer 2008. Although new, these programs replaced the existing MED programs in early childhood education, middle grades education, reading education, and special education.
- EDS in Learning and Leading with tracks in early childhood education, general content, and special education were approved and began in Fall 2008. Although new, these programs replaced the existing EDS programs in early childhood education and middle grades education.

Objective 4: Enrich Campus Intellectual Life

- As an institution of higher learning, there are numerous opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to develop scholarly, creatively, and professionally. The difficulty lies in determining how to assess the extent to which the institution has made progress in cultivating scholarly, creative, or professional development. The IEC subcommittee discussed many different options and has not yet determined the best way to assess this particular objective.

  Initially, the subcommittee discussed developing a survey to collect information from faculty and staff for assessment of this objective. As can be seen from the rough draft of questions, the focus was primarily on compiling lists of activities that faculty, staff, and students engaged in for intellectual development.

  - Have you had any scholarly articles or creative works published during the last academic year? If so, please provide specific details.
  - Have you presented at state, regional, national, and/or international conferences or professional meetings during the last year? If so, please list specific details.
  - Have you attended any conferences, seminars, and/or workshops during the last academic year? If so, please provide specific details.
  - Have you served on any conference committees (i.e., responsible for "putting on" the conferences) or organized any workshops during the last academic year? If so, please provide specific details.
  - During any point of the academic year, have you been working towards a terminal degree? If so, please provide further details.
  - Have you invited any speakers, either internal or external, to come and present at GSW? If so, please provide specific details.

- o Have you completed any certifications during the academic year? If so, please provide further details.
- o Are you a member of any professional organization related to your field? Did you continue your membership or become a new member during the past academic year? If so, please provide specific details.
- o Did you participate in any committee work for any of the professional organizations that you belong to during the past academic year? If so, please provide specific details.
- o Have you directed a GSW student in a project that was either presented at a conference and/or published during the academic year? If so, please provide further details.

However, we did not pursue further development and administration of the survey for a couple of reasons. The first was a question of whether or not a comprehensive compilation of activities would offer insight into the extent to which the campus engages in intellectual development or how engagement in those activities has changed over time. A second concern was the potential for low response rates, particularly given that much of this information, at least for faculty, is already reported in Annual Reports.

Since Annual Reports document the scholarly activities of departments, faculty, staff, and sometimes students, a review of these documents could provide us with answers to many of the questions we drafted for the survey. However, we still have the same question as to what the resulting compilation of activities will reveal. In addition, increases or decreases in the number of intellectual activities reported in Annual Reports may be reflective of changes in resource allocations, or in personnel, or the editing of activities which warrant inclusion in the report versus those which do not (e.g., reporting presentations made at a conference but not presentations made to a campus committee) rather than changes in the levels of engagement in intellectual activities. At the same time, though, it seems as though some sort of compilation of activities would provide the campus with a greater insight into the development activities that occur across different departments. It would also perhaps be a good mechanism for celebrating and recognizing the accomplishments of our faculty, students, and staff.

Recognizing that some intellectual activities may be omitted from Annual Reports, members of the IEC Subcommittee also discussed whether or not departmental newsletters and web pages would be good alternative sources. A cursory review found that newsletters or web pages provided some information that might generally not be found in an Annual Report. However, we also found that many of the newsletters or web pages were not kept up to date. The following are examples of intellectual activities obtained from the newsletters and web pages:

- o GSW's Psychology/Sociology Club sponsored a display in the library in honor of Mental Illness Awareness Week which was held October 3-9, 2010. The display contained a model of the brain, examples of Rorschach test materials, diagnostic equipment, and books and other items representing different aspects of the diagnosis, treatment, and media portrayal of mental illness.
- o A POW/MIA exhibit was developed in honor of the National Prisoner of War/MIA Recognition Day by DeDe Reyes, Katrisha Lester, and Dr. Glenn Robins. One of the display cases contained information on Macon, Georgia native Major Bobby Jones, who is still listed as MIA from the Vietnam War. The display enclosed the MIA bracelets of Major Jones and four men who returned from captivity and one whose remains were returned along with their stories. The

other case was devoted to providing information on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall as well as stencil rubbings of the names of Vietnam POWs who died in captivity and whose names appear on The Wall. Between the cases stood "The Missing Man Table," which symbolizes the plight of our MIA's.

- o During November, in honor of National Family Caregivers Month, the Rosalyn Carter Institute for Caregiving displayed various booklets and pamphlets on family caregiving. There is also a proclamation from Mayor Barry Blount declaring November as National Family Caregivers month in Americus.
- o A computer major presented on the art, language, culture, traditions and religion of his home county, Korea (March 31, 2008 newsletter).
- o A Robocode Contest was sponsored by GSW CIS and GSW ACM chapter promoting programming skills of computer science students (2008 newsletter).
- o A presentation on art, language, culture, traditions, and religion of Nepal was provided by staff and students (March 2011 newsletter).
- o SIFE is a global non-profit organization active in more than 40 countries. SIFE is funded by financial contributions from corporations, entrepreneurs, foundations, government agencies and individuals. Working in partnership with business and higher education, SIFE establishes student teams on university campuses. These teams are led by faculty advisors and they are challenged to develop community outreach projects that reach SIFE's business criteria.
- o Pope fellows engage in projects and off campus activities that increase their understanding of the impending caregiver crisis and successful implementation of evidence based caregiver interventions.
- o RCI Annual Summit brings national leaders in research of caregiver support and evidence base implementation (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011).
- o Jianyun Ziyu, a graduate student in Computer Science, developed the Emergency Information System for the Americus fire Department. The system manages the information on local properties such as residential, commercial, community, etc. (May 2010 newsletter)

Lastly, some items on the NSSE survey provide a broad view of students' self-reported perceptions about and engagement in some enriching educational activities. Although, the results from the survey are limited, the evaluative types of questions asked on the survey may offer an alternative way of trying to assess this objective.

Goal Three: Cultivating Community Partnerships

- The committee also considered developing a survey to collect information about relationships with community partners, but did not continue further with this idea because the drafting committee assigned for completing a report on SACS standard 3.3.1.5 will likely be compiling similar data and completing a report on institutional effectiveness in community/public service. So the subcommittee obtained evidence of documented partnerships with community stakeholders and outside entities from our review of newsletters, web pages, and documented agreements.

- **Objective 1: Enhance Campus Profile with Key Community Stakeholders**

    - o MOU with Phoebe Putney to "collaborate in the interest of maximizing medical services and opportunities for nursing education in Southwest Georgia."

- In January 2009, GSW was actively involved in the Sumter County Archway Project. Worked with South Georgia Technical College to use the project to expand the college town concept and the "Two Great Choices: One Great Community" fund drive and promotion.
- The Medical College of Georgia expanded its Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) graduate program on GSW's campus. Through our partnership with MCG, individuals with prior non-nursing bachelor's degrees enter and complete the pre-licensure graduate degree program in 16 months. There are currently 20 students enrolled in the program on our campus.
- Partnership between RCI and West Central Georgia CARE-NET. Part of a state-wide coalition of agencies serving family caregivers and family caregivers. Membership includes River Valley Area Agency on Aging, ResCare, Innovative Solutions, and area Faith Community.
- Partnership between RCI and Phoebe Sumter Caregiver Support Center, housed at Phoebe Sumter Medical Center and staffed by RCI (Program Coordinator and Pope Fellows), this program serves family caregivers of loved ones in and out of the hospital.
- The Center for Business and Economic Development at Georgia Southwestern State University, housed in the School of Business Administration, provides support services to existing and potential business, economic development agencies, and local governments in the area served by Georgia Southwestern. These services and assistance include conducting and dissemination of business and economic research, consulting services, and training and development of staff, workforce, and management.

Objective 2: Partner with Outside Entities

- MOU with Andersonville National Historic Site to establish a partnership to "better understand the causes and consequences of the Civil War, to place the Park within that broader context, and to specifically enhance the public's appreciation of the Prisoner of War experience during the Civil War and throughout American history.
- RCI's national partnerships include Administration on Aging, Alzheimer's Association, Johnson and Johnson, and the American Association of Retired People.
- RCI's International partnerships include RCI-Korea and the Global Implementation Conference, Purveyor Group.
- RCI has state-wide partnerships the Georgia Division on Aging Services, Georgia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, and the American Health Education Center.
- RCI is a partner with Georgia CARE-NET Coalition: Area Agencies on Aging in the twelve regions in Georgia (covering all counties) are represented in this advocacy and education initiative.
- RCI is a partner with Georgia National Guard and Muscogee County DFACS to support returning soldiers with PTSD and TBI.
- RCI is a partner with Georgia office of AARP to conduct statewide survey of caregiver service agencies.

Summary

- Activities engaged in by departments in 2008-2011 resulted in positive increases in undergraduate enrollment from 2008-2011, particularly in the enrollment of new transfers, international undergraduates, and students in online courses.

- Although significant work was accomplished in developing a 3 year plan to increase retention and graduation rates, engagement in the activities has not yet had a measurable impact on retention and graduation rates.

- Major work in developing learning outcomes and an assessment plan for the core curriculum was accomplished. Results from initial assessments of general education learning outcomes are expected in 2012.

- Despite increasing difficulty in obtaining approval from the BOR for new programs, GSW will begin offering a minor in Spanish and a MS in Nursing (online) in fall 2012. A MA in English and Web BSIT began in fall 2011. A MED in Curriculum and Instruction and an EDS in Learning and Leading replaced the existing MED and EDS programs in 2008.

- Substantial work remains to be done on Goal 2 Objective 4: Enrich Campus Intellectual Life. Although the committee has discussed possible ways to assess progress towards this goal, a method for assessing this particular objective has not yet been identified. In previous discussions, the committee focused on a quantitative assessment approach by trying to develop a way to inventory faculty, staff, and student engagement in intellectual activities.

  - The IEC committee discussed the pros and cons of this approach during the assessment day meeting and suggested that we explore the possibility of having a centralized mechanism for collecting this type of data so that faculty, staff, and student engagement in intellectual activities could be more easily collected and utilized for various reports. The committee also discussed assessing the extent to which the institution supports student, faculty, and staff engagement in intellectual activities. This would require a wider discussion of what we mean by enriching educational activities and how we assess it. Development of a Teaching Circle was suggested as a mechanism for further discussing what we mean by "enriching campus intellectual life."

- Assessment of the progress towards achievement of the strategic plan goals and objectives would be greatly improved by better documentation of relevant activities, more assessment of the effectiveness of those activities and programs, more integration of institutional goals with individual department goals, and more coordination among departments working on common goals and objectives.