

The Quality Enhancement Plan

GC&SU has committed to six initiatives in its effort to better address its educational mission as a public liberal arts university to challenge students and foster excellence in the classroom and beyond. Specific endeavors will be pursued over the next few years in fulfillment of these initiatives.

Below, the format that will be used to identify and describe the initiatives of GC&SU's quality enhancement plan are fully specified. They are presented using a descriptor system of numerals separated by decimals.

Outline Scheme for QEP

The first digit identifies an initiative:

1. Enhance Student Orientation Programs for Transfer Students
2. Enhance Student Leadership Opportunities
3. Enhance Academic Challenges within the Curriculum to Reflect the Liberal Arts Mission
4. Enhance Recruitment and Retention of Students and Faculty to Increase Diversity
5. Enhance Opportunities to Engage Student Learning in the Classroom and Beyond
6. Enhance Preparation of Students for Success in post-graduate Opportunities

The second digit identifies a category of information about the initiative:

- 1.1 Rationale
- 1.2 Survey of Related Best Practices
- 1.3 Student-Learning Outcomes
- 1.4 Assessment Measures
- 1.5 Specific Programs
- 1.6 Budget

The third digit identifies an endeavor to address that initiative. These vary with the initiative, so here, only the endeavors for initiative one are provided to illustrate:

- 1.5.1 Educate transfer applicants about the new transfer admission requirements and admission requirements of academic programs.
- 1.5.2 Develop a transfer "Road Map" that outlines a transfer student's desired experience at GC&SU.
- 1.5.3 Develop initiatory orientation activities for transfer students to be conducted during the orientation activities.
- 1.5.4 Encourage transfer student involvement in campus organizations and activities.

The fourth digit identifies a category of information about that endeavor:

- 1.5.1.1 Leadership
- 1.5.1.2 Resource Allocation
- 1.5.1.3 Implementation Time Line

1. Enhance Student Orientation Programs for Transfer Students

GC&SU believes that, in order to facilitate its expectation that students take responsibility for their own learning, it must provide good orientation to all entering students. The University has assessed the current orientation program and found a need to provide focused service to transfer students. It also researched theory and practice related to orienting transfer students. From there, it determined assessable desired outcomes of a good transfer-student orientation program. Finally, it developed endeavors to address the needs of entering transfer students.

1.1 Rationale

Assessment of Current Orientation Program

Each summer orientation is assessed by entering students and parents in attendance. Evaluations for the plenary events have yielded satisfaction levels exceeding 4.4 on a 5.0 scale for the last three years. Optional orientation sessions are also assessed. Only 40 survey respondents indicated they attended the transfer orientation optional sessions in Summer 2003, and these sessions were assessed generally less positively than other orientation sessions. Because GC&SU transfer students make up 26% (359 of 1364) of new undergraduate students each Fall, transfer student participation in orientation and improvement in transfer student perception of the benefit is desired.

Transfer Student Demographics

In Fall 2003, 359 students were classified as first-semester transfer students. Of the 359, 48 (13.4%) were freshmen, 119 (33.1%) sophomores, 159 (44.3%) juniors, and 33 (9.2%) seniors. With transfer students entering GC&SU at various stages in their collegiate career, the academic orientation needs are of a more diverse nature than entering freshmen.

Transfer students are more likely to be African-American (12% to 3.6% for entering freshmen), more likely to live off campus (78% to 20% for entering freshmen), more likely to be on Pell grants (27% to 16%), and less likely to be on HOPE scholarship (45% to 90% for entering freshmen). Finances, socialization, and the need for academic support are all issues of greater importance for transfer students.

Transfer Student are a large part of GC&SU Graduates

A review of the May 2002 graduation class indicates that 36% of all graduating students transferred 30 semester hours or more to GC&SU. In the University's effort to produce intentional characteristics of graduates, it is incumbent on GC&SU to ensure that transfer students receive a similar orientation to the unique attributes that Georgia's public liberal arts university desires of its graduates.

In 2002-2003, Academic Council reviewed issues related to transfer students and concluded that transfer students were at much greater need for career and academic advising and that they tended to require more extensive knowledge of the GC&SU curriculum from their faculty advisors than incoming first-year students. Academic

Council also found that many transfer students request admission into programs for which their previous academic credentials did not illustrate readiness.

1.2 Survey of Related Best Practices

The most prevalent theory regarding student success comes from the work of Vincent Tinto who feels that "more than academic progress is needed for persistence and that successful students find a niche of support" (Narretto, p. 96). Webb defines Tinto's model as "the interaction between the student's commitment to the institution and his/her commitment to the goal of college completion determines whether or not the student decides to drop out." (p. 43)

The key to a student's success is the connectedness of the student to the institution. Boyle's (1989) examination of the Tinto model of retention in higher education reports the following about the Tinto model: "Tinto concluded that the key ingredient is a commitment on the part of the institution to the growth and development of all members of the educational community" (p. 293).

Tinto (1987) espouses that orientation and student support activities should be: "systematic," "should start as early as possible to retain students," and "education, not retention should be the goals of the institutional retention programs" (pp. 473-474). Tinto's studies on student success recognize the uniqueness of student subgroups and find that the transition to a new college for transfer students is more difficult than for traditional freshmen.

Creamer espouses four principles that enhance retention: "recruit ethically, orient honestly, inform continuously, and advise developmentally" (p. 17). Beal finds programs most likely to enhance retention to involve orientation, academic advising and support, and counseling. Billson and Terry conclude that "students who sense that they have entered an academic community where high standards are coupled with concern for their growth as individuals throughout their career path as students will be more likely to persist to graduation, regardless of the pulls toward outside commitments" (p. 304).

Tinto, Russo, and Kadel review the impact of communities that are created smaller within a larger campus by combining several courses and students together. This approach provides students with an enhanced community within the larger college environment. The course format encourages student participation and therefore student investment in the education process.

Below is a list of references that influenced the development of this initiative to improve student orientation programs for all students:

Beal, P. E. & Noel, L. (1980). *What works in student retention: The report of a joint project of the American College Testing Program and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems*. Iowa City, IA and Boulder, CO:

American College Testing Program and National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

- Beal, P. E. (1979). Student retention: A case study of an action approach. *NASPA Journal*, 17(1), 9-16.
- Billson, J. M., & Terry, M. B. (1987). A student retention model for higher education. *College and University* 62(4), 290-304.
- Boyle, T. P. (1989). An examination of the Tinto model of retention in higher education. *NASPA Journal*, 26(4), 288-294.
- Creamer, D. G. (1980). Educational advising for student retention: An institutional perspective. *Community College Review*, 7(4), 11-18.
- Naretto, J. A. (1995). Adult student retention: The influence of internal and external communities. *NASPA Journal*, 32(2), 90-97.
- Webb, E. M. (1987). Retention and excellence through student involvement: A leadership role for student affairs. *NASPA Journal*, 24(4), 6-11.
- Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Tinto, V., Russo, P., & Kadel, S. (1994). Constructing educational communities: Increasing retention in challenging circumstances. *Community College Journal*, 64(4), 26-29.

1.3 Student-Learning Outcomes

GC&SU believes that students who participate in orientation programs are better prepared for a successful transition into college life. The effects of this initiative will be indicated by the following student outcomes:

1. Transfer students will set their own personal development goals and take responsibility for their own learning;
2. Transfer students will be prepared to learn and to be intellectually challenged;
3. Transfer students will strive for excellence in their studies and seek to achieve high academic expectations in all of their courses;
4. Transfer students will experience the benefits of the public liberal arts experience.

1.4 Assessment Measures

The success of student-learning outcomes above will be measured through analysis of the following assessments:

1. The number of transfer students using support services for academic success is at a rate similar to that of generic freshmen.
2. The number of transfer students who are in good academic standing after their first semester and are retained has increased.
3. The average grade point average of transfer students is equivalent to or better than that of generic freshmen at graduation.

1.5 Specific Programs

The initiative to provide orientation programs for transferring students will be addressed through four new endeavors, which will address the specific needs of transfer students while orienting them to the benefits of a liberal arts education.

1.5.1 Educate transfer applicants about the new transfer admission requirements and specific admission requirements of academic programs.

1.5.1.1 Leadership

Academic Deans and staff of the Admissions Office will be responsible for this endeavor.

1.5.1.2 Resource Allocation

Orientation expenses are self-funded by a \$50 orientation fee for costs that amount to approximately \$50 per person. An anticipate transfer orientation with 300 participants would generate \$15,000 in revenue. From that, \$800 will be allocated to produce new brochures, and \$300 will be needed to cover the cost of mailings.

1.5.1.3 Implementation Time Line

A design presentation will be due by Spring 2004 with implementation scheduled for Summer 2004 and evaluation and time for modification accomplished in Fall 2004.

1.5.2 Develop a transfer “Road Map” that outlines a transfer student’s desired experience at GC&SU.

1.5.2.1 Leadership

The Offices of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs will be responsible for this endeavor.

1.5.2.2 Resource Allocation

From the \$15,000 transfer orientation revenue that was generated by the 300 transfer participants, \$200 will be used for the printing of the “Road Map.”

1.5.2.3 Implementation Time Line

A transfer road map will be developed in Fall 2004 for first use in Spring 2005. In Fall 2005 and Spring 2006, there will be a time for using evaluations and having focus group discussions with transfer students to evaluate the piloted road map. By Fall 2006, the new transfer road map will be included in all transfer student materials.

1.5.3 Expand orientation for transfer students with initiatory activities and attention to their special needs.

Transfer students would sign the Honor Code, learn about GC&SU’s 3R’s and the expectations of students:

The Georgia College & State University experience is founded on the 3 Rs: **Reason, Respect, and Responsibility**. Based on this foundation, we expect that during their time at GC&SU students will:

1. set their own personal development goals and take responsibility for their own learning;
2. be prepared to learn and to be intellectually challenged;

3. strive for excellence in their studies and seek to achieve high academic expectations in all of their courses;
4. acquire an inquisitive mind; respect for human diversity and individuality; a sense of civic and global responsibility; sound ethical principles; effective writing, speaking, and quantitative skills; and a healthy lifestyle;
5. be meaningfully engaged in and involved in the campus community; and
6. take full advantage of opportunities to develop and implement career plans.

GC&SU students are expected to achieve and maintain high ideals founded on the sound principles of utilizing **REASON** before acting or reacting; employing **RESPECT** for others, for ideas, for the law, and for property; and recognizing their **RESPONSIBILITY** as citizens and members of the campus community.

1.5.3.1 Leadership

Orientation staff and staff from the Office of Student Affairs will be responsible for this endeavor.

1.5.3.2 Resource Allocation

No funding is needed for this endeavor.

1.5.3.3 Implementation Time Line

Initiatory activities would be designed in Summer 2004, implemented in Fall 2004, and evaluated/modified in Spring 2005.

1.5.4 Encourage transfer student involvement in campus organizations and activities.

1.5.4.1 Leadership

Staff of the Office of Student Activities will be responsible for encouraging transfer student campus involvement.

1.5.4.2 Resource Allocation

\$100 from the budget of Student Activities will be designated to cover the expense of promotional materials and activities related to registering transfer students for events.

1.5.4.3 Implementation Time Line

The design process for signing up for organizations and activities will occur in Spring 2004 with implementation scheduled by Summer 2004 and any evaluation/modification due in Fall 2004.

1.6 Budget for Initiative: Enhance student orientation programs for transfer students

Endeavor	Personnel	Fringe	Travel	Scholarships	Supplies	Contractual	Training	NO COSTS	Total
Educate transfer applicants					Brochures - \$800 Mailing - \$300 SOURCE: ORIENTATION REVENUE (ongoing)				\$1,100
Create transfer "Road Map"					Printing - \$200 SOURCE: ORIENTATION REVENUE (ongoing)				\$ 200
Expanded transfer orientation with initiatory activities								No costs	
Encourage transfer involvement in student organizations					Promotional Materials - \$100 SOURCE: STUDENT ACTIVITIES BUDGET (ongoing)				\$ 100

TOTAL: \$1,400

Costs to be covered by existing revenue or budget allocation: ALL

Costs requiring new allocation: NONE

2. Enhance Student Leadership Opportunities

GC&SU believes that, in order to facilitate its expectation that students seek to achieve high academic expectations in the context of liberal arts goal of preparing to be future leaders, students must be provided with significant leadership opportunities. GC&SU assessed the current leadership program and found it lacking. However, through the newly-formed Coverdell Institute supported by a federally-mandated congressional grant, GC&SU is now poised to begin a significant enhancement. In addition to assessing current leadership programming, theory and practice related to student leadership programming were also researched and assessable, desired outcomes of a leadership program were determined. A plan of endeavors to address leadership development in students was established and lodged within the responsibility of the Coverdell Institute.

2.1 Rationale

A summary sentence from the GC&SU Statement of Principles reads as follows:

In turn, GC&SU seeks to provide communities and employers with graduates who exhibit professionalism, responsibility, service, leadership and integrity.

A review of the strategic plan, the annual report, revealed few institutional specific initiatives that directly addressed the development of leadership. Only one institutional strategy (1.1.b) specifically addresses leadership and provides for the development of a “Deans Cup” to recognize and reward student organizations that show leadership in campus and community involvement. No objective within the current strategic plan directly addresses ways in which to develop leadership skills within students.

Much of GC&SU’s success in achieving institutional initiatives has been based upon the development of intentional experiences that impact desired outcomes. As a result, an intentional leadership experience is being developed.

2.2 Survey of Related Best Practices

The Committee on Student Leadership began a study of best practices in promotion of leadership, as it applied to a liberal arts mission, during the 2001-2002 academic year. The study of best practices included a focus on identifying benchmarks from other institutions. Hallmarks from our study of best practices in student leadership included the following:

The Chronicle of Higher Education (5/31/2002) featured James MacGregor Burns as “Leading the Way in Leadership.” In his seminal book, Leadership, Burns contends: “Not only is leadership a crucially important subject itself, but it is especially valuable as a component of liberal arts courses, because to understand leaders you have to know not only political science, but history, philosophy, and psychology.” Burns’ article validated our review of the following benchmark leadership programs:

1. The University of Maryland, William’s College, and Claremont McKenna College, all offer majors, minors, or master’s degrees in Leadership Studies. All of these programs are based upon a broad multidisciplinary approach which allows students to explore various courses which “examine the social, psychological and ethical issues leaders face” as well as skills that good leaders should acquire, such as written and oral communication.

2. Duke University's program "encourages undergraduates to develop and test their visions of leadership through community service and mentoring, along with course work."
3. The leadership center at Morehouse College "focuses on preparing ethical leaders, and emphasizes 'character, civility, and a sense of community'."
4. George Mason University's program is a Leadership Certificate, which "highlights an understanding of leadership concepts and behaviors, civic responsibility, creativity, communication, and change." The program is experientially based, includes a reflection paper as a final project, and draws from an Emerging Leader program for freshmen.
5. Elon University has a four-phase developmental leadership program (beginning with Emerging Leaders for freshmen) that "takes students from learning leadership skills to sharing those skills with others." The program includes eligibility for \$750 study/travel grants to fund study abroad as well as it provides annually four "Freshmen Leadership Fellow" scholarships valued at \$1,000 each.
6. Samford University's Leadership Education Awareness and Development program also provides scholarships for entering freshmen. In addition to course work, students read books on great leaders and on leadership and then submit reviews. The students also write a senior paper summarizing their leadership learning and growth through their participation in the program.
7. The LEAD Scholars program at the University of Central Florida includes course work, workshops, and community service each semester.

2.3 Student-Learning Outcomes

GC&SU anticipates that the successful development of student leadership opportunities will benefit all students at GC&SU who wish to pursue them. By encouraging students to pursue leadership and by providing enough leadership opportunities for all interested students, GC&SU anticipates a significant increase in the number of students who will receive this benefit. The effects of this initiative will be indicated by the following student outcomes:

1. Students will value leadership-training opportunities.
2. Students in leadership programs will display self-knowledge and confidence.
3. Students in leadership programs will display knowledge of aspects of leadership from a wide range of perspectives.
4. Students in leadership programs will learn and practice leadership skills, such as oral and written communication and interpersonal skills specific to various social settings.
5. Students in leadership programs will acquire delegation, negotiation, and consensus-building skills.
6. Students in leadership programs will network with, observe and learn from, local and state leaders.

2.4 Assessment Measures

The success of the student-learning outcomes above will be measured through analysis of the following assessment tools:

1. Increased student desire for leadership skills will be indicated by an increase in the number of applicants to leadership training opportunities.
2. Many courses in a variety of degree programs are designated as courses relevant to leadership training. These courses will provide the opportunities to collect assessment data.
3. Self-knowledge and confidence will be assessed through oral reflection opportunities, such as in-class presentations or group discussions; written reflections opportunities, journals or essays; and performance reflection opportunities, such as role-playing skits. These reflective opportunities will allow students to process their learning in a demonstrable way. Self-knowledge and confidence will also be assessed through evaluation of graded student work in courses relevant to leadership certification.
4. An understanding of leadership from a variety of perspectives will be assessed through evaluation of student demonstration of those understandings in assignments in courses relevant to leadership certification.
5. Leadership communication skills will be assessed through evaluation of student performances. The performances are based on the skills in assignments of those courses relevant to leadership certification. These leadership skills will also be demonstrated for assessment in extra-curricular leadership situations required for leadership certification.
6. Leadership interpersonal skills will be assessed through evaluation of student performances. The performances are based on the skills in assignments in courses relevant to leadership certification. Interpersonal skills will also be demonstrated for assessment in extra-curricular leadership situations required for leadership certification.
7. Interaction with non-academic leaders will be assessed by records kept in the Office of Experiential Learning. Learning gained from these mentors will be assessed through reflections by and survey responses from students in leadership programs, and through survey responses from the mentors.

2.5 Specific Programs

The initiative to increase and enhance student leadership opportunities will be addressed through four endeavors related to the enhancement of the Leadership Certification Program that has been made possible by the newly established Coverdell Institute for Public Policy, which will be working with the Office of Experiential Learning.

2.5.1 Enhance Leadership Certificate Curriculum

2.5.1.1 Leadership

The Director of Experiential Learning is responsible for this endeavor.

2.5.1.2 Resource Allocation

No new funds will need to be budgeted for this endeavor. Courses for qualifying for leadership certification are taught by faculty in a wide-range of disciplines throughout campus. Staff from Student Activities will coordinate leadership workshops. Students

will participate in service-learning projects and will be directed by the Coordinator of Service Learning in the Office of Experiential Learning.

2.5.1.3 Implementation Time Line

Academic Governance has approved this program, but it is not yet implemented. Courses and Student Activities workshops will begin in Fall 2004; service-learning experiences will begin Spring 2005.

2.5.2 Institute a Leader Scholars Program

2.5.2.1 Leadership

The Director of Coverdell Institute for Public Policy is responsible for this program.

2.5.2.2 Resource Allocation

No new funds will need to be budgeted for this endeavor. Twelve scholarships of \$1000 each will be funded by the Coverdell Institute; they will be phased in over three years (4, 8, 12).

2.5.2.3 Implementation Time Line

The first four leader scholars will matriculate in Fall 2005. Four new scholars will be added each year up to 12. Coverdell funding for scholarships is assured through FY 2008.

2.5.3 Enable leaders to be involved in national organizations and activities

2.5.3.1 Leadership

The Director of Coverdell Institute for Public Policy is responsible for this program.

2.5.3.2 Resource Allocation

No new funds will need to be budgeted for this endeavor. The Coverdell Institute will allocate \$4000 a year for leadership students to travel to conferences and other events.

2.5.3.3 Implementation Time Line

The Coverdell Institute will begin funding travel for scholars in Fall 2005; this funding is assured through FY 2008.

2.5.4 Develop a Leadership Lecture Series

2.5.4.1 Leadership

The Director of Coverdell Institute for Public Policy, in collaboration with the Director of Experiential Learning, is responsible for this program.

2.5.4.2 Resource Allocation

No new funds will need to be budgeted for this endeavor. The Coverdell Institute will allocate \$19,000 a year for nationally recognized leaders to speak on campus.

2.5.4.3 Implementation Time Line

The Coverdell Institute will begin funding the lecture series in Fall 2005; this funding is assured through FY 2008.

2.6 Budget for Initiative: Enhance student leadership opportunities

Endeavor	Personnel	Fringe	Travel	Scholarships	Supplies	Contractual	Training	NO COSTS	Total
Curr. Rev for Leadership Certification								No cost	
Institute Leadership Scholars Program				4 new \$1000 scholarships each year up to 12: 4 – yr. one SOURCE: COVERDELL INSTITUTE (ongoing)					Yr. 1: \$4,000
National involvement of leaders			Student travel - \$4000 SOURCE: COVERDELL INSTITUTE (ongoing)						\$4,000
Leadership Lecture Series					Program Materials - \$4000 SOURCE: COVERDELL INSTITUTE (ongoing)	Visiting Lecturers – \$15,000 SOURCE: COVERDELL INSTITUTE (ongoing)			\$19,000

TOTAL: \$27,000

Costs to be covered by existing revenue or budget allocation: ALL

Costs requiring new allocation: NONE

3. Enhance Academic Challenges within the Curriculum to Reflect the Liberal Arts Mission

In order to facilitate its expectations regarding academic achievement, GC&SU believes that it should provide a challenging curriculum that supports the liberal arts & sciences education. This will include the development of effective reading, writing, speaking, quantitative, and technical skills by students. The University recognizes that the curriculum, including all degree program and general education core courses, should be critically reviewed to ensure that they address these values. To clarify its curricular goals, GC&SU has assessed the need for curricular review in terms of its affiliation with the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) and with the University System of Georgia.

3.1 Rationale

In 2000, GC&SU applied for admission to the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC). A crucial component of admission to COPLAC was the submission of an institutional prospectus in which GC&SU demonstrated that it met the core philosophy of COPLAC. Guidelines given for application included two significant principles:

1. Demonstration that the liberal arts & sciences directs the thinking of the entire curriculum.
2. Demonstration of commitment to liberal education and student centeredness and providing a transformative educational experience.

While GC&SU was accepted for admission into COPLAC in 2001, the application process drew the University's attention to the need for further review of the curriculum to assess the degree to which it currently provides a liberal arts & sciences experience, and if determined necessary, to consider ways of better reflecting our mission in the curriculum.

3.2 Survey of Related Best Practices

In its effort to develop a challenging liberal arts & sciences curriculum, GC&SU has supported faculty and staff involvement in numerous associations pursuing best practice research and development, such as the American Council on Education, the American Association for Higher Education, the American Association of Colleges and Universities, and the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges. For an overview of significant best practice workshops, institutes, and conferences attended in recent years, see the "Foundations" section of this document (pages 6-7).

3.3 Student-Learning Outcomes

Students in all majors will demonstrate competency in the following areas:

1. Reading skills
2. Writing skills
3. Quantitative skills
4. Technical skills
5. Oral communication skills

3.4 Assessment Measures

1. Perception of academic challenge will be assessed by a sampling of student responses on the NSSE survey and using discipline-appropriate measures developed and administered by faculty within appropriate academic disciplines.
2. Reading and Writing competencies will be assessed by scores on standardized examinations, such as the University System of Georgia Regents exam, and using discipline-appropriate measures developed and administered by faculty within appropriate academic disciplines.
3. Quantitative reasoning competency will be assessed by scores on standardized examinations, such as Praxis, and using discipline-appropriate measures developed and administered by faculty within appropriate academic disciplines.
4. Technical and oral communication skills will be assessed using discipline-appropriate measures developed and administered by faculty within appropriate academic disciplines.

3.5 Specific Programs

The initiative to enhance academic challenge in ways that reflect the liberal arts & sciences mission will be addressed through four specific new endeavors.

3.5.1 Review of GC&SU's general-education Core Curriculum to ensure content needed to promote a liberal arts & sciences education.

Accompanying review of the general education Core to assure that it provides the content necessary to support the student-learning outcomes identified as part of a liberal arts & sciences education will be the development of a plan for ongoing assessment of how well the student-learning outcomes are being achieved.

3.5.1.1 Leadership

GC&SU University Senate Committee on Academic Governance will lead this endeavor.

3.5.1.2 Resource Allocation

No new funds will need to be budgeted for this endeavor, as funds will be drawn from the existing Academic Affairs general education budget. A total of \$6,000 has currently been designated to fund a team of five to attend the AAC&U Institute on General Education in the summer of 2004. In future years, similar funding will be provided for this endeavor as needed from the Academic Affairs budget.

3.5.1.3 Implementation Time Line

An ad-hoc committee of the University Senate's Academic Governance Committee is currently reviewing the curriculum in the general education core and will report its initial findings to the membership of the University Senate in April 2004. The University Senate will determine the next course of action following the report.

3.5.2 Review of GC&SU's degree programs to ensure content needed to promote a liberal arts & sciences education.

The curriculum contained in upper-division courses that support degree programs will be reviewed to ensure that it contains content that is supportive of the student learning outcomes identified in section 3.3. This endeavor will also develop a plan for ongoing assessment of how well courses outside the general education core are contributing to the student-learning outcomes.

3.5.2.1 Leadership

The academic deans, department chairs, and faculty will comprise the leadership for this endeavor.

3.5.2.2 Resource Allocation

No additional funds will need to be budgeted for this endeavor.

3.5.2.3 Implementation Time Line

Programs will be reviewed as they relate to the student-learning outcomes in section 3.3 and revised as deemed necessary based on assessment plans developed and evaluated by faculty in charge of each degree program. Assessment plans should be developed and implemented by May 2005 and curriculum review within all degree programs will be accomplished by May 2006. If assessment results indicate a need for revision of the curriculum, then those recommendations will be developed and proposals will be made by May 2007.

3.5.3 Review all course profiles in the University Profile System to assure that they are consistent with, and reflective of, GC&SU's student-learning outcomes.

3.5.3.1 Leadership

Department chairs and faculty will comprise the leadership for this endeavor.

3.5.3.2 Resource Allocation

No additional funds will need to be budgeted for this endeavor.

3.5.3.3 Implementation Time Line

The review of the course profile is dependent upon the degree programs' having been reviewed by May 2006 to assure attention to the student-learning outcomes (see section 3.5.2.3). Following the review, and possible revisions to the courses offered in the curriculum of the degree programs, the course profiles would be reviewed and revised as needed.

3.5.4 Establish voluntary faculty-development workshops designed to help faculty devise techniques within their courses to facilitate enhanced student-learning in reading, writing, quantitative, technical and speaking skills.

3.5.4.1 Leadership

The Center of Excellence in Teaching and Learning at GC&SU (CETL) will provide the leadership for this endeavor.

3.5.4.2 Resource Allocation

No new funds will need to be budgeted for this endeavor, as funds will be drawn from the existing Academic Affairs general education budget. A budget of \$5,000 will be designated for FY 2005 to fund development of these workshops (consultants, materials, course release for faculty leaders, etc.). In future years, similar funding will be provided for this endeavor as needed from the Academic Affairs budget.

3.5.4.3 Implementation Time Line

The Center of Excellence in Teaching and Learning at GC&SU (CETL) will facilitate the development of faculty-development workshops by May 2005. CETL will also be responsible for compiling a resource bank of materials developed for and used in the faculty-development workshops. Workshops will begin by the Fall 2005 semester and continue on an as needed basis.

3.6 Budget for Initiative 3: Enhance Academic Challenges Within the Curriculum to Reflect the Liberal Arts Mission

Endeavor	Personnel	Fringe	Travel	Scholarships	Supplies	Contractual	Training	NO COSTS	Total
Review of General Education Core Curriculum							5 people to AAC&U Gen. Ed. Institute -\$6000. SOURCE: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (one year, may be renewed)		\$6,000
Review of Upper-Division Degree Program Curriculum								No costs	
Review of Course Profiles								No costs	
Faculty Development Workshops						Consultants for training workshops: \$4000. SOURCE: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (one year, renewable)	Workshop expenses: \$1000. SOURCE: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (one year, renewable)		\$5,000

Costs to be covered by existing revenue or budget allocation: TOTAL \$11,000

ALL costs requiring new allocation: NONE

4. Enhance Recruitment and Retention of Students and Faculty to Increase Diversity

GC&SU believes that, in order to facilitate its expectation that students acquire respect for human diversity and individuality, as well as a sense of civic and global responsibility and sound ethical principles; it must provide a learning environment that demonstrates these values. Further, the University recognizes that having a diverse University population is the best way to implicitly affirm diversity. It has assessed the need for greater diversity and found a need to recruit and retain faculty and students who will bring greater diversity to the campus. It also researched theory and practice related to recruitment and retention for diversity. From there, it determined assessable desired outcomes of a diverse campus environment. Finally, it developed a plan of endeavors to address the needs of recruiting and retaining to increase diversity.

4.1 Rationale

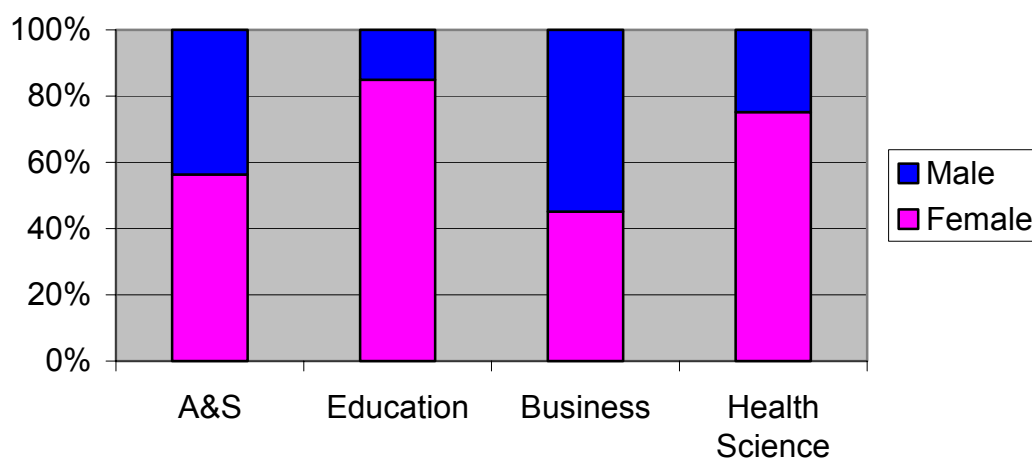
GC&SU diversity was reviewed in terms of gender, ethnicity, and disability.

STUDENT DIVERSITY

Student Gender

Women constitute 63% of the GC&SU student body as compared to 58% for the University System of Georgia. While there are students of both genders in all academic programs at GC&SU, some programs are more likely to have one gender than the other. GC&SU strives to make all disciplines welcoming to both male and female students. Whereas the School of Liberal Arts & Sciences students are 56% female, the school of Business students are 45% female, the School of Education students are 84% female and School of Health Sciences is 75% female.

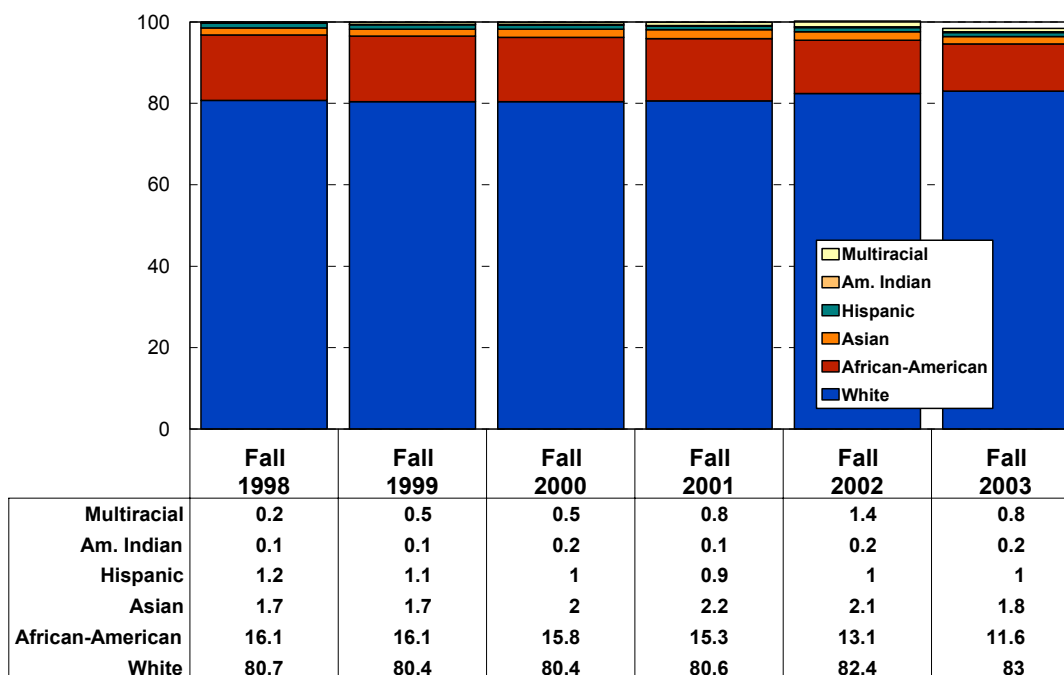
Gender by School -Students Percent of Majors



Student Ethnicity

The percentage of GC&SU students who are minorities has declined from 19.3% in Fall 1998 to 17% in Fall 2003. During that same time period, African-American enrollment has declined from 16.1% to 11.6%. In addition, the percentage of Hispanic students has remained at 1%, although the Hispanic population in Georgia has grown significantly during that same time period.

Student Characteristics - Ethnicity 1998-2003 Percent



Fall enrollment for each year:
1998=5168, 1999=5030, 2000=5118, 2001=5070, 2002=5513, 2003=5674

The decline in minority students and African-American students in particular, is more apparent in the entering freshmen classes. While the Fall 1998 entering classes percentage of African-Americans was 6%, the Fall 2003 entering class percentage was only 3.5%. A study of this decline revealed that African-American enrollment at GC&SU has traditionally been from surrounding counties. With the change in the GC&SU mission from serving as an open-door state regional university to serving as the state's public liberal arts university, the number of students from local counties has significantly decreased. For instance, while in Fall 1996, 60% of the entering class was from middle Georgia counties, in Fall 2003 only 18% were from these same counties. Much of this demographic change is a result of the higher admission standards for GC&SU and the fact that these middle Georgia counties high school graduates have (on average) very low SAT scores.

To address this concern, GC&SU hired an additional admissions recruiter with specific responsibilities for minority recruitment. Recruitment at high schools with high SAT scores and large minority populations has been the cornerstone of this

effort. This effort coincides with a strategic plan objective to increase the selectivity of students from a minimum SAT of 900 to 1000 by 2006. This initiative has resulted in impressive gains in the new freshmen SAT from 975 in 1996 to 1089 in Fall 2003. Currently, GC&SU ranks fourth among USG schools in SAT and second among non-engineering schools.

Maintaining, much less increasing, African-American enrollments is exacerbated by the shortage of African-American's in Georgia high school seniors who can meet GC&SU admission requirements. A study of high school students in Georgia who took the SAT revealed that the pool of African-Americans eligible for admission into GC&SU is quite low. Of the 12,144 African-Americans in Georgia that are high school seniors who took the SAT in the 2002-2003 test year, only 2,186 qualified for entrance into GC&SU. A review of African enrollment patterns with University System of Georgia identified that the research universities enrolled 962 first-term African-Americans in Fall 2002. Assuming that these students met the research university admission standards, which include high SATs, other state universities would have access to 1,224 African-American students with the SAT necessary to enter GC&SU. If each of the 15 state universities yielded an equal share of the high SAT African-American students the schools would enroll 82 students each. These numbers can also be reduced by the fact that of the 15 state universities, three are identified as historically black colleges. In addition, Georgia has several quality private historically black colleges. Competition for these students exists also from the state's junior colleges and colleges and universities outside the state of Georgia.

Students with Disabilities

GC&SU has been successful in admitting students with disabilities. The number of students with disabilities at GC&SU has increased 700% since 1999. Students with disabilities are attracted to GC&SU because of its small classes, academic quality, and caring faculty and staff. In Fall 2003, 147 students with disabilities utilized the services of Student Support Services as compared to 20 in 1999.

The increase in students with disabilities relates to the increase in services provided by Vocational Rehabilitation Services and a greater awareness of the general public regarding services available for students with documented disabilities. In addition, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) were recognized by the educational institutions as a disability, in part because of revisions to the American Disability Act. In Fall 2003, 55 new students (incoming freshmen and transfer) identified themselves at registration as having a disability.

Currently, the Office of Student Support Services coordinates the following institutional activities:

1. Providing recorded books for the blind and dyslexic;
2. Providing special registration opportunities ;
3. Contacting rehabilitation services on disability issues;
4. Tutoring in response to specific disabilities;

5. Administering tests for students with unique needs;
6. Providing note taking;
7. Counseling on academic issues;
8. Conducting study skills training unique to specific disabilities;
9. Providing classroom accessibility;
10. Scheduling of courses related to mobility and health problems;
11. Determining the need for unique housing accommodations;
12. Providing readers for the blind;
13. Providing computers with special adaptations devices;
14. Collecting documentation and forwarding information to university committees and university personnel as necessary;
15. Working closely with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to provide adaptive learning devices.

Also, the ADA committee works with providing accessibility for students and identifies buildings that are not in compliance with American Disabilities Act.

In addition, approximately 25 inquiries are made annually by prospective students and/or their parents regarding services provided for students with disabilities.

However, GC&SU has not been as successful in enabling students with disabilities to achieve their academic aspirations. Currently, students with disabilities graduate at a slower pace than students without disabilities. Students with disabilities often take fewer courses per semester than students without disabilities. Students with disabilities also report that they have difficulty staying on track in cohort programs such as in Education and Nursing. The institution should review mechanisms in which to allow students with disabilities to progress through academic programs or identify academic programs for which students with certain disabilities cannot enroll because the curricula, nor the career for which the curricular prepares the student for, is appropriate for persons with specific disabilities.

With the large increase in students with disabilities since 1999, and the ever-expanded range of services needing to be provided, the institution must review its current delivery of services to persons with disabilities.

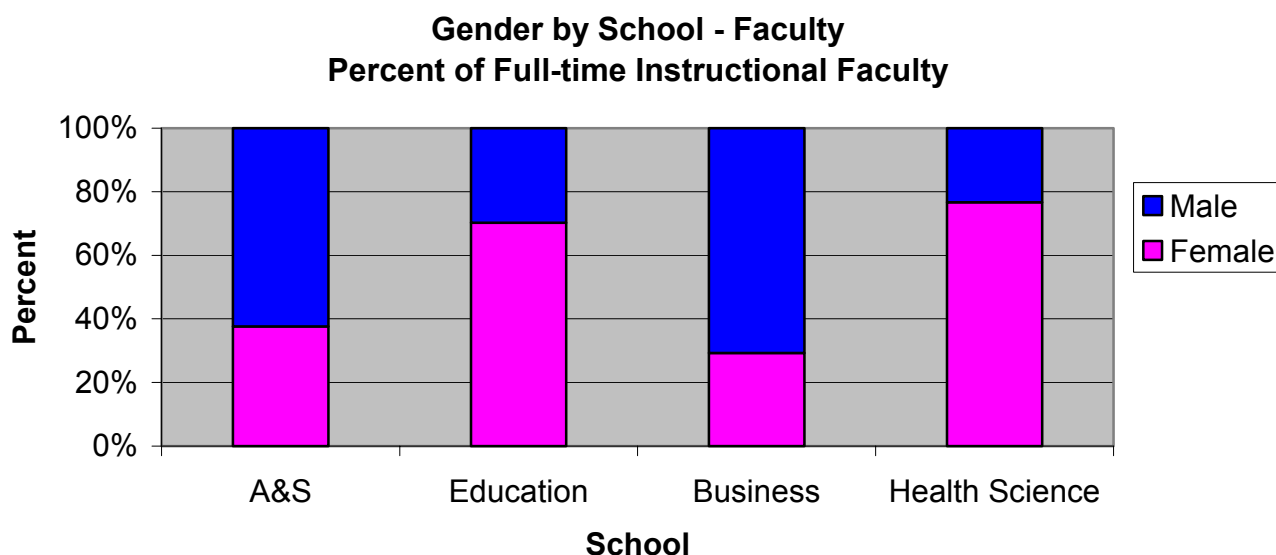
FACULTY DIVERSITY

GC&SU has made great effort in hiring minorities and women since 1999 and has made progress in both areas. The hiring of faculty with disabilities has been less of an overt effort of the institution.

Faculty Gender

Women constitute 45% of the GC&SU faculty as compared to the 38% for the University System of Georgia. However, gender equity within schools and departments is still in need of being addressed. GC&SU strives for greater gender equity among faculty in all disciplines. Whereas, the School of Liberal Arts & Sciences faculty is 37% female, School of Business faculty is 29% female, School of

Education faculty is 70% female, and School of Health Sciences faculty is 77% female. GC&SU seeks to alter the traditional gender imbalances in disciplines in order to encourage male and female students to pursue whatever careers they desire.



Ethnic Faculty

Just as GC&SU wishes to have a more ethnically diverse student body, it also wishes to have a more ethnically diverse faculty. While the campus has made great efforts to recruit and hire minority faculty, the institution's efforts have produced mixed results. Significant gains were made between 1997 and 2001, with the percentage of ethnic minority faculty rising from 9% to 14%.

In Fall 2002, GC&SU was given the opportunity by the Georgia Board of Regents to hire additional faculty to support the public liberal arts mission. This initiative provided for the greatest influx in the number of ethnic minority faculty into GC&SU; ironically, the number of new faculty was so large that it did not show a percentage gain. Also the retention rate of ethnic minority faculty has not kept up the pace with recruitment. Thus, the percentage of ethnic minority faculty has declined to 10% in Fall 2003. As a result, the institution must enhance its recruitment and retention of minority faculty.

Faculty with Disabilities

Currently, 10 faculty have identified themselves as having disabilities. The institution may also review its hiring practices and personnel support efforts to accommodate faculty with disabilities. The current structure for support of persons with disabilities is decentralized and may need revision to better serve people with disabilities.

4.2 Survey of Related Best Practices

Recruitment and retention of students is well documented in higher education literature. Edward Webb outlined the importance of a student's relationship with the institution:

"Retention = Involvement = Excellence . . . Through involvement students learn and grow . . . these are true measures of the 'value added' or 'excellence' of an institution." (p. 7)

Many programs, which concentrated on minority retention, sought to enhance student connectedness. A study of Hispanic students by Rendon and Amaury found that "students who had higher levels of initial commitment to the institution and their educational goals, higher levels of academic and social integration . . . were most likely to have integrated better both socially and academically at their institutions." (p. 20). Research on black students by Mallinckrodt concurred: "black students might be helped to remain in college by interventions based on increasing the level of campus social support they receive." (p. 63)

Similarly, Astone, Nunez-Wormack, and Smoldaka found mentoring programs to be effective for retention. This study discovered that many factors that contribute to student attrition are minimized by interaction with college faculty and staff and by increased interaction in college programs. Jones (1986) reported that:

"[E]xperience indicates that helping the high-risk student establish a linkage with the college through either a personal relationship with a staff member involvement in campus organizations, or a campus-based work assignment appears to be the single most effective means of reducing attrition." (p. 17)

Lenning, Beal, and Sauer in their seminal work Retention and attrition: Evidence for action and research studied factors relating to retention and attrition of all students. Their study looked at the correlation between student retention and student characteristics, environmental characteristics, and the interactions between the student and the institution. They found "that academic factors represent the strongest predictors, but the correlation may be no more than .50." (p. 18) They also assert that the dominant theme in retention research is that retention and attrition result from the interactions that take place between students and the institution:

"The term *fit* is used to describe the interaction for those who stay and *lack of fit* the interaction for those who leave. Fit . . . include[s] moral and social integration, meaningful contact between the student and the faculty, development of relationship between students and those who care about them, and the responsiveness of the institution to the needs students feel." (p. 21)

Lenning, Beal, and Sauer further advocate colleges to "direct recruitment efforts to students whom the institution is best equipped to serve and to change the institution so that it will better serve those students" (p. 96).

The American Council on Education (ACE) is a leader in the effort to create institutions of higher learning that reflect and serve a diverse nation. In October

2001, GC&SU faculty attended an ACE Conference devoted to “Educating All of One Nation: Affirming Diversity in the 21st Century: Developing a Proactive Agenda.” (Cincinnati, Ohio). In its literature ACE asserts:

“The strong empirical evidence presented in this monograph, comprising three studies of college teachers’ and students’ attitudes toward and experiences with racial and ethnic diversity, demonstrate that campus diversity represents an educational benefit for all students that can not be duplicated in a racially and ethnically homogeneous academic setting.

The studies presented here strongly support the proposition that practices such as race-sensitive admissions lead to expanded educational possibilities and better educational outcomes for all students, regardless of race or ethnic origin.” www.acenet.edu/programs/caree/diversity.ccm):

Below is a list of references that influenced the development of this initiative to recruit and retain students and faculty to increase diversity:

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- Webb, E. M. (1987). "Retention and excellence through student involvement: A leadership role for student affairs." *NASPA Journal*, 24(4), 6-11.

4.3 Student-Learning Outcomes

GC&SU anticipates that the successful recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty will benefit all students at GC&SU by creating a learning environment that stimulates intellectual and emotional discovery and which prepares students as global citizens. The effects of this initiative will be indicated by the following student outcomes:

1. Students will understand perspectives of others of racial and ethnically diverse groups.
2. Students will successfully interact with diverse groups.
3. Students will value being a member of a diverse community.

4.4 Assessment Measures

The success of the student-learning outcomes above will be measured through analysis of the following assessment tools:

1. Understanding of perspectives will be assessed through a sampling of written reflections on specific topics, provided by students of instructors volunteering to participate.
2. Interaction will be assessed through increased participation in various synthesizing events on campus (i.e., Multicultural Affairs-sponsored cultural

events, culturally diverse art openings, literature readings, musical and theatrical events, academic guest speakers on campus, etc.)

3. Values will be assessed through responses to relevant questions on the NSSE, ACT, and GC&SU graduation surveys.

4.5 Specific Programs

The initiative to increase diversity at GC&SU through recruitment and retention of faculty and students from underserved groups will be addressed through six specific new endeavors.

4.5.1 Increase Recruitment of Minority Faculty.

4.5.1.1 Leadership

The Vice President and Dean of Faculties as well as the academic deans will comprise the leadership for this endeavor.

4.5.1.2 Resource Allocation

No new funds will need to be budgeted for this endeavor; funds will be drawn from the Academic Affairs budget. Funding for travel to conferences and professional venues to seek out minority candidates will be increased to \$8,000. Funding to advertise in minority journals, conferences, professional networks, and HBCU's will be increased to \$5,000.

4.5.1.3 Implementation Time Line

The funding will be budgeted in 2004 for FY 2005. The endeavor will therefore begin in Fall 2004. This endeavor will be funded at this level or higher until no longer needed.

4.5.2 Establish an "Aspiring Minority Scholars in Residence" Program

If lack of a diversified candidate pool for permanent tenure-track hiring is a problem, a minority ABD or Post-Doctorate Fellow may be sought and engaged on a contractual basis as an "Aspiring Minority Scholar in Residence."

4.5.2.1 Leadership

The Vice President and Dean of Faculties as well as the academic deans will comprise the leadership for this endeavor.

4.5.2.2 Resource Allocation

No new funds will need to be budgeted for this endeavor. The minority fellows will be provided with a two-course reduction each semester to further their scholarship, so for each minority fellow hired, the cost of \$6000 per year will be drawn from the Academic Affairs budget. Also from the Academic Affairs budget, \$2000 will be drawn to fund increased incentives, in addition to course reduction, such as research funding and a library budget.

4.5.2.3 Implementation Time Line

Some Departments, such as English and Art, have begun to explore these possibilities. An institution-wide initiative will require the academic deans and chairs to develop school-specific plans; this could be accomplished by December 2004. School approval of the plans will be accomplished by May 2005; and implementation will budgeted in FY 2006 to begin in Fall 2005. This endeavor will be funded at this level or higher until no longer needed.

4.5.3 Review and adopt admission policies to attract a broader, more diverse spectrum of academically qualified students.

4.5.3.1 Leadership

The Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services and Director of Admissions will comprise the leadership for this endeavor.

4.5.3.2 Resource Allocation

No new funding will be required. Minimal costs may be involved in research connected with policy review. And new policies will entail some printing costs of new materials. But these expenses will be covered by the existing budgets. However, implementation of revised policies may entail increased costs.

4.5.3.3. Implementation Time Line

A committee of Enrollment Services and Admissions staff with academic deans and chairs will review and revise admissions policies. This will be accomplished by December 2004. These policies will need to go through the University's governance process, which should be accomplished by May 2005. The new policies will be implemented in Fall 2005 for applicants wishing to matriculate in Fall 2006. Once accomplished, this endeavor will not need to be continued.

4.5.4 Establish a special mentorship program for minority faculty.

Usual new-faculty mentoring will be augmented for minority faculty, matching them with established minority faculty who can help them with both professional and personal issues associated with adjusting to life in Middle Georgia.

4.5.4.1 Leadership

The Coordinator of New Faculty Orientation and the academic deans will comprise the leadership for this endeavor.

4.5.4.2 Resource Allocation

No additional funds will need to be budgeted for this endeavor.

4.5.4.3 Implementation Time Line

A committee of the new-faculty orientation team and the academic deans will develop a plan for this endeavor by December 2004. Training and preparation of mentors will occur in Spring 2005; and the endeavor will be implemented in Fall 2005. It will then be an ongoing element of every new-faculty orientation.

4.5.5 Review Core curriculum to assure coverage of issues related to diversity.

4.5.5.1 Leadership

The University Senate Academic Governance Committee will comprise the leadership for this endeavor.

4.5.5.2 Resource Allocation

No additional funding will be needed for this endeavor.

4.5.5.3 Implementation Time Line

This endeavor will follow the implementation time line established for review of the Core Curriculum (see 3.5.1)

4.6 Budget for Initiative: Enhance recruitment and retention of students and faculty to increase diversity

Endeavor	Personnel	Fringe	Travel	Scholarships	Supplies	Contractual	Training	NO COSTS	Total
Minority Faculty Recruitment			Travel to recruitment venues - \$8000 SOURCE: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (ongoing)		Print Advertising - \$5000 SOURCE: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (ongoing)				\$13,000
“Aspiring Minority Scholars in Residence”	Part-time pay to allow 2-course release each term for the scholars - \$6000 SOURCE: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (ongoing)				Incentives for scholars: library budget, research funding, etc. - \$2000 SOURCE: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (ongoing)				\$8,000
Review admissions policies								No costs	
Minority Faculty Mentors								No costs	

Endeavor	Personnel	Fringe	Travel	Scholarships	Supplies	Contractual	Training	NO COSTS	Total
Multicultural Diversity workshops									
Review of Core Curriculum for diversity awareness								No costs	

TOTAL: \$21,000

Costs to be covered by existing revenue or budget allocation: ALL

Costs requiring new allocation: NONE

5. Enhance Opportunities to Engage Student Learning in the Classroom and Beyond

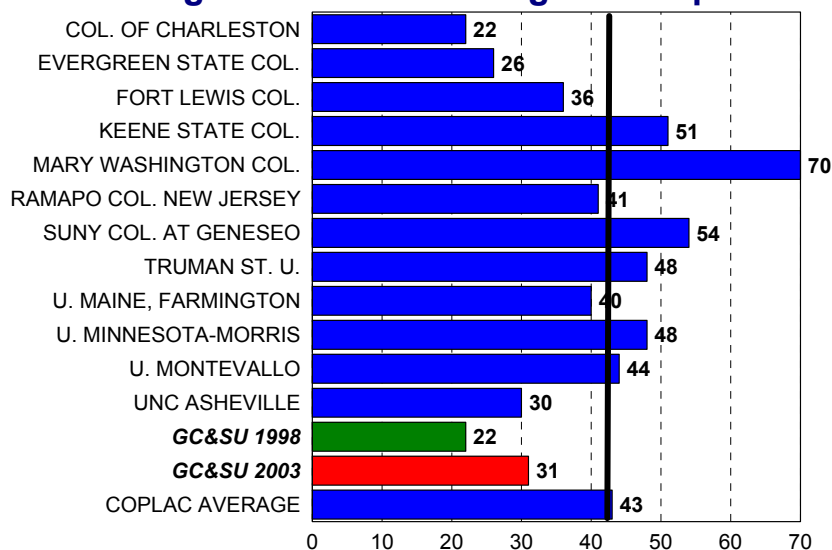
GC&SU believes that, in order to facilitate its expectation that students be meaningfully involved in the campus community, it must provide a learning environment that facilitates engagement. The University further believes that expansion of its structuring of learning communities would foster student engagement. It has assessed the current curricular and student-life programming and found a need to provide a greater variety of small learning communities. It also researched theory and practice related to learning communities and cohorts. From there, it determined assessable desired outcomes of academic programs structures to a greater degree as learning communities. Finally, it developed a plan of endeavors to address the development of learning communities in a variety of forms.

5.1 Rationale for Initiative

On-Campus, Living-Learning Communities

As early as 1998, GC&SU recognized the importance of learning communities in the achievement of its liberal arts mission. Using COPLAC benchmarking data, GC&SU established an institutional goal to house 40% of its Milledgeville campus students in University residence halls. In 2001, GC&SU embarked upon a three-phase construction and renovation program to provide 2,226 on-campus beds by 2007. The residence halls were developed with student input, with on-campus housing consultants and an awareness of the desire for the creation of living-learning communities. As a result, new and renovated facilities are being constructed with the intent of providing residents with additional personal, classroom, and meeting space. All residence hall rooms provide internet access. With the completion of phase one, GC&SU has increased on-campus residency from 22% in the Fall of 1998 to 31% for Fall 2003. By the completion of phase three of the housing project in 2007, GC&SU will house approximately 44% of Milledgeville students on campus.

Percentage of Students Living on Campus



* Not COPLAC In the case of blanks the data were not available.
Data adapted from US News & World Report (1999 best Colleges Guide)

Fall 2004 will be a threshold year in the on campus renovation project when GC&SU will implement a residency requirement for entering freshmen. In order to assure the housing of all entering freshmen, the campus will limit freshman enrollment to 900, down from 1,013 freshmen in Fall 2003.

Cluster Courses

In Fall 2002, GC&SU offered ten learning community opportunities for undecided freshmen by providing a program where groups of students take two or more classes together. The course cluster included a 1-hour Freshman Seminar, a 3-hour English Composition, and a 2-4 hour Core curriculum course depending on the mentor area of expertise. Two Biology, 1 Political Science, 1 Math, 1 History, 1 Music, 1 Art, and 3 IDST (Communication and Society, Interpersonal Relations, and Global Issues) were offered. Therefore, all the entering first-year students in 2002 who were classified as "undecided" experienced a cluster. In Fall 2002, only 13.9% of undecided students earned under a 2.00 as compared to the institutional average of 20%. In 2001, without the cluster, undecided first-year students were more likely to be under a 2.00 GPA than was the average freshman. In Fall 2003, several departments offered cluster courses for first-year students with a declared major. Results are pending.

Educational Experiences of Cohort and Non-Cohort Students

In 2003, using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), GC&SU compared academic programs with cohort/learning community structures with those without cohort structures. Students in cohort programs, reported a statistically significant higher level of the following experiences:

1. Having diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing;
2. Working with other students on projects during class;
3. Tutoring or teaching other students (paid or voluntary);
4. Participating in a community-based project as part of a regular course;
5. Using e-mail to communicate with an instructor;
6. Discussing ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class;
7. Working harder than they thought they could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations;
8. Working with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.);
9. Having coursework emphasized by analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth;
10. Having coursework emphasized by synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships;
11. Having coursework emphasized by applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations;
12. Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages;
13. Participating in community service or volunteer work;
14. Having a culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, capstone course, thesis, project, etc.);
15. Contributing to thinking critically and analytically;
16. Contributing to understanding oneself;

17. Contributing to solving complex real-world problems;
18. Contributing to developing a personal code of values and ethics;
19. Contributing to the welfare of the community.

As a result of these findings, GC&SU seeks to further pursue the development of additional learning communities in programs outside the schools of Health Sciences and Education. The data indicates that regardless of their developmental levels, students benefit from the coherence and continuity provided by learning communities.

5.2 Survey of Related Best Practices

The following offer benchmarks for the development of this initiative:

1. Evergreen State College, a COPLAC institution. Evergreen houses the “Learning Community Commons”
http://learningcommons.evergreen.edu/03_start_entry.asp#21 From the Web site: “curricular learning communities are classes that are linked or clustered during an academic term, often around an interdisciplinary theme, and enroll a common cohort of students. A variety of approaches are used to build these learning communities, with all intended to restructure the students’ time, credit, and learning experiences to build community among students, between students and their teachers, and among faculty members and disciplines.”
2. Henderson State University: “Building a Community of Learners”
<http://www.hsu.edu/dept/irs/community.html>
3. Temple University, “The Learning Communities @ Temple University”
<http://www.temple.edu/LC/>
4. [Learning Communities Taking Root](#), by Jean MacGregor, Washington Center News.
5. [Learning Community Models](#), by Jean MacGregor, Barbara Leigh Smith, Roberta Matthews, Faith Gabelnick.

5.3 Student – Learning Outcomes

GC&SU anticipates that engaged students will be effective, responsible citizens. The effects of this endeavor will be characterized by the following student outcomes:

1. Students will value being in a community of supportive peers.
2. Students will be involved in campus life.
3. Students will perform well in courses and make good progress toward degree.
4. Students will perform well in collaboration with other students.
5. Students will interact with instructors outside of the classroom.
6. Students will demonstrate crossover learning and apply learning to external situations.

5.4 Assessment Measures

The success of student-learning outcomes will be measured through analysis of the following assessment tools:

1. NSSE surveys, graduation surveys, and program-specific surveys addressing attitudinal outcomes;
2. Increased participation numbers in campus events and activities;
3. Increased membership in student organizations;
4. GPA’s, retention rates, and graduation rates of students in learning communities;

5. Faculty survey related to students in learning communities;

5.5 Specific Programs

The initiative to engage students in learning in the classroom and beyond will be addressed through two new endeavors:

5.5.1 Expand learning communities in the first-year experience.

5.5.1.1 Leadership

Department Chairs will be responsible for this endeavor.

5.5.1.2 Resource Allocation

From the General Instruction budget, there will be a reallocation of the use of funds to cover the costs associated with this initiative. \$5,000 will be used to support the cost of lead faculty who will provide extra curricular activities to support enrichment. \$20,000 will be used for faculty course load reduction. Funding will support the hiring of part-time replacement faculty at a cost of one course reduction per faculty member per year involved in learning communities.

5.5.1.3 Implementation Time Line

By May 2005, academic chairs in the School of Liberal Arts & Sciences (SOLAS) will develop Core clusters and solicit and train Core faculty for leading learning communities. New communities will be implemented in August 2005, and an evaluation workshop will be scheduled in February 2006 for the purpose of evaluating the Core clusters and determining revisions so that they are ready for the next fall term.

5.5.2 Expand learning communities in degree and certificate programs.

5.5.2.1 Leadership

Department Chairs will be responsible for this endeavor.

5.5.2.2 Resource Allocation

Budget reallocation in section 5.5.1.2 above will also cover the cost of this endeavor.

5.5.2.3 Implementation Time Line

By May 2005, school meetings to design program-specific learning communities will be completed. Workshops led by faculty leading cohort programs will follow to help faculty understand the concept. Departmental/School review of learning community clusters will be scheduled during AY 2005-06, and by May 2006 faculty will be solicited and trained to lead learning communities so that the program can be implemented in August 2006. The final step will be to schedule a workshop in February 2007 to evaluate the success of the communities and make all necessary revisions for the next fall term.

5.6 Budget for Initiative: Enhance opportunities to engage student learning in the classroom and beyond

Endeavor	Personnel	Fringe	Travel	Scholarships	Supplies	Contractual	Training	NO COSTS	Total
Expand learning communities in first year	Part-time pay to allow course release for faculty leading communities - \$10,000 SOURCE: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (ongoing while needed)				Materials for curricular enrichment-\$2500 SOURCE: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (ongoing)				\$12,500
Expand learning communities in degree programs	Part-time pay to allow course release for faculty leading communities - \$10,000 SOURCE: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (ongoing while needed)				Materials for curricular enrichment-\$2500 SOURCE: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (ongoing)				\$12,500

TOTAL \$25,000

Costs to be covered by existing revenue, or budget allocation: ALL

Costs requiring new allocation: NONE

6. Enhance Preparation of Students for Success in Post-graduate Opportunities

GC&SU believes that, in order to facilitate its expectation that students will take full advantage of opportunities to develop and implement career plans, it must prepare students to pursue these opportunities successfully. Because the University wishes its students to succeed as global citizens, it believes enhancements of both career and international programming are necessary to achieve this goal. It has assessed the need for better preparing students for post-graduate opportunities and found a need to enable students to attain their goals, whether those be jobs, graduate programs, or international opportunities. It also researched theory and practice related to post-graduate preparation, particularly for career and international experience. From there, it determined assessable desired outcomes of programs that provided these opportunities. Finally, it developed a plan of endeavors to address the needs of career preparation and international experience.

6.1 Rationale

GC&SU's statement of principles states:

“Georgia College & State University aims to produce graduates who are **well prepared for careers or advanced study** and who are instilled with exceptional qualities of mind and character. These include an inquisitive, analytical mind; respect for human diversity and individuality; **a sense of civic and global responsibility**; sound ethical principles; effective writing, speaking, and quantitative skills; and a healthy lifestyle.”

The University recognizes that it can do more to fulfill these mission goals.

Student Retention and Graduation Rates

Increased student retention and graduation rates are very important institutional objectives for GC&SU. The fall-to-fall retention rate for the Fall 2001 freshman cohort was 75%, up from the 2000 freshman cohort of 73%. Fall-to-fall freshman retention averaged in the 65-68% range until GC&SU implemented higher SAT requirements in Fall 1999. Fall 2001 admission required an SAT of 940. The chart below indicates the retention rates for the USG sectors and GC&SU. One area of concern in the data for GC&SU is the variance between the institution-specific retention rate and system-wide graduation rate; GC&SU has a large proportion of its freshman cohort (10%) retained at other USG schools.

Comparison of Retention Rates to USG School Categories

Cohort Year	Fall 2001 Full-time Freshman	
	Institution-specific Rate	System-wide Rate
Research Universities	89.12	92.18
Regional Universities	76.12	84.67
State Universities	70.93	78.54
GC&SU	75.43	85.32

GC&SU's improved retention rate is in stark contrast with the four-year and six-year graduation rates. Selective admission was implemented in Fall 1999; thus, there is not a graduation history for GC&SU in the context of its current status as a more selective public liberal arts university. The current increases in retention suggest that graduation rates will increase as the more academically prepared freshman cohorts matriculate through GC&SU. Graduation rates increased from 32.8% to 34.73% for the 1996 cohort. Graduation rate information follows.

Comparison of Graduation Rates to USG School Categories

Cohort Year	1996	1996
	6-year Graduation Rate	4-year Graduation Rate
Research Universities	62.03	32.05
Regional Universities	33.94	12.27
State Universities	26.92	10.03
GC&SU	34.73	16.81

Many initiatives have been implemented to increase retention. In Fall 2002, the University implemented an early-intervention program for freshmen. A major component of this intervention is that students receive mid-semester grades for Core curriculum courses. In addition, student services personnel actively seek out students identified as having difficulty in class or having excessive absences.

While graduation rates should increase as retention increases, the percentage of students who choose to complete their degree at GC&SU is extremely low for an institution seeking Tier 1 status in US News rankings of Southern Masters Universities. A recent consultant report on GC&SU's progress in its effort to gain Tier 1 status states:

GC&SU's data are unusual in that they are so disparate. In two categories, "reputation" and "faculty resources," GC&SU is in the first tier. These two categories account for 45% of the ranking model. Yet, in the remaining categories: financial resources, retention/graduation rate, selectivity, and alumni giving, GC&SU falls into the third tier. Over time, the strides GC&SU made in SAT data should enhance GC&SU retention and graduation rates. GC&SU should continue to improve its retention and graduation rates. Retaining and graduating those enrolled as freshmen is not only good for GC&SU rankings but is also cost effective and can lead to a more committed alumni and, thus, a higher proportion of alumni donors.

Graduation Questionnaire

The May 2003 graduating student survey revealed that at graduation, 65% were seeking employment, 12% had accepted an employment offer, 16.5% were currently employed, and 6% were not accepting employment. More master-level graduates

(26.5%) reported being currently employed as compared to undergraduates (10%). The percentage of accepted job offers at the point of graduation was higher than average for bachelor degree recipients in the professional schools of education (20.8%) and health sciences (14.3%).

Average compensation for bachelor-degree recipients varied by area of study:

1. School of Health Science bachelor graduates received an average salary of \$38,550;
2. School of Education bachelor graduates received an average salary of \$38,875;
3. School of Business and Arts & Science graduates received average salaries in the \$29,000- \$30,000 range, but these groups exhibited a large variability in entry salaries as compared to the health science and education bachelor recipients.

All job offers were in the state of Georgia.

Of those who were currently employed, 35.6% of bachelor recipients and 47.4% of master recipients reported their employee status had changed due to their education.

Over one fourth (27.4%) of bachelor recipients and 15.6% of master level graduates indicated that they intend to enroll in a graduate or professional program within the next six months. Arts and science bachelor recipients reported a higher level of intent to continue their education (37.7%), followed by education bachelor recipients (26.1%). Of those who indicated their intent to enroll in a graduate program or professional program in the next six months, 24.4% of bachelor recipients and 30% of master level graduates had been accepted into graduate or professional school. GC&SU (34.8%) and the University of Georgia (8.7%) were the dominant graduate schools for bachelor recipients.

Career Center Utilization

Approximately 25% of seniors currently utilize Career Center resources prior to graduation and 7-10% of the graduates use them within the 3 months following graduation. Most use the Career Center for help with their resumes, to learn job search methodologies, to prepare for interviews, to gain skill in salary negotiation, and to prepare for career fairs. During the 2002-2003 academic year, two major GC&SU career fairs were held. The larger of the two is held each Fall term in the Atlanta metropolitan area with an average of 100 major employers participating. The spring career fair is held on campus and has consistently involved an average of 25 major employers. In addition, soon-to-graduate students are encouraged through Career Center promotions to participate in numerous "niche" career fairs and career related events including the NAACP Diversity Career Fair, and the Women for Hire Career Fair. GC&SU also co-sponsors with Augusta State University the "Teach Georgia" Career Fair for students graduating in education. Approximately 250 students from GC&SU participated in career fairs during 2002-2003.

Internships, Practica, and Clinical experiences

The academic departments of nursing and mass communication and the entire school of education require some type of internship, practicum, and/or clinical experience as an integral part of their curricula. Other departments have incorporated community service opportunities within a course so as to expose students to practical world of work experiences. However, it is thought that a number of students in additional departments could benefit by the incorporation of an educational experience that would provide for the application of their major within a world of work milieu. Approximately 25% of GC&SU undergraduate students experience an internship, practicum, or clinical opportunity prior to graduation.

International Experiences

The American Council on Education Center for Institutional and International Initiatives has recognized GC&SU as having one of the most active internationalized curricula out of 752 colleges in the United States. As a result, the University has been one of eight colleges chosen to participate in the ACE national study on internationalizing college curriculum. Although the University has received national recognition for its current international experiences, GC&SU's desire for graduates to have a "sense of civic and global responsibility" impels the University to provide greater access to the world for its students.

In 1998-1999 the Office of International Affairs worked with the USG Study Abroad Committee and core groups of interested faculty to create more programs. They developed study abroad flyers, presented study abroad to freshman seminars, and initiated study abroad fairs. Consequently, the number of students studying abroad has increased from 42 in the 1997-1998 academic year to 140 in the 2002-2003 academic year.

In 2002, GC&SU established a Global Scholars Endowment Fund to send more students abroad and to address the decline in international student enrollment due to increased out-of-state tuition and post-9/11 visa restrictions. With a proposed student activity fee to support students seeking an international educational experience, additional funding for study abroad scholarships may be available.

6.2 Survey of Best Practices

Career Planning

Career Center staff reviewed best practices of career service professional, and employer organizations. They looked at the following organizations: the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the Georgia Association of Colleges and Employers (GACE), and the Careers Consortium (a collaborative of representatives from twenty-five USG colleges and universities). Additionally, they surveyed internet career service representatives from MonsterTrak.com and GeorgiaHire.com for best practices input.

From this information, they were able to discern that the best schools encourage students to have early exposure and practical experience in their major areas of

study. Additionally, best schools provide students with career-related support and advise them in the best up-to-date methods to help them attain professional employment. Students having access and support are better prepared to be effective and successful in their transition from college to graduate school or their career position.

International Experiences

In the book *Colleges that Change Lives* (1996), Loren Pope indicates that the best private liberal arts colleges strongly encourage their students to participate in cross-cultural experiences in the U.S. and to study abroad for a semester during their junior or senior year. As documented in a recent survey of nearly 3,000 former study-abroad participants and conducted by the Institute for the International Education of Students, these experiences instill in students respect for human diversity and a sense of global responsibility that will prepare them for life in a diverse society, and more specifically for graduate study or employment abroad and employment in cross-culturally diverse corporations in the U.S. The survey also indicated that nearly half had worked or volunteered abroad since graduating from college, and 9 in 10 respondents said their study-abroad experiences had led them to seek a greater diversity of friends. An article with the survey results was published in the November 7, 2003 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and can be found at <http://www.iesabroad.org/info/iesinthenews.htm>.

6.3 Student-Learning Outcomes

Career Planning

1. Students pursue internship and practicum experiences related to their majors;
2. Students develop effective resume and cover-letter writing skills;
3. Students learn to research discipline-appropriate jobs effectively;
4. Students prepare to successfully interview for employment and admission to graduate programs;
5. Students practice the most effective job search methodologies;
6. Students learn salary negotiation skills;
7. Students utilize internet technology and resources in all appropriate career and graduate study endeavors.

International Experience

1. Students pursue graduate study abroad and receive fellowships to support that study;
2. Students pursue employment in international and cross-culturally diverse corporations in Georgia and the U.S.;
3. Students pursue employment abroad.

6.4 Assessment Measures

The success of the student-learning outcomes above will be measured through analysis of the following assessment tools:

Career Planning

1. The participation numbers in internship and practicum programs will assess the success of students pursuing internship and practicum experiences related to their majors;
2. The number of professional quality student resumes on file in the Career Center will measure the success of students being able to develop effective resumes and cover letter writing skills;
3. An increased number of "visits" by students to the GC&SU Career Center Web site will measure the success of students knowing how to utilize Internet technology and resources to research discipline-appropriate jobs effectively;
4. An increase in student participation in university-wide co-and extra-curricular activities dedicated to preparing students to successfully interview for employment, apply to graduate programs, and learn salary negotiation skills will assess the success of this endeavor;

International Experience

1. An increase in the number of graduates pursuing graduate study abroad and receiving fellowships to support that study will measure the success of GC&SU students pursuing graduate study abroad and receiving fellowships to support that study;
2. An increase in the number of graduates pursuing employment in international and cross-culturally diverse corporations in Georgia and the U.S. will measure the success of the endeavor to have students pursue employment in international and cross-culturally diverse corporations in Georgia and the U.S.;
3. Increased numbers of students pursuing employment abroad will show success in the endeavor.

6.5 Specific Endeavors

Seven endeavors are planned to support the preparation of students for success in post-graduate opportunities.

Career Preparation

6.5.1 Review relevant degree programs to increase the opportunities for major-related internships, practica, field experience, and clinical assignments.

6.5.1.1 Leadership

The Director of Career Center and department chairs will comprise the leadership for this endeavor.

6.5.1.2 Resource Allocation

Since costs are included in the Career Center's budget, no additional funds are needed.

6.5.1.3 Implementation Time Line

Collaborative discussions to develop plans specific to degree programs will take place during AY 2004-05. Responsibilities will then be assigned by May 2005 to the Career Center staff with implementation scheduled for August 2005.

6.5.2 Encourage seniors to participate in a Senior Career/Job Search Workshop, which will include development of a resume, during their final 45 semester hours.

6.5.2.1 Leadership

The Director of the Career Center will lead this endeavor.

6.5.2.2 Resource Allocation

No additional funds will be needed. Staff and resource materials for the workshops will be covered by the existing Career Center budget.

6.5.2.3 Implementation Time Line

Collaborative discussions with department chairs to develop workshops will take place during AY 2004-05. The Career Center staff will then pilot them in Fall 2005, and fully implement them in Spring 2006.

6.5.3 Encourage senior students to participate in at least one of several career fairs.

6.5.3.1 Leadership

The Director of the Career Center will lead this endeavor.

6.5.3.2 Resource Allocation

No additional funds will be needed. Staff and resource materials for the workshops will be covered by the existing Career Center budget.

6.5.3.3. Implementation Time Line

Collaborative discussions with department chairs to develop a plan for encouraging student involvement in career fairs will occur so that the plan is developed by May 2004 with implementation scheduled for AY 2005-06.

International Programming

6.5.4 Review Core curriculum to assure coverage of issues related to global diversity and international awareness.

6.5.4.1 Leadership

The Core Curriculum Ad-Hoc Committee of the University Senate Academic Governance Committee will comprise the leadership for this endeavor.

6.5.4.2 Resource Allocation

No additional funds are needed for the development of this endeavor.

6.5.4.3 Implementation Time Line

This endeavor will follow the implementation time line established for review of the Core Curriculum (see 3.5.1)

6.5.5 Increase cross-cultural and international co-curricular programming

6.5.5.1 Leadership

The Assistant Vice President for International Education holds the leadership for this endeavor, but will work collaboratively with the academic deans.

6.5.5.2 Resource Allocation

At least one additional full-time staff member is needed. If a Study-Abroad Advisor is hired, that may suffice. Resource allocation information regarding a new staff position is discussed in the next endeavor (see 6.5.6.2). The programming cost is \$3000, which would be drawn from the Academic Affairs budget.

6.5.5.3 Implementation Time Line

A committee to assist the International Education staff in program development is to be developed by May 2004, and programs will begin in January 2005. Regarding the time line for a new staff member, see below (6.5.6.3).

6.5.6 Encourage more students to study abroad.

6.5.6.1 Leadership

The Assistant Vice President for International Education will be the leader of this endeavor.

6.5.6.2 Resource Allocation

This program will require the hiring of a full-time Study-Abroad Advisor at a cost of \$41,350, which will come from the Salary budget (\$30,000) and the Benefits budget (\$11,350).

6.5.6.3 Implementation Time Line

A budget request will be made for a full-time professional Study Abroad Advisor. This position will be given high priority in the Academic Affairs budget proposed for FY 2006. If the Georgia Board of Regents allocates the position in May 2005, it will be filled by August 2005. If not, it will be requested again for FY 2007.

6.5.7 Encourage students to pursue post-graduate study and work opportunities abroad.

6.5.7.1 Leadership

The Assistant Vice President for International Education will be responsible for this endeavor, but will work collaboratively with the Director of the Career Center.

6.5.7.2 Resource Allocation

No additional cost is anticipated for this endeavor.

6.5.7.3 Implementation Time Line

The addition of a new staff position (see above) will be requested for FY 2006. If allocated, it will be filled by August 2005, enabling implementation of the endeavor in Fall 2005.

6.6 Budget for Initiative: Enhance preparation of students for success in post-graduate opportunities

Endeavor	Personnel	Fringe	Travel	Scholarships	Supplies	Contractual	Training	NO COSTS	Total
Increase major-related field experiences								Costs included in Career Center Budget	
Required Senior Career Workshops								Costs included in Career Center Budget	
Promote job fairs								Costs included in Career Center Budget	
Curr. Review for global diversity awareness								No Cost	
Increase cross-cultural programming					Materials for Programs - \$1000	Expenses for guest speakers - \$2000			\$3000

Endeavor	Personnel	Fringe	Travel	Scholarships	Supplies	Contractual	Training	Endeavor	Personnel
Encourage study abroad	New Position: Study Abroad Advisor - \$30,000 NEW ALLOCATION: SALARIES	Benefits for new position- \$11,350 NEW ALLOCATION:							\$41,350
Encourage post-grad. study and work abroad								No Cost	

TOTAL: \$44,350

Costs to be covered by existing revenue, or budget allocation: \$3,000

Costs requiring new allocation: \$31,350 in budget for FY2006

Summary of Funding Sources

Initiatives	Cost Covered by Revenue	Cost Allocated From Funding Source	Cost Needing New Allocation	TOTAL
1. Orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Brochures • Postage & Handling • Transfer Road Map • Promotional Materials 	\$50 revenue per student from transfer orientation fee will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$800 for new brochures • \$300 for postage & handling • \$200 for Transfer Road Map \$1300	Promotional materials and activities related to registering students for events: \$100 from the Student Activities budget		\$ 1,400
2. Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships • Student Travel • Visiting Lecture Series • Program Costs Associated with Lecture Series 		Scholarships @ \$1,000 each for 4 students from the Coverdell Grant (increasing by 4 each year up to 12): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4,000 (1st year) Travel for 4 new Coverdell student scholars each year from the Coverdell Grant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4000 each year from the budget of the Coverdell Institute Visiting Lectures Series from the Coverdell Grant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$15,000 each year Program Costs Associated with the Visiting Lecture Series from the Coverdell Grant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4,000 each year 		\$27,000
3. Academic Challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAC&U Institute Participation • Workshops 		Team of five to attend the AAC&U Institute on General Education, Summer 2004 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$6,000 from the General Instruction budget (renewal as needed) Funding for development of faculty to teach Writing-Reading-and-Speaking-Across-the-Curriculum and Quantifying-and-Computing-Across-the-Curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5,000 beginning in FY 2005 from the General Instruction budget with funding at this level continuing until the staffing need is met. (Includes: \$4k for training workshops; \$1k for workshop expenses.) 		\$11,000

Initiatives	Cost Covered by Revenue	Cost Allocated From Funding Source	Cost Needing New Allocation	TOTAL
4. Minority Recruitment and Retention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel • Advertising • Minority Scholars in Residence Program • CETL-sponsored faculty development workshops 		Funding for travel to conferences and professional venues seeking out minority candidates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$8,000 from General Instruction budget Funding for advertising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5,000 from General Instruction budget Funding for Aspiring Scholars in Residence program, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for a two-course reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$6,000 + benefits from the Salary and Benefits budget • Incentives: research funding, library budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2,000 from the General Instruction budget 		\$21,000
5. Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-curricular enrichment funds • Faculty course-load reduction 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5,000 from the General Instruction budget to cover extra-curricular activities to support enrichment; • \$20,000 from the General Instruction budget to support hiring of part-time replacement faculty at a cost of one-course reduction per faculty member involved in learning communities per year. 		\$25,000

6. Post-graduate Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring of a full-time Study-Abroad Advisor • Expanded programming 		Expanded Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3,000 from the General Instruction budget (\$2k for guest speakers and \$1k for program) 	New F/T Study-Abroad Advisor from the Salary and Benefits budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$30,000 salary • \$11,350 benefits 	\$44,350
Totals	\$1,300	\$87,100	\$41,350	\$129,750

