

Faculty Committee on Georgia College Strategic Planning

The Faculty Committee met periodically from December 2015 to February 2016, discussed the charge to the committee, and identified the five goals detailed in this report.

The committee consisted of the following members:

Alex Blazer, Robert Blumenthal, Kimberly Cossey (LARP representative), Barbara Funke, Ashok Hegde (Chair), Sunita Manian, Chesley Mercado, Wendy Mullen, & Ed Stanley.

The Faculty Committee developed the goals based on the charge provided by the Steering Committee which was as follows:

Focus: Faculty recruitment, retention, and productivity.

- What does the faculty cohort look like at a preeminent public liberal arts university?
- How can the university best position itself for meaningful national recognition of its faculty?
- How can we increase the positive impact faculty have on student learning outside of the classroom?
- How can Georgia College better recruit, support, develop, and retain an outstanding, diverse faculty that meets the expectations for a preeminent public liberal arts university?

The Faculty Committee is of the opinion that the faculty at a preeminent public liberal arts university would have expertise in many areas, would be ethnically diverse and would have equal representation of gender. The faculty would pursue excellence in scholarship and teaching. In order to make meaningful progress towards such aspiration, the Faculty Committee has developed the following measurable and realistic goals:

(1) Increase the number of students receiving individualized experiences such as (a) Undergraduate research or engagement in creative projects (e.g. MURACE, Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors); (b) Study Abroad; (c) Service Learning; and (d) Internships.

Students engaging in research or creative projects increases the depth of their education and elevate the status of an institution. For example, in spring 2015, US News and World Report invited college presidents, chief academic officers, deans of students and deans of admissions from more than 1,500 colleges to nominate up to 10 institutions with stellar examples of undergraduate research/creative projects. Among the ones nominated were many liberal arts colleges such as Elon University, Davidson College and Amherst College.

Therefore, an effective way for GCSU to distinguish itself from other universities (including research intensive [R1] universities), is through increased one-on-one mentoring by faculty of students in undergraduate research or creative endeavors.

The other individualized student experiences (such as Study Abroad, Service Learning and Internships) enhance engaged learning. Such activities are sought after in academic programs and are considered high-impact learning practices. Increased student participation in these activities is likely to move us towards permanence (For example, Elon University leads in recognition of these categories by US News and World Report in their annual "Best Colleges" guide. <http://www.elon.edu/E-Net/Article/120237>)

Measurable Objectives:

- (a) Increase the proportion of faculty engaging in one-one-one mentoring of students in undergraduate research or creative projects (including capstone projects).

At present we don't seem to have data as to the proportion of faculty engaged in one-one-one mentoring. A reasonable goal would be to increase this proportion such that 50% of the students will receive individualized experiences in the next five years.

- (b) Increase proportion of faculty leading Study Abroad programs.

- (c) Increase proportion of faculty participating in ENGAGE sponsored projects/initiatives such as Community-based Engaged Learning (C-bEL).
- (d) Expand the internship programs such that opportunities are available in many departments across GCSU (Currently formal processes to identify internships seem to exist in Criminal Justice, Sociology, and Political Science).
- (e) A formal mechanism (perhaps through the Carrera Center) needs to be developed to identify the numerous internship opportunities in the sciences and an appropriate faculty member who can guide students in each Department needs to be identified (see 'd' above).

Recommended actions:

Broadly, the institution must incentivize engagement of faculty in one-one-one mentoring of students in undergraduate research or creative projects. Past research has shown that providing incentives will increase faculty engagement (Eagan MK Jr et al [2011] Res. High Educ. 52:151-177).

Specifically, an immediate step that can be taken to encourage faculty to fully engage in one-on-one research or creative endeavors is the following: MURACE must be recognized as a scholarship option that is counted as equal to individual faculty research in terms of faculty evaluations and tenure and promotion decisions across all departments.

(2) Enhance national preeminence through impactful faculty engagement in scholarship/research/creative endeavor of faculty.

A key way for GCSU to enhance preeminence is recognition of its faculty nationally and internationally. For this to occur, endeavors such as scholarship/research/creative projects that are recognizable outside the GCSU campus are necessary. A close look at prestigious liberal arts college/university reveals a common feature, which is engagement of faculty in scholarship/research/creative endeavors.

Measurable Objectives:

Increase the quality and quantity of scholarly and research output by faculty. These can be measured in terms of number of papers/scholarly articles published, the status of the journals in which they are published, and participation in national/international meetings/conferences.

NOTE: This also helps achieve Goal #1 above.

Recommended Actions:

(a) In order to achieve the objectives, institutional support in providing the infrastructure and support for Scholarship/Research/Creative Endeavor of faculty would be necessary.

Scholarship in the sciences requires primary research which needs infrastructure and adequate intramural grant support for faculty to successfully compete for extramural funding at the national level.

(b) An important factor is availability of protected time to engage in scholarly/creative activities. The institution can facilitate engagement of faculty in scholarly/creative activities by granting release from teaching.

(3) Increase diversity of faculty in terms of breadth of expertise and demographics.

An important factor for moving towards preeminence is the ability to attract diverse types of high quality students from all across the nation and students from abroad. This can only be achieved by attracting diverse faculty with broad array of expertise.

Measurable Objectives:

(a) Recruit faculty who can teach courses that prepare students for an increasingly diverse world. Such faculty will also be expected to engage in scholarly activity in those subject areas.

(b) Increase the proportion of under-represented groups among the faculty (to reflect national demographics) to 30% across all faculty ranks.

At present, ethnic minorities comprise only a small percentage of faculty: Professors (20%), Associate Professors (20%), Assistant Professors (25%), Instructors (25%), and Lecturers (25%).

Recommended Actions:

The institution will need to devise ways to attract faculty belonging to ethnic minorities.

- a. Devise an institutional plan to engage in cluster hires across departments and disciplines [This addresses Measurable Objective (a)]
- b. Implement the Recommendations of the Diversity Action Plan: Subcommittee on Faculty and Staff Vitality and Viability [This addresses Measurable Objective (b)]

(4) Increase the proportion of full-time tenure track faculty to 90% of the total faculty.

A way to move towards preeminence is emulate the institutions that are ranked highly by US News and World Report. Two ranking indicators that pertain to the number of faculty are: (1) Number of classes with fewer than 20 students; and (2) Student-Faculty Ratio. The college ranking number 1 nationally (based on the 2014 data), Williams College, has 76.5% classes with fewer than 20 students and the Student-Faculty Ratio 7:1. The corresponding numbers for Elon University (which is ranked #1 among Regional Universities [South]) are 48.5% and 12:1.

This committee does not have the data on classes at GCSU with fewer than 20 students but calculation of Student-Faculty Ratio based on 2015 Georgia College Fact Book indicates a Student-Faculty Ratio of 17.5: 1.

This committee strongly believes that the way to improve our ranking indicators is not by hiring a numerous contingent or temporary faculty but by steadily *increasing the number of tenure-track faculty*. Faculty who will be here for the long-term (such as tenure-track and tenured faculty) will be vested in the success of GCSU and will effectively contribute to Goal #1 and Goal #2 described above.

Measurable Objectives:

Increase the number of tenure-track faculty by 2% per year for the next 5 years. (Currently, the proportion of tenured or tenure-track faculty is 80%).

Recommended Actions:

The institution should allocate resources to achieve this goal.

(5) Increase retention of faculty and enhance efforts to retain underrepresented groups.

As stated elsewhere in this report, only full-time faculty who are here for the long-term will have a vested interest in the success of GCSU. To achieve this, we as an institution, need to make every effort to retain the faculty whom we have hired.

Measurable Objectives

We should aim to increase retention of newly hired faculty to 90%.

Recommended Actions:

- (a) Develop further the faculty mentoring program currently in place at GCSU to mentor new faculty to ensure that they thrive at GCSU (Additional programs may be necessary to help retain faculty belonging to underrepresented minority groups).
- (b) In order to increase retention of faculty belonging to underrepresented groups, implement the Recommendations of the Diversity Action Plan: Subcommittee on Faculty and Staff Vitality and Viability.