Guided Pathways to Complete General Education At a Four-Year Institution

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The GSU Guided Pathway designed to meet the needs of:

- First generation
- Low Income
- Transfer students

Changes to University Policies and Practices

- Equity Initiative
- Faculty Learning Communities
- University-wide Symposia
- Academic Policies

Results

- Persistence Rates
- Dual Degree Success
- “Just-in-time” Changes
Why is a “guided pathway” critical to the success of a GSU student?

Fall 2016, New First-Year Students

- Female: 61%
- Male: 39%

Fall 2016, New Transfer Students

- Female: 62%
- Male: 38%

- White: 33.1%
- Black: 37.2%
- Hispanic: 13.1%
- Unknown: 11.7%
- Two or More: 2.1%
- International: 1.4%
- Asian: 1.2%
- Hawaiian/Pac. Isl: 0.1%
- Amer. Indian: 0.1%

Average Age:
Direct-entry – 19.2 years old
Transfer – 27.7 years old
What is a GSU Guided Pathway?

- Learning outcomes form the foundation;
- Programs, courses, and assignments designed and sequenced to foster deep learning;
- Structured for participation in high impact or active learning from first to final year;
- Blends inclusive, high-touch and high-tech approach in teaching and learning;
- Includes applied learning project(s) connecting program and student goals;
- Student’s work provides the primary evidence of progress.
Session Outcomes:

- Examination of a guided pathway designed to maximize college success with first time college students;
- Examination of a guided pathway for transfer students to a four-year institution;
- Equity-minded principles that support student success; and
- Topics and resources for faculty professional development for integrative learning and transparency in instruction.
General Education Outcomes as the Foundation

- Developed as a cooperative effort of faculty and administrators;
- Based on a review of national research and incorporation of best-practices (LEAP, CCA);
- Established an assessment plan for both general education and major student learning outcomes;
- Structured, integrative experience required in the junior year to build community among and between the “native” and transfer students.
The GSU Guided Pathway

- Cohort Model with three overarching themes
  - Civic Engagement
  - Global Citizenship
  - Sustainability
- Themes link courses together and enable development of learning communities
- Incorporate HIPs across first three semesters
  - Writing intensive
  - First year experiences
  - Learning communities
  - Collaborative assignments
  - Service learning semesters
Student Success

• Measured by:
  • Persistence
  • Educational Attainment
  • Academic Achievement
  • Student Advancement
  • Holistic Development
First Year Students

• Strategies Implemented to Achieve Success:
  • *Smart Start* in English and Mathematics
  • Enrollment based on admission criteria
  • Designed to build student’s abilities before fall semester begins and to continue with supplemental instruction in math and/or English during the fall semester.
First Year Students

Strategies Implemented to Achieve Success

• Upper level students as *Peer Mentors*
• *Midterm Grades* to call attention to student progress and formalize an action plan for success through *Save My Semester* initiative
• *Early Warning System-GSU STAR* to communicate with students, advisors, faculty and support staff
Guided Pathway

Year 1: Cohort courses (9 credit hours) Fall + Spring

Year 2: Cohort courses (9 credit hours) Fall

Year 3: Junior Seminar: Introduction to the Major (Fall)

Year 4: Scholarly Capstone

Used data collected on the first year cohort to revise and expand academic and social supports for FA15 first year cohort; continued that practice with FA16 cohort.
Transfer Students

- Enroll after completing 25 to 60 credit hours; primarily at community colleges, some from other four year institutions;

- Some transfer from one of 17 partner institutions in our *Dual Degree Program (DDP)*;
  - Personalized academic advising from a GSU advisor while at community college;
  - Clear guidance for their major while they are at the partnering institution;
  - Inter-institutional Peer Mentors assist in the transition from community college to university;
  - Admission to GSU is guaranteed and tuition is frozen;
  - Eligible for fifty GSU need-based scholarships and thirteen honors scholarships, allowing students to graduate debt-free.
The Center for the Junior Year

- Brings together the “native” and “transfer” student;
- Designed to facilitate the transition of juniors into their programs of study;
- Provides a space for undecided/undeclared students to explore their “hidden intellectualism”;
- Enhance students’ engagement with learning opportunities across campus;
- Assist students’ exploration of leadership opportunities, experiential learning opportunities, and undergraduate research opportunities;
- Assist students’ career exploration and exploration of professional/graduate school options.
Junior Seminar

- Undergrads who started in freshman cohort
- Transferring juniors

Integration

Transition
- From broad intellectual experience of GE coursework
- To focused study of a particular field

Conceptual Development
- Substantive study with intro to significant concepts and the nature of inquiry within the discipline
- Writing intensive
- Reinforce GE SLO for foundational knowledge, practical skills, and social responsibility

- 30 Undergraduate Degree Programs
- 26 Different Courses
Senior Capstone Design

- Research Based
- Internship
- Interdisciplinary
- Creative Senior Project
- Service Learning Project
Changing Policies and Practices

Equity Initiative
Goal to increase retention of African American students through targeted intervention strategies such as:

✓ Male Success Initiative,
✓ Female Success Initiative,
✓ Academic and Early-Alert Interventions such as introduction of mid-term grades and student success software – GSU STAR,
✓ Monthly seminars on bridging community and building cultural capital,
✓ Participation in culturally relevant and responsive career fairs, internships, work-study, and financial literacy counseling/workshops.
Faculty Learning Communities

• Designed to address success of all students, included as a targeted activity for equity initiative;

• Created Junior Seminar (JS) faculty learning communities within the disciplines;

• Encouraged First Year Seminar (FYS) instructors to teach JS.

• Provided funds to support research projects focused on the first year experiences.
Changing Policies and Practices

Symposia

• Designed to engage entire university community;
• Student success dependent upon the actions of all units across campus, thus it was important that everyone engage in meaningful dialog around student success;
• Symposia topics included: preparing for the first year experience, writing across the curriculum, e-portfolios, citizenship across the curriculum, and inclusive excellence.
Changing Policies and Practices

Academic Policies

• Revised policy on Academic Standing (Policy 14) to align with our equity initiative, thus creating policy which will assist a student placed on academic probation to recover academically within one year;

• Revised policy on Undergraduate Readmission and Special Admissions (Policy 19) to provide for re-entry intervention program – Back on Track
Student Support Services

– Establishment of Office of New Student Programs
  • Coordination with Faculty in Residence (shift to Academic Coach model).

– Strengthening of Student Success Teams
  • Added Financial Aid representative

– Assignment of students in Mastering College course

– Development of Student Success Commons
Results

Academic Performance First Year Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall, 2014</th>
<th>Fall, 2015</th>
<th>Fall, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AVG</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>AVG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall AVG</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter students</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident students</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors FY students</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Admits</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>81 (33%)</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Start Math &amp; Eng</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>120 (50%)</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Start Math</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>33 (14%)</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Start English</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>8 (3%)</td>
<td>2.73</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Focused and intrusive advising in year 3 yielded results with increase in First Semester GPA
Persistence First Year Students

- **Spring 2**
  - Fall 14
  - Fall 15
  - Fall 16

- **Fall 2**
  - Fall 14
  - Fall 15
  - Fall 16

- **Spring 1**
  - Fall 14
  - Fall 15
  - Fall 16

- **Start size**
  - Fall 14
  - Fall 15
  - Fall 16

Legend:
- Fall 16
- Fall 15
- Fall 14
Results

Closer Look @ Fall 14-First Year Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Headcount</th>
<th>Entering Fall 2014</th>
<th>Spring 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Spring 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>102</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dropped/Not Registered</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>140</td>
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Persistence Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Retention Rates</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 14-Spring 15</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>Fall 14-Fall 15</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 15-Fall 15</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>Fall 14-Fall 16</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 14-Spring 16</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>Spring 15-Spring 16</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 16-Fall 16</td>
<td>88.7</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

65% of original 242 remain enrolled in higher education, in fact, 1 has earned an Associates degree and another is completing it and is planning to return to GSU as a “transfer” in Fall, 2017.
Persistence Transfer Students

% of Students

- Fall 14
- Spring 14
- Fall 13
- Spring 13
- Fall 12

Legend:
- Graduate (5 terms)
- Term 5+Graduates
- Term 3
- Term 2
- Term 1

Results
Persistence Dual Degree Transfer Students

- As of September, 2016, 87% of DDP students who have completed their associate degree and enrolled at GSU have either graduated or are currently enrolled and pursuing their bachelor’s degree.

- The average GPA of DDP students enrolled at GSU is 3.38.

- DDP-GSU graduates graduate in an average of 3.7 terms.
“Just in Time” Changes

- Recognized importance of formalized feedback to first year students during first semester – instituted *Midterm Grades* as a pilot in summer of 2015; encouraged faculty participation fall 2015.

- Data
  - Fall 2015, 1702 students, 3091 grades
    - 370/376 (98%) of General Studies students received grades (Avg: 3.5 grades)
  - Spring 2016, 1949 students, 3165 grades
    - Compared to Fall 2015, increase in A’s, decrease in D’s and F’s.
“Just in Time” Changes

- October of 2014, using a freshmen intake form
- Data showed
  - 76.9% of the freshmen responded passing all classes with “C” or higher
- Freshmen cohort faculty assessment of student progress (midterm grades)
  - Data 87% faculty participated
  - Midterm grades did not match student perceptions
- Instituted *Save My Semester* to help students with D or F midterm grades
“Just in Time” Changes

• In Spring of 2015 implemented a Lower Division Academic Recovery Program

• Data
  – 102 (42%) of freshmen placed on academic probation from Fall 2014.
  – 74 students returned the second semester.

• Outcome
  – 71 (93%) of freshmen on probation participated in the program.
  – 78% of freshmen raised their cumulative GPA
  – 50% of freshmen were removed from academic probation by the end of the Spring 2015 term.
“Just in Time” Changes
Through revised Academic Standing Policy

- **Policy 14 revised**
  - Policy to allow non-degree, undergraduate below 1.0 and graduate below 2.0 to move to Academic Probation Extended (APE) status.
    - Learning Contract with Academic Resource Center

- **Policy 19: Readmissions and Special Admissions**
  - Back on Track Program

- **Summer 2015 Data**
  - 86 (32.8%) of the 262 undergraduate students on probation face dismissal
Questions

• What might a pathway for transfer students look like at your institution?
• What policies or practices might need to change at your institution?
• How would you incorporate Equity minded principles into your design?
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