Moving the Dial: The Importance of Metrics in Raising College Completion in Georgia

Timothy M. Renick, Ph.D.
Associate Provost for Academic Programs
Chief Enrollment Officer
THE CHALLENGE IN FRONT OF US

National Student Retention and Graduation Rates, 2000-2010

Source: Education Advisory Board. Data is for Four-Year Public Universities
THE CHALLENGE IN FRONT OF US

Unmet Financial Need

Cost of Full Year Undergraduate Education: $20,200
(Including in-state tuition, fees, books, room and board)

- Variable Unmet Need
  (In Some Cases Over $15,000)
- Family Contribution
- Work Study
- PELL
- HOPE
- Federal Loans

- Students with unmet financial need often must take on multiple off-campus jobs, forego buying textbooks, and make other choices that negatively impact their ability to succeed academically.
- There were over 14,000 students at GSU with unmet need during Fall 2011.
THE CHALLENGE IN FRONT OF US

Record Increases in Unmet Need

- Freshmen: $2,713 to $4,335 (59% increase)
- Sophomore: $3,655 to $4,979 (36% increase)
- Junior: $3,909 to $5,188 (33% increase)
- Senior: $5,294 to $6,357 (20% increase)
- Total Undergraduate: $4,154 to $5,434 (31% increase)
- Graduate: $4,369 to $5,042 (15% increase)
# The Challenge in Front of Us

## Record Increases in the Number of Students Being Dropped for Non-Payment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>1-Year Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students Dropped</td>
<td>2,887</td>
<td>3,359</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Hours Dropped</td>
<td>26,944</td>
<td>32,248</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Net Loss at Census</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Hours Net Loss at Census</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>2,432</td>
<td>198%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spring 2011</th>
<th>Spring 2012</th>
<th>1-Year Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students Dropped</td>
<td>1,134</td>
<td>2,452</td>
<td>116%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Hours Dropped</td>
<td>19,077</td>
<td>23,279</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Georgia State has been awarded a $600,000 NSF grant to pilot a program which fills unmet need for science majors and tracks the resulting impact on academic performance.

(Fall 2008, Undergraduate Students)
The Loss of HOPE

Students who lose HOPE support graduate at only half the rate of those who never had HOPE support in the first place.
The Value of the Unmet Need Metric

The Impacts of Tracking Unmet Need

- Telling the story: AJC, stakeholders
- Funding: NSF, Coca-Cola Foundation, Goizueta Foundation
- Moving the Dial: New, targeted programs to address the problem
## Supplemental Instruction (SI)
### Positive Impact on GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Non SI</th>
<th>SI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIOL</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLS</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEM</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCT</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYS</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJU</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Average course GPA - Overall
- Non Supplemental Instruction: 2.41
- Supplemental Instruction: 2.91

### One-Year Retention - Overall
- Non Supplemental Instruction: 83.5%
- Supplemental Instruction: 91.2%
THE VALUE OF THE UNMET NEED METRIC

Undergraduate Research and Mentoring
University Assistantships (2002 Cohort)

One-Year Retention

- No University Assistantship: 83.3%
- University Assistantships: 93.0%

Six-Year Graduation

- No University Assistantship: 49.6%
- University Assistantships: 75.0%
The Value of the Unmet Need Metric

Keep HOPE Alive

- Targets students who have lost HOPE
- Grants students 500/semester for one year on the condition they attend year-long series of academic skills workshops and individual advisement sessions
- Institutional HOPE Retention Rate 2008: 49%
  Institutional HOPE Retention Rate 2011: 68%
Rising Trend in Progression

Freshmen with Sophomore Standing After One Year

Progression rates have improved 45.7% in the past 9 years and 18.1% in the past 3 years alone.
We use it already: Georgia's Funding Formula. Question not *if* but *what*?

We have to be more efficient amid higher education’s new economic realities.

We need to innovate. The old assumptions and ways will not work to support populations that are growing and will need to grow further: first generation, low income.

Metrics do make a difference (and none of us are using them enough).
Rate of Acceptance into GSU’s Bachelors in Nursing Program based on First-Year GPA

Students are formally admitted into the BSN at the start of their Junior years.
MOVING THE DIAL

Grades in “Sentinel” Courses Accurately Predict Success in Major

Impact of Introductory Course Grade on Graduation Rate in Major

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>A or B</th>
<th>C or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art History (Art Majors)</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro Chemistry (Natural Science Majors)</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Math Course (Engineering)</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaches to Literature (Humanities Majors)</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macroeconomics (Business)</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Politics (Political Science)</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Physiology (Nursing)</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing &amp; Rhetoric (Journalism)</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Studio (Architecture)</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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So Much for the Gentleman’s “C”

Six-Year Graduation Rate Breakdown by Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>A or B</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D/F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Chemistry (Natural Science majors)</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Comparative Politics (Political Science majors)</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

55% of enrollees

41% of enrollees
Why the Old Metrics Won't Work

- RPG exclusively tracks the rate of the completion of bachelor degrees by first time, full time, fall freshmen (about 20% of college students by 2025)

- Rates are important, but the N matters, too—and now more than ever

- What really constitutes success?
  - Are even graduates with bachelors gaining what they need to succeed in the new global economy?
  - Are there alternate indicators of success and completion?: Associate degrees, certificates, coursework milestones.
What Constitutes Success?

Cross-University Retention and Graduation
Fall 2003 Cohort

- Traditional graduation rates undercount students who actually graduate elsewhere
- Total Graduated: 61.4%
  Total Graduated and Retained: 78.5%
- The top 10 institutions receiving GSU transfer students are all USG schools
What Are Other States Doing?:
Examples of Two Extremes

- **A Simple, Outcome-Oriented Approach**
  INDIANA: Funding based on **Degree Completions**
  A dollar amount is awarded for each degree awarded over and above those awarded according to a four-year average of degrees conferred by the institution.

- **A Complex, Progress-Oriented Approach**
  WASHINGTON: Funding based on **Momentum Points**
  A dollar amount is awarded to each student who reaches such points as passing remedial math and English courses, earning 15-hours of college-level credits, earning 30-hours of college credit, completing 6-hours of math credits, earning an associate degree and so forth.
  (Note: in Washington, associate degrees are automatically awarded by original institution when student reaches 60 hours even if student has transferred to another school.)
Moving the Dial

Some Principles Behind Complete College America

- Keep it simple: The metrics should be understandable and worthy of the aspirations of the USG
- Use data that is accessible and reliable
- Count the populations who will make a difference: Not merely first time freshmen, but transfer, part-time, and nontraditional students are all essential to meeting state-wide completion goals
Moving the Dial

Some Principles Behind Complete College America

- Promote efficiency: Consider metrics such as Time to Degree, Course Completion Rate, Student Learning Progress Model

- Recognize (institutional) diversity: Not all metrics need to apply to all campuses

- Reward relative progress, rather than the status quo