Strategic Enrollment Plan

Executive Summary

2018-2022

College of Coastal Georgia
Brunswick, Georgia
Executive Summary

As a state college of the University System of Georgia, the College of Coastal Georgia’s mission is to be a “college of choice” for residents of the State of Georgia and beyond. The College is called to provide an accessible and affordable quality education while advocating excellence in scholarship and community engagement. The College promotes student progression and timely graduation through student-centered programs that offer a rich and diverse student experience while preparing them for meaningful careers, advanced study, lifelong learning, and participation in a global and technological society. The College is also charged with providing associate and baccalaureate degrees that support the intellectual, economic and cultural needs of the community and region.

Historical Context

In the fall of 2016, the Office of Admissions and the Office of Financial Aid were combined with the Division of Student Affairs to create the Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management. This administrative shift philosophically aligned the student matriculation and support process resulting in a seamless transition from inquiry to admit to integration, to successful student. Charged by the Chancellor of the University System to continue to grow enrollment, campus leaders identified the lack of a long-term view of enrollment or enrollment-focused strategic initiatives at the College. The institution engaged with Ruffalo Noel Levitz to assist in a cross-campus planning process to develop a strategic enrollment plan, and lead the Admissions Office in developing the College’s first strategic recruitment plan.

Purpose

The purpose of the strategic enrollment plan process was to systematically examine key components of the College through an enrollment lens. The process called for an internal and external environmental scan to help identify the feasibility of continued growth, an identification of potential threats to the College’s enrollment, further definition of appropriate growth opportunities, and the systematic identification of opportunities to expand and grow programming in terms of enrollment (academic and co-curricular). The results of this planning process is meant to serve as a guiding document in directing the future of the institution and the distribution of financial and human resources toward enrollment growth.

Environment

Since the designation of the College of Coastal Georgia as a four-year state college in 2009, the College has been tasked with growing its programs to serve the surrounding counties and beyond. Enrollment projections from the University System anticipate Coastal Georgia growing by 2.3% from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018, then slowing to an average of 1.2% through Fall 2023 (see Table 1.1). Internal growth goals set by Interim President Dr. Meg Amstutz focused on a linear 2% increase over the next five years.
Table 1.1 - Enrollment Growth Projections for College of Coastal Georgia as Defined by the University System of Georgia – Spring 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Projected Enrollment</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>3663</td>
<td>3747</td>
<td>+2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>3747</td>
<td>3815</td>
<td>+1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>3815</td>
<td>3858</td>
<td>+1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>3858</td>
<td>3895</td>
<td>+1.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>3895</td>
<td>3933</td>
<td>+1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>3933</td>
<td>3968</td>
<td>+0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>3968</td>
<td>4010</td>
<td>+1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2024</td>
<td>4010</td>
<td>4044</td>
<td>+0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>4044</td>
<td>4081</td>
<td>+0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>4081</td>
<td>4121</td>
<td>+1.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source: USG Enrollment Projections Memorandum, April 10, 2018

External factors such as high school graduation rates and local and state unemployment rates can have a tremendous impact on carrying out the College’s charge to grow. Drawing over 60% of our student population from the local five counties (Glynn, Camden, Wayne, Brantley, and McIntosh), the number of high school seniors are projected to only grow incrementally over the next several years. In our local market, the senior population is poised to grow by only 25 students for Fall 2019 while Fall 2020 will see a 6 student decrease in the graduating population (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.2 – High School Graduation Rates of Local Counties

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glynn</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>907</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camden</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brantley</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McIntosh</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,911</td>
<td>2,018</td>
<td>2,043</td>
<td>2,037</td>
<td>2,095</td>
<td>2,122</td>
<td>2,107</td>
<td>2,221</td>
<td>2,143</td>
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</table>

*Source: RNL Enrollment Projection Report by Market, February 14, 2018

Lower unemployment rates can have an effect on enrollment at four-year colleges and universities as well. Studies vary, but a correlation has been found in some states, accounting for enrollment increases
and decreases that are counter cyclical with the unemployment rate. In the State of Georgia, this impact is most pronounced in the State College sector. For the College of Coastal Georgia, lower unemployment can have an effect on students who are classified as readmits (stopping/staring after being away for a period), adult learners, associate degree seeking students, and transfer students. According to the Georgia Department of Labor, the unemployment rates for the Brunswick area (including Glynn, Brantley, and McIntosh counties) in May 2018 was 3.4%, a 12-month low (see Chart 1.1). The 3.4% unemployment rate held true for the Coastal Area (Chart 1.2) and the Atlanta area (Chart 1.3) as well.

These data suggest that the College form strategies that build an enrollment population based on first-time/full-time undergraduate students from the Coastal region, Metro Atlanta, and Jacksonville Metro area to insulate the college from enrollment swings closely tied to economic factors.

Chart 1.1
Chart 1.2

**Coastal Area Unemployment Rate**
(Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Coastal Area: 3.4%

- **May-17**: 4.5%
- **Jun-17**: 4.9%
- **Jul-17**: 4.5%
- **Aug-17**: 4.8%
- **Sep-17**: 4.7%
- **Oct-17**: 4.4%
- **Nov-17**: 4.2%
- **Dec-17**: 4.2%
- **Jan-16**: 4.4%
- **Feb-18**: 4.4%
- **Mar-18**: 4.1%
- **Apr-18**: 3.8%
- **May-18**: 3.4%

*Note: Coastal Region includes Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, McIntosh and Screven counties.*

*Source: Georgia Department of Labor – Mark Butler, Commissioner*

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Chart 1.3

**Atlanta Area Unemployment Rate**
(Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Atlanta Area: 3.4%

- **May-17**: 4.4%
- **Jun-17**: 4.8%
- **Jul-17**: 4.8%
- **Aug-17**: 4.7%
- **Sep-17**: 4.2%
- **Oct-17**: 4.2%
- **Nov-17**: 4.1%
- **Dec-17**: 4.1%
- **Jan-18**: 4.3%
- **Feb-18**: 4.3%
- **Mar-18**: 4.0%
- **Apr-18**: 3.6%
- **May-18**: 3.4%

*Note: Atlanta Area includes Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Morgan, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding and Walton counties.*

*Source: Georgia Department of Labor – Mark Butler, Commissioner*
Charge

After extensive analysis of both the internal and external environment in which the College of Coastal Georgia operates, it is clear that we must develop key enrollment strategies that ensure the College realizes its mission and strategic goals while we are:

- intentional and deliberate in decisions about the allocation and use of resources;
- aligning the actions of our various units across campus;
- innovative, aggressive, and competitive in our pursuit of students;
- mindful of the financial burden we place on our students.

As such, this planning process was an attempt to outline, quantify, and reconcile competing factors to develop a pathway that allows the College of Coastal Georgia to achieve its goals and those of the University System of Georgia, while establishing long-term enrollment health and fiscal stability.

Implementation of the SEP will allow the College of Coastal Georgia to respond to an uncertain economic and demographic future with improved understanding of the characteristics, needs, and expectations of potential and current students. Implementation will also serve to maximize the College’s overall return on investment by increasing the College’s ability to take advantage of new opportunities for growth, while avoiding strategies and activities that provide little or no return on investment.

Process Summary

The Strategic Enrollment Planning Steering Committee (SEPSC) has primary oversight for the development, implementation, assessment, and modification of the Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP). Development of the SEP was initiated in January 2018 at the direction of Interim President, Dr. Meg Amstutz and chaired by Dr. Jason Umfress, Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management. Current members of the SEPSC include:

- Dr. Michelle Johnston, President
- Dr. Johnny Evans, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Ms. Michelle Ham, Interim Vice President for Business Affairs
- Dr. Jason Umfress, Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management
- Mr. Scott Williamson, Interim Vice President for Advancement
- Ms. Amy Clines, Assistant Vice President for Admissions & Recruiting
- Dr. German Vargas, Assistant Vice President for Academic Student Engagement
- Dr. Jim Lynch, Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- Jim Anderson, Associate Consultant, Ruffalo Noel Levitz

Primary drivers during the planning process were: relevance, authenticity, and differentiation in terms of student recruitment, retention and graduation.

The SEP incorporates these drivers into the College’s mission of being a “college of choice” and supports the shared values of quality education, experiential learning, global awareness, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

Effective Strategic Enrollment Planning enables the College to discourage independent unit-specific initiatives and narrowly focused programmatic approaches, and direct those efforts into an integrated network of strategies and actions. The SEP is grounded in and guided by the College of Coastal Georgia mission and vision, as well as the direction set forth by the College’s strategic plan, Coastal Vision 2021. It is informed by empirically defined key performance indicators (KPIs) and an understanding of the College
of Coastal Georgia’s position in the University System of Georgia and in a competitive environment. The result of a successful SEP process is a set of actions that have been derived for the purpose of helping the College achieve its mission and strategic goals.

Five subcommittees were charged with developing specific strategies and actions to meet the goals of the SEP: Academic Subcommittee; Purpose, Price, and Promotion Subcommittee; Undergraduate Experience Subcommittee; On-Line Student Experience Subcommittee; and the Research Subcommittee. After the development, financial analysis, and vetting of the strategies, the subcommittees prioritized their recommendations and forwarded them to the SEP Steering Committee. The Steering Committee identified six strategies to address in the first year of the plan.

Identification of Key Performance Indicators

In order to answer the charge by the USG and campus leadership to grow 2% in total headcount over the next five years, the SEP process has identified a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor progress. KPIs are enrollment, performance, quality, outcomes, and fiscal indicators that institutional leadership uses to measure the health of the institution’s mission and vision fulfillment.

The KPIs were developed through the SEP process, vetted by the subcommittees and approved by the Steering Committee. Each KPI is supported by several Performance Indicators (PIs) that support and allow for a more detailed view of the top level Key Performance Indicators. Supporting PIs are listed in the comprehensive strategic enrollment plan.

The KPIs are as follows:

1. **Enrollment**: FTE enrollment and unduplicated Headcount of enrolled students per term (fall/spring/summer) from base year 2018 to end of Strategic Enrollment Plan in 2022.
2. **Student Progress**: First to second year retention rate (from base year 2018 to end of Strategic Enrollment Plan in 2022), second to third, third to fourth
3. **Graduation Rate**: (from base year 2018 to end of Strategic Enrollment Plan in 2022)
4. **Diversity Enrollment**: (numbers enrolling and percentage of students from diverse backgrounds or under-represented groups) (from base year 2018 to end of Strategic Enrollment Plan in 2022)
5. **Program Quality**: (from base year 2018 to end of Strategic Enrollment Plan in 2022)
6. **Fiscal Health**: (enrollment-related revenues and operating expenses).
Return on Investment (ROI)

The implementation of the Key Enrollment Strategies contained in the plan will support and strengthen existing college programs while enabling the institution to expedite achievement of its strategic enrollment goals. The strategies and action plans, coupled with the implementation of an ongoing SEP process, will allow the College of Coastal Georgia to respond to an uncertain economic and demographic future with improved understanding of the characteristics, needs, and expectations of prospective students. This process will also serve to maximize the College’s ability to take advantage of new opportunities for stabilization and/or growth and to avoid investing in untested strategies and activities that provide little or no return on investment.

Strategy Prioritization

The following are high-priority strategies identified by the SEP Steering Committee that require immediate implementation. The strategies are mapped back to strategic objectives found in Coastal Vision 2021. Importantly, the implementation of initiatives deriving from the SEP will require that the College develop a comprehensive fiscal support strategy that addresses resource and funding needs necessary for the implementation of the SEP initiatives.

- Conduct a comprehensive repurposing of the College’s website & social media platforms in order to provide an appealing and informative virtual space where prospective students and the general community can learn more about the College of Coastal Georgia and navigate opportunities for engaging with the campus.
  - Coastal Vision 2021: C.5.1.; C.5.2; E.7.8.
- Revisit and revise/create a Student Success Experience program for first & second-year, traditional, adult, and dual enrollment students, to include the revamp of a common experience-type course.
  - Coastal Vision 2021: A.1.1.; A.1.2.; A.1.3.; A.1.6; E.7.8
- Develop a strategic vision, mission and operational plan for the Camden Center and continue the conversation about the undergraduate experience at the Center.
  - Coastal Vision 2021: E.7.6.; E.7.8
- Enhance the promotion of unique, high-demand, academic programs that draw interest to the College. (e.g. Bachelor of Science in Hospitality & Tourism Management; Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice with a Concentration in Cyber Security; Bachelor of Science in Biology with a concentration in Coastal Ecology; Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science; etc.).
  - Coastal Vision 2021: B.4.3.; B.4.4.; C.5.1.; C.5.2; E7.8.
- Identify, develop, and promote academic programs to be delivered entirely on-line based on market demand, instructional capacity, and faculty support.
  - Coastal Vision 2021: B.4.3.; B.4.4.; D.6.3.; E.7.8
- Align the mission, vision, and attributes of the College through the establishment of a cohesive identity, distinguishing itself as a unique institution of higher education with value for key audiences.
  - Coastal Vision 2021: C.5.1.; C.5.2.; E.7.8
Implementation & Communication of the Strategic Enrollment Plan

Upon approval by the president, the following structure will ensure implementation and communication of the SEP:

- The President of the College and her leadership team will have administrative oversight of the SEP. The Plan will serve as a foundational document to assist the College in the planning and expansion of programs and services, allocation of resources, and initiative prioritization.

- The College’s Enrollment Management Committee, chaired by the Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, will have primary oversight for the implementation, assessment, and modification of the SEP. Members of this committee will be charged with leading further development and implementation of the plan with the facilitation of campus wide engagement and participation. Members will review progress, recommend modifications, and foster institutional support and involvement.

- As an effort to communicate the progress of the Strategic Enrollment plan, the Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, the Assistant Vice President of Recruitment & Admissions, and the Assistant Vice President for Academic Student Engagement will provide quarterly updates on the implementation of the plan to the President’s Cabinet.

Long Term Comprehensive Recommendations

A number of important actions and initiatives were identified by the sub-committees that should be pursued by the College beyond the scope of a SEP:

- Brand development - The importance of being able to articulate the Coastal experience into a conscience, recognizable, and respected brand cannot be understated. The committee recognizes the complexity of this undertaking and recommends the College spend some time developing the brand.

- Academic programs - A key to enrollment growth will be introduction of new, innovative, and deliverable academic programs that will be distinctive in the marketplace. The committee recommends the continued development of these types of programs with partnerships from a wide variety of campus partnerships (i.e. academic affairs, admissions, career services, etc.)

- Campus Master Plan - As the College continues to grow, the physical plant will need to expand as well. The addition of phase III of a housing facility, additional academic buildings, student activity space, and other support spaces / facilities on campus will be needed to accommodate the student population. The committee recommends a re-visit of the College’s existing master plan and the potential expansion of the plan to meet the future needs of the campus.

- Fundraising for scholarships – While the College is a very affordable option in terms of cost of higher education, the majority of our students indicate financial difficulty as a factor in their decision to leave the institution. Additionally, the ability to provide private scholarships to attract new students to the College makes us considerably more competitive with other institutions. It is
the recommendation of the committee for the College to continue to expand the scholarship program in order to support enrollment.

- Expansion of health sciences – With health-related careers poised to be the largest employment demand in the coastal region, it would be beneficial for the College to explore the addition/expansion of our health sciences offerings. The committee recommends continued review of the feasibility of expansion of the nursing program, as well as the addition of other high-demand career paths (e.g. physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, repertory therapy, etc.).

- Shifting / investing in qualified faculty to full time – The utilization of adjunct and part-time faculty has been a creative way the College has been able to keep up with enrollment growth. The Committee recommends the continued investment of the College into expanding the full-time faculty across the institution.

- Continued utilization of Banner functionality – The Banner student database is a powerful tool the College utilizes daily to perform vital business functions. There are, however, a number of functionalities the College does not utilize that has the potential of streamlining current work and potentially expand management capabilities. Lack of awareness, training, and dedicated personnel are three main reasons we are not fully utilizing these functionalities. The committee recommends continued exploration of these functionalities and systematic review of how to implement them into the work of the institution.

- Data Warehousing - Although the College has made great progress in the reporting area, most of the data is obtained directly from our live instance of Banner. As a result, historical reporting is limited to census data collected by the USG. The implementation of a data warehouse would be an important step to ensure that decision makers have access to current and historical data from multiple sources for planning and reporting purposes.

**Next Steps**

Next steps include:

1. Continued enhancements to action plans in support of the Key Enrollment Strategies.

2. Determine the potential for implementing top-priority enrollment strategies and associated action plans given fiscal constraints.

3. Develop specific, realistic, data-supported, five-year enrollment targets for total headcount, retention rates, and new student populations.

4. Monitor progress on implementation of the SEP by tracking KPIs and adjusting specific action plans based on empirical analysis of internal and external factors and evaluation of overall progress.

5. Systematically integrate the Strategic Enrollment Planning process in the routine life of the institution so that it becomes a part of institutional culture, operation, and assessment. All phases of SEP must reflect shared vision and responsibility, campus-wide learning, and the incorporation of best practices to ensure seamless enrollment delivery systems and
maximum engagement of students in academic and campus life/culture at the College of Coastal Georgia.

6. Develop a communication strategy supporting the strategic enrollment plan and the initiatives housed in the plan for the campus, community of Brunswick and Camden, and the University System of Georgia.