

# Task Force for Academic Progress

## Proposals and Progress Summary

November 3, 2014

The Task Force subcommittees developed sets of recommendations during fall 2013. Co-chairs Richard Baskin and Ed Whitelock prioritized the recommendations, based on impact, short-term vs. long-term objectives, history of success with similar ideas in the college, and ability to implement effectively and timely. With this list in hand, Baskin and Whitelock began working with departments and individuals in the college to implement recommendations. Progress to date on each idea is summarized below. Thanks to Ed Whitelock and Jeff Knighton for contributing significantly to this status report.

### Advising Subcommittee

Recommendation	Progress
Re-emphasize usefulness of Degree Works for advisors	Student and Faculty training sessions offered regularly
Flow Chart to facilitate choice between MATH 1001 and MATH 1111; additional flow charts to facilitate other choices	Multiple conversations over course of 2013-14 year: elements incorporated into Guided Pathways proposal (discussed at AARRFA and APC Committees). New MPI in place fall 2015 will be used for placement
Advising Information Table in cafeteria (and possibly the IC Lobby)	Implementation begun spring 2014: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring advising station outside Highlander Dining Hall</li> <li>• “Spring Advising/Registration Bash” with 3 SSC advisors in IC 102 between 11:00 AM and 5:00 PM on Thursday, April 24.</li> <li>• “On the Go Advisement” in the Dining Hall, October 29.</li> </ul>
Text and Twitter messages regarding advisement procedures and deadlines	Facebook and Twitter have been used for some advising and deadline messages in 2014, but can be used more. AA will work with Public Relations to get more messages out. In fall 2014, texting messages were implemented.
Post advising messages on campus electronic message boards	Implemented spring 2014 and continuing
Schedule off-campus and evening advising	Implemented spring 2014 and continuing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offered on-site advising at Henry County</li> <li>• “March Madness” advising in Residence Halls March 18-19, 2014, and also October 20-22, 2014 (extended an extra day from spring).</li> </ul>
Scheduled advising for students with two or more midterm F’s	Have expanded Early Alert to Always Alert for all students, starting fall 2014. Faculty are now able to recommend intervention for students failing at midterm.
Hold a series of group advising sessions within majors and	Multiple programs have held group advising (e.g. School of Education; BUSA

concentrations during the semester for first year students	associate of science students; human services baccalaureate students).
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## Engagement Subcommittee:

Recommendation	Progress
Student activities more intellectual in nature (Encourage more professors to present evening talks on their research; publicize upcoming events more aggressively)	<p>Minimal additional action yet taken, though campus academic departments continue to sponsor educational lectures and professional presentations along with providing support for such programs as the Undergraduate Research Symposium.</p> <p>Academic Affairs sponsored the Graduate Symposium in October for students who are considering graduate school regarding the transition and how to prepare for it.</p> <p>Events are typically advertised in the student activities weekly emails, on all electronic sign boards around campus, on standing sign boards, and/or by flyer.</p>
Polling data from random students (Encourage Admissions and Computer Services to develop a “must do” poll on what incoming students would like to see happen on campus)	Existing: Housing students are surveyed from time to time and action is taken when feasible. Student Affairs sends out a student survey each Spring concerning events on campus. Admissions has not surveyed incoming students, but Director Ben Ferguson tells us it could be done at NSO’s or perhaps through Banner. At this point, need an individual to take ownership and lead development.
Centrally located kiosk (Decide on heavily trafficked location for kiosk)	Multiple discussions in spring 2014 in both academic and student affairs. Strong interest expressed in this idea, but numerous unresolved issues (“SA Stamp” approval, location, etc.) require additional investigation. Baskin will follow up.
Changing Foundation scholarship for part-time/non-traditional students (Work with Gordon College Foundation to allow students with fewer than 12 hours to compete for pro-rated scholarships)	Institutional Advancement reports that non-traditional students are eligible to apply for the great majority of scholarships. There is a full-time requirement on the scholarships of 12 hours. Nurses are exceptions as a fulltime student may not have 12 hours. If a student presents to IA who has an award but who does not have 12 hours, they require a letter from their advisor. The feeling of most is that a student needs to be progressing

	<p>to a degree so the scholarship can go to another student behind him/her as opposed to someone who may be taking a course here or there. Issue ultimately resides with Foundation Board.</p>
<p>“Academic emphasis” dormitory or wing (Co-ordinate with Student Affairs and Residence Life on sectioning off portion of dormitory; develop “academically friendly policies” for new AE dorm. Encourage Honors College to publicize new AE dorm section)</p>	<p>Discussed with Student Affairs/Housing in fall 2013. Current efforts and policies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SSC holds study/tutoring times in specific housing spaces.</li> <li>• 10 pm and after is quiet time.</li> <li>• There are study rooms, including a Sunday evening study room in NAHS.</li> <li>• The following activities are hosted in and by the residence life area in order to promote study times/quiet areas in the residence halls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Twilight Tutoring sponsored through the Student Success Center is hosted on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm, Commons 3<sup>rd</sup> Multipurpose Room (Peter Higgins helps oversee the activity as the Faculty-in-Residence member).</li> <li>○ Melton Hall residents (coordinated by Melton RAs) and others across campus host Sunday night study sessions in the Nursing Building every other week during the long semesters.</li> <li>○ Melton, Commons and Village buildings all have lobby/lounge (tables and chairs) areas where residents gather in groups to study for different classes.</li> <li>○ Melton, Commons and Village buildings all have computer labs/areas where residents work together on assignments and projects.</li> <li>○ Commons and Village buildings have multi-purpose rooms with white boards that can be utilized by residents.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Upon suggestion and interest from residents, other areas are designated as desired. For further clarification on quiet time/study time, see the Guide to Highlander Living which outlines Quiet Time/Study Time (page 25): <a href="http://www.gordonstate.edu/forms/housing/hallguide.pdf">http://www.gordonstate.edu/forms/housing/hallguide.pdf</a></p>
<p>Re-Orientation (Similar to convocation, with the beginning of the new semester in January, sponsor a campus-wide program to re-commit ourselves to excellence and inform students of some of the great things that will happen on campus in the coming semester)</p>	<p>Discussed with the Provost, fall 2014. Interested in further consideration of this idea.</p>
<p>Homecoming Festivities (Select day, plan activities, notify interested parties. Co-ordinate with Athletics, Alumni Relations,</p>	<p>Discussed with VP for Institutional Advancement Rhonda Toon in fall 2013 and fall 2014. We discussed several ideas, including a Gordon Family Day</p>

<p>and Student Affairs)</p>	<p>with picnic (see next recommendation from subcommittee), a homecoming, including Campus Visit Day, a spring or fall Fling/Gordon Days. VP Toon talked about the different events we have tried, the ins and outs for the various ideas.</p> <p>Homecoming does not appear to be a feasible idea at this time, based on surveys of alumni. The military-era alumni are/were often a close-knit group. They developed or were a part of so many traditions while they were here, and the environment stayed consistent for enough time that multiple generations relate well to each other. Younger alumni often say that they came to Gordon with a group of friends from high school and when they want to socialize with those friends that they attend their high school reunion because then they see not only those who chose Gordon but those who chose other colleges. Broadly speaking, young alumni associations are dying out across the country. The theory for that change is that the current generation does not communicate with each other the same.</p> <p>VP Toon suggested surveying commuting students, “Is there anything we can do that would attract you to such an event” kind of survey. We are working on designing and executing a survey.</p> <p>Relevant to this recommendation is IA’s revival of Founders Day in March 2013.</p>
<p>Gordon Family Day (A family friendly day-long festival celebrating all things Gordon. A full-out “Spring Fling” combination fair-concert-dance (this project may require the cancelling of classes for one day or a portion of the day). Families of students, staff and faculty as well as community members invited for a campus-wide picnic, concert, fireworks display. Evening activities might be more adult in nature—a concert and/or a dance. Arguably the committee’s favorite idea, this is, admittedly, a huge undertaking and will require buy-in from all or almost all members of campus community. Select coordinator, build committee, contact local merchants, book entertainment, publicize.)</p>	<p>Something similar was being considered late in 2013 for development. President Burns has asked Institutional Advancement and Student Activities to extend our annual Alumni Weekend into Alumni Week. The thinking at this point is a week that showcases Gordon and appeals to young families. It might include lab tours with interesting demonstrations or talks. This project will take considerable resources, including time and effort, in planning and execution, and it is planned for spring 2015. If we are opening classrooms and labs for demonstrations, we will need faculty support, especially if a Saturday is included for academic-related activities. If during the week, will need to select labs, etc. Faculty support is needed.</p>
<p>A Holiday Tree lighting ceremony (One Friday evening in early December, kick off a charity drive with a non-denominational winter holiday get together with music, lights, and hot chocolate.</p>	<p>Discussed fall 2013. The Holiday Tree has been set up each year by Student Activities in mid-November, but this is about an 8-foot tree, indoors. The subcommittee appears to have something a little bigger in mind, and have it</p>

Select tree; decorate, co-ordinate with campus departments such as Facilities and Student Affairs)	outdoors. With the various related activities in mind, this idea needs some type of group to take ownership. Some additional ideas have been discussed, but no further action has taken place at this point.
A "G.S.C. News Station" (This news station could bring the daily power points to life, this could also broadcast the weekly weather forecast, and possibly 3-4 trending topics. This would be a good way for students to be able to, better receive info. to what's going on around campus. GSC News could take the form of Internet broadcasts, podcasts, or Internet-based campus radio system)	Action not yet taken.
Forum (Host a forum(s) in order to gain a better perspective of the student's wants on campus in order to retain them)	Discussed with Provost, who will take to the President's Cabinet, fall 2014.
Vending Machines (The vending machine outside the student center containing assorted items useful to students (e.g., paper clips, flash drives) should be expanded. Place similar machines in high traffic areas such as the IC building and/or the dormitories)	Idea has appeared, as well, in student focus group surveys; requires coordination of Business and Residence Life Offices. Initially discussed with these offices in spring 2014, VPBA asked for more input on what exactly is needed, in terms of products likely to sell, and location. Vendor interest required. Baskin will follow up.

### Learning Support Subcommittee:

Comprehensive revision of Learning Support program in progress and to be fully implemented and aligned to new USG policy.

### Policies Subcommittee:

Recommendation	Progress
Change Area F requirements for General Studies major	Implemented with fall 2014 Academic Catalog.
Limit number of W grades given for withdrawal from class before midterm	Initial research and discussion in APC; no further action taken.
Place transfer students into "Academic Probation" if their pre-GSC GPA falls below "Academic Good Standing."	Development of this idea is related to work on the next item.
Revise Academic Standing policies to include an "Academic Warning" component.	Multiple discussions in Cabinet, Academic Executive Council, AARRFA, and APC; to be continued.
Delay declaration of "major" to sophomore, or second, year of enrollment and build more interactive guidance system towards degree choices	Pathways program designed and presented to both AARRFA and APC for discussion. In meantime, USG has initiated exploration of pathways program; GSC has committed to be an early adopter of "Guided Pathways" for limited programs in fall 2015

## Services Subcommittee

Recommendation	Progress
Additional Financial Aid Orientation	Action not yet taken, but Financial Literacy component established in GFYE 0097 course in fall 2013.
Faculty/Staff Forum	Online forum area created and expanded coverage in GSConnect. Email account set up for faculty and staff to relay concerns to Senate President and Staff Council President.
“I’m next! 2014 Graduate of ..... “.	This idea has generated significant interest and discussion. Actions still pending.
Academic Advisor/ Student Mingle event	Action not yet taken
Graduation “mentors”	This idea has not been implemented, but a Completion Coach was hired in summer 2014 to guide students who had enough or close to enough hours to earn a degree. The “mentors” idea would benefit from an individual taking ownership and leading development.
Develop electronic tutoring resources through D2L or Facebook	Discussed with SSC Director Peter Higgins in spring 2014. An online resource has been piloted on a limited basis; more resources are needed to expand.
Continue to develop Supplemental Instruction Program	Expansion on hold due to annual budget decrease.
Reinstitute our Certificate in Management Program	Discussed but tabled; proposal for BS program in Management and Administration (approved by BOR in August 2014) covers similar ground
Offer Test-prep sessions in Testing Center (GRE, LSAT, etc.)	Discussed spring 2014, but limited resources prevent implementation at this time.
Expand community partnerships (business and students)	Faculty and administration have met with several potential partners to develop partnerships regarding academic programs. In addition, within academic affairs, numerous initiatives for expanding our internship offerings have been undertaken. Career Services has taken on a leadership role in developing and communicating internships.
Establish financial aid program modelled after GSU’s Panther Retention Program	The GSU program has been studied over the past year by relevant college personnel, and the college is considering elements that can be brought to our campus.
Financial incentives for graduation	Discussed in spring 2014; still under consideration.
Fund student participation in research and professional conferences	Line item was proposed for 2015 budget year but could not be funded due to USG mandated budget cuts. Numerous departments have, however, begun taking students to professional conferences (e.g. Sociology, Human Services, Biology). The Student Success Center and Academic Affairs have funded student participation in professional LRC’s (learning resource centers) for a number of years.
Provide grant-writing training to students	Action not yet taken (with limited classroom exceptions such as in HUSV

	4010)
Program more specific activities and services for non-traditional students	<p>The Adult Learning Coordinator continues to create events, services, and networking assistance to meet these students' needs, such as through prior learning assessment, professional development opportunities, and support groups and mixers.</p> <p>Several administrators and staff have been involved in Georgia's Adult Learning Consortium executive committee for the past few years, providing support and guidance for these activities and services.</p> <p>Weekend College (Human Services degree) is being promoted exclusively to adult learners, particularly those who cannot attend a typical class schedule.</p> <p>Student Affairs and Residence Life Offices continue to review programs geared to adult learners.</p>
Reinstitute our Superintendent's University Summer Program in tandem with the Lamar County School System	Action not yet taken
Give student club leaders more flexibility and responsibility regarding use of funds	Status unknown at this time.