

Complete College Georgia Plan Data Analysis and Goals for Kennesaw State University

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June 9, 2012

In the eight years prior to the introduction of Georgia's Higher Education Completion Plan 2012, KSU has increased the number of undergraduate degrees awarded in Georgia from 1,801 to 3,319, an increase of 84% for fiscal years (FYs) 2004 through 2011. This significant increase has moved KSU from the fifth largest to the third largest degree granting institution within the University System of Georgia (USG) Research, Regional, and State University sectors without sacrificing quality. Every parameter of overall measurement at KSU is on an upward trajectory and there is existing growth already in the pipeline for the next eight years, which CCGA initiatives could accelerate. Therefore, KSU's past and projected degree completions will play an important role for advancing the CCGA's overall goal attainment of 250,000 additional graduates in Georgia by 2020.

KSU's degree completion achievements thus far is the result of its efforts to help traditional-age (< 25 years) and nontraditional-age (>= 25 years) students, part-time and full-time, obtain their education goals through the establishment of a variety of practices already targeting student success such as first-year experiences, transfer student orientation, adult learner support, military learner services, tutoring, advising, coaching, and counseling. In order to ensure CCGA goals are to be achieved in the future, KSU will continue focusing on all significant student subgroups, and not first-time, full-time freshmen alone. The other significant student subgroups for KSU include transfer students at all classifications levels and dual enrollment students.

Given the success experienced in the last eight years in increasing the number of degree completions, KSU does recognize the need for continuous improvement in order to meet institutional goals as well as those of the Complete College Georgia Plan over the next eight years. To help establish goals as part of the plan, KSU analyzed students for the following two approaches:

- A degree completions analysis was conducted using completions and degrees conferred data available as part of the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) and USG Data Warehouse (USG123). This data allowed KSU to identify graduating student characteristics by tracing credential completion pathways backwards through the education pipeline on an annual basis. Fundamental disaggregation of KSU's annual pool of baccalaureate graduates into component subgroups was possible, allowing for distinguishing the graduates who were and who were not first-time freshmen.
- A progression model was analyzed using an annual fiscal year (i.e., Summer, Fall, Spring) unduplicated headcount methodology with enrollment data from USG123. This approach permitted KSU to focus on two outcomes: (1) annual tracking of students entering college and follow their progression forward allowing for disaggregation into component subgroups; and (2) tracking of enrollment forward to degree completion.

Degree Completions Analysis

KSU admits both beginning freshmen and transfer students in relatively equal numbers. Students who matriculate at KSU as beginning freshmen in the fall term, on either a full or part-time basis, represented nearly 44% of all baccalaureate graduates, with transfer and other students consisting of the remaining 55% in FY 2011. Given the characteristics of KSU's baccalaureate graduates, the typical assumption that beginning freshmen, who remain continuously enrolled on a full-time basis each fall term and graduate within four to six years, excludes a substantial portion of students graduating from KSU. KSU's SAS-powered Degree Completions Report for FYs 2004-2011 and other analytics available at the institution's Virtual Information Center (<https://vic.kennesaw.edu>) reveal numerous patterns on baccalaureate graduates. Some of the more notable patterns relevant to the Complete College Georgia Plan are as follows:

- Continuous enrollment out of high school and beginning freshmen. KSU has made great strides from largely graduating nontraditional-age students (≥ 25 years of age) in 2004 to traditional-age students (< 25 years of age) in 2011 (Appendix A). As shown in Appendix A, the traditional-age graduates who remained continuously enrolled after high school, that are 22 years of age or younger, had increased significantly between FY 2004 and FY 2011, 15% to 26%, tracking closely with KSU's four-year graduation rate. Nearly 30% of the baccalaureate graduates at KSU in FY 2011 were traditional 5-year graduates (23 years of age) and 6-year graduates (24 years of age). This subgroup of students have not increased significantly since FY 2004, which may indicate that many of KSU's traditional-age students periodically "stop out," or change to a part-time status, resulting in delayed graduation.
- Nontraditional students and adult learners. Appendix A shows that KSU continued to graduate a significant portion of nontraditional-age students, 43% in FY 2011. During that time, nearly 27% of baccalaureate graduates were age 28 or older, indicating KSU has a strong contingent of adult learners in the educational pipeline. This means students who started as traditional in age soon become nontraditional in age mostly due to attendance patterns, indicating a need to slow the nontraditional "aging" of KSU's undergraduates as they progress through the undergraduate classifications by increasing efficiencies in course completion.
- Transfer students. Annual intakes of new undergraduate transfer students typically exceed or equal the intakes of first-time freshmen at KSU (See Appendix C), and thus represent a higher percentage of the baccalaureate graduates (56% in FY 2011). Between FYs 2004-2001, over 50% of baccalaureate graduates transferred in from other colleges, many from out-of-state. This indicates KSU needs to continue expanding "onboarding" support for transfer students as well as enhancing relationships with KSU's top transfer intake TCSG and USG institutions.
- Time to completion. Nearly one-third (33%) of first-time freshmen who graduated in FY 2011, transferred an average of 15 cumulative earned hours back to KSU. Over 12% of transfer students matriculated multiple times, bringing in additional earned hours. This suggests potential bottlenecks in course availability and a lack of understanding of course taking patterns.

- Minority characteristics. Female graduates have outpaced male graduates nearly 2-to-1 from FYs 2004 to 2011 (See Appendix B). Hispanic females are the fastest growing segment of graduates at KSU with a 358% increase during that period. Asian females are the second fastest growing segment at 103%, followed by African American females at 71%. African American females were the only group that displaced males at a rate slightly higher than 2-to-1. During the same period, Hispanic and African American baccalaureate graduates remained evenly distributed between traditional-age and nontraditional-age subgroups. This suggests that all racial groups experience nontraditional “aging” relatively the same.
- Learning support students. Over 43% of learning support students with English, Math, or Reading (with an institutional or system requirement) took between 5 and 7 years to graduate in FY 2011. Another 30% took over 10 years to graduate during the same FY.

Progression Analysis

An unduplicated disaggregation of component subgroups for students progressing toward credential completion on an annual basis for FYs 2001-2005 also reveals numerous key findings pertinent to KSU’s Complete College Georgia Plan:

- Beginning freshmen. KSU has analyzed two groups of beginning freshmen for FYs 2001-2005 that are traditionally ignored in the federal first-year retention rate and graduation rates: (1) annual beginning freshmen intakes that started with a part-time enrollment status; and (2) annual beginning freshmen intakes that started in Spring semester. The part-time beginning freshmen consisted of about 2% of the annual intakes, and did not significantly affect the first-year retention rate and graduation rates when included. On the other hand, nearly 15% of beginning freshmen annual intakes at KSU started in Spring semester (See Appendix D). Beginning freshmen that delayed entering until the Spring decreased the six-year graduation rate when included, as around 22% of the students had a learning support institutional or system requirement. This is compared to 6% or less for students entering in the Fall. This suggests that traditional-age, beginning freshmen intakes who delay entry by one semester are less prepared for college and progress slower as compared to those students entering in the Fall.
- Transfer students. Over 47% of annual transfer intakes at KSU graduated in six-years or less during FY 2005 (with the vast majority graduating in four-years or less). This was an increase of 6% since FY 2001. Given that many new transfer students take four-years to graduate, suggests that many transfer earned hours do apply toward degree completion and further coaching is needed. As indicated previously, the annual intakes of new undergraduate transfer students typically exceed or equal the intakes of beginning freshmen at KSU (See Appendix C) with the number of freshmen transfer intakes steadily decreasing over the years as KSU has transitioned from graduating largely nontraditional-age students to more traditional-age students. The result of this change has been that the majority of annual new transfer intakes bring in between 30 and 89 earned hours, which further reinforces KSU need to continue expanding “onboarding”

support for transfer students as well as enhancing relationships with KSU's top transfer intake TCSG and USG institutions.

- Non-returning students. Nearly 20% of annual beginning freshmen intakes and 19% of transfer intakes for FYs 2001-2005 never returned to KSU. Both intake groups were similar in that over 97% of the non-returning students left KSU prior to completing the first year of enrollment. At least one-third of the non-returning students went on to attend other institutions within the USG. This indicates KSU has a contingent of students with intentions to transfer out prior to entering the educational pipeline.

Missing Information and Data Anomalies

During the analysis of students from FYs 2004 to 2011, it was evident that information was missing for key subgroups for either a degree completion analysis or progression analysis. Missing information included the following:

- Tracking of students that are a military member. KSU had traditionally tracked if a student was receiving GI Bill benefits, but did not track students in a self-reporting capacity who served in the military (i.e., Active, Veteran, National Guard, or Reservist). Beginning in Fall 2011, KSU started asking future applicants to self-report their military affiliation as part of the application process entering in Summer 2012.
- Tracking of first-generation college students. Beginning in Fall 2010, KSU started collecting data on first-generation college students in a self-reporting capacity for students applying on or after Summer 2011. The data collection was modeled after the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).
- First-time freshmen cohorts data management. The USG interpretation of the IPEDS first-time freshmen definition contains learning support students as well as students who are not traditional-age students remaining continuously enrolled out of high school.
- Course taking patterns. KSU needs to understand the course taking patterns of its students. Ongoing efforts to mature the operating practices of the DegreeWorks degree audit system will aid in shortening time to completion through improved analysis of student course demand.

Goals

Given the findings and limitations identified in the data analysis, KSU has set the following goals as part of its CCGA plan:

- Strengthen external partnerships with TCSG institutions and K-12 schools in Cobb County.
- Identify course-taking patterns and eliminate bottlenecks to shorten time to completion.
- Enhance student services, tutoring, advising, coaching, and counseling for all significant student subgroups (i.e., transfer, dual enrollment, beginning freshmen, and military learners), to include early intervention measures.
- Restructure delivery around first-year experiences and distance education.
- Transform how remediation is handled.

Appendix A

http://vic.kennesaw.edu/EIMWebApps/vic/degree_profiles/documents/pdf/fy2004_2011_graduate_characteristics.pdf#page=1

http://vic.kennesaw.edu/EIMWebApps/vic/degree_profiles/documents/pdf/fy2004_2011_graduate_characteristics.pdf#page=2

http://vic.kennesaw.edu/EIMWebApps/vic/degree_profiles/documents/pdf/fy2004_2011_graduate_characteristics.pdf#page=3

Appendix B

http://vic.kennesaw.edu/EIMWebApps/vic/degree_profiles/documents/pdf/fy2004_2011_graduate_characteristics.pdf#page=4

http://vic.kennesaw.edu/EIMWebApps/vic/degree_profiles/documents/pdf/fy2004_2011_graduate_characteristics.pdf#page=5

Appendix C

http://vic.kennesaw.edu/EIMWebApps/vic/rpg_tracking/documents/pdf/undupFY.pdf