

USG Strategic Plan

Framework of the Strategic Plan and Public Agenda for the University System of Georgia

Public higher education has changed dramatically in the last ten years. Concerns about affordability are greater than ever, and pressures on quality continue to increase. Questions are raised about the value of getting a bachelor's degree



at the same time data show that the jobs of the future will require higher levels of education. Unemployment rates among college graduates remain much lower than those without. But state support has declined and costs of attendance have shifted even more to families and students. Yet other large industrial nations, like China and India, are threatening the long-held U.S. leadership position in higher education and number of college graduates. To compete economically, Georgia must raise the attainment levels of its citizens.

Building upon the Governor's and USG Regents' Complete College Georgia initiative, the Strategic Plan and Public Agenda of the University System of Georgia will accelerate higher education's commitment to educational attainment, accountability, partnerships, performance, value, and global competitiveness. College is increasingly a prerequisite to a middle class life and is a key to economic development and creating strong communities. Our universities and colleges are providing the transfer of research, information, and critical thinking skills that will ensure Georgia's strong future in the knowledge-based economy. This public agenda for USG makes college completion and knowledge transfer a top priority through a series of actions and measures of progress with additional commitments to the Governor's Strategic Goals for Georgia.

Both the Governor's Strategic Goals and this USG Strategic Plan and Public Agenda share the goals of educating Georgia's citizens for success in the global economy with a commitment to preparation for life-long learning and involvement in society. Academic programs, research and services that

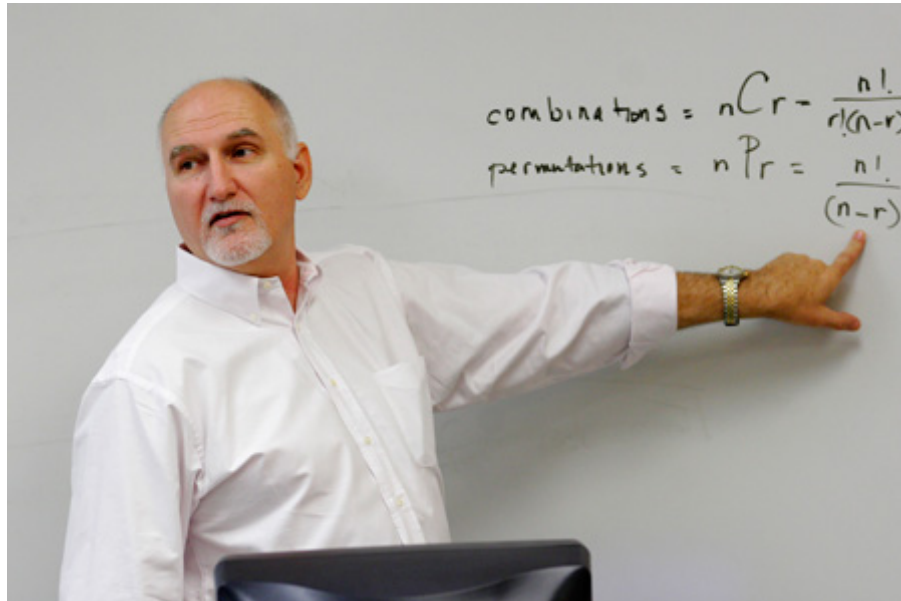


correspond with job growth and creation will strengthen areas of distinct advantage for Georgia in the global marketplace. Higher education is a central contributor to the educational, economic, social, and cultural future of the state and has a major impact on health and quality of life measures. Through efficient deployment of research, teaching, and service and increased attention to public and private partnerships, the university system will ensure that it is a responsive and transformational enterprise for the citizens of Georgia. Use this website to track the forward progress of our public agenda for academic excellence, economic development, innovation and adaptation.

Strategic Imperative 1

Commitment to Academic Excellence and Degree Completion

The future of our state depends on Georgians obtaining meaningful college credentials at a significantly higher rate than today. This commitment to degree completion will target the emerging workforce represented by our



youth as well as the existing adult workforce, many of whom have some college but no degree.

- **Develop Partnerships for College Readiness.**

The USG will develop more intentional partnerships with K-12 education and the Technical College system and better utilize programs and assessments to ensure academic readiness for all students. We will define the success of our partnerships by what benefits our students and the State of Georgia. Collectively, Georgia's educational partners will ensure that more Georgians graduate from high school ready for college and careers and increase the number of students participating in postsecondary education and earning degrees.

- **Reaffirm Commitment to Collegiate Access and Affordability.**

The USG will maintain its longstanding commitment to collegiate access, affordability, and value. Overall costs to students and families must be mitigated by affordable degree options and through continuance of a cost effective, access tier of colleges. Our access tier will accomplish this goal through a rigorous, focused commitment to educating students while minimizing some of the amenities that increasingly define, but also increase the cost of, a college education. Finally, private sector and alumni support is an absolute requirement to support our continued efforts to increase need-based grants and aid.

- **Develop New, Flexible, and Affordable Degree Options.**

The USG is committed to the development of new and flexible general education and degree program pathways that promote affordable and high-quality course and degree completion options to Georgians. Next generation academic program structures and innovations in distance learning, prior learning assessment, and open courses and learning resources provide opportunities for great expansion of the academic enterprise.

- **Ensure Student Support for At-risk Populations.**

The USG will continue the work to ensure student support for at-risk student populations, whether economically challenged or underprepared academically. From influencing aspirations for college to establishing services and support for enrolled students, the USG and its educational partners recognize that postsecondary education is increasingly a prerequisite to a middle class life and is a key to economic development and creating strong communities.

- **Commit to High-Quality Programs, Teaching, and Learning.**

The USG is committed to maintaining and improving the quality and diversity of academic programs, teaching, and learning opportunities. By placing an emphasis on academic program reviews, accreditation standards, faculty development opportunities, and pedagogical improvements, the universities and colleges will ensure the continual improvement of programs, curriculum, learning outcomes, and assessments.

Strategic Imperative 2

Commitment to Economic Development and World Class Research



The USG will ensure that Georgia remains a leader in an increasingly competitive and complex global economy by supporting business recruitment and retention, driving business creation, and spurring research and creativity that make

the state a center of innovation, discovery, and entrepreneurship.

Academic programs, research, and services that correspond with job growth and creation will strengthen areas of distinct advantage for Georgia in the global marketplace. Through efficient deployment of research, teaching, and service and increased attention to public and private partnerships, the university system will ensure that it is a responsive and transformational enterprise for the citizens of Georgia.

- **Focus on Economic Development.**

The USG will drive the growth of our state's knowledge-based economy and entrepreneurial ecosystem while supporting the economic development efforts of our government, businesses, and communities across the state. The USG will work with partners to identify economic development needs, to enable research and innovation, and to provide a visible gateway to the vast assets of the system. Whether through business and industry relationships, education and training with military partnerships, internship activities, or other direct linkages of academic programs to career opportunities, the system and its campuses will strive for programmatic rigor and relevance as well as strong ties to the state's need for research and services in the knowledge economy.

- **Lead in Community Development Partnerships.**

The USG and its member universities and colleges will reaffirm the commitment to being strong stewards of the public's trust and provide leadership of community development partnerships. Higher education is a central contributor and voice to the educational, economic, social, and cultural future of the state. The system and its campuses are committed to providing timely and direct connections to local businesses, services, and community development.

- **Pursue Excellence in Research and Graduate/Professional Education.**

The USG is committed to positioning Georgia as an international center of research, discovery, innovation, and entrepreneurship. System coordination toward this goal is critical because, collectively, the pooled resources of the USG research universities, key university partners in the public and private sector, and centers of research, graduate education, and innovation on other USG campuses represent a powerful collection of assets. Georgia's top-tier research assets and opportunities must be grown to ensure that the state's full potential is realized in the knowledge economy.

- **Make Commitment to International Education.**

The USG is committed to increasing international education opportunities through student and faculty exchanges and to ensuring that all students in the system graduate as active and aware participants in the global economy and society.

Strategic Imperative 3

Commitment to Accountability & Efficiency and Leadership in Higher Education Innovation

We will ensure that the research, teaching and service resources and assets in higher education are efficiently and effectively utilized and serve as an investment in the future of Georgia. Partnerships must continue to be developed that include corporate relations, philanthropic organizations, external sponsorship, and increased fundraising.



Further, the system and its leadership are committed to a critical exploration of the overall higher education enterprise so that Georgia remains a leading state and system of institutions amid the disruptive innovations in technology, business, and education.

- **Commit to Measures of Performance and Accountability.**

The USG and its institutions are committed to measuring performance and being accountable for its decisions. In addition to adoption of systemwide completion metrics and a new funding formula driven by outcomes rather than enrollments, the system will eliminate low-enrollment academic programs and limit the approval of new degrees without sufficient data demonstrating need. Data-driven decisions about facilities management and construction, budget allocations, and the need for new programs and facilities will become standard. Institutions will steward their resources and reputations through managing risk, meeting legal and ethical obligations, and by proactively managing operations in a fiscally sound manner.

- **Continue to Seek Operational Efficiencies.**

The USG is committed to pursuing operational efficiencies and being a model steward of resources. Institutional consolidation, reducing administrative costs, closer monitoring of degree

programs, and improving and expanding the shared services function all contribute to greater resource management. The USG must manage its current physical space far more effectively, build fewer new buildings, and invest in repurposing current facilities to serve the modern student more efficiently. Facilities funding decisions will be linked to space utilization data and demonstrated need.

- **Embrace Goals of Currency, Relevance, and Innovation.**

The USG is committed to timely and thorough review of programs, services, and policies for currency and relevance. Disruptive innovations within the higher education enterprise require that we think critically about current strategies and position our university and college system for the challenges and opportunities that will come in the next decade. The USG and its institutions must remain proactive to stay abreast of the rapidly changing world of public higher education. As one of the largest and most complex systems in the nation, the USG must remain a leader in finding new ways to serve students at the least cost and highest quality.