

BUILDING THE POWER OF



A NEW VISION FOR GORDON STATE COLLEGE
2019–2024



Introduction

Since 1852, Gordon State College (GSC) has demonstrated that two heads are better than one and that there is strength in numbers. The next chapter of our institution's story will continue to build on this concept of collaboration. It has always been there from our founding—the desire to help one another, the impetus to develop a common bond, the commitment to a stronger region, the passion to produce more than self, the pursuit of collective transformation, the joy of learning and winning together. This is our motivation. **This is “the Power of WE.”**

To build the Power of WE, Gordon State College launched a five-month strategic planning process in fall 2018 to develop a new vision for the institution and strategic imperatives for the next five years. The goal of the planning process was to reach consensus around the future of Gordon State College and identify steps required to achieve the collective vision. The comprehensive planning process was led by a steering committee composed of faculty and staff and was driven by data and campus input, as well as numerous existing reports, studies, and surveys completed in 2018. The strategic plan will be used across campus to guide investment, enable excellence, and drive the allocation of resources.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the steering committee members for their efforts in developing this strategic plan. The steering committee was made up of the following members: Wendy Byrd, Winsome Chang, Lisa Ferguson, John Head, Jeff Knighton, Britt Lifsey, Rachel Mittelman, Austin Neill, Kirk Nooks, Elizabeth Pollock, Beth Pye, Jim Rickerson, Craig Soaries, Rhonda Toon, Jessica Traylor, Nicole Vanderbush, and Margie Wright. Thank you to the campus community for input and direction during the planning process. Many faculty and staff members participated in listening sessions, town halls, and feedback sessions.

Strategic guidance, meeting facilitation, project documentation, and plan production by Greg Wilson, Rebecca McIver, Sid Johnson, and Jan Coyne of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia. Editing by Karen DeVivo and graphic design by Jake Brower.

Letter from President Nooks

Dear Friend,

On behalf of the college, I am pleased to present Gordon State College's Strategic Plan for 2019–2024. The plan is the result of several months of work by many institutional stakeholders. This document reflects the thoughts, feedback, and aspirations of students, faculty, staff, foundation members, system colleagues, alumni, civic and workforce leaders, elected officials, educational partners, parents, and other engaged partners. Input was garnered through surveys, personal interviews, townhalls, listening sessions, and institutional reports, while taking into account University System of Georgia priorities. The Gordon State College's Strategic Planning Committee then partnered with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia to craft this exciting plan for our future.

This strategic plan was created during a crossroads moment in the institution's history. Georgia's population is changing, with some areas experiencing rapid growth while other areas are in decline. Gordon State College's 14-county primary service region exemplifies both of these trends. In addition, the state college sector within the University System of Georgia is and will continue to be the primary access point for the broadest range of high school graduates and returning students. In crafting this vision for the future, we also embraced the challenge of providing a well-rounded educational experience at an economically viable position in a competitive market.

These challenges provided the platform to equally recognize the opportunities ahead. We are aware that by taking an educational ecosystem approach, renewed partnerships with our regional K-12 partners will result in higher college-going rates. As a result, GSC will help to foster previously untapped workforce talent for future decades. We recognize that students are seeking an educational experience that is specifically designed for their success. We are committed to moving forward with the assurance that our students will graduate as engaged innovators, dedicated scholars, gifted communicators, and ethical leaders. We believe that we can create an educational atmosphere in which faculty and staff can partner to grow a vibrant college where rewards come in diverse ways.

A final opportunity stands out from the rest. Some may even refer to it as a secret ingredient or our key institutional strength. In the journey of life, there will always be challenges, obstacles, and setbacks. Our environment has a way of supporting the notion of survival of the fittest and focusing on the personal need-to-succeed story. But, our truth actually runs contrary to this thought. Since 1852, Gordon has demonstrated that two heads are better than one and that there is strength in numbers. The next chapter of our institution's story will continue to build on this concept of collaboration. This is our motivation. This is "the Power of WE."

I hope you will consider this document not only as a road map for the next five years, but also as a personal invitation to accept your role as part of the WE. The institution has progressed to this point in its history because of passionate and caring people. Our future awaits us. WE are ready.

Highlanders Forward,



Kirk A. Nooks, Ed.D.
President, Gordon State College



"To participate in planning the direction of a college for the next five years is an awesome responsibility. It has indeed been an honor to work with my colleagues to chart a course that will provide to the students of Gordon State college a life-changing experience."

Dr. C. Jeffery Knighton
Steering Committee Member
Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Who We Are

MISSION

To be a catalyst for exceptional and accessible education through innovative teaching, engaged learning, and transformative experiences for the benefit of our students, the communities we serve, and the world we live in.

VISION

Gordon State College will be a leader and primary educational partner in elevating our region's economic prosperity and educational attainment through collaboration, integrated educational experiences, and a vibrant campus culture.

VALUES



Student Focused

Placing students at the heart of everything we do through accessible education, personalized resources, and engaged communities.



Life-Long Learning/Scholarship

Empowering and promoting academic rigor, professional development, and personal growth that results in ethical and honest life-long critical inquiry with a global perspective.



Excellence

Fostering excellence through rigorous and innovative experiences driven by the institution's mission of delivering quality programs, services, and education.



Respect

Cultivating an atmosphere that promotes integrity and embraces diversity, where all are valued and included regardless of economic, social, religious, or political background.



Collaboration

Promoting a culture of collaboration where meaningful relationships between faculty, staff, students, and the community are formed in an environment of transparency with high expectations of excellence for professionalism and service.

"The strategic planning was a time when all faculty, staff, and administrators came together. We all had one goal: For the college we loved, we had the opportunity to plan its future growth and what we wanted the community and world to know about our college as it continues to flourish!"

Margie Wright

Steering Committee Member
Professor of Nursing



ATTRIBUTES OF A GRADUATE

The Highlander EDGE

We will prepare our students for success after graduation. Gordon State College graduates will embody the following four key attributes—the Highlander EDGE. Faculty and staff will work to foster these attributes through their work and interaction with students.



Engaged Innovators

GSC graduates will have the ability to think critically and creatively, enabling them to tackle complex problems with confidence.



Dedicated Scholars

GSC graduates will have acquired not only the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful in their chosen careers, but also a commitment to life-long learning that traverses all aspects of their lives.



Gifted Communicators

GSC graduates will have a strong foundation in spoken and written communication as well as quantitative reasoning skills that enable them to share ideas with others effectively.



Ethical Leaders

GSC graduates will have gained a deep appreciation for local community service as well as global issues. They will approach leadership with respect for everyone involved in the process.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

To accomplish this vision, Gordon State College must:



Establish a distinctive identity built on a **collaborative campus culture** supported by our institutional values



Promote **student excellence** throughout the academic journey



Strengthen **community engagement and partnerships**





STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 1

Establish a distinctive identity built on a collaborative campus culture supported by our institutional values.

In order for Gordon State College to leverage “the Power of WE” and accomplish its vision, it must foster a culture of collaboration among faculty, staff, and students. This collaborative culture will be strengthened by increasing internal communication efforts; building institutional capacity in key areas like human capital, financial, and physical resources; and celebrating excellence across campus.

OBJECTIVES

Develop a comprehensive strategy for sharing our present story and pursuing our future aspirations.

To create a more collaborative campus where faculty, staff, and students can work together and are aware of the opportunities and resources available to them, we must communicate across departments and the campus. By using data to chart our path forward, we will ensure informed decisions and engage the depth and breadth of expertise within the college.

Objective 1.1: Ensure shared governance, decision making processes, and communication that lead to maximum performance.

Objective 1.2: Determine and monitor data points that lead to successful institutions, and report GSC’s performance, in comparison to its peers, at least annually to appropriate stakeholders.

Objective 1.3: Design a strategy for launching and enhancing marketing and communications efforts reflective of the 2019–2024 vision.

Objective 1.4: Craft a compelling case for support that highlights academic programs, endowed faculty positions, and special initiatives.

Create an institutional framework that supports evolving strategic priorities.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of Gordon State College, we must examine our current policies and resources and then take action to align and increase institutional capacity. Specifically, we must focus on two main areas: policies and processes. Our work will strengthen the organization, clarify our roles, and allow us to communicate with greater transparency.

Objective 1.5: Stabilize and align the organizational structure, institutional budget, and operating policies.

Objective 1.6: Identify all college policies and develop a long-term plan to address annual updates and the education of those impacted.

Recognize excellence across campus.

We will strengthen GSC’s identity across the region and the state by recognizing and promoting quality work by our faculty and staff. We will highlight the academic and career success of our students and alumni. Specifically, the college will seek to affiliate itself with or invest in events, designations, and other recognitions that demonstrate the quality and excellence of Gordon State College. We will further advance this objective by investing in on- and off-boardings, cross-training, professional development opportunities like the Highlander Leadership Academy and the Center for Teaching & Learning.

Objective 1.7: Recruit, retain, and transition professionals through a process that supports and emphasizes the institution’s values.

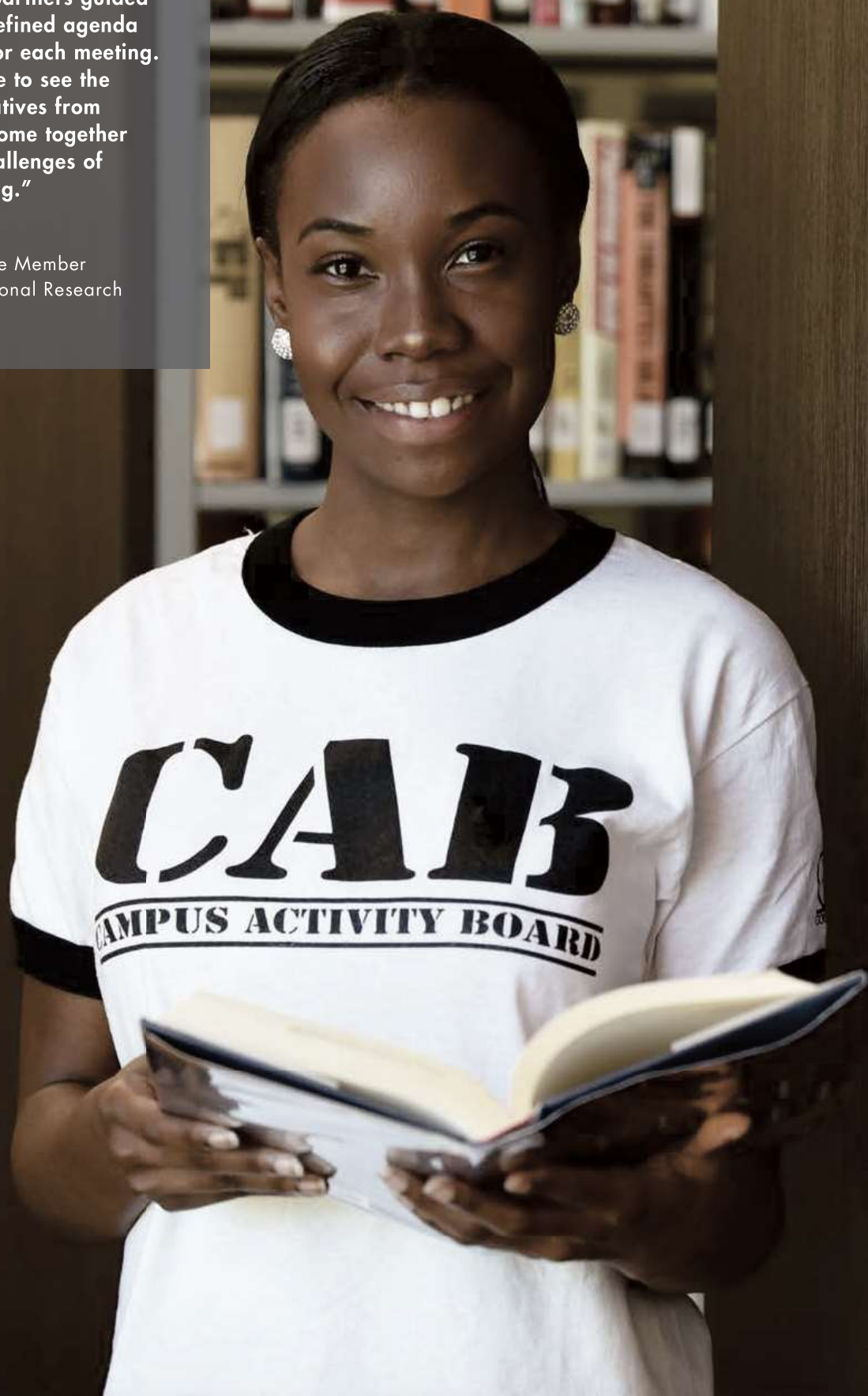
Objective 1.8: Ensure that college faculty and staff members are provided with at least one professional development opportunity annually aimed at expanding the understanding of their role.

Objective 1.9: Acknowledge and celebrate the accomplishments and milestones of the Highlander Nation family.

"The process of creating Gordon State College's Strategic Plan was a very satisfying experience but very fast paced. Our Institute of Government partners guided us with a well-defined agenda and objectives for each meeting. It was impressive to see the many representatives from across campus come together and meet the challenges of strategic planning."

Britt Lifsey

Steering Committee Member
Director of Institutional Research
and Effectiveness





STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 2

Promote student excellence throughout the academic journey.

The work of Gordon State College is for the benefit of our students. We will help our students achieve excellence throughout their academic journey. The journey starts before they arrive on the GSC campus. We will promote excellence by ensuring best practices in recruiting, outreach, and enrollment management. Once students join the Gordon State College community, we must continue to promote excellence throughout their academic journey. To achieve our mission and vision, we must also ensure that students are successful after graduation.

OBJECTIVES

Develop a strategic enrollment management plan.

To ensure the sustainability of the institution and the long-term success of our region, GSC must understand the needs of our partners. Regional needs, along with supporting data, will provide a clear roadmap for our strategic enrollment management plan. From the first impressions of a student to the noble thoughts of a graduate, we will ensure a cohesive experience aimed at supporting all students. We will also embrace the need to provide the appropriate balance between preparing students to enter the workforce and continuing their education through graduate programs. We will explore the feasibility of several nondegree programs, additional class times, satellite locations, and delivery methods (in-class, online, hybrid, etc.). Recruiting adults in our primary service region to enroll at GSC for a certificate program or other credential or to complete a previously begun degree both helps the regional workforce and contributes to the larger University System of Georgia Complete College Georgia initiative.

Objective 2.1: Develop and implement a comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Management Plan in which 70% of the student population is pursuing a baccalaureate degree.

Objective 2.2: Develop and evaluate degree programs to ensure maximum transferability to higher education partners and alignment to regional workforce needs.

Promote student success.

As a student-focused institution, Gordon State College will evaluate our current practices, activities, and resources for students and align efforts and activities to ensure students are successful through a comprehensive Momentum Approach experience. We will scale the Highlander EDGE distinction for all students, developing additional co-curricular experiences to increase student engagement, and exploring alternative advising models that support a deeper role for faculty mentorship.

Objective 2.3: Design an educational experience that supports the University System of Georgia's Momentum Approach and national success measures.

Objective 2.4: Identify, define, and align the elements of the Highlander EDGE.

Foster a dynamic campus learning environment of engagement, discovery and service.

To fulfill our mission and vision of providing exceptional and accessible education that can elevate our region's economic prosperity and educational attainment, we must ensure that we are speaking to the "whole student." We are committed to the notion that learning transcends the traditional classroom and all of our efforts will produce a more engaged student and citizen.

Objective 2.5: Design and connect co-curricular experiences to increase student engagement and development.

Objective 2.6: Design and connect extracurricular experiences to increase student engagement and development.

Objective 2.7: Design student leadership experiences to increase student engagement and development.

"The strategic planning process was uplifting and motivating. I enjoyed being a part of a team purposefully working to help Gordon achieve its full potential!"

Dr. Nicole Vanderbush
Steering Committee Chairperson
Assistant Professor of Biology





STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE 3

Strengthen community engagement and partnerships.

Gordon State College will be an institution that is focused on meeting the needs of its primary service region and the state. We will accomplish this goal by strengthening our partnerships with employers, organizations, school systems, other higher education institutions, governments, and other entities in the region. We will enhance our marketing and communications efforts to better tell our story and build relationships with our partners.

OBJECTIVES

Create an opportunity for community engagement with a regional approach.

We will implement a strategy for marketing and external communications. This will include sharing a compelling message of who we are and how we connect to the communities we serve. We will emphasize service opportunities and connections through on-campus events and community projects.

Objective 3.1: A community communications/engagement plan, aligned with the branding message and mission, will ensure regular, consistent communication with elected, civic, and workforce leaders, yielding a deeper understanding among the communities served by GSC.

Objective 3.2: Create, designate, and communicate the various institutional connection points with the community to enhance the quality of life for the region.

Increase campus utilization and reach.

Our campus will be a destination for our students, staff, and faculty and for the region we serve. We will look for ways to increase the quality of life for students, faculty and staff, and local residents through connections between the community and campus. We will also review our current space usage and future space needs, both on and off campus. We will develop a facilities master plan to support the strategic growth of the institution.

Objective 3.3: Evaluate and determine facility space needed on- and off-campus to serve current and future programs.

Build a strategic partnership pipeline.

We will work to build a strategic partnership pipeline by partnering with and nurturing the education ecosystem (K-12 and postsecondary education) in our region. All of our educational institutions can achieve more, enhance student completion rates, and better serve our region by working together. We will also harness the collective strength of philanthropic supports, alumni, and regional employers.

Objective 3.4: Convene and nurture partnerships to build an education ecosystem approach with K-12 partners to increase the regional college-going rate.

Objective 3.5: Convene and nurture relationships with other Higher Education institutions to build an education ecosystem approach to increase the regional completion rate.

Objective 3.6: Partner with the Foundation Board to build philanthropic capacity linked to the institution's goals.

Objective 3.7: Partner with the Alumni Board to build collegiate affinity linked to the institution.

Objective 3.8: Develop meaningful and productive relationships with employers throughout GSC's 14-county primary service region.

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