The University of West Georgia (UWG) is located in Carrollton, just 50 minutes west of Atlanta. Accredited by 12 national accrediting agencies in addition to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, UWG offers a wide range of disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and professional programs. We have 110 programs of study, including 58 at the bachelor’s level, 40 at the master’s and education specialist levels, two at the doctoral level, and 10 at the post-bachelor’s and post-master’s certificate level. The current enrollment is 10,684, up from 2006 by approximately 5 percent in headcount and approximately 6 percent in credit hours. The average SAT for the fall 2007 entering class is 1010. UWG is ready to play an increasing state-wide role as a robust-tier doctoral-granting institution as we increase capacity to accommodate the rapidly-growing number of high school graduates.

The five academic entities which comprise the university are the College of Arts and Sciences, largest of West Georgia’s undergraduate colleges; the College of Education, which recommends 800 students for certification annually; the Richards College of Business, one of approximately four percent of colleges and schools of business worldwide to hold the prestigious AACSB-International accreditation in both business and accounting; the Honors College, the only one of its kind in the state, which houses the Advanced Academy of Georgia; and the Graduate School.

UWG has earned national distinction in such areas as teaching, undergraduate research, debate, athletics, service, leadership training, and honors study. For the eighth time in the past ten years, no college or university in America has had more Honors student research proposals accepted for presentation at the National Collegiate Honors Council; this is a very prestigious record since NCHC rejects approximately 90 percent of submissions. In debate, UWG has back-to-back national championships in the Cross Examination Debate Association tournament (2000, 2001), has qualified for the National Debate Tournament for 35 consecutive years, and beat Dartmouth, Harvard, and Northwestern in unanimous decisions to win the 2005 UC-Berkeley Invitational. Every year since 2002, UWG cheerleading teams have won national championships. The American Association for the Advancement of Science has awarded its first AAAS Leadership in Science Education Prize for High School Teachers to Chris Kennedy, a 2001 M.Ed. graduate.

The West Georgia motto, “Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment,” is evidenced by all our senior faculty and administrators (including the VPAA and President) teaching at least one course a year, and the numerous awards given to our outstanding faculty. Examples include the 2007 Regents Hall of Fame Faculty Award; the 2006 Governor’s Award for the Humanities; the 2006 Carnegie Foundation/CASE Georgia Professor of the Year, the 2007 Governor’s International Award, the 2007 Sam M. Walton Free Enterprise Fellow, and 2005, 2006, and 2007 Fulbright Scholars and Teachers. West Georgia has just moved up one tier among master’s universities in the south in U.S. News and World Report’s most recent rankings, and for the fifth consecutive year, has been recognized by the Princeton Review as a Best Southeastern College. The Princeton Review ranked the Richards College of Business in The Best 282 Business Schools in 2007 and is expected to do so again in 2008.
West Georgia is constantly improving and expanding facilities. The College of Education has opened a new instructional laboratory designed to improve science and mathematics teaching in the elementary and middle school classroom. A new Campus Center opened in August 2006 and construction has begun on a new Health and Wellness Center, and on a major renovation and addition to the Callaway Geosciences Building. The transfer of 246 acres by the City of Carrollton will constitute the new northwest campus and allow the University to protect its academic core while meeting the needs of projected enrollment growth. Along with our existing 375 acres, this will put UWG at 621 acres, which represents tremendous growth potential for the System at relatively low cost in the Metro Atlanta region.

Undergraduates comprise 83% of our students, and 17% are graduate students. Our undergraduates are mostly traditional-age students. (UWG enrollment figures for Fall 2007 are correct as of September 21; census date for official 2007 figures is October 12). The average age for Fall 2007 is 22.04, compared with most recent figure (Fall 2006) for the average USG age of 23.9. For Fall 2007, 86.91% of our undergraduates are under age 25, 76.17% are under age 23, and 83.83% are enrolled as full-time students. The Fall 2007 graduate student profile is somewhat different – the average age is 35.26, compared to the most recent (Fall 2006) USG average age of 31.8. Graduate students are more likely to be enrolled part-time. The number of graduate students for Fall 2007 is up by 148 students, a gain of almost 9% over last year.

Georgia residents comprise 96% of the student body drawn from approximately 85 percent of Georgia counties, and 84% of West Georgia alumni reside in Georgia. We also draw students from 39 states and 41 foreign countries. Our enrollment reflects the diversity of the state. For Fall 2007, our African American enrollment is 25.41%, compared to the USG’s most recent (Fall 2006) 23.7%. Our white enrollment is 66.95%, compared to the USG’s 64.5% (Fall 2006). We have a small but growing Hispanic population, which has grown from 127 (1.2% of our enrollment) to 215 (2.01%) in the past four years. Other ethnic categories have remained stable.

Our Multicultural Achievement Program (MAP) and African American Male Initiative programs are important in the success of our minority students. On average, students who participate in MAP programming have higher GPAs than students who do not participate in MAP. For example, the average GPA for freshmen in MAP is 2.06, as opposed to 1.88 for minority students not participating in MAP. Our African-American retention rate (for males and females) is 83%, compared to 73% overall. However, the six-year graduation rate for African American students still lags slightly behind the overall average – it is 35 %, compared to 36% overall. UWG plays a key role in the success of this community. Beyond the obvious economic impact of over $220 million annually, the University faculty, staff, and students are an integral part of this community. Over 90% of all new teachers in the Carroll County schools come from UWG and 75% of the nurses at Tanner Medical Center are UWG graduates. Over 3,000 Carroll County residents hold one or more degrees from UWG. The Center for Water Resources provides watershed assessments for four counties and serves as a major source of expertise in collecting data and finding solutions to state-wide water supply, conservation, and quality issues. Since 2003, the College of Education has increased production of certified teachers by 30%. Of 3,500 new teachers produced by USG public institutions in 2005, UWG’s production was exceeded only by the University of Georgia and Georgia State University; 86.2% of these were employed in Georgia schools, with a first-year retention rate of 97.7%! 
The University offers complete degree programs in Rome, Dalton, and five Master’s degree programs and a B.S. degree program in Nursing at its satellite campus in Newnan. Nine years ago our Newnan Center enrollment was less than 200 students for the entire calendar year. This past year we enrolled over 2,000 students from over 30 Georgia counties east, west and south of Newnan and some from adjoining counties in Alabama. In addition we offer three complete degree programs completely online. West Georgia has by far the largest number of students in the entire University System taking e-core courses, accounting for about 39% of the total USG enrollment. Following a year-long study our Distance and Distributed Education Center implemented an experimental advisement and targeted orientation programs for students enrolling in e-core Freshman English and Math courses in Summer 2007. As a result of this extensive project, the course retention rate for all English e-core courses at UWG increased from 70% to 87%, and the e-core Math retention increased from 69% to 76%. The retention rates for these targeted e-core courses were, for the first time ever, higher than their counterparts in traditional face-to-face courses. We plan to expand this initiative to include all e-core courses in Spring 2008. We have shared this study and its results with the central office of the USG.

The entire community benefits from UWG’s cultural arts opportunities, lectures and exhibits, athletic events, and continuing education classes. Students and employees are engaged in the life of the community in service projects, tutoring and mentoring, and participation in local churches and organizations. UWG administrators have helped with several economic development and industrial recruitment efforts including the AirTran call center. It is difficult to find a single person in the region whose life is not impacted, directly or indirectly, by UWG.

The major challenge UWG faces is that of resources. Historically, UWG was underfunded – three Chancellor administrations have recognized this, but have not been able to address the problem through incremental funding. Previous analysis has shown that it would take approximately $5.9 million more of state allocation for UWG to be funded at just the average ($/FTE) of the comprehensive sector (and we know that we are way better than average)! In fact, when this analysis was done last, UWG had a lower $/FTE allocation than five Access (Two-year and State College) Institutions. As we examine such performance indicators as RPG, we know we can do much better than we already have with the appropriate allocation. Last year, the Chancellor did a “shadow budget” analysis which confirmed that we are one of the most efficient universities in the USG. While this may sound like “whining,” it really makes two more significant points: (a) It’s a “brag” point for the great efficiencies of UWG – which makes our national accomplishments even more spectacular, and (b) if you flip that ratio around, a very low $/FTE makes for a very high FTE/$, indicating at your level, that to get the highest impact for incremental dollars at your command, you might well consider allocating them to the institutions with a high FTE/$.

As one of the four USG institutions comprising the “robust tier” of comprehensive universities, the University of West Georgia is poised to move to a whole new level of excellence and prominence. As we demand more of ourselves, striving to fulfill the USG’s vision for West Georgia and the expanded role we will play in higher education, we will seek increased support and resources. We will ask, not what you can do for us, but what you and we can together do for the betterment of our state, our country, and our changing world.

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