University System of Georgia Initiative:
Retention and Graduation
Source: National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education; 2002
Graduation rates – Georgia’s 6-year graduation rate is 43.7%, or 42nd in the U.S.
Conclusion of USG Graduation Report, 2004

“Except for the research university sector, USG’s bachelor degree granting universities retain and graduate a substantially smaller proportion of their first-time, full-time bachelor degree seeking students over six years than their out-of-state peers.”

From the Report, *Multiple Year-Retention in the University System of Georgia*, by the Office of Strategic Research and Analysis, available at [www.USG.edu](http://www.USG.edu)
Institution-Specific Six-Year Bachelors Degree Graduation Rates
First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen: Fall 1992--Fall 1996

Comparing graduation rates:

Education Trust, www.collegeresults.org

Each institution receives a “similarity score,” ranging from 0 (least similar) to 1000 (identical), based on the degree of similarity to the chosen institution in terms of 11 selected institutional and student characteristics that are statistically correlated with overall six-year graduation rates:

Estimated Median SAT or ACT equivalent of freshman class (96)
Admissions Selectivity, Barron’s Guide To American Colleges (107)
Carnegie Classification (63)
Percent of undergraduates receiving Pell Grants (181)
Sector (Public vs. Private) (123)
Number of full-time equivalent undergraduates (66)
Student-Related Expenditures / FTE student (133)
Percent of FTE undergraduate students age 25 and over (56)
Status as a Historically Black College or University (35)
Percent of undergraduates who are enrolled part-time (91)
Status as a commuter campus (49)
Comparing graduation rates: 
UWG vs. Education Trust’s 15 most similar institutions

- South Dakota State University - 53.3%
- Central Missouri State University - 49.4%
- Western Carolina University - 48.9%
- Southwest Missouri State University - 47.9%
- Sonoma State University - 47.8%
- Southeast Missouri State University - 47.3%
- Bridgewater State College - 45.8%
- University Of Wisconsin-Stout - 45.5%
- Northern Michigan University - 44.8%
- Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville - 44.6%
- University Of Tennessee-Chattanooga - 40.7%
- Marshall University - 37.6%
- Stephen F Austin State University - 35.4%
- Sam Houston State University - 34.6%
- Valdosta State University - 33.3%
- State University Of West Georgia - 31%
## USG Graduation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Of Georgia</td>
<td>71.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Institute Of Technology</td>
<td>69.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Georgia College And State University</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Southern University</td>
<td>37.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia College And State University</td>
<td>34.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Southwestern State University</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valdosta State University</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany State University</td>
<td>32.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia State University</td>
<td>32.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State University Of West Georgia</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennesaw State University</td>
<td>30.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Valley State University</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus State University</td>
<td>24.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Polytechnic State University</td>
<td>22.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augusta State University</td>
<td>20.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armstrong Atlantic State University</td>
<td>19.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah State University</td>
<td>17.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clayton College And State University</td>
<td>13.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

• Georgia's graduation rates (at institutions other than the research institutions) are among the lowest in the nation. It can't be explained away simply by the entering characteristics of our students, or because of problems unique to Georgia, because states with similar issues are doing better than we are.

• UWG’s graduation rates are low. Fewer than 1/3 of our entering students graduate from UWG in 6 years. It's not because they are all transferring to UGA and Tech to graduate; only an additional 8% graduate from USG institutions.

• There are institutions with similar students to ours and with similar characteristics which have better graduation rates than we do.
Possible Next Steps

• There is increasing public pressure to improve graduation rates. If we want to avoid bureaucratic solutions imposed from the outside (like the No Child Left Behind Act), we need to figure out a way to solve this problem ourselves.

• The questions we will be asking ourselves include:
  – "How can we improve the graduation rates of our currently enrolled students?"
  – “What can we do to help students develop the skills and attitudes they need in order to be successful?”
Whose Responsibility?

Mine, Yours, and Ours!

Participation in the AASCU study of 12 diverse institutions nationwide that have made better-than-expected improvements; UWG is one of 96 institutions participating on the study teams). Report due in July. The one clear preliminary conclusion is that each campus made a commitment to work on it:

*President, senior administrators, faculty, and staff worked to create a campus culture that expects and encourages success.*
Thank You for All You do!