

UNIVERSITY of 
West Georgia



Annual Report
of
Institutional Progress
2008-2009

University of West Georgia

2008-2009 Annual Report of Institutional Progress

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Part A: Annual Progress in Assessing Institutional Effectiveness

The University of West Georgia continues to make progress to becoming a destination university – one which will be regarded in the minds of high school students and their parents as a first-choice university. The 2008-2009 academic year opened with another record breaking enrollment of 11,252. This marks the fifth consecutive year the enrollment exceeded 10,000 students.

The University's continuing pledge to *Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment* is demonstrated below:

Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment

- *The Princeton Review* selected the Richards College of Business as an outstanding business school for the third consecutive year and included the college in its "Best 296 Business Schools: 2009" publication. The national recognition is based on a survey regarding the college's academic programs and student satisfaction, as well as the university's student body and campus life.



West Georgia's online WebMBA program won recognition as one of the Top 25 Best Buys in the country by GetEducated.com and *The Princeton Review* listed the Georgia WebMBA as a "top choice" for an online MBA for 2008.

- *James Magazine* chose the University of West Georgia as a top 10 pick in four categories in its third annual "Ranking Georgia's Colleges and Universities" publication and is mentioned as "an institution of note." Also in the *James* Top Political Science/Governmental Affairs Programs in Georgia category, UWG ranked sixth out of 10 universities in Georgia. Other rankings for West Georgia were seven out of 10 in the People's Choice Based on Academic and Overall Reputation category, a list that includes Emory University, Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia, and a ninth place in the Institution Georgian's Most Identify Themselves With As To Interest, Support and Favorable Opinion category.

- UWG received its second national recognition by "Creative Colleges: A Guide for Student Actors, Artists, Dancers and Musicians," a publication that selects the top 200 schools in the nation for its creative programs for students. West Georgia offers outstanding creative programs in music, drama, art and creative writing. The Departments of Music, Art, English and Mass Communications and Theatre provide many opportunities to earn a degree through creative endeavors. The university has a television and radio station, three theatres and several recital halls on campus.

Program and Need Assessment by Department

Each of the academic divisions of the college conducts assessment activities on an ongoing basis.

The *Department of Educational Leadership and Professional Studies* redesigned their new master's and specialist programs in educational leadership to provide an example of this process.

With input and support from multiple agencies and organizations, a new, state-wide, Georgia performance-based leadership framework was put in place. This new framework was designed to prepare administrators to meet the diverse needs of Georgia schools, learners, and communities in the 21st century.

Several years in the making, the process of creating the new leadership system included the following components:

- Development of new performance-based program standards;
- Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) program-approval reviews based on the new standards;
- A new leadership certification examination (Georgia Assessment for the Certification of Educators, GACE);
- A new certificate structure; and
- A phased-in implementation plan.

Critical milestones in the state-wide implementation plan included:

- April, 2007 – New preparation standards were adopted as criteria for the Georgia institutions to redesign all leadership preparation programs.
- January 15, 2008 – New Georgia certification rule established the structure and requirements for certificates, along with a phased-in implementation schedule.

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- June 14, 2008 – First administration of the GACE leadership assessment.
- July 1, 2008 – Georgia institutions stopped admitting students to the “old” leadership programs. Previously enrolled students continued in their programs, but understood that program completion and certification documents had to be submitted to the PSC before September 30, 2009, to be grandfathered under the outgoing certification rules. Students who could not meet the September 30, 2009, date were required to complete all preparatory work under the new program and certification structures.

Because the new UWG educational leadership programs are being introduced in summer, 2009, no data are available to inform refinements. However, assessments of goals and outcomes are embedded in the work of the new programs to assess student learning and guide continuous program improvement.

The *Department of Mathematics* conducted exit interviews with undergraduate students to help develop a regular four semester cycle of course offerings at 3000-4000 level. The department also responded to requests from undergraduate students to offer a Master of Science in Mathematics degree which started in fall 2008.

In past assessments, *Department of Economics* students have indicated that a strong, positive attribute of the Economics Department is the high quality of faculty. Students have made a number of positive comments about the teaching quality of the faculty and the willingness of the faculty to work individually with students. The department’s newest tenure track faculty member began her position at UWG in August 2007.

Before fiscal year 2006, no economics students participated in “Big Night” or other research presentation forums. Beginning fall 2006, the department began offering a research methods class (ECON 3460, Forecasting) on a consistent basis. The offering of this course (as well as other factors) have contributed to an expanded interest in undergraduate research. In fiscal year 2009, three undergraduate RCOB students participated in research projects with economics faculty.

The department reviews the exit evaluations of graduating seniors. Two of the greatest weaknesses of the department (based on the spring 2009 survey) are the lack of internship opportunities for students and the lack of variety of upper division elective offerings. The chair of economics department has been “making the case” with the Dean for college support to help expand the number of internship opportunities for RCOB students. The department was able to offer an additional elective course in spring 2009

(Economic Development) and will be offering Environmental and Resource Economics in fall 2009.

One of the goals of the department and the RCOB was to offer more online courses. This past year, the department made enormous strides in achieving this goal. Faculty taught ECON 4410 (Money and Banking) online during summer 2008. In addition, ECON 2105 and ECON 3402 were offered completely online for the first time in spring 2009. Plans are in the works to offer two additional courses (ECON 2106 and ECON 3406) online during 2009-10.

The *Department of Music*’s assessment of student progression led to the establishment of a Student Wellness Policy which provides an alternative capstone experience for students in the Bachelor of Music in Performance who sustain a permanent injury/condition that renders them unable to complete a full recital. This change in policy allowed a student to graduate in spring 2009.

For many years the *Department of Accounting and Finance* has used the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Level II examination to assess the level of understanding of accounting topics. Since annual updating of the examination has been discontinued, some of the questions on the exam are no longer relevant. Thus, the Assessment Committee decided that the examination has outlived its usefulness. To continue to assess student learning, embedded assessment modules are being used in Financial Reporting I (ACCT 3212), Managerial Accounting (ACCT 3232), Accounting Information Systems (ACCT 4241), Financial Reporting II (ACCT 3212), Income Tax Accounting for Individuals (ACCT 3251), and Auditing (ACCT 4261).

In the *Department of Special Education and Speech Language Pathology*, Speech-Language Pathology faculty use the Praxis and the Knowledge and Skills Acquisition (KASA) standards to update courses to enable students to receive higher scores on the Praxis exams. In Special Education, faculty updated courses to teach essential content to comply with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards and to meet the new Professional Standards Commission (PSC) preparation rules. Speech Language Pathology are using Foliotek to measure/track student achievement while Special Education faculty need to identify the assessments for each course for Foliotek and develop a new undergraduate assessment related to the new field experiences associated with the General Curriculum.

The *Department of Health, Physical Education, and Sport Studies* created more online courses to be in line with student demand. This past year departmental faculty developed a 97% online walk/jog class that relied on five

pre- and post- measures of fitness and daily workout logs to track student progress and performance across the semester. This popular class option was offered for six semesters in line with departmental goals of adding course options to accommodate student need, interest, and demand.

In the *Department of Mass Communications and Theatre Arts*, senior communication majors exit surveys have indicated the need to strengthen the curriculum with course additions that center on public relations writing, journalism, and new media (particularly web-based technologies), news producing, and media management. Starting fall 2008, two new special topics courses were offered: Media, Blogs, & Society and Public Relations Crisis Communication. Student demand exceeded enrollment caps for both courses, which are scheduled to be offered again next academic year.

The Theatre core area now introduces a balance in both performance, through Acting I (THEA 2291), and theatre studies, through Play Analysis (THEA 2100). These requirements were recently redesigned based on NAST Standards by adding Play Analysis as a requirement. This explicitly addressed a need for a stronger grounding in text work and critical thinking skills. Additionally as part of our self-study:

- For the *Theatre program*, area F was modified to narrow core major elective choices. The 1000-2000 level elective is now restricted to a music or art course. This is in direct response to a recommendation in the NAST Handbook for Liberal Arts degree curricula.
- Developed an upper level Costume Design course.
- Modified the Theatre Studies required courses to include Internship or Special Topics options.
- Dropped COMM 3356 (Film and Culture) from the theatre major elective choices because the course was rarely offered and added a new Screenwriting option (ENGL 3200), which is taught by Theatre faculty.
- Revised the Theatre minor to balance comprehensiveness and focus in both performance and theatre studies per NAST Standards and created a structured “emphasis” for major students choosing a design or performance focus.
- Institutionalized the Theatre Company model with a zero credit requirement called Theatre Laboratory (THEA 1000). This requires attendance to all company meetings and all theatre company productions as specified by the Theatre faculty. All theatre majors are required to enroll in this course for a grade of S or U.
- Continued the new “Entrance Knowledge Survey” and added an “Exit Survey” to begin collecting results for curriculum assessment.

The *Department of Media and Instructional Technology* engaged in its fifth year program review. The departmental goals and outcomes were examined and determined that the assessment process for students in the Masters of Education in Media did not provide a clear picture of student outcomes and achievements from a holistic program perspective. Instead, it focused on student perceptions about the program and fragmented course outcomes. The evaluation process was changed to include development of a midpoint reflection and assessment of student outcomes half-way through the program, as well as a culminating reflection and assessment of student outcomes at the end of the program. Student outcomes are evaluated within the context of the program standards, and the midpoint assessment enables faculty to specifically target areas of deficiency or areas that require additional work to make sure the student will reach the desired targets by the program end. The new process requires students to submit a self-reflection and an in-progress electronic portfolio at the midpoint, as well as a final reflection and completed electronic portfolio at the completion of their program. These reflections and portfolios are evaluated by faculty formatively (at the mid-point), and summatively (at the end of the program).

One of the *Department of Anthropology’s* goals is to provide a high quality curriculum for anthropology majors that emphasizes disciplinary rigor, encourages minority participation, and prepares undergraduate students to be productive members of society, strong candidates for graduate programs, and successful candidates for entry in a wide variety of employment fields.

The department met this goal by developing a computer laboratory for students. The laboratory incorporates discipline-specific software and teaching capabilities developed fully in courses offered fall 2009, particularly in a course on Cultural Resources Management, where GIS and other mapping activities took place. Other classes also used the lab to teach skills in ethnographic research methods, library research skills, bibliography management, etc. The technical skills that students acquired in this laboratory helped prepare them for graduate school and employment in the field of anthropology.

Each year the *Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology* evaluates the curriculum based on examination scores as well as feedback from constituent groups and changes are made as needed. A number of changes that were made included addition of several courses as electives (classes in Play Therapy, Eating Disorders, Substance Abuse Counseling, Counseling Children and Adolescents, Counseling and Spirituality); the development of some courses as “N” (fully online), a number of courses as “D”

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(hybrid or <50% online) courses; and the reorganization of some courses (i.e. combining two courses, Leadership course and Advocacy and Brokering of Services course, into a single required course, Leadership and Advocacy).

In the *Department of Curriculum and Instruction*, formal assessment questionnaires reflecting program goals are distributed to graduate students upon completion of their programs of study. The responses are collected and reviewed by the chair person, program coordinators, and program faculty and modifications are made to programs as needed. At the undergraduate level, the Dean's office surveys graduates as part of the comprehensive unit assessment system. The results of these surveys are also discussed at the department level, and appropriate changes are made in programs.

After considerable investigation and discussion in the *Department of Chemistry*, the Bachelor of Art in Chemistry Education program was redesigned to require each student to be a Chemistry Workshop Leader. In order to be a leader the student must have (1) completed the first two chemistry courses scoring no lower than a "B"; (2) maintain a 2.9 GPA; (3) undergo critique of being able to effectively convey chemistry topics to students in freshman chemistry courses.

The *Department of English and Philosophy* adopted a common grading rubric for all 2000-4000 level English courses to better ensure uniform assessment of Student Outcomes 3 and 4 for the major.

- (Outcome 3.) Students will demonstrate in both oral and written work a discipline-specific critical facility through convincing and well-supported analysis of related material.
- (Outcome 4.) Students will demonstrate their command of academic English and the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.

Philosophy program goals were assessed through an alumni survey which helped to identify better ways to communicate to graduate students the skills they are acquiring through this program. Skills-focused communication will be instituted in senior seminar courses to prepare students in effectively marketing themselves to employers. All of the Philosophy program goals will be reassessed during the fall 2009 semester to bring them in line with the new strategic plan.

The Department of Geosciences receives feedback from alumni working as Professional Geologists and desire to make our students better prepared encouraged the Department of Geosciences to require geology majors to take the ASBOG national exam. This exam is required as the first step towards obtaining a Georgia certification as a

professional geologist. Results from the 2009 exam indicate that our students performed very well on all the topics that we teach. The results indicated two weaknesses we have are due to not teaching Geophysics and Economic Geology. We are now planning to add more geophysics to our Plate Tectonics class and add an Economic Geology class. Ideally when the budget improves we would like to hire a tenure-track geologist in geophysics and plate tectonics.

The *Department of Management's* goal is to "maintain and enhance the personal environment for student learning, advising and mentoring." To support this goal several issues were addressed to improve performance: 1.) the Business Education area developed a book entitled, "10 Steps to Preparing Your Program Schedule: A Guide for Business Education Majors," to assist students in scheduling classes, 2.) Provided more scheduling options to Management majors by offering CISM 4350 and CISM 4355, 3.) Provided more flexibility to students by offering MGNT 3600 and ABED 3100 as online courses.

Based on student feedback and Richards College of Business (RCOB) initiative the *Department of Marketing and Real Estate* developed several new online and WebMBA courses as well as offered more courses in summer sessions. Exit interviews with graduating students, discussion with the board of advisors, and alumni surveys all indicate a need for more practical training and applications oriented instruction, plus international exposure. Based on these, the curriculum in several of the marketing elective classes and in the capstone class was revised to include outside class projects with local firms and students were encouraged to find internships with local firms; and two study abroad programs in London and China are now offered.

Administrative Areas

The *Office of Auxiliary Services* which covers various services for the campus such as Dining Services, Parking/Transportation and the University Bookstore continuously assesses ways to improve services and the level of satisfaction of those services by conducting surveys. Below are a few areas of Auxiliary Services that improved services during fiscal year 2009.

- *Parking and Transportation* hired an outside consultant to evaluate bus routes and student walking times to support their departmental goal to reassess the campus bus transportation system to be more operationally effective. As a result, revised shuttle routes were established to reduce operating cost while maintaining student transportation needs and three new larger buses were purchased to reduce the number of

buses needed from 4 to 3. The relocation of bus stops and the addition of larger buses will allow Parking and Transportation to be more efficient while improving customer service.

- The *Bookstore* supported their goal of improving merchandise offerings to students by utilizing surveys and focus groups to refine its product mix in both clothing and electronics, conducted a fashion show to increase clothing product awareness with students, and created remote sale sites at the Coliseum and the Newnan Center in response to student demand. This change helped the gross store revenue increase 10 percent over fiscal year 2008.

Publications and Printing supports Goal #2. Provide equipment necessary to efficiently meet the University's printing needs by identifying and acquiring upgrades necessary to meet production demands of the institution. Following an ongoing assessment to determine at what point an offset press upgrade would be most cost effective, a slightly-used Komori press was purchased in late 2008 with installation completed in fall 2009. Since an additional payment was made in 2009 only three payments remain in the five-year payment plan. The press is much more suitable for the university's needs and has increased production levels by 47.2 percent, from 6.93 million impressions in fall 2008 to 10.2 million in fall 2009.

University Communications and Marketing assessed the usefulness of the Developments and Honor Roll publications and determined that goals were not being met, so duties of the Coordinator of University Publications were realigned to meet the need for a marketing writer to help with advertising and publications. Marketing personnel was hired to help strategize marketing goals and concepts, including those for advertising and publications. A person in the news services area was hired to increase the institution's media presence regionally and nationally, including the purchase of ProfNet and several other new initiatives. Another staff member created the FaceBook page for more national and international presence.

In the *Office of the Registrar*, recent downturn in the economy has created much opportunity for non-traditional students and alumni to return to school or begin a new job search. In either case, a great number of these require an academic transcript from a period before the implementation of the Banner Student system. The transcript process for these is totally manual and must be pulled from the paper files and copied. The implementation of Xtender imaging software makes the processing and turnaround time faster and more technologically sound. The transcripts are scanned into the system and then printed from the

employees work station which eliminates the tedious searching and refilling of the paper files and has significantly reduced error.

Since fiscal year 2000, *Information Technology Services* has collected and analyzed data on customer satisfaction which has remained largely unchanged over the last ten years. Given the importance of this data in determining how to improve the delivery of technology support on campus, a project was undertaken to revamp the data collection and analysis process. To allow for benchmarking with prior years data, the decision was made to keep the survey questions the same, but the method of data collection was changed to a web based survey. The new survey has been in production for just under three months, and the response rate during this time has nearly doubled. The survey data, along with the service desk call data itself, can now be analyzed in real time, giving ITS managers immediate feedback and the ability to spot trends quicker and take appropriate action. This should lead to better service delivery for all campus constituents.

Learning Support and Testing implemented a system whereby learning support students could be contacted via email blasts rather than through correspondence delivered via their learning support instructors or regular mail. This goal served two purposes: 1.) it emphasized to the learning support population, primarily non-traditional students, the importance of technology and the usefulness of a portal for dissemination of information; 2.) it enabled all learning support students to receive the same information at the same time rather than relying on word-of-mouth and possible misinterpretation of policies, procedures, advising/ registration schedules, and so forth.

An important goal of *Career Services* is to **Improve customer/client services and satisfaction: Improve process of student job postings/referrals utilizing all resources including CareerWeb.** The department supports this goal by undergoing extensive changes in the Student Employment area with regards to updating processes, procedures and physical space. Now the Student Employment Office consists of a reception area with both an accessible counter and walk up counter. Other new features of the reception area includes a seating area for students to review job postings instead of standing in the hall as well as a new touch screen computerized check in center.

Process and procedure changes have gone from antiquated handwriting and hard copies for everything to almost complete computerization. No more postings on the bulletin board for students to stand in the hall and write jobs on a scrap piece of paper. No more handwritten referral cards as they are now loaded on computer to print. No more writing

job numbers on scrap pieces of paper as we now use scrap paper to print up a business card sized form for students to complete. No more handwritten job posting forms as now all employers/staff/faculty complete an electronic form to submit. All positions are now posted online for student access saving them time from having to come to Student Employment to view positions. Also if a student sees a position of interest they can print the position description and bring it to Student Employment to print them a referral card.

Part B: Overall Institutional Health

The University of West Georgia entered fiscal year 2008-2009 with milestones to celebrate and challenges to face. Fall 2008 enrollment was 11,252 and enrollment for spring 2009 broke all former spring enrollment records. Yet while the institution continues to move in a positive direction, UWG definitely felt and was impacted by the current economic recession that faces the state and nation. The following are the steps taken by UWG to absorb a historic 9 percent cut to its state funded budget, totaling approximately \$4.7 million. This shortfall resulted in shared sacrifices throughout the university.

- When faced with a five percent budget loss in the amount of \$2,653,000 budget cuts were made without touching students' or employees' personal finances.
- At 6 percent, UWG modified the insurance coverage such that employees had reduced coverage.
- As the budget situation became dire, UWG temporarily modified business procedures that enabled the release of further resources and also reduced the employer match for insurance, which caused an increased burden on employees.
- It was only at the last stage, when the budget situation got even worse, that a \$100 student fee was imposed system-wide by the University System of Georgia. UWG is mindful of the burden this places on students, but was necessary in order for UWG to continue to provide a quality education.

Finally, UWG is one of the most efficient universities in the state of Georgia—in terms of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) students produced per dollar of state allocation. UWG is proud of this fact, but it also creates a great challenge when already turning out great output (FTE) per unit input (\$), the ability to do more is severely restricted—much more than an institution which has more dollars per FTE. This helps to bring home the point that we have tighten our spending to deliver a quality education that students deserve while staring at unprecedented growth and expansion.

The University of West Georgia Foundation's endowment lost 26 percent of its value in 2008 despite conservative investment strategies. This loss has impacted more than 70 endowed scholarship funds and some of those will not be funded because the funds have dropped below the original endowment level.

In addition to the endowment loss, the 2008 Annual Fund needed an additional \$100,000 to support other scholarship programs. A year end appeal to donors netted approximately \$20,000 to be applied toward that shortfall.

In addition to the challenges faced by students, faculty, and staff have also felt the constraints caused by the budget shortfall. In most departments, it often comes to prioritizing and doing without supplemental items or services in order to sustain programs and services that are essential to the functions of the university.

Below is how the university has changed and grown while supporting the Strategic Planning Goals for 2005-2010.

Campus Infrastructure (Bread and Butter Goal, 10. Campus Infrastructure)

Fall 2008 marked an unprecedented infrastructural growth for the institution with construction signage everywhere resulting in multiple new facilities and renovations.

- In spring 2009, the Coliseum opened its doors for classroom instruction and intercollegiate athletic competition. The 123,000 square feet building houses the *Department of Health, Physical Education, and Sport Studies* and a 6,700 seat arena with facilities for the *Athletics Department*, home of the Wolves basketball and volleyball teams.

The Coliseum's main purpose is for instructional use; however, it also supports other activities such as freshman convocations, preview days, commencement, athletic events, trade shows and conventions, concerts, and camps.



Coliseum

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- The second phase of a four-phase plan to modernize the campus began with ground breaking for the Greek Village located on the north end of the campus. The Village will house 262 students from 18 fraternities and sororities, including a community building, parking for residents, and outdoor recreational space. The facilities will be completed and open by fall 2009. Greek Village is designed to tie together UWG's past and future, to create a community that will help students develop lifelong ties with each other and the university.

- UWG continues with construction of the new \$29 million intercollegiate athletics complex and football stadium. While the 9,000-seat football stadium will serve as the centerpiece, the athletics complex will eventually include a women's soccer facility, a women's varsity softball field and additional soccer and football practice fields.



UWG's Football Stadium

Non-athletic components will also factor into the project an academic support lab and assembly area, and a parking area that will be fully utilized throughout the week for commuter students. Parking for the complex will be fully utilized throughout the week for commuter students. By 2009, the UWG Wolves should be playing football on campus for the first time in the institution's history.

Public Relations ***(Bread and Butter Goal, 4. Public Relations)***

The *Department of Publications and Printing*, a division of University Advancement, designed seven publications that won Print Excellence Awards in the state's annual Printing Industry Association of Georgia (PIAG) competition. The awards include three prestigious Best of Category plaques, for "Just the Facts," a mini-publication printed for the Office of Institutional Research and Planning; the Wolves Football Media Guide; and the Townsend Center Season Mailer.

Four other publications received Awards of Excellence: the President's holiday card, Wolves Fall Sports poster, faculty/staff directory, and one off-campus project, the Georgia

Highlands College student literary magazine, *Old Red Kimono*. The university print shop produces a limited amount of printing for other schools, civic and government organizations, and non-profits. No commercial work is accepted as the print shop does not compete with local printers.

The PIAG Print Excellence Awards competition is the Georgia printing industry's oldest, largest, and most prestigious graphic arts awards program.

The University Experience ***(Bread and Butter Goal, 5. The University Experience)***

UWG to host summer research program

The University of West Georgia and the *Department of Mathematics* hosted an exciting National Science Foundation program this summer. Students participating in "Research Experience for Undergraduates" are chosen from a national pool of math majors and will live on the UWG campus for eight weeks.

Students received first-hand experience in conducting research in mathematics in the areas of number, graph theory and combinatorics. The research program focused on individual and team research work under a faculty mentor. The syllabi featured lectures by visiting speakers, weekly seminars where students gave oral presentations on their work and writing a mathematics research paper. Students also had the opportunity to participate in a prestigious mathematics conference. The NSF-sponsored program, in its third year, is an inspiring program for students who enjoy mathematics.

Customer Service

The *Department of Financial Aid* was given \$70,000 in Targeted Enhancement funds from the Board of Regents to use in Customer Service initiatives. Funding was used to purchase a new phone system for the Call Center as well as to hire a graduate research assistant and student workers to man the Call Center and assist in Orientation. The funding was granted based on the efforts of the department to improve customer service.

Another improvement was eliminating an administrative backlog of processing notifications to the campus departments with Federal Work Study (FWS) Allocations. Departments did not always receive their spending reports in a timely manner especially during the summer term. To better serve the university community, the department implemented the Banner student employment module. Data is now loaded directly into Banner from a payroll report. This process reduces human error (a concern of UWG's internal auditor as

well). Once this was established, ITS created a report for departments to pull their own spending reports. This whole process has reduced the time it takes to process a payroll from 6 hours to approximately 10 minutes.

External Funding

(Bread and Butter Goal, 8. Regional collaboration for economic and community development)

A top priority of UWG is to increase external and private support. External grants and funding sources continue to help maintain and expand programs and services of the University, as well as ensure the professional development of personnel. The *Office of Sponsored Operations* reports that external funds decreased by 12 percent from \$2,396,349 in FY2007 to \$2,097,703 in FY2008 and remains competitive with respect to proposals submitted and funded over the past year.

- \$182,250 was received by the Richards College of Business from University of Georgia/ United States Small Business Administration to fund the Small Business Development Center.
- Curriculum and Instruction received \$213,574 from the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning for the Georgia's Pre-kindergarten Program.
- Department of Chemistry received \$344,325 from the National Science Foundation to fund the Major Research Instrumentation (MRI): Acquisition of a 400 MHz NMR Spectrometer Project.
- The UWG Foundation presented \$200,000 for IMPACT (Improving Motivation, Performance and Attitudes of Children and Teachers) to enhance teaching and learning in science and mathematics.

The University of West Georgia Foundation also received private dollars that funded scholarships and fellowships for students, recruiting outstanding new faculty, providing travel and research support for current faculty, and buying classroom and lab equipment, as well as books and other materials.

UWG's Economic Impact

Despite a recession that has buffeted the state's economy, the University of West Georgia's impact on the state and local economies totals \$346 million, according to a study released by the University System of Georgia (USG). The Board of Regents confirmed that UWG continues to be a key economic engine for the region and the State. West Georgia ranked eighth among the university system's 35 institutions in terms of economic contribution to its surrounding community, contributing 3,127 jobs, an increase 260 more

jobs than a year earlier, and adding millions to the local and regional economy in personnel services, construction expenditures and student spending.

The study also looked at what it called the multiplier effect of the institutions, finding that, on average, for every dollar of initial spending, an additional 51 cents is generated to the regional economy, and that for each job created on campus, 1.6 off-campus jobs are supported. Over the past year, the university's physical growth has contributed to economic activities, with construction projects on campus boosting employment.

Another role that UWG plays in contributing to the area's long-term viability during economic downturns with large numbers of job losses elsewhere is to educate those people re-sharpening their skills, so that when they return to the labor market, they are qualified for more and better opportunities.

The report, commissioned by the Intellectual Capital Partnership Program, is limited to economic contributions and does not address the many other benefits that UWG imparts to the region's economic development such as cultural opportunities, community service and intellectual stimulation to local residents

The University of West Georgia has been designated as a robust tier institution, one of four in the State. UWG offers undergraduate and graduate degrees, specialist and advanced certification programs, distance education courses and an award-winning WebMBA degree.

Information Technology Services

(Bread and Butter Goal, 9. Information Technology Services)

Fiscal year 2009 was the *Department of Information Technology Services (ITS)* first full year as a newly reorganized department. Focus on staff development was planned, but was somewhat hindered by restrictions placed on travel. To overcome this challenge, on-line training opportunities were identified and several good alternatives were found. Leadership development among the ITS management staff was accomplished via common reading assignments and group discussion. An ITS Employee Recognition Program was developed, and initial awards are planned for the fall of 2009.

An information technology (IT) audit took place in the fall of 2008. Hundreds of man-hours were invested in pre-and post-audit planning process. Dramatically improved results over the 2005 IT audit are a testament to the value of that process, including talented and dedicated staff within ITS. Work will continue on the audit findings into 2010.

Institutional Health

The project management initiative that began in last year continued in FY09. Several projects were managed using processes developed by a staff, including the Greenway Medical software implementation and the Luminis IV upgrade.

Customer Service Advancements

A new centralized service desk was implemented to provide a phone bank to answer and direct questions and problems encompassing all of ITS. The phone bank uses an automatic call distribution system, more effectively routing calls to the proper place and providing a more efficient caller experience. This system allows for a priority to be placed on classroom emergencies, ensuring that faculty will receive the fastest possible response to issues impacting students and teaching. The Service Desk hours were expanded to provide emergency support from 5PM – 8PM.

The Service Desk also worked with the HelpDesk Institute (HDI) to lead ITS's first "Customer Service Week" in October of 2008, an initiative to increase department wide awareness of customer service best practices. This included a week of luncheon seminars with guest speakers recognized as leaders in the field of IT customer service.

Numerous improvements were made in the areas of classroom and lab computer management, including standardizing the procedures of computer imaging and installation, and developing a campus wide "First Responder" list to ensure quick deployment of technicians for emergency calls. The goal of the "First Responder" is to have support on site within 15 minutes.

Other technology advancements were as follows:

- Many man-hours were invested in the planning and engineering of IT support systems for the new Greek Village and Stadium complexes coming online in the fall of 2009.
- Nortel Contact Center software was installed in June 2009 to provide more advanced call center operations and reporting capabilities for ITS, Financial Aid, and the Registrar Offices.
- The campus financial reports were rewritten for the new version of PeopleSoft. These reports allow access to information that the PeopleSoft reports do not have or is not in the format users desire.

Part C: Summary of Major Institutional Accomplishments

The University of West Georgia, during 2008-2009, focused on improving and advancing the strategic planning process and to implement programs and policies in accordance with the University System of Georgia and University goals.

Planning Structure and Process

In March 2007, the Institutional Studies and Planning Committee (ISP), a standing-committee of the Faculty Senate, was charged with the responsibility of reviewing the UWG's current Strategic Plan against both the future goals of the institution as well as through feedback from staff, faculty, and administrators.

Based upon this research, the committee agreed that the Strategic Plan should be redesigned in order to clearly define the vision of the University. The committee began a careful review of the previous planning documents in order to build upon them and develop a new plan that could at least move toward a singly defined vision. Consequently, this plan carries forward a great deal of the sentiment and goals of the previous strategic plan but with a few significant differences. **The final draft was approved on January 30, 2009 and will take affect fiscal year 2010.**

Revised Strategic Plan for 2010-2015

Vision of the Strategic Plan

The University of West Georgia (UWG) will pursue a strategy to become a competitive, destination member of a top ("robust") tier of comprehensive universities in the University System of Georgia (USG), serving the broader west Georgia region as well as metro Atlanta and beyond including international students and clients. The fundamental effort of the University will be to provide for a diverse student population an array of high quality graduate and undergraduate programs in the liberal arts, business, and education that have as their distinctive mark the successful preparation for professional careers based upon the content, principles, and discipline of a liberal education. These programs will be as diverse as English and Nursing and taught by a faculty who are equally committed to teaching as they are to their research and service. Furthermore, West Georgia will be known for its distinctive approach to an integrated student experience, an experience

that for undergraduates will be designed to guide them through their freshman experience to career goals and for graduate and professional programs to connect them as mentors, models, and guides for others on campus.

UWG's Four Strategic Guiding Principles

- 1.) Academic Programs Balancing Liberal Arts with Professional Preparation
- 2.) A Campus that is Safe, Engaging, and Exciting
- 3.) Steady and Intelligent Enrollment and Resource Growth
- 4.) Meaningful Engagement with Off-campus Communities

The Strategic Plan is designed to shape the University of West Georgia for the next five years in such a way as to place it as a destination university, particularly among peer universities in the state of Georgia and among those universities in the nation granting doctoral degrees in programs that balance liberal education with professional preparation. In addition to this bold pledge of shaping, creating, and maintaining such a distinctive educational mission as expressed in its degree programs, it also promises to be a leader in campus safety and campus life. That is to say, West Georgia will be guided by a commitment to a safe and engaging campus. West Georgia predicts a growing enrollment, and the University is committed to a steady and smart growth that together with careful resource management will enhance our primary mission of academic excellence in a personal environment. Finally, we are committed to our external community from Atlanta to India to Japan, but we are quite mindful of our local community of Carrollton, Georgia, and will build on all of our current obligations of giving students opportunities for service work in the community even as we invite the community into our campus and thus work together to develop our neighborhood as a recognizable university village.

The Four Guiding Principles and Twelve Goals:

Guiding Principle 1: The University will develop and support a distinctive set of quality academic programs ranging from bachelors to doctorates that blend the best of professionalized liberal education, experiential learning, and individual transformation.

- Goal 1: Every undergraduate academic program will demonstrate a distinctive blending of liberal education, professional competencies, and experiential learning, preparing students to be ethically responsible and civically engaged professionals in the global economy of the 21st century.

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- Goal 2: Every undergraduate student will be advised to take advantage of one of multiple available learning communities. Learning communities that are available to students will include communities organized by living arrangement, by year in program, by other co-curricular associations – Honors Program, Advanced Academy, Band, Athletics, Debate, or program in the major.
- Goal 3: The University will endeavor to increase enrollment in and graduation from graduate programs, including doctoral programs, that have as their mark a practical professional purpose, experiential learning opportunities, and an intellectual program informed by a foundation of liberal education.
- Goal 10: Capital Campaign: The Development Office will prepare for a capital campaign to assist in meeting the long-term needs of the University of West Georgia
- Goal 11: Communication and Marketing: The Office of University Communications and Marketing (UCM) will internally and externally promote the missions and goals of the strategic plan. This will be achieved by aligning the institution's integrated marketing plan (advertising, visual identity standards, web presence, media relations, etc.) with the strategic plan.
- Goal 12: Community Relations: The University will engage the local community educationally, culturally and recreationally.

Guiding Principle 2: Every responsible agency of the University will be dedicated to creating a safe, supportive, and engaging campus life.

- Goal 4: The University will maintain an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.
- Goal 5: The University community will provide a balanced variety of cultural, recreational, leisure, and informal education programming opportunities for faculty, staff, and students that enhance the quality of campus life.
- Goal 6: All units will strive to improve the compensation and working environment of faculty and staff in order to recruit and retain the best individuals.

Guiding Principle 3: The steady enrollment growth over the next five years will be managed to enhance the University's dedication to educational excellence in a personal environment.

- Goal 7: The University will endeavor to increase our overall enrollment to 14,500 by the year 2015.
- Goal 8: With our enrollment growth West Georgia will remain committed to the following targets of academic quality: faculty-student ratio of 18 to 1; average class size of 29; full-time to part-time faculty ratio of 4.4 to 1.
- Goal 9: West Georgia will develop several new facilities to improve quality along with meeting capacity demands due to enrollment growth, such as new classroom space for Nursing and Art.

Guiding Principle 4: The University will increase its fund-raising and community service to match the needs of all of our stakeholders and communicate our story effectively.

Enrollment Management

The faculty and staff at the University of West Georgia are focused on efforts to improve retention and graduation rates. Several specific programs have been designed to improve student retention and to increase the likelihood for successful program completion. The following is a brief summary of the accomplishments of these programs:

The major structure responsible for overall institutional retention, progression, and graduation enhancements is the Strategic Enrollment Council (SEC). The SEC is chaired by the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, and has as members all other divisional Assistant/Associate Vice Presidents, the Dean of the Graduate School, and many Critical Functional Area leaders. The SEC reports to the Strategic Enrollment Executive Committee consisting of the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Student Services, as well as the Associate Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management.

The original goal of the SEC was to update the campus Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. However it was determined that it would be prudent to wait on the System Strategic Plan and the West Georgia strategic planning process to proceed with the Enrollment Plan. The West Georgia Strategic Plan was completed in 2008-2009 will be implementation starting in FY2010. This has led the way to the development of a Strategic Enrollment Plan which will be developed in 2009-2010 for implementation in FY 2011.

Retention, Progression, and Graduation

After receiving a \$350,000 grant from the Georgia Board of Regents in 2006, 2007, and again in 2008, to increase retention, progression, and graduation, UWG received this amount in the base budget for FY2010. Securing this funding was important because it made it possible for UWG to permanently implement many of the RPG initiatives that

have been so important to significant gains in student success and especially in retention and graduation rates

Highlights of Recent Interventions

In 2008, the University developed the RPG Guide program to further spread the responsibility for student success and to inculcate retention, progression, and graduation enhancements into the fabric of the campus culture. RPG Guides are faculty representatives from each academic department whose sole charge is to provide services to students in their department leading to retention, progression, and graduation. RPG Guides continue to be involved in Orientation by leading Parent groups and conducting student advising. However, their roles now go far beyond that. RPG Guides developed and implemented their departments RPG plan; they participate in periodic planning and training events surrounding first year experience programs and graduation enhancement initiatives; and they are their department's primary academic advisor. The RPG Guides were the first faculty trained in the use of Degree Works, a comprehensive advising and degree audit system, and they will be the key to successful implementation of the program throughout campus. The RPG Guide program has created a single point of accountability within each academic department so that communication and connection to other campus resources flows more smoothly.

UWG continues to focus on student involvement in First Year Programs. Historical data analysis has shown that First Year Programs at West Georgia have a statistically significant effect on retention rates. Students in these programs are much more likely to be retained beyond their first year and have higher graduation rates. At UWG First Year Programs include Learning Communities; Freshman Seminar Classes; a Residence Hall mentoring and academic support program (called RPM-Residential Peer Mentoring), HOPE Mentorship, Multicultural Achievement Mentoring, First Year Mentoring, and the Honors Program. As late as fall 2006 only half of our incoming students participated in these programs, but in fall 2009, 97 percent of incoming freshmen were involved with at least one First Year Program.

Academic intervention is very important to achieving gains in Retention, Progression, and Graduation rates. In 2007-2008 we have focused on developing a breadth of services to make sure that each student doesn't fall through the "net."

In 2008 we continued to focus on at-risk students—at the point, and even before, they step foot on campus.

UWG has taken dramatic steps recently to assess new students' level of risk of attrition, and to implement programs and services to mitigate that risk.

In 2008, we ran a pilot program of intervention for new students that was based on a statistical analysis of their entering characteristics. The research on previous entering classes of students showed that, to a great extent, we could predict the retention of first year students based on certain entering student characteristics (High School GPA, ethnicity, whether they were going to live on or off campus, etc.). When the 2008 cohort entered, we analyzed them based on those same characteristics, and developed an "at risk" score. Advisors then developed interventions for those students that were specific to their score. Results of the pilot are not yet known, but it is likely that the interventions helped students connect to university resources earlier than they otherwise would. We have decided to continue the intervention in fall 2009 as we believe it has great potential.

Based on information received from our Orientation Survey (called the New Student Profile), we provide direct intervention in areas students self-identify. When students indicate they may have difficulty in a particular academic content area or academic skill (study skills, time management, etc), staff members call them and provide specific, targeted interventions that are customized to that particular students. Since the survey is completed at Orientation, we are able to intervene with the student at a much earlier stage—not waiting until they fail a test, or until we know their mid-term grade when it may be too late to save the term. Results are not in yet, but it is clear that students appreciate the outreach, and we expect that there will be a benefit in terms of overall student success leading to higher retention rates.

We have also implemented an intervention, in the second term, for students that fall into academic difficulty and are placed on academic probation. Probation students are required to meet with an academic advisor, and to complete a series of academic support presentations that are aimed to provide the necessary knowledge and skills to get back on track. These services were available, but not required in the past, and to the extent that students took advantage of them they were successful. However, making the intervention mandatory will provide these services to a greater number of students, thereby increasing the academic success of students who have fallen into academic difficulty.

Non-Academic Interventions

Although the majority of our RPG interventions are academic, three such programs are aimed to the non-academic support of students.

In fall 2008, the university continued to offer an online program designed to develop a better relationship with the parents of our new freshman students. The program, called

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Family Connection, is part of our Education Dynamics suite of programs, and it seeks to create a partnership with parents in the transition of their student to college. The purpose of developing this parent module is to engage parents in the knowledge about UWG's programs and services so that they can provide that information when the student needs it. Parent participation was high with more than 50% of the parents of new students engaging in the program. We have renewed the program for a third year, and it will be the centerpiece of our programming and communication for parents as we continue to serve them through our Parent Association.

In spring 2009 we completed plans for Commuter Student programming, and opened the Commuter Lounge. Commuter students have the lowest retention rate of all sub-groups of students, and it is necessary that we provide programs and services to connect them to campus and help increase their involvement. The Commuter Lounge provides a needed space on campus to hang out between classes, and has several computers and study carrels and tables for group or individual study. It also has an area with a television, refrigerator, and other amenities that would enhance the social aspects of commuter life.

In addition to the lounge, we have implemented a Commuter Student Association which aims to organize students so that they can inform campus about commuter student needs, and to increase commuter students' involvement in the overall campus culture

At this early stage, we do not have data on the success of these programs, but the participation of commuter students would suggest they are very successful. We have nearly 100 commuter students utilizing the Commuter Lounge on an average day; and we have more than 50 students in the Commuter Student Association.