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State University of  
West Georgia

2002-2003 Annual Report  
of  
Institutional Progress

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# Part A: Summary of Major Institutional Accomplishments in the Preceding Year

The 2002-2003 academic year was an important one for the State University of West Georgia. The University's ten-year reaffirmation of the accreditation visit by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS, 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; Telephone number 404-679-4501), provided the University an excellent opportunity for detailed examination of how well UWG is fulfilling the mission "*Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment*" and meeting the needs of the students, citizens of the region, and of the state. This intensive process involved active participation of students, faculty, and staff.

- In November 1999, 17 subcommittees, a steering committee and three support committees were established and continued to work toward their objectives. Institutional Research and Planning designed and created a SACS Accreditation web site [www.westga.edu/~sacs](http://www.westga.edu/~sacs) for use in the University's self-study (fall 2001) and to facilitate the work of the SACS visitation team (spring 2003).
- All departmental web sites were updated, reflecting a clear connection with the "*Bread and Butter*" Goals and the *Visionary Goals* of the University. The departments initiated a sustained effort to link the departmental goals, objectives, learning outcomes, and assessment statements with UWG's vision and mission statements, as well as provide students, faculty, and university visitors a clear view of the University.

The Committee from the Commission on Colleges and Schools (COC) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) visited the State University of West Georgia (UWG) in January 2003, for the purpose of evaluating the University's application for reaffirmation of its accreditation. The Committee found that UWG was prepared for and participated in a forthright assessment of institutional strengths and weaknesses through the preparation of its self-study and through its acceptance of a thorough reaffirmation visit. The Committee found that UWG demonstrates commitment of fulfilling all of the responsibilities in the accreditation process and that the self-study presented recommendations designed to remedy identified weaknesses and the procedures for the review and follow-up of these recommendations. Finally, the Committee noted that the institution is committed to the search for knowledge and its dissemination and obeyed high standards of integrity in its operations and activities.

As a result of the committee reviews, the SACS Visitation Committee presented their findings orally at the conclusion of their visit and later in a written report. There are 496 "MUST" statements in the Criteria for Accreditation. If an institution is deemed not to be in compliance with a "MUST" statement, a recommendation is generated. The State University of West Georgia received only 11 recommendations and two suggestions, which a respond was written by the State University of West Georgia.both the SACS associate executive director and the chair of the visitation team referred to as "a small number." A suggestion does not represent a violation of a "MUST" statement, but represents advice from the visitation team.

**A commendation was also presented by the SACS visitation committee for technology resources, equipment and support which according to the visitation committee, were "far above that of similar institutions."**

**For an institution that had very poor performance rating, on this dimension during the 1993 SACS visit, this is truly commendable. Millions of dollars were redirected for the purpose of technology so that students, our teaching and learning endeavors, and scholarships could benefit. Therefore, this commendation is well-deserved and is a result of hard work on the part of many people.**

While acknowledging the outstanding leadership of Dr. Ara Volkan, Self Study Director, during the SACS study, major credit for the positive report goes to the numerous faculty and staff who served with distinction on the self-study report committees, to those who designed and implemented assessment measures for departments, and to those who worked so hard to improve the university's programs and services to students through the self-study process. UWG welcomes the opportunity to make improvements and is dedicated to the spirit of continuous improvement and self-evaluation embodied in the SACS reaffirmation process.

### ***Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment***

The following are demonstrative of the University's commitment to *Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment* is a long-term pledge to quality instruction by preparing its students, faculty, and staff.

### ***Enrollment Management***

- Enrollment increased to 9,675 for fall 2002, an increase from fall 2001's enrollment of 9,030. This was the fifth year that first-time freshman enrollment totaled more than 1,600 students. As a result of increasing admission standards, the entering student profile has improved dramatically. The mean SAT for entering freshman for fall 2002 was just over 1,000.

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## Institutional Accomplishments

- Beginning Spring 2003, the Office of the Registrar expanded the use of Banner by requiring faculty to enter final grades on BanWeb. Also, a Banner process was instituted that allows departments to enter permissions for specific students to register for courses which have reached maximum enrollment or which have special registration restrictions. This new process allows the student to register via BanWeb and eliminates the need for written permission to be received by the Registrar's Office.

### *Academic Programs*

- The Department of Computer Science received accreditation from the Computing Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (CAC/ABET) for the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, making the program one of only five accredited programs in the state of Georgia.
- The Nursing Program reached a milestone of excellence when 100 percent of spring 2003 BSN graduates passed the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensing Exam (NCLEX-RN) on their first attempt.

West Georgia's nursing program is one of a very few nursing programs in the entire United States to have achieved a 100 percent first attempt pass rate. Dr. Kathryn Grams, chair of the Nursing Department, cited three years of changes and innovation as the catalyst for this accomplishment.

The NCLEX examination is designed to test the knowledge, skills and abilities essential to the safe and effective practice of professional nursing. Licensure to practice as a registered nurse (RN) in Georgia is granted only to those individuals who pass it. The Georgia Board of Nursing recognizes first attempt NCLEX-RN passing rate as an important indicator of program excellence.

This December will mark the first commencement ceremony for graduates of UWG's Master of Science (MSN) program. This degree program offers options in either nursing education or health systems leadership. This program was developed in response to the shortage of nurses and nursing faculty in Georgia and the United States.

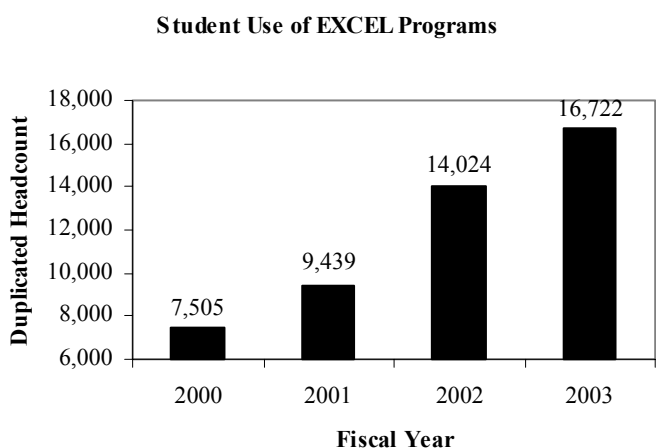
- The Theatre Program was accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) in summer 2003. It is now one of five theatre programs in Georgia to receive NAST accreditation. Accreditation ensures that the theatre curriculum, both in the classroom and in the rehearsal room, meets the highest national standard that is set by NAST.

- The Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology (CEP) has been recognized as a pioneer and national leader in school counseling reform by the Education Trust. The Education Trust promotes high academic achievement among students at all grade levels, with a focus on closing the performance gap between groups of students separated by income level and ethnicity.
- UWG and Floyd College offer a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education on the campus of Floyd College. This pilot program has been funded for a three-year period and courses began fall 2002. It is expected that this program will continue to increase in numbers and the success of the three-year pilot will result in a permanent baccalaureate degree program in early childhood on the campus of Floyd College.

### *Student, faculty, and staff*

- The EXCEL Center for Academic Success offered training to students on a weekly basis in time management, test-taking skills, memory enhancement techniques, dealing with stress, computer basics, note taking, reading skills, etc. Faculty and professional staff conducted the seminars. Attendance was required for all first year students on academic probation.

Below is a chart that demonstrates growth in the number of students served by the EXCEL Center over the past four years.



**External Relations**

*Regional collaboration for economic and community development*

- UWG completed the second year of the accelerated transfer program with Floyd College in Rome that began fall 2001. Under the new program, students who fall short of meeting UWG freshman admission standards but are eligible for admission to Floyd College may take Floyd classes offered on the UWG campus. Floyd College faculty taught the core curriculum and Learning Support classes. After demonstrating success as a college student, a participant who completes 19 semester credit hours of work, in addition to all required Learning Support courses, will be eligible to be considered for transfer admission to UWG. As these students begin to transfer to UWG, the institution will track the overall success of the program.
- The Richards College of Business' Small Business Development Center (SBDC) continued its active calendar of outreach activities during 2002. Unlike the University's fiscal calendar, the SBDC operates under a calendar year. Thus, the SBDC report reflects calendar year accomplishments from January to December 1998 through 2002.

Calendar Year	Number of Clients	Total Counseling Hours
1998	191	1,517
1999	211	1,354
2000	250	1,665
2001	250	1,500
2002	230	1,476

In addition to contractual obligations, the SBDC provides considerable services to the community. The following table provides a summary of the center's efforts for the 2001 and 2002 calendar year:

Services	2001 Calendar Year	2002 Calendar Year
Continuing Education	177	522
Professional Development	212	431
Business Support Services	23	36
Internal Service	555	437
Economic Development	367	189
Public Relations	182	89
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>1,516</b>	<b>1,704</b>

- The Richards College of Business' Department of Economics sponsored the Sixth Annual Economic Forecast Breakfast together with the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, with more than 300 representatives attending from business and industry. The keynote speakers were nationally known economists Dr. Donald Ratajczak and Dr. Michael Raper. Dr. Ratajczak, former director of the Georgia State University Economic Forecasting Center, presented the economic forecast for the United States and the State of Georgia and Dr. Michael Raper informed the economic forecast for the region. Dr. David Boldt and Carol Dole assisted in preparation of the West Georgia Regional Outlook.

**Information Technology**

*Administrative Computing*

- The CAPP (Curriculum, Advising and Program Planning) module, which was put into production during FY02, required major modifications to process degree compliance reports correctly. Students are now able to run compliance reports successfully over the web.
- The campus BlackBoard One Card project was completed in FY03. This required over 750 hours of staff time, along with numerous additional network connections in all the residence halls, Aycock Hall, Intramurals, the UCC, Health Services and Z6.
- ITS continued to work on the Resource25/Schedule25 implementation. Parallel room scheduling runs were done for spring 2003 and Fall 2003 classes. ITS worked with Auxiliary Services on their use of R25 for scheduling administrative events.
- ITS implemented i1440 for Student Development, which helps the campus meet the new federal regulations governing international students.

*Customer Service*

- Web search engine software was purchased and implemented. The inability to effectively search the campus web site was one of the most common complaints received about www.westga.edu. The new software has reduced those complaints to zero.
- ITS participated in new student orientation sessions, providing hands-on assistance with Banweb and student email accounts. ITS also had a display board and materials available during orientation sessions. The TechLife Guide was updated for 2003.

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## **Institutional Accomplishments**

### *Networking*

- The campus on-line virus scanning software was improved to include the ability to reject spam email from known spam sources. This system blocked over 6,500 virus infected or spam email messages per day from reaching campus. This project was done using public domain software and did not cost the campus any additional funds.
- The software used to allocate network bandwidth was also migrated to a new system. This system improved the campus access to the internet by limiting the impact of file sharing applications and other network intensive applications.

### *Student Focused Services*

- Fiscal year 2003 was the first complete year Student Information Technology Services, or SITS, was in existence. The goal of SITS is to provide free hardware and software support to all currently enrolled students. A graduate assistant, who oversees a team of five technical student assistants, manages SITS. In its first year, SITS managed to complete over 3,100 requests for assistance. This includes distributing software for the student Microsoft Campus Agreement, which allows every enrolled student to own a copy of the MS Office suite and Windows operating system. SITS assessed their success using customer satisfaction surveys, and maintained a 94% satisfaction rating.
- ResNet student assistants completed over 600 requests for assistance in the residence halls.

### *Campus Infrastructure*

- The Incident Command Center, part of Public Safety, was established and is fully operational. In the event of a disaster, all University functions (Facilities, Registrar, Residence Life, etc.) can operate from the Center while campus services are being restored. UWG will continue to review software and equipment needs so that if it is ever needed, the Center will be able to respond to the need. Additional radio equipment and lighting sources were purchased and stored in the Center.
- Construction began on a campus-wide project to address the electrical needs of the campus. The campus maximized the capacity of the electrical distribution system when the Technology-enhanced Learning Center became functional. Aging sub-stations and increased demand due to computers and instructional technology also played a part in this increased demand for electricity. Prior to the addition of the Health, Wellness and Lifelong Learning Center, expansion is required. A construction period of nine months is

anticipated. The project will include: reconfiguring the electrical distribution; replacing aging substations; placing all above ground distribution lines underground; providing for maximum system capacity; and preparing for future campus expansion.

- Renovations to the Martha Munro Building were completed during spring 2003. The objectives of the work were 75% of restoration dedicated to instructional space, two classrooms on the first floor in addition to the auditorium, and additional classrooms on the second floor. Renovations took place in two phases. Phase One included re-roofing, masonry repair, window repair, new HVAC, new electrical service and ADA restrooms on the first floor. Phase Two consisted of interior electrical; interior partitioning; interior finishes; sprung stage floor; special theatrical electrical systems; special lighting systems, theatrical drapes, furniture, fixtures and equipment. Restoring the building will accommodate the Theatre Arts program and relieve the Townsend Center for Performing Arts to concentrate on a cultural rather than instructional mission.
- A new 612-bed residence hall complex was approved by the Board of Regents in fall 2002. The privatized student housing complex will consist of three four-story residence halls plus a community building. The complex will be located in the area of Pritchard Hall, which will be demolished following the construction of the three residence halls. This is a public/private partnership which is funded by bonds issued through the West Georgia Foundation, Inc. The estimated completion date is July 2004.

### *University Advancement*

In FY2003, the Office of Development and Alumni Services, within the Division of University Advancement, had a tremendous fund raising year despite the economy. The overall fundraising program generated \$2,617,760 in gifts for the University, an increase of 56 percent from the previous year, with a total of 5,317 donors making 7,384 gifts and pledges for scholarships, programs and university-wide excellence programs.

The university's scholarship program continues to grow. Sixteen new funds (endowed and annual) were established to assist many deserving students. The largest single major gift given was \$614,437 for the creation of the Marion Crider Chair of Mathematics.

The annual A Day campaign broke all previous records by surpassing the \$2.3 million mark. The A Day Faculty and Staff drive also raised \$71,456 in gifts and pledges year round.



The phonathon, which is organized through the Office of Development and Alumni Services, had a record setting year of \$113,086. The phonathon, which operates from September through April, contacted approximately 30,000 UWG alumni donors. The phonathon also assists Development and Alumni Services by contacting alumni to remind them of important events such as Homecoming, reunions and receptions, and assists with alumni database maintenance by providing up-to-date addresses/business information and locating lost alumni. The phonathon has generated support for the university since it began in 1999. Approximately \$71,000 was raised in 1999, over \$89,000 was raised in 2000, and in 2001 over \$100,000 was raised. The yearly phonathon program continues to prove a successful fundraising tool for the State University of West Georgia.

### *The University Experience*

- The area of Intramurals and Recreational Services, in conjunction with the Department of Residence Life, established a Co-Ed Residence Hall league which included three sports- flag football, volleyball, and softball. The league will be expanded next year to include basketball and paintball.
- During FY2003, both the co-ed and all-women's cheerleading squads earned national awards: the all-women's squad was ranked second nationally, and the co-ed squad won first place in Division II. The athletics program attracted over 235 student athletes to the university and awarded athletic financial aid to approximately 170 student athletes and student workers.

The Department of Student Activities worked with students to build on the campus's philanthropic traditions. In its second year, the Marathon provided a new tradition for UWG, brought together diverse students in social and recreational activities, and raised more than \$20,000 for the Children's Miracle Network (doubling their first year's fundraising). Student organizations held more than 150 fundraisers for other local and national charities.

The residence halls sponsored 847 social and educational programs, with 13,072 participants.

Health Services dramatically expanded its outreach programs with the creation of the Peer Health Educator program, as well as collaborating with faculty and staff on outreach efforts. More than 4,500 students participated in 81 campus programs on topics such as alcohol, sexual assault, sexually transmitted diseases, breast cancer, smoking, and eating disorders.

In a difficult economy, Career Services helped students find part-time jobs that generated \$1.9 million in wages to assist with their educational expenses. They also assisted

students in finding internships and cooperative education positions that generated \$618,000 in wages.

### *Public Relations*

- The Office of Public Relations implemented a weekly radio interview with news directors of three radio stations in an effort to provide accurate, timely promotion and coverage of campus events, programs and achievements. In addition to coverage of all UWG news, the interview with the Director of Public Relations provides voice-over emphasis of special events. There was increased effort to provide UWG experts on the local radio daily call-in program.



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# Part B: Annual Progress in Institutional Strategic Planning

During 2002-2003, the State University of West Georgia underwent several strategic planning processes to continue or to implement programs and policies in accordance with the University System of Georgia and University goals.

## **Planning Structure and Process**

During 2000-2001, the ad hoc committee undertook the first stage of UWG's strategic planning process, which globally defined the areas on which the institution wanted to concentrate. Later stages of the plan addressed unit and departmental issues. The committee was charged to take an institutional perspective and to:

*"... reaffirm our Mission, study our publics, examine how our programs and services are meeting the needs of our publics, study our comparative advantage in each of these areas, and examine our goals and objectives for the next five years."*

The SPC developed the "Bread and Butter and Visionary Goals: The Three Fives." After interim and final reports were posted on the web and revised with University-wide input, the final reports were sent to the University President to study the SPC's recommendations. After review by the University President the report was submitted for consideration by the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate approved recommendations unanimously on December 15, 2000.

During 2001-2002, an annual report template was developed and implemented for both the academic educational support, and administrative units. The annual report template incorporates each department's mission/vision statement, statement of goals, processes to assess these goals and assessment results, departmental statement of curriculum learning outcomes, and processes to assess these learning outcomes. Each department's annual report is located on its departmental web page.

Subcommittees were formed to recommend ways to convey two messages, "we know who we are and we know what we do well," to every segment of the overall target audience in a manner that maintains and protects the integrity and the consistency of the university's desired image. The reports of the subcommittees offered recommendations to support and achieve the university's "bread and butter" goals.

As part of the planning process, the Technology Planning Committee (TPC) was formed and charged with the development of a vision for Information Technology Effectiveness, a strategic plan and goals, and a process for evaluation and change of the strategic plan. A final draft of

the strategic plan was approved by the Faculty Senate in November 2002 and may be viewed at [www.westga.edu/~library/itspsc/work/overview.shtml](http://www.westga.edu/~library/itspsc/work/overview.shtml).

## **Technology Strategic Plan**

This strategic planning document applies to all information technology and information systems for the State University of West Georgia. These include information technology systems planned, developed, operated and supported by the institutional information technology units, schools, colleges, departments and administrative units. In addition, this document may have implications relating to information technology contracted through outside entities and provided by the University System of Georgia and other statewide agencies. The major goals and initiatives recommended by this planning document are strategically significant to all units of the University. This document is intended to reflect major institutional directions with subsequent addition and modification to include corresponding plans of respective units within the University.

## **IT Vision and Mission**

UWG's Technology Vision:

*"... to integrate information technology into West Georgia's academic and administrative mission to ensure that students, faculty, staff, and the community are well prepared for life in a knowledge-based and technologically-dynamic society."*

UWG's Technology Mission:

*The mission of Information Technology (IT) for the State University of West Georgia (UWG) is to employ comprehensive technology resources, services, and solutions in support of the University's mission and goals. Those coordinating IT will work together to provide campus-wide leadership through dynamic policies and practices, accountability, and responsive stewardship of resources.*

## **A Vision for Information Technology Effectiveness**

As part of the planning process, a *Vision for Information Technology Effectiveness at the State University of West Georgia* has evolved. The major goals and initiatives presented later in this plan reflect this vision. The vision is that:

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## Strategic Planning

- All faculty, staff and students will have information accessibility via a reliable, secure, and robust networking and computing infrastructure as appropriate to each individual or local unit of the University;
  - Each faculty member will be able to make full and effective use of technology in instruction and research through an individually appropriate use of training and resources;
  - Staff will be able to make full and effective use of technology for administrative purposes and research through an individually appropriate use of training and resources;
  - Courses and programs that are delivered electronically, or have technology-integrated components will be improved and expanded;
  - Support for all users of technology will be appropriate for their individual and local unit needs, yet systematically deployed by the University as a whole to maximize delivery to and minimize complexity and inconvenience for the user;
  - Administrative support for the academic mission will be enhanced by appropriately employing information technology to enhance administrative process effectiveness and efficiency;
  - Selection of technology solutions will be informed by analyses of benefits and associated costs.
  - The University will utilize enhancements in technology to strengthen and develop the many relationships that sustain an institution — students, alumni, donors, and partners.
- Services should be provided routinely to all users: faculty, staff, and students.
3. Increase Customer Focus: The University will employ IT to encourage and support an operational environment in which characteristics of its customers - students, faculty, staff, and the West Georgia community – are identified, their needs are understood, relationships and expectations are effectively managed, and quality assurance is fostered for high-quality services and support. The University will enhance processes associated with establishing, servicing, and retaining relationships with students, faculty, staff, alumni, vendors, the University System of Georgia, and the Community.
  4. Ensure Continuous Innovation: The University will anticipate, plan, and implement information and instructional technology capabilities and solutions in a manner that provides the greatest overall benefit to the communities served by the State University of West Georgia.
  5. Effectively and Efficiently Plan and Manage IT Operations: The University will provide an IT operational environment where collaboration and communication are given priority, resources are matched with services, costs are effectively managed, resource alternatives are explored, appropriate funds are provided, resources are shared and used to their maximum potential, and services are continually improved.

### *Process for Evaluation and Change of this Strategic Plan*

#### *Strategic Statements and Goals*

1. Enhance Learning: The University will provide an environment for learning and development empowered by technology. Users will have access to informational, educational, and research resources both inside and outside the classroom. Delivery of academic services will be enhanced by the use of appropriate technology. The University will seek to identify and increase the benefits accrued by the use of technology for instruction, learning, and the delivery of research materials.
  2. Support Information Accessibility: The University will develop and maintain a robust, secure, and flexible infrastructure that allows efficient and reliable access to information and accurate data for learning, research, and decision-making. Services are expected to be ubiquitous, to enhance the user's ability to accomplish work, and to present no obstacles for accomplishment.
1. Documentation of Participation in Strategies: All university area assessments and annual reports will include a section addressing any action taken to participate in the strategies listed in this IT Strategic Plan.
  2. Evaluation of Participation in Strategies: Once a year, the Faculty Senate Technology Planning Committee (TPC) will produce a Yearly Evaluation of Campus IT. One component of this document will be an assessment of these annual reports, area assessments and other documents that provide evidence that the university is actively participating in the strategies articulated in the UWG IT Strategic Plan.
  3. Status Summary and Recommendations: Also included in the TPC Yearly Evaluation of Campus IT will be a summary of the committee's findings and any recommendations for increased activity to fulfill participation in the IT Strategic Plan and/or recommendations for changes, additions or other improvements to the UWG IT Strategic Plan and accompanying process.

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# Part C: Annual Progress in Assessing Institutional Effectiveness

The State University of West Georgia has made significant advances in the way institutional effectiveness is evaluated and is constantly striving for improvement. The University has taken a number of steps in recent years to advance this commitment.

## **Academic Program Review**

The University originally formed a plan for systematic periodic program review in 1995-1996. That original plan called for a self-study to be conducted by each academic unit and for an external critique of the self-study. The University developed a schedule in which approximately one-fifth of the academic degree programs would undergo review each year.

The review stresses evaluation of student and faculty learning within degree programs, specifically the success with which programs achieve learning goals and the degree to which such success contributes to the achievement of the University mission. Departments take full advantage of reviews already conducted for accreditation as well as of annual reports to streamline the reporting process and thus to make communication about the process easier for the institutional community.

Below are some highlights of the review process:

- All academic programs will undertake periodic program review every five years (in line with accreditation reviews and updates).
- Particular attention is given to programs identified by Board of Regents staff that fall below set thresholds for low numbers of majors or graduates over the last five years.
- Each department will form a review committee to conduct a self-study. Departments will submit a self-study (based on annual reports, faculty vitae, student surveys, and other data relevant to assessment) and an action plan.
- The report will be critiqued by (1) the academic dean; (2) the Program Review Advisory Committee; and (3) the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The department will provide a follow-up action plan one year later. The institution is required to share the results of the program review with the Board of Regents staff, whose comments are used by the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) to close the cycle with the one-year follow-up report.

Criteria for the assessment will include the following: quality, productivity, and viability. Definitions for each of these are included in the plan.

Fiscal year 2003 concluded the second year of comprehensive program review for 33 programs in 10 departments.

## **Annual Report Process**

Since 1961 the State University of West Georgia has completed an *Annual Report of Institutional Progress*. For many years, the institutional-wide report has been an abridged compilation of individual departmental reports that outline accomplishments over the past academic year, and has been used as an institutional-wide assessment tool, as well as an instrument to report institutional accomplishments to the Board of Regents.

Recognizing a need to make the template more user friendly and to provide greater flexibility of tying department goals and/or learning outcomes to the institution's mission, Core and Visionary Goals, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning is currently working with the Office of Information Technology Services to re-design the Annual Report template. The new version is planned to be ready for input by March 2004.

The new template will not only allow individual departments to tie their goals and/or learning outcomes to specific institutional goals and objectives, but it will also enable the institution to gauge the extent to which its "Bread and Butter" Goals, and "Vision Statements" are supported by the summative departmental assessments. This latest assessment will provide significant information when the institution's goals and objectives will be reviewed again in 2006.

## **Educational Programs**

Through the Annual Report process, academic units are required to consider the goals and objectives they desire to achieve and to identify and articulate their curricular, personnel, and other resource priorities. Using input generated through the planning process, departments, colleges, and, ultimately, Academic Affairs, develops long-term agendas and priorities. As a result, the implementation of academic initiatives is able to proceed in a systematic and purposeful manner.

Evaluation is also interrelated by articulating the progress toward attaining the goals stated in each unit's academic annual report. This information is summarized in college and administrative reports, which are further distilled in the Academic Affairs Annual Report.



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## Institutional Effectiveness

### *Assessing Learning Outcomes and Student Engagement*

All departments in the three colleges have identified learning outcomes for all programs. Most departments have identified three to four undergraduate outcomes that include written communication, oral communication, computer skills, and knowledge related to the major. Graduate learning outcomes typically address research skills, advanced knowledge in the discipline, and application abilities within the field including professional licensure where applicable.

For fiscal year 2003, programs made progress in establishing goals, objectives, and learning outcomes and in developing procedures to evaluate student learning. In addition, many programs now incorporate undergraduate student research into their curricula and UWG students are producing award-winning work.

- To measure effectiveness of the General Education program UWG implemented the use of the Academic Profile Test in spring 2002. The test was administered each semester in conjunction with the Regents' Test.

The test revealed several items that were problematic, such as long testing sessions that lead to student fatigue, lack of incentives to prepare well, and a selection procedure that resulted in students taking the test after only completing 30 hours of CORE courses. UWG is re-assessing the procedures for administering test and is in the process of developing new procedures for use beginning fall 2004.

- UWG's first time pass rate for the Regents' Test, which measures basic proficiency in reading and writing, is 76.66 for 2002, up 10 percent from 2000.
- Within the five areas of effective educational practices developed by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), UWG freshman and senior respondents exhibited scores that were comparable to both NSSE's national and masters/comprehensive benchmarks.
- PRAXIS scores in reading, writing, mathematics, and content for UWG students in teacher preparation programs were comparable to the average of all public/private institutions.
- A new instructional method in Introduction to Chemistry has resulted in an increase in scores on the American Chemical Society's standardized test from the 35th percentile in 2001 to 42th percentile (tentative) in 2002.
- One hundred percent of the BSN graduates for spring 2003 passed the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensing Exam (NCLEX-RN) on their first attempt.

While the Richards College of Business and the College of Education require a demonstration of competence in basic computer skills as a part of the curriculum, the College of Arts and Sciences does not for all majors. However, the use of computers in ENGL 1101 and 1102, required Core courses, provides some evidence that students have basic computer skills.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, are exploring alternatives and will implement a diagnostic examination to test basic computer skills for all students in programs that do not explicitly have a required course in computer science. The new examination procedure will begin fall 2004.

Each department has established standard criteria in the three areas of teaching, research, and service to determine if a faculty member is qualified for promotion and/or tenure. Faculty members are evaluated against these standards at the Third Year review, at the time they apply for tenure and/or promotion, and at post-tenure review.

### *Administrative and Educational Support Services*

The University's organizational structure includes three administrative and educational support divisions: Student Services, Business and Finance, and University Advancement. During fiscal year 2002, each department within these divisions posted its specific mission statement, which supports the overall purpose and goals of the University. The mission statements for each department are maintained on their departmental Web sites.

Each administrative and educational support department participates in an annual reporting process designed to evaluate the achievement of its goals. Such assessment is a primary component of the required Annual Report of Institutional Progress that is sent to the Board of Regents. The process identifies specific objectives derived from the University's mission, specific parameters measuring achievement of departmental goals, and the assessment instruments used for analysis. Each unit's self-study is sent to the Department of Institutional Research and Planning for compilation in the institution's Annual Report of Institutional Progress.

A departmental analysis also identifies problems encountered in implementing the assessment process as well as plans to facilitate achievement of outcomes that did not meet the established parameters. The process of self-study is integral in determining the extent to which departmental goals have been achieved. All administrative and academic units utilize the self-assessment plan in making improvements in their structure, function, and services. The assessment plans for each department are maintained on their departmental Web sites.

***Additional Institutional Effectiveness Plans***

By systematically re-evaluating its goals and objectives, the State University of West Georgia was able to achieve greater articulation of its values through its mission as well as through newly created “Bread and Butter Goals” and “Visionary Statement.” These values are actively being supported and assessed through various means, including a more comprehensive academic program review process and a re-designed Annual Report procedure for all academic, educational support, and administrative departments.

However, the University found that it could achieve greater control over institutional effectiveness assessment by creating a review process for all educational support and administrative programs. While these departments are required to complete annual reports, the institution lacked a comprehensive departmental review program for the educational support/administrative units that emulated the cyclical review process for the academic departments.

Below are some highlights of the educational support/administrative plan:

- Departments will undertake periodic departmental review every five years.
- Departments will form a review committee to conduct a self-study. At the discretion of the Vice President who has authority for that department, an external review of this committee’s report may be put in place before the report is submitted to the review board. Departments will submit an action plan based on the self-study. Subsequently, the report will be critiqued by the departmental Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) and the Vice President over that department.

Based on the results of the review, the department will provide a follow up action plan (one year later) that the respective Vice President will accept, amend, or return to the department for further action.

In fall 2002, the plan was approved by the President’s Advisory Committee and the Departmental Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) was established. Additionally, the timeframe for all educational support and administrative departments was established and review guidelines were created.

The following is an example of the format and guidelines for the DRAC Committee:

**Title Page****Department Review Narrative**

The Departmental Review Narrative should be arranged according to the following outline. The narrative, excluding appendices, should be no longer than 20 double-spaced pages.

- A. Discussion of Departmental Goals and Directions**
- B. Discuss Departmental Staff/Faculty**
- C. Demonstrated Student, Staff, and Faculty Demand for the Department**
- D. Departmental Resource Management**
- E. SWOT Analysis**
  1. Internal Strengths of department
  2. Internal Weaknesses of department
  3. External Opportunities facing the department
  4. External Threats confronting the department

Each of the above requirements will be rated as S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory). If the DRAC deems an area unsatisfactory, it will provide the department with Recommendations or Suggestions for that area. Recommendations will be provided if an area is clearly deficient and changes must be made. Suggestions will be provided for areas that the committee perceives as weak or needing attention from the department in order to avoid a complete deficiency.

The Department of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) created an Assessment link on the departmental website <http://www.westga.edu/~instrsch/Assessment/AssessmentChoice.shtml> to provide the timeline and review guidelines for both the Departmental Review Advisory Committee and the Program Review Advisory Committee. IRP is the repository for the departmental reports submitted to DRAC and PRAC and the Committees’ Recommendations.

Fiscal year 2003 ended with five departments (Financial Aid, Student Activities, International Center, Internal Audits, and Publications and Printing) completing their five-year review. The DRAC report with recommendations and suggestions were submitted to the department’s Vice President for review. Five more departments will complete their five-year review in fiscal year 2004. Those departments are: Residence Life, EXCEL Center, Facilities and Grounds, Distance and Distributed Education Center, and Development and Alumni Services.

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## **Institutional Effectiveness**

Institutional review, like all other elements of a vibrant institution, must be constantly examined for continuous improvement. This overview reflects an on-going commitment to processes which identify elements of institutional effectiveness and strategies to revise activities not contributing to such effects.



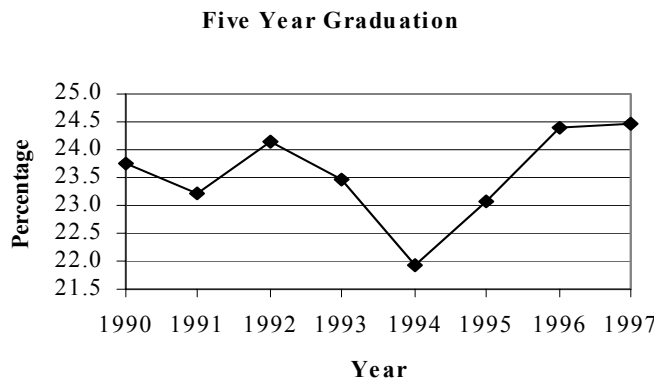
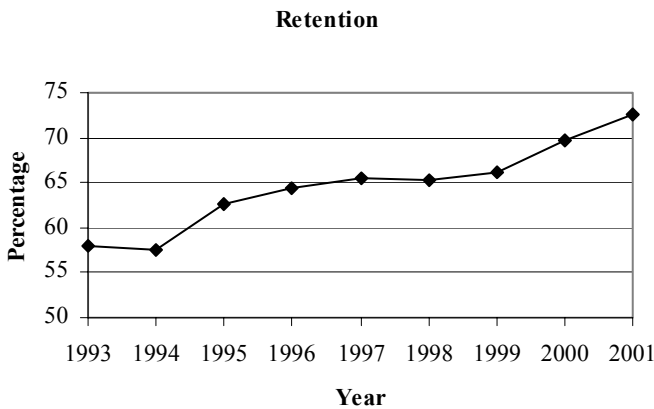
# Part D: Improving Student Retention and Graduation

In June 1996, the Board of Regents approved the implementation of new requirements for admission to the University System of Georgia institutions. The more rigorous requirements have been adopted to ensure that students who enter the University System of Georgia are prepared to succeed.

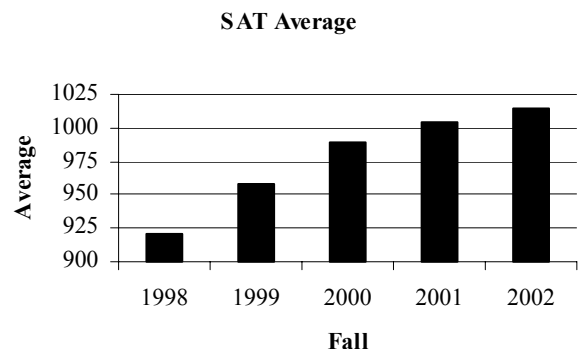
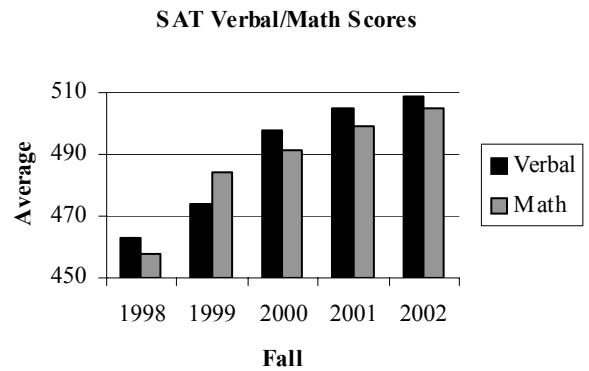
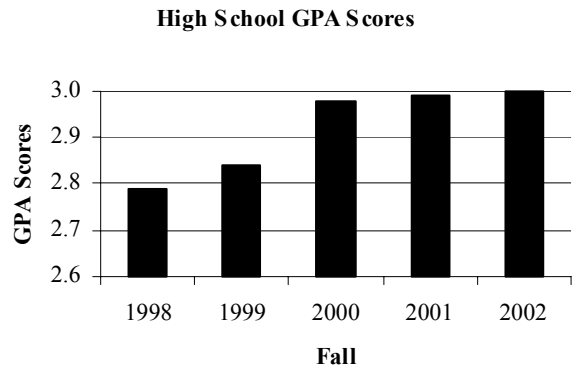
The State University of West Georgia attributes its retention and graduation rates in part to its higher admissions standards. The following shows retention and graduation rates for first-time full-time students who have entered since 1993. Retention rates have increased from 54.99% to 72.45% (17.46%) since 1989, with a very steady upward climb since 1998. Six-year graduation rates have increased slightly, from 27.01% to 30.21%, but without a clear trend. We will be watching graduation rates very closely in the coming years to see if the improved retention rates translate into improved graduation rates.

By fall 2001, students admitted to the University System had to meet higher College Preparatory Curriculum (CPC) requirements and certain minimum System standards based on a combination of SAT/ACT scores and high school grade point average. The standards vary by type of institution.

UWG has experienced an increase of **seven percent** or more in the following categories: High School Grade Point Average, SAT Verbal and Math Scores, and Average SAT scores.



Each entering class includes all entering freshmen enrolled full time whose first term is the fall indicated or the previous summer.



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## Retention and Graduation Rates

### *Strengths and Challenges Related to Retention and Graduation/Completion*

#### *Strengths*

- Retention has steadily improved (from 54.99% for the 1989 entering cohort to 72.45% for the 2001 cohort). This rate is close to the CSRDE averages for moderately selective institutions with enrollments of 5,000 to 17,999 (72.5%).
- Assessment and effectiveness evaluation processes have improved in recent years, as we have begun to move from merely asking students about their satisfaction with services, to comparing the outcomes of certain processes. The best example is the EXCEL Center, which compares GPAs and retention of students participating in various programs (tutoring, probation intervention, FYRST, Multicultural Achievement Program) to non-participants in order to analyze the programs and make changes.
- The University has made retention a priority and has responded creatively to make improvements. Several university-wide task forces and committees examined retention concerns between 1992 and 2000. The University created the Freshman Center (now called the EXCEL Center for Academic Success) in 1996 specifically to work on issues related to the retention of first-year students. Academic Affairs and Student Services worked collaboratively to create Learning Communities and the First Year Residents Succeeding Together (FYRST) program to enrich the freshman experience for students. Retention is regularly discussed at the President's Advisory Council level, with reports from Institutional Research and Planning allowing us to track progress and make predictions based on admissions criteria and institutional history.
- UWG has begun to take an increasingly strategic approach to decisions affecting enrollment, as described in other sections of this document. The 1999-2000 Retention Committee and the 2000-2001 Strategic Planning Process both recognized that decisions affecting enrollment should not be made in a vacuum, and the newly created Office of Enrollment Management is a promising next step in bringing together faculty, staff, and more sophisticated tools of analysis to make decisions for the future.

#### *Challenges*

- Graduation rates have not yet shown improvement in the way that retention rates have. The University will need to monitor this closely to determine if this is simply a time lag (the factors that affect first to second year retention can take up to five more years to affect graduation), or if our efforts have not been successful.
- The number of students transferring out of UWG to other institutions is a concern. UWG's transfer-out numbers are among the highest in the university system. Although we have begun some preliminary work in this area, this is not something we have analyzed in-depth. The University needs to get a better understanding of factors such as how many of these students are transferring for very positive reasons (for example, completing a pre-professional program here and transferring to the Medical College or Georgia Tech for the next steps), and how many are transferring for negative reasons (for example, dissatisfaction with UWG).
- The paradox faced by the University System is that as state appropriations have declined, demand has skyrocketed. The increase in enrollment for UWG is unlike anything experienced in the recent past. **UWG has increased by 14.4% in enrollment while the budgets have decreased by almost the same percentage.**

The State University of West Georgia's expenditure per FTE on Institutional Support is \$1,117, a small fraction of the high level for USG State Universities (SSU at \$~3,098), and significantly lower than the mean for national peer groups for Comprehensive State and Regional Universities (\$1,396), for State Colleges (\$1,156), and even for Two-Year Colleges (\$1,234)!
- The University continues to improve assessment and evaluation processes, with a focus on outcomes. In times of increasing enrollments and steady (or declining) resources, it is tempting for offices which provide direct services to make assessment a low priority because of the need to deal with students' immediate needs; Campus leaders will need to assure that does not happen.
- Maintaining a comprehensive, collaborative, campus-wide focus on retention will continue to be a challenge, but the preliminary work of the Office of Enrollment Management is promising.

***Enrollment Management***

In the summer of 2001, the position of Enrollment Manager was created to serve as an advisor to the Vice President for Student Services on Enrollment Management.

The Enrollment Management Committee (EMC) was transformed from the former Steering Committee on Retention. The EM Committee did not relinquish any former responsibilities, but expanded its membership and mission. The mission statement of the EM Committee is dedicated to achieving successful enrollment management, where enrollment management is defined as follows:

*Enrollment Management is a comprehensive process designed to achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students where "optimum" is defined within the academic context of the institution.*

The EM Committee first met in fall 2001 and its first order of business was to expand the membership. As a result of that agreement, the membership of the committee increased to more than 20 members.

The first goal for the Office of Enrollment Management was to write a comprehensive enrollment plan for the University. This plan would take at least two years to develop and another year or two to implement. The enrollment plan can be described in two phases: the developmental phase and the implementation phase.

The general goal of the enrollment plan is to optimize University resources so the quality of every student's education, both academic programming and student life, meets or exceeds expectations. In order to achieve this goal, the EM Committee requires a full understanding of the University's situation (i.e. capacity to provide services, academic programs consistent with UWG's mission, and demography), and its prospects for the future.

Within the Developmental Phase, an executive committee was created that would serve as the recommending body of the final plan. The finer points of organization and rough outline of the plan were also developed. During the second year of the developmental phase, the committee and subcommittees developed the final draft of the plan. During the first years of the implementation phase, the office of enrollment management will assist in the process of making the plan operational by gathering necessary data to monitor the successes, enable assessments, and recommend necessary alterations.

***Enrollment Retreats***

In summer 2003, as a part of the development phase for completing the Comprehensive Enrollment Plan, the Office of Enrollment Management and the Vice President for Student Services hosted Enrollment Planning Retreats where the Vice Presidents of each division as well as academic and academic support unit leaders were in attendance. The purpose of the Enrollment Planning Retreat was to raise consciousness among University leadership of the consequences of unregarded enrollment growth and to establish some minimal Key Performance Indicator (KPI) targets for the enrollment plan. The results of KPI indicate that the University plans for an enrollment of nearly 15,000 students over a period of ten years. Therefore, the University must find ways to serve this increased student population.

***New Student Advisement and Registration***

One manifestation of enacting the enrollment plan was realized over the past summer when new freshmen were being advised and registering for fall classes. First, through no fault of the student, the University had limited class availability for students that attended orientation later in the summer. Second, advising 300 students per orientation placed a heavy demand on academic advisors and often mistakes were made during the advising process such as students taking courses that were not needed, all requirements not being satisfied for the major when enough hours had been taken to graduate, being told that certain courses from other institutions will count for credit at UWG when they will not, etc.

After becoming aware of the several recurring problems students encounter related to advising, a method was devised by the OEM and the Numbers Committee for getting new freshmen to provide information during the process of signing up for campus orientation that would enable advisors to create schedules in advance of the student's visit to campus for orientation.

While there were a few communications, mailing, and billing glitches, basically the process was a success. Each student received a full-time course schedule, largely due to the efforts of the University EXCEL Center. Less demand was required of the academic advisors for campus orientations and there was a decrease in the crisis for class availability.

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## Retention and Graduation Rates

### *UWG 1101: The First Year University Experience*

The University freshman seminar project was initiated in fall 2003 with three sections of UWG 1101 as a pilot. Each section is team-taught with one member of the team being from the faculty and the other from Student Services. The three sections are using a common textbook and a course schedule for topics and some sessions are conducted with all of the sections underlined. The pilot will be used to provide feedback on the course and student outcomes will be assessed in the spring.

UWG 1101 is designed to help students succeed academically as well as personally and socially at West Georgia. The fundamental focus of the class is to provide an understanding of the basic structure of critical thinking and of academic disciplines in order to increase learning in the university classroom. The course will also provide an overview of resources available which will help to insure student success in the university classroom. Furthermore, UWG 1101 provides students with essential information about the University as a whole, its rules, procedures and resources. UWG 1101 classes include subjects that cut across the academic and nonacademic lines of school; these subjects include time management, college study skills, basic computer skills, the structure of the Core Curriculum, choosing a major and career, and using the UWG library. Most classes require that students attend several University activities and events, events that introduce students to important University offices and events that discuss topics such as safer dating, multiculturalism and drug and alcohol abuse. Students are required to attend class and to interact with the instructor and classmates. While students must take responsibility for their own learning, the course attempts to support and enhance that responsibility by creating in the class a learning community within the University.

### *New Committees*

Three new committees or groups were developed in an effort to apply more focus on enrollment management. The Academic Advisory Committee was created to develop a system or structure for communication, quality development, and control of academic advising. The Transfer Student Advising Subcommittee was developed to enhance UWG's understanding of the needs of transfer students, particularly the orientation and advising phase. The Admissions Research Group was designed to make formal use of the data obtained by the Admissions counselors in the course of their work.

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## Part E: Overall Institutional Health

Over the past year, the State University of West Georgia steadily progressed toward the accomplishment of its goals and priorities despite budget cuts and being asked to work harder with fewer funds, staff, and resources. The exceptional work of UWG's faculty and staff has aided in redefining and actualizing system and institutional objectives while keeping the University's commitment to *Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment* vital. Continuous efforts are being made to attract a diverse student body and improve retention rates as UWG fully incorporates the implementation of the more stringent University System admissions requirements of 2001. In the area of instruction, the University is advancing toward enhancing quality and implementing technology usage throughout the curriculum, with a focus on improving teacher education. West Georgia is poised to further assert itself as a vanguard institution of Georgia, and with the continued support of the University System of Georgia and the legislature, it will most assuredly do so.

Recently, state legislatures have made significant and often sudden reductions in financial support for the University System of Georgia and its colleges and universities. These cuts have come despite public recognition that higher education is one of the critical strengths of the United States as it competes in a global economy. The cuts in public funding have had a detrimental effect on the ability of many institutions to carrying out their missions and meeting the challenges of providing well-educated graduates.

Sometimes a reduction in funding leads institutions to undertake comprehensive and intensive examinations of their programs and operations, and efficiencies result; however, oftentimes vital programs and services suffer. In the state of Georgia the cuts have come without warning, making it impossible for institutions to plan effectively. In many cases, the disparity between available resources and educational demands has become so significant that the institutional capacity to respond has been severely impaired and the academic integrity and quality of many programs have been and are being threatened.

The State University of West Georgia reaffirms its belief that administrators, trustees, and legislators share in the responsibility for ensuring that institutions of higher education have the ability to achieve their stated purposes. When rapid declines in resources diminish any institution's ability to fulfill its mission, all parties should understand the necessity of either replacing these resources or redefining the institution's educational programs and services.

Administrators, trustees and legislators have a joint responsibility for providing, safeguarding, and managing the resources of institutions under their charge. Without such understanding and commitment, our institutions of higher learning and their programs are placed in jeopardy.

Despite all of the above the State University of West Georgia's overall health of the institution is good and, with continuous improvements, it will get better, but only with the support of the State of Georgia's administrators, trustees, and legislators. The State University of West Georgia has identified areas of need for additional support to achieve its defined goals and objectives, and it is grateful to the Board of Regents and the University System of Georgia for addressing these needs and concerns.

However, considerable need still exists, which must be met if West Georgia is to preserve its commitment to *Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment*. UWG's quality and national accomplishments are due to the faculty and staff performing at unequaled levels of efficiency and effectiveness, but they become impossible to sustain in the long run without adequate support.

Salary compression is still an issue at the State University of West Georgia. Salary compression refers to the phenomenon where junior faculty/staff members receive salaries that approach or exceed those of faculty/staff at more senior ranks. The effects of salary compression can lead to faculty/staff turnover, low morale, and unwillingness to support institutional initiatives.

Salary compression and the standard cost of living increase continues to be felt even after annual raises have taken effect, but for 2002-2003 raises were not available or received due to the current state of the economy. The fact is the cost of health insurance continues to increase and state employees living in rural areas of Georgia are being forced to switch to PPO/HMO health insurance plans to try and keep the employees' costs lower, all the while paying increasingly higher medical bills since physicians and healthcare facilities in the area are not willing to participate in the plan.

The salaries for faculty and staff have not kept pace with salaries currently being offered in the southeast. With relatively low salaries and no chance for annual raises, continued turnover is expected since faculty and staff can increase their salaries by several thousand dollars by accepting positions at other public and private colleges and universities outside the state or other positions outside higher education. If UWG is to remain competitive, it will have to receive additional funding to improve faculty and staff salaries.



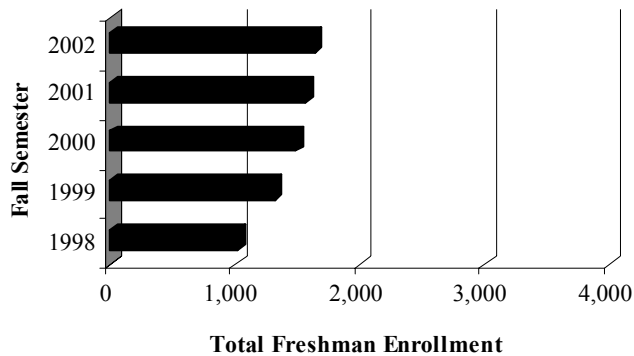
## Institutional Health

Due to growing student enrollment, limitations are developing in the areas of technology, space, and course availability. There is a limit as to the number of course sections West Georgia may offer with the faculty resources available. Currently, classes with a high enrollment of 90+ are being divided into smaller classes of 50, while sections with 20 to 30 students now have enrollments of 45 to 50. Department resources are being drained to provide alternatives to full classes, and it is becoming harder to support UWG's 20 to 1 student to teacher ratio.

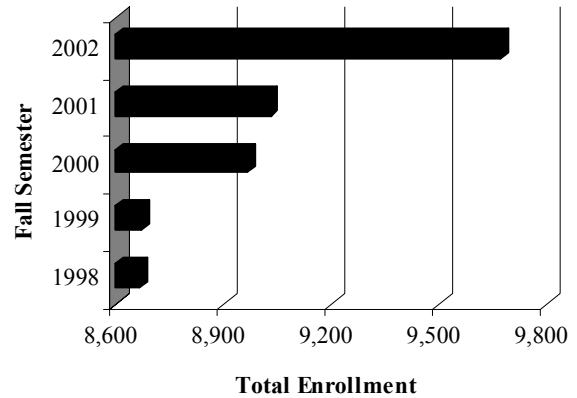
	FY2002	FY2003
<b>Undergraduate Class Size</b>	<b>Class Sections</b>	<b>Class Sections</b>
Less than 10	177	164
10-19	224	212
20-29	293	333
30-39	146	150
40-49	75	79
50-99	71	95
100+	38	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>1,069</b>

Since fall 1998 semester conversion, the State University of West Georgia's new freshman enrollment has increased 60 percent. The total student enrollment has increased more than eleven percent.

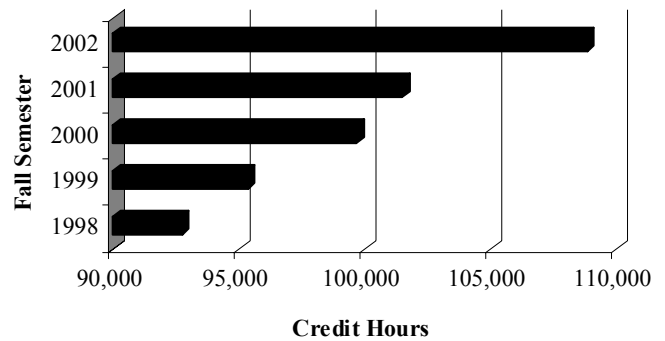
**Freshman Enrollment**



**Student Enrollment**



**Credit Hour Production**



The University's credit hour production has increased more than seventeen percent over the past five years. If the needs and limitations of technology, space, and course availability are not addressed the *Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment* will diminish.

To date, the State University of West Georgia has been able to maintain a healthy environment, while at the same time being positioned to benefit greatly from continued and further support. The support will indeed allow the University to maintain the momentum continued through the previous years.