



Task Force to USG Presidents: Make Student Success No. 1 Goal for All

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved with the same level of thinking that created them." This quote from German physicist Albert Einstein set the tone for an interim report from the Graduation Rate Task Force delivered by Regent Willis A. Potts Jr. at the Board of Regents' March meeting.

Potts, who is vice chair of the board this year and chairman of the task force, said he reports Feltzer Jenkins and Larry R. Ellis, Chief Academic Officer Dr. Susan Herbst and leaders from several institutions and the University System Office are in the process of meeting with the presidents and provosts of each institution in the University System of Georgia (USG) to hear their plans for improving graduation and retention rates.

So far, the task force has met with officials from 11 USG institutions, and Potts presented his observations to date in the form of a list of "the top 10 things our committee has learned in listening to campus graduation-rate struggles."

He prefaced his remarks by saying, "We have many successes in the system, but I am going to focus on the challenges today. Bear with me, and do know that this remains a constructive process. There are many wonderful efforts underway across the state, and we do see the great work among all the colleges."

- **Compasses are not always defining their graduation and retention-rate-related problems with accuracy.** "I am not seeing enough empirical evidence that pinpoints why a retention or graduation rate is low," Potts remarked.
- **Compasses are not matching solutions to problems as a result.** Lacking the data necessary to drive the process, campus officials are not coming up with targeted solutions, he noted.
- **Too many lists, not enough elaboration.** "We are being presented with laundry lists of tactics for improving retention and graduation rates borrowed from the higher education literature, but very little elaboration about why they're better than any other technique or the best fit for a particular campus," Potts said.
- **Assessment data are lacking.** "We've told that this or that program works, but see little in the way of assessment data to prove it," Potts noted.

See "Student Success," Page 4...

http://www.usg.edu/pub_docs/SS-March_2010.pdf

Student Success
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- ◆ **Graduating students should be a campus' top priority.** "Surprisingly, some institutions do not yet consider retention and graduation a clear priority, even though the regents do," he said. "Graduating our students is the number-one job for us all."
- ◆ **USG campuses are not involving faculty deeply enough in retention and graduation issues.** "Faculty need to own these issues," Potts said.
- ◆ **Retention and graduation rates are not about money.** "I want to see our institutions boost retention and graduation rates no matter how much or how little they have," Potts said. "Take resources away from other areas in order to boost student success – this is our very best investment."
- ◆ **Leadership is key.** "We want to see presidents out in front of retention and graduation issues, understanding their campus problems and designing the solutions," he said.
- ◆ **Don't just blame students.** "Some students are not as prepared for college as they should be," Potts conceded. "While this plays into the graduation-rate conundrum, my feeling is that no matter how our students come to us, we need to do whatever we can to ensure their success."
- ◆ **The entire campus must own student success as a goal.** "A plan for boosting graduation and retention is not a bunch of best practices," Potts said. "It is a thoughtful, comprehensive document that analyzes the problem and provides a roadmap. The entire campus has to feel confident about the plan, advocate for it, and work on it."

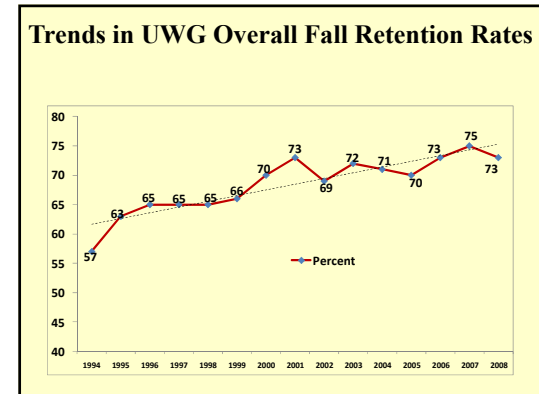
In closing, Potts implored USG presidents and provosts to "pull out all the stops. Make your campus culture one of student success, and I promise that you will be rewarded for it – by me, by this board, by your parents, by your stakeholders. And the greatest rewards will be walking across your stage at commencement. We need your leadership, your ideas, and most of all, your passion on behalf of the precious 300,000-plus young people under our care."

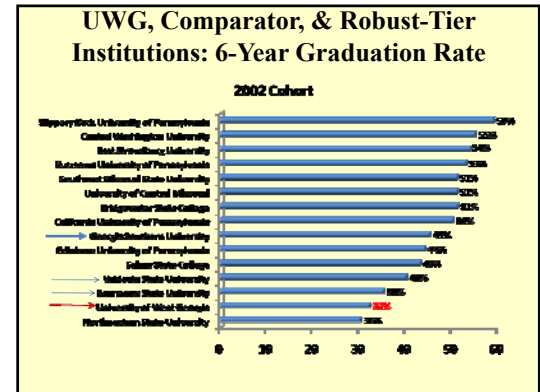
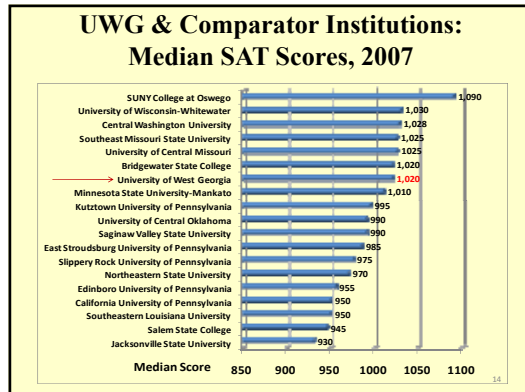
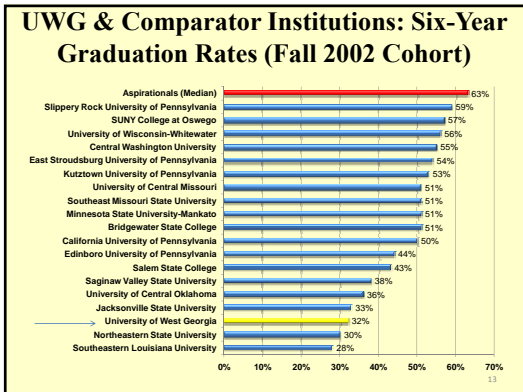
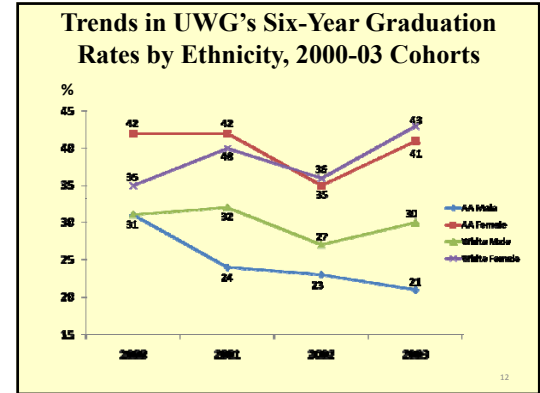
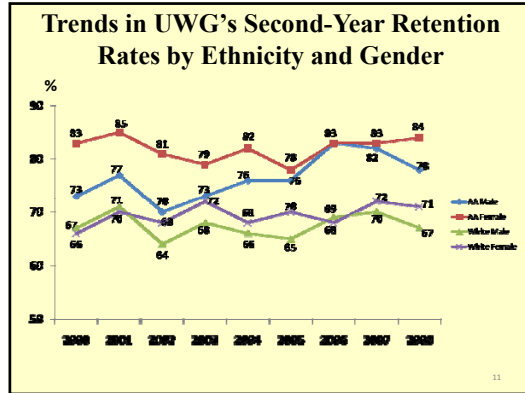
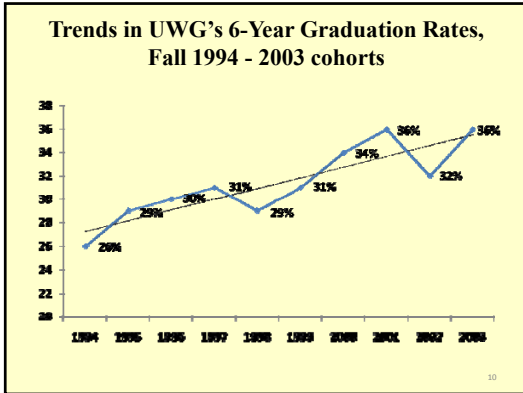
Presentation Points

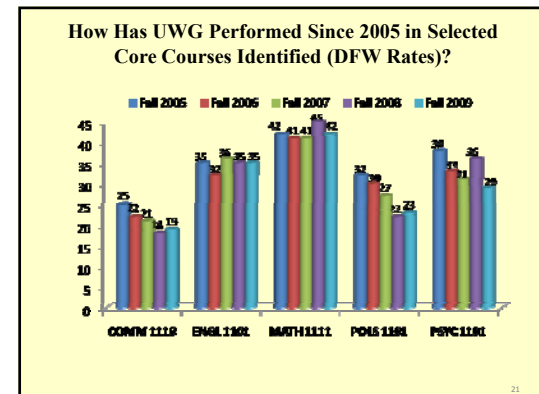
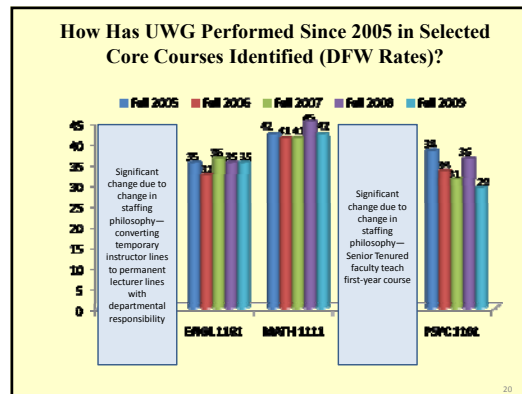
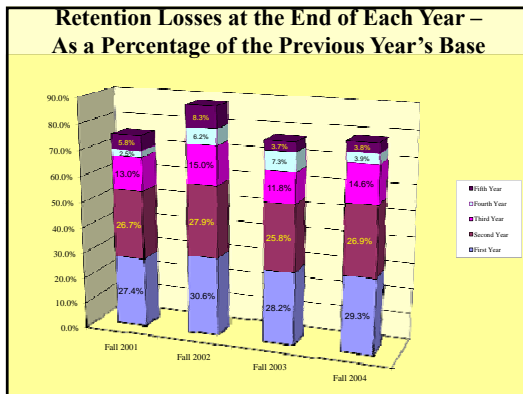
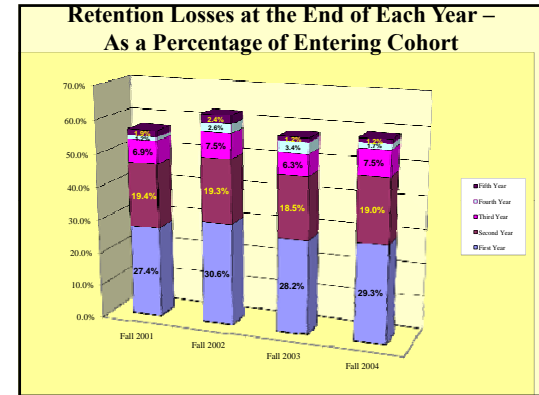
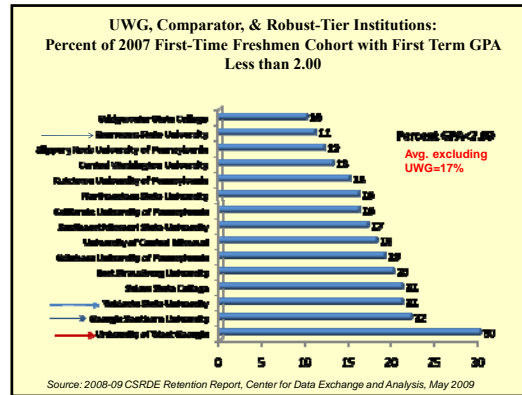
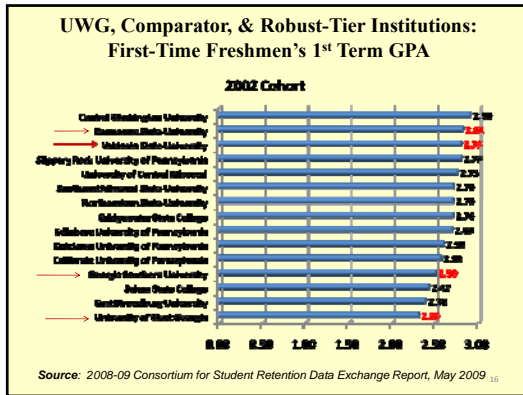
- 🔥 **What are the Problems leading to Low Graduation Rates?**
LOTS AND LOTS OF ANALYSIS!
- 🔥 **How do we know this?**
- 🔥 **What are we going to do about it?**

How Do We Know What the Problem Is? Graphical Analysis

- 🔥 **Overall Retention and Graduation Rates**
- 🔥 **By Ethnicity and Gender**
- 🔥 **Comparisons with Peers**
- 🔥 **Drilling Down to Root Causes**







More Analysis – With Intervention

- ANOVA of Graduates vs. Non-Graduates (Fall '00 –Fall '03 Cohorts, 6-year Graduation):
- 📌 **Statistically Significant Findings:**
 - 📌 Expected Family Contribution: Higher for Graduates (measure of SES?) ($p \leq .01$)
 - 📌 Living Arrangements: Residential Students Graduate at higher rates than Commuters ($p \leq .05$)
 - 📌 First Term GPA: Graduates have .8 higher GPA after the first term ($p \leq .01$)
 - 📌 Probation Status: Non-Graduates are 3-times more likely to be on Probation after their first term ($p \leq .001$)
 - 📌 Attempted Credits in Second (Spring) Term: Graduates complete more credits in the Fall (non significant) and Spring ($p \leq .05$) than Non-Graduates
 - 📌 Second Term GPA: Graduates have a higher GPA after Spring Term ($p \leq .01$)
 - 📌 Critical Core Course Success: Non-Graduates failed at higher rates in ENGL 1101 and MATH 1111 in their first term ($p \leq .001$ for both)
 - 📌 **Cannot control input variables; but can reduce their effect by intervention**

So, What Are the Roots of the Problem?

- 📌 **Analysis points to problems in the first and second year**
- 📌 **The first term of first year is critical**
- 📌 **No comprehensive institutional approach to the First Year**
- 📌 **Failure and withdrawal rates (D, F, W) in some core courses are very high**
- 📌 **Low Freshman Success Rate (FSR) and First Term GPAs**
 - 📌 FSR 42.7 % in AY 2006; 51.7 % in AY 2009
 - 📌 First Term GPA = 2.3

So, What Are the Roots of the Problem? (contd.)

- 📌 **Low course load leading to extended time to degree**
 - 📌 Increased in Fall '09 due to special prioritization for core courses
 - 📌 For those who graduated, average time to degree has been fairly constant at 12.2 semesters – even a slight change would make a big difference
- 📌 **Low retention and graduation rates of male students**
- 📌 **Some policy questions:**
 - 📌 unlimited and easy withdraw;
 - 📌 unlimited retakes;
 - 📌 low standards for academic standing;
 - 📌 declaration of major; restrictions on admission to major...
- 📌 **Campus Culture**

What we are already doing

- 📌 **Foundations of Excellence – Study of first year (set the stage for RPG Grant and addition of FYPs)**
- 📌 **Implemented First Year For Everyone Program – 97% of all first year students are in some FYP**
 - 📌 Higher retention rates for those in programs than not
- 📌 **Early Intervention (different levels of implementation)**
 - 📌 Predictive modeling for At-Risk Students (first term) based on pre-college characteristics – predicted 75% of outcomes
 - Residential: EFC, HS GPA, Race (AA is a plus), answers on New Student Profile (Finances as Barrier and Difficulty Choosing a Major)
 - 📌 New Student Profile -- Direct Intervention and Early Engagement
 - 📌 Early Withdraw Intervention (wks 2-6)
 - 📌 Early Alert (passive – should be required)
 - 📌 Success Seminars
- 📌 **Academic Warning/Probation Intervention**
 - 📌 Appointment with Advisor; Academic Warning seminars

Fall Cohort FYP Retention Rate

FY Program		Fall 08 Cohort Retention Rate
No FYP Selection		67%
Selected but Dropped		63%
UWG 1101		75%
Learning Communities		80%
Residential Peer Mentoring		74%
MAP Mentoring		76%
Honors		86%
FY Mentoring/IServe		71%
Commuter FYP	Previously Commuter Retention <60%	65%
Overall Retention Rate		73%

What we are already doing

- 📌 **RPG Guides: Direct retention and graduation program in each A&S department; meet with parents at Orientation**
- 📌 **DegreeWorks: Measures progress towards degree**
- 📌 **Academic Support Centers: Writing Ctr.; Math Lab; Biology Tutoring; EXCEL Center (tutoring, mentoring, advising)**
- 📌 **Two-Phase Orientation (Summer and Transitions)**
- 📌 **Second Year Experience program (Spring 10 initial term)**
- 📌 **First-Year Commuter program, Commuter Student Association, Commuter Lounge**
- 📌 **Policy change: Enforced 60 hour rule – students must declare a major by their 60th hour; required intervention if not**
- 📌 **Policy change: Increased threshold for Academic Good Standing; increased requirement for intervention (challenge/support)**

Metrics

- 👉 Pass rates in core courses
- 👉 Pass rates lower level courses
- 👉 Pass rates upper level courses
- 👉 Successful course completion rates per semester (DFWI)
- 👉 Average student credit hour load per semester
- 👉 Freshmen success rates
- 👉 Retention and Success rates by First Year Program
- 👉 First- and second-year retention rates.
- 👉 First-year retention rates by First Year Programs/Interventions/Services
- 👉 Four-, five-, and six-year graduation rates
- 👉 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Data

**What are we going to DO about it?
Three-Year Plan: Big Ideas**

- 👉 First Year Critical – DFW – Improvement Strategies
- 👉 Predictive analysis and interventions
- 👉 Institutional Commitments:
 - 👉 First-year programs
 - 👉 Support: Orientations, T
 - 👉 Degree Work
 - 👉 Center
 - 👉 Increase
 - 👉 Engagin
- 👉 Declaring majors by 60 hours; then Departmental ownership
- 👉 Study Institutional Policies and Procedures affecting time to degree

**Student, Faculty,
Administrative Culture**

Note: The plan will be an evolving one and grow with faculty input.

Thank you for all you do.

Let's look more carefully at ourselves!

What are we missing?