

University of West Georgia
Focused Report

**Submitted to the SACS
On-Site Review Committee**

Visit Scheduled – April 1-3, 2014

Submitted: February, 2014



UNIVERSITY of 
West Georgia[®]



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Dear Members of the SACSCOC On-Site Visit Committee,

Welcome to the University of West Georgia. “Go West! Transforming Lives & Changing Perspectives!” is our mantra and exemplifies our commitment to student success, academic success, mutually beneficial partnerships and operational effectiveness and sustainability. We are fortunate to have dedicated faculty, staff, alumni and engaged partners who are committed to the success of UWG and its students. We hope that your experience on our campus is a pleasant one and that you find everything you need to evaluate our compliance with SACS principles.

This Focused Report is UWG’s response to the off-site committee’s findings. It includes the narrative of the off-site committee followed by a response from UWG. In addition to this paper (hard) copy, all documents are included on a thumb drive for your convenience. All documents are also posted on the web site at www.westga.edu/sacs.

Documents included on the thumb drive are:

- The Compliance Certificate as submitted to the off-site committee
- The Focused Report
- The Focused Report Appendices
- The Institutional Effectiveness Addendums (3.3.1.1-3.3.1.5)

While you review these documents prior to the visit and while you are on campus, you can be assured that you have full access to the campus, including its resources and records, to conduct your review. UWG values the peer review process and we welcome your candid and thoughtful evaluation of our compliance.

As you get to know UWG, you will find that it is an institution that is earnestly focused on success in every area. Should you need anything in preparation for your visit, we look forward to complying your requests.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kyle Marrero
President

- 2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

Off-Site Committee Narrative:

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the institution's Mission Statement, Annual Reports of Institutional Progress, Fact Book, Strategic Plan, Annual Report of Institutional Progress, Faculty Senate Approved Minutes, the webpage for the Strategic Planning Committee, and the Core Mission Statement for Comprehensive Universities. The narrative for 2.5 notes that a new Strategic Planning Committee was formed during the 2011-2012 academic year, and that there is a Strategic Plan in place for 2010-2015. The Strategic Plan has been reviewed and revised. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) was charged with collecting and reporting data on accomplishments related to the Strategic Plan and Mission

However, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not determine that the planning process is ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide. For example, it is noted that the Faculty Senate approved modifications to the Strategic Goals, but the role of the senate in the development or revision of the Strategic Plan is not clearly explained. It is not clear if the vote of the senate was all that was required for approval of the modifications to the Strategic Plan. The committee could not determine how the Faculty Senate and the Strategic Planning Committee interact to create an integrated and systematic institutional planning and evaluation processes. Nor was the committee able to determine how the Annual Report of Institutional Progress, Fact Book, Assessment of Programs, the SACSCOC Assessment System, and the Comprehensive Program Reviews are integrated into a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes. Each of these appears to include isolated reviews of the mission, goals, and outcomes.

The narrative and documentation does not demonstrate that the institution has established a systematic process for continuous improvement and for ensuring that decisions are made based on valid and reliable information. The committee could find no clear documentation that information gathered through assessment is used to inform the budgeting process.

According to the narrative, the Annual Report of Institutional Progress focuses on "accomplishments" of academic programs and administrative support units in relation to the Strategic Plan and Mission. However, the committee found that many of these "accomplishments" do not appear to demonstrate continuous improvement as would be expected in an assessment report, but regular operations of offices, departments, or programs as might be expected in an annual report of operations.

The Assessment of Programs and the "SACS Assessment System" are mentioned in the narrative, but no documentation is provided for these processes in the narrative for this requirement. The Off-Site Committee was unable to determine if the "Assessment of Programs" and the "SACS Assessment System" are the same or different processes.

The link to the “Completed Comprehensive Program Reviews” on the university’s Program Review website would not work so the committee was unable to review any completed comprehensive program reviews.

The On-Site Committee should look for clear evidence that the planning process is ongoing, integrated, and institution wide; the planning process impacts the budgeting process; the work of the various bodies tasked with aspects of the planning and evaluation process are integrated; that the “Assessment of Programs” and “SACS Assessment System” are identical or different processes; and that completed Comprehensive Program Reviews demonstrate continuous improvement.

UWG Response:

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found Core Requirement 2.5 to be non-compliant. The intent of the original submission was to assure the off-site committee that our processes were comprehensive. As such, each individual part of the process was discussed at length. The narrative below intends to do the opposite by giving the committee an understanding of how all the individual elements of the research-based planning and evaluation processes are ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide.

We also provide evidence that UWG incorporates a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; that this review results in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and demonstrates the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. This narrative provides three clear examples of how this process unfolds on campus.

We believe this response provides the committee the necessary information to review whether or not UWG provides “clear evidence that the planning process is ongoing, integrated, and institution wide; the planning process impacts the budgeting process; the work of the various bodies tasked with aspects of the planning and evaluation process are integrated; that the “Assessment of Programs” and “SACS Assessment System” are identical or different processes; and that completed Comprehensive Program Reviews demonstrate continuous improvement” as suggested by the off-site review team.

This response includes two sections.

- 1) Section one answers specific questions posed by the off-site review team.
- 2) Section two provides evidence that UWG incorporates a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes, and that these decisions inform budgeting processes.

Section One: Answers to specific questions noted by the off-site review team.

The committee judged that UWG did not provide sufficient information to answer basic questions about how UWG operates. Each question is answered below. The off-site committee notes are in bold and bulleted, the UWG response follows.

- **The committee could not determine how the Faculty Senate and Strategic Planning Committee interact to create integrated, systematic institutional planning and evaluation processes.**

The University of West Georgia has a Senate comprised of senators elected to represent academic areas including colleges, the School of Nursing, and the Library. The senate

work is completed through a set of working committees that include, faculty, staff, and administrative appointments. The Senate is organized in 13 committees. Each committee includes senators, other faculty elected directly to that committee, and administrative appointments. All committee decisions are presented to the Senate for consideration. The items that are approved by the Senate are sent to the President for his review and acceptance or rejection.

The Senate Strategic Planning Committee is charged with recommending policy concerning University purposes and goals (and to evaluate their degree of suitability and attainment), academic planning and growth, SACs and specialized accreditations, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), campus development, and to monitor the implementation of the University's strategic plan. Although this senate committee is large (13 or 14 members), including faculty, staff, administrators, and a student, the committee is expanded when a revision of the vision, mission, and strategic goals are considered.

Using this process, the UWG mission statement was last modified and approved by SACS in 2007. The current strategic plan and objectives were adopted in 2008 with an intended implementation for the years 2010-2015. This process was managed by the Interim Provost working through the process outlined above. This work was presented to the Senate on 31 October 2008 senate minutes state : The ISP Committee would like to submit the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan to the Faculty Senate for approval—Approved.” Following this process, the President then adopted this recommendation on February 19, 2009 (President’s Approval of the Minutes: <http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/ctl/FSPresResponse31Oct08.pdf>). Shortly thereafter, the SACS Liaison and Office of Institutional Research and Planning updated the annual reporting process to reflect the new strategic goals and collect data on assessments and improvements for each objective each year.

The goals were slightly revised in April of 2012, and again approved by the Senate and then adopted by the President. During the 12-13 academic year an expanded subcommittee chaired by a Senator who is a member of the Senate Strategic Planning Committee began work on revising and updating the plan. This revision is in process and is following the same inclusive process outlined above.

Additionally, UWG’s institutional planning has evolved in response to shifting priorities at the level of the University System of Georgia and Office of the Governor. These reprioritizations, which largely focused on evidence-based student success initiatives, have influenced how UWG implemented its 2010-2015 Strategic Plan over time. The institution took advantage of flexibility built into the strategic plan, while remaining true to UWG’s mission, to respond to the student success mandate. Within the strategic plan, Guiding Principle 1 (...quality academic programs...that blend the best of professionalized liberal education, experiential learning, and individual transformation) steered the allocation and reallocation of resources in response to evolving initiatives led by the system and governor’s offices to improve student performance and degree completion. Examples follow.

UWG has implemented strategies to increase retention and graduation rates since receiving a \$350,000 grant from the USG Board of Regents in 2006. At that time, the institution identified several “student success” metrics and charged Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) with ongoing data collection, analysis, and annual

reporting. These data have informed decision-making, particularly during budget development, with special attention to facilitating students' academic progress toward graduation. Further, analyses of these metrics formed the basis of the institution's three-year plan to improve retention, progression, and graduation (see "UWG BOR Submission – RPG Plan – June 1 2010"). Indeed, data analyses clearly indicated that improvements in student progress toward graduation would require an institution-wide effort. This conclusion resulted in the formation in July, 2010, of the President's Special Commission to Improve Graduation Rates.

The President's Special Commission was co-chaired by the Associate Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs as a cross-divisional collaborative effort and included 17 faculty and staff members representing a wide range of disciplines and offices. One year of planning and self-study subsequently led to the creation of five subcommittees that examined campus data, literature, and best practices related to retention, progression, and graduation. The subcommittees produced recommendations that formed the basis of the Special Commission's draft report, which was sent to the Faculty Senate for review in September, 2011 (see "Special Commission Draft Report and Recommendations 8-29-11").

The Special Commission draft was reviewed first by the standing committees of the senate and then discussed by the full body at its September, 2011, session. The senate advised that five particular recommendations (of the 60 included in the draft) should be targeted for immediate implementation. Two of the five recommendations involved the development and implementation of new programs to help struggling students (i.e., Summer Bridge Program, Early Alert/Early Intervention Program). An additional two recommendations required an analysis of backlogged courses (e.g., Foreign Languages, Mass Communications, Anatomy & Physiology) with suggestions for subsequent action. The last recommendation addressed an institutional policy barrier with regard to course withdrawals and course repeats. During the next budget development cycle, the President's Advisory Council (PAC) allocated funding to (1) start the Summer Bridge Program, and (2) purchase software to support the Early Alert/Early Intervention Program and hire an assistant director in the Excel Center to help coordinate the new program. Further, PAC requested new funding for faculty lines to address the course backlogs. Lastly, a campus-wide committee of 17 faculty and staff tackled the course withdrawal/repeat policy barrier. The result, UWG's new Limited Course Withdrawal Policy, was approved by the Faculty Senate in April, 2013, and became effective in August, 2013.

The ongoing work of these committees, commissions, and subcommittees positioned the institution well for the new Complete College Georgia initiative, which was introduced to UWG at the state-wide CCG Summit in March, 2012. Complete College Georgia (CCG) is the college completion initiative promoted by the Governor and the University System of Georgia. UWG started work on its CCG Campus Plan by soliciting input from faculty, staff, and students through institutional-wide presentations, town hall meetings, and senior leadership sessions (e.g., Deans' meeting, President's Advisory Council). The UWG CCG Commission, formally comprised of 18 members representing every college and key Student Affairs offices, was tasked with developing the actual campus plan. The commission worked through the summer to analyze IRP's student success metrics and data obtained through campus feedback, as well as the

recommendations promoted by the President's Special Commission to Improve Graduation Rates. The UWG CCG Commission produced the Complete College Georgia – UWG Campus Plan, which was then vetted by the President's Advisory Council and Faculty Senate prior to its submission to the USG Chancellor on August 22, 2012, (see "Complete College Georgia – University of West Georgia Campus Plan – FINAL – August 21 2012").

In sum, although the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan does not include specific phrases such as "retention, progression, and graduation" or "Complete College Georgia," these student success efforts are aligned with Guiding Principle I (...quality academic programs...that blend the best of professionalized liberal education, experiential learning, and individual transformation). The revised goals embedded in Guiding Principle I support ongoing work toward improving student success.

This process is evidence of ongoing, integrated planning. Specific examples of how data and assessment inform institutional-level improvements are noted in the examples below.

- **The committee could not verify that the institution has established a systematic process for continuous improvement. Tangentially, the committee could not determine whether valid and reliable information is used to inform decision-making, to include the budgeting process.**

At UWG the Director of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) is the sole point of accountability to assure that data are presented to leaders in formats that are easily digestible and can be used to inform decision making. Their website contains data relevant to decision making under the titles: Official Data, Student Reports, and Institutional Effectiveness (www.westga.edu/irp). Additionally, the assessment of academic programs is administered through the Office of the Provost, and financial statements and audit reports are created and housed in the Division of Business and Finance. These three elements provide foundational data for decision making at the level of the institution. They are discussed at Senate meetings, meetings of the President's Advisory Council, and meetings with the President and Vice Presidents. Three clear examples of how these data were analyzed to improve institutional processes and performance are included below. It is in these meetings that budgets are set and requests for new money are created.

Please note that program-level, department/college level, setting of objectives, assessment, and improvement based on analysis of the results are addressed in principle 3.3.1.1-5. This lower level analysis and improvements inform internal decisions for allocation of funding. The Institutional data mentioned in the preceding paragraph inform institutional-level decisions.

- **The Off-Site Committee was unable to determine if the "Assessment of Programs" and the "SACS Assessment System" are the same or different processes.**

The Assessment of Programs and the SACS Assessment System do refer to the same process. Academic programs are assessed by (IRP) in terms of enrollment, retention, progression, and graduation data. These data are posted on the IRP web site (www.westga.edu/irp). The assessment of academic program learning outcomes and the collection of annual reports are all managed through the SACS Assessment System.

The SACS Assessment System is simply an online database UWG created to house assessment data for academic programs and annual reporting purposes.

- **Nor was the committee able to determine how the Annual Report of Institutional Progress, Fact Book, Assessment of Programs, the SACSCOC Assessment System, and the Comprehensive Program Reviews are integrated into a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes. Each of these appears to include isolated reviews of the mission, goals, and outcomes.**

As noted in the introduction for this response, the intent of our initial submission was to provide the committee with details on each element of the process. As the examples below show, these individual elements are integrated to assure that UWG engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.

Section Two: Evidence that UWG incorporates a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes, and that these decisions inform budgeting processes.

This section includes an opening narrative on the assessment driven planning and budgeting processes at UWG. This is followed by three major initiatives that the university has completed within the last five years. Each initiative provides evidence of institution practices the principles required for compliance with principle 2.5.

Budgeting Process: The Role of Planning and Assessment in the Budgeting Process

The planning process at The University of West Georgia is indeed ongoing, integrated, and institution wide; the planning process impacts the budgeting process; and the work of the various bodies tasked with aspects of the planning and evaluation process are integrated.

In a continuous process, it is difficult to identify an unambiguous starting point, but for convenience, we start at the first meeting of the General Faculty just before classes start in the Fall semester. At this meeting the president shares with the UWG community the information coming out of the Board of Regents' Office and the Governor's office, including their priorities and fiscal news. This information helps set the parameters and constraints under which UWG will work in the coming year.

For example, the first set of four slides is taken from among several others from the Fall, 2012 presentation to the General Faculty. These slides demonstrated that this Complete College Georgia (CCG) initiative would permeate our planning and our culture.



Why Us? Why Now?

- ♥ Because it's the right thing to do.
- ♥ Because the President of the United States, the Governor of Georgia, the Board of Regents, the Chancellor, the President, the Provost, and the Faculty-based President's Special Commission to Improve Graduation Rates are on the same page.
- ♥ Because the nation will not be even close to achieving global competitiveness if we don't make dramatic changes.
- ♥ Because our bread and butter funding (the funding formula) will weight college graduation heavily.
- ♥ Because this is not going away.

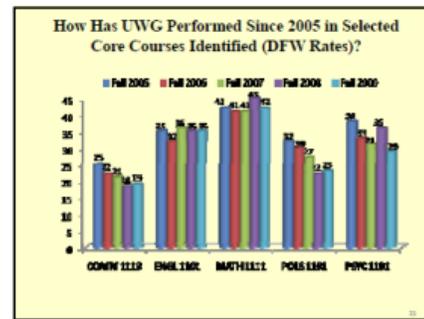
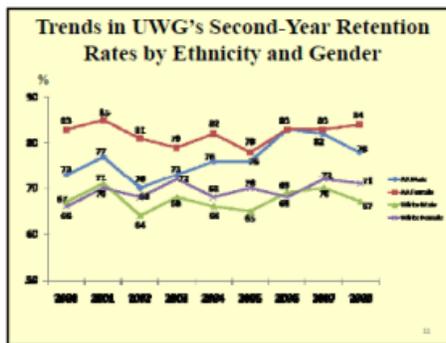
Actions Taken Based on Recommendations of the President's Special Commission to Improve Graduation Rates

- Foreign Language – Insufficient seats in foreign languages to accommodate student needs.
- Early Alert/Early Intervention – Dr. Gantner's e-mail.
- Withdraw/Course Retake Policy – revision underway.
- Summer Transition Program.
- Backlog Courses – money put in the budget.

Early Wins

- Previous RPG efforts are making a difference. Six-Year Graduation rates (which is the standard) have gone up from 34 to 38% in the past four years!
- Started Summer Transition Program this Summer. Early college entrance program.

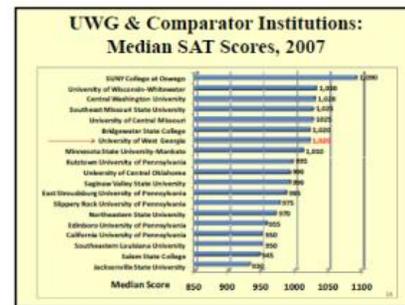
At the Fall meeting, other speakers include the Provost, who shares the plan for the Academic Affairs agenda, and the Deputy Provost who shares with colleagues the



progress on SACS assessment and accreditation, and highlights what has been completed and what needs to be done in the immediate future, using with Gantt charts

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/Service	71%
Commuter FYP	65%
Overall Retention Rate	73%



with dates. Often, hard quantitative data is shared through charts, graphs, etc., such as the next set of six slides from the meeting of the General Faculty in the *Spring* semester of 2010, which demonstrate a commitment to integrated and institution-wide planning and assessment, and also a willingness to take a hard look at ourselves. Note that all these parameters are being continuously monitored and approaches been revised.



- 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

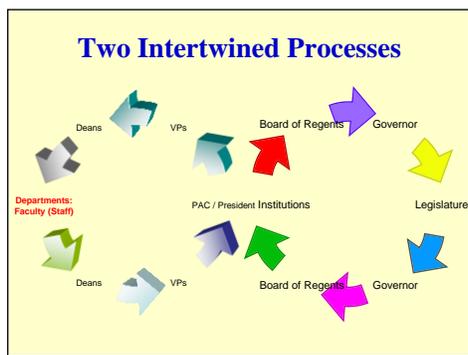
Shortly after the Fall meeting of the General Faculty, there are meetings with the Faculty Senate Budget Committee, and if further elaboration is needed on the items covered in the meeting of the General Faculty, open meetings are called to which the UWG community

is invited [Sidebar comment: In the true spirit of self-assessment, attendees are asked to provide feedback at the end of these meetings which then is used for continuous improvement.]

If there are budget cuts announced during the year, additional meetings are called or additional communications used to keep the UWG community informed. Since the Faculty Senate Budget Committee reports to the Faculty Senate, that is another method used to share information. If there are budget cuts announced during the year, additional meetings are called or additional communications used to keep the UWG community informed.

With a view to a January or (in more recent times, a December) date for submission of budget requests to the University System / Board of Regents' Office, work starts at the department and college levels to develop budget requests up the chain.

As UWG's budget requests are being prepared for submission to the University System Office, additional meetings take place between the administration and the Faculty Senate Budget Committee, and with the UWG community as well. Since the process of state budgets is not obvious to all colleagues, some of the material covered at such meetings includes a description of the budget process. The next set of four slides, first used in an open meeting in 2007, have been re-used (with appropriate modifications) several times to explain the budget process to colleagues.



- ### B. UWG Internal Processes
- ✕ Sept/October: Departments formulate needs for new funds and submit requests to Deans
 - ✕ Mid-October: UWG receives instructions for development of FY2009 budget from USO
 - ✕ October: Colleges & non-academic departments submit requests for new funding to divisional VPs
 - ✕ November: VPs formulate requests for new funding
 - ✕ December: PAC completes request for new funding and submits to System Office
 - ✕ February: Budget hearing at System Office

In recent years, the parameters of the budget requests have been very tightly specified, and UWG budget requests have been written to conform with these parameters, priorities, and constraints.

- ### A. Budget Process and Timetable: "Before" it comes to UWG
- ✕ June: Institutions submit requests for health insurance increases, new retirees, and O&M for new academic square footage
 - ✕ Board of Regents staff develops a budget request and Board approves a proposal for the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB)
 - (FY09 request approved at August 7th meeting)
 - ✕ Fall: Chancellor and senior staff present, explain, and defend the budget proposal to OPB and Governor

- ### Key Legislation of Interest to the University System of Georgia
- House Bill 154** – This bill will create the Intellectual Diversity in Higher Education Act, requiring all USG institutions to submit to the General Assembly an annual report on their efforts to ensure intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas and also to post this information on their websites.
Sponsor: Rep. Tom Rice of Norcross
Status: The bill is being reviewed by the House Higher Education Committee
 - House Bill 915** – (Guns on Campus) This legislation will allow a licensed person to carry a weapon, concealed or unconcealed, in numerous public places, including college campuses.
Sponsor: Rep. Timothy Bearden of Villa Rica
Status: The bill is pending in the House Judiciary Committee. A Senate substitution to House Bill 89, which also deals with where weapons can be carried or kept, is currently pending before a Conference Committee appointed by the Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor
 - House Bill 941** – This legislation will reduce the age at which Georgians may attend classes tuition-free from 62 to 60.
Sponsor: Rep. Bobby Franklin of Marietta
Status: The bill is under review by the Senate Higher Education Committee

For example, for the previous 2-3 years, it has been made clear that Complete College Georgia is the single most important priority. UWG's response to this call is discussed in Example 2.

The president and VPs are usually invited to the University System Office to present their budget to the Chancellor and the leadership team. Feedback from this meeting is shared with the Faculty Senate Budget Committee.

During the legislative session (January to March, or sometimes April), updates are provided to the UWG community depending upon the seriousness of the news. The fourth slide in the preceding set of slides is just an example of some of several slides presented to the UWG community to keep them informed.

UWG's budget allocation is known typically in April, after which UWG administrators have a few days to put together the final budget. Colleges and the Faculty Senate Budget Committee are involved, but in a pragmatic sense, there is very little flexibility at this stage, since the budget allocations are quite specific. Both by the University System of Georgia rules and University of West Georgia rules, we are constrained to spend money consistent with our budget request, monitor those expenditures, assess their effectiveness, and use that data to develop budgets for the following year. The state of the budget is also reported out to the UWG community during the Spring meeting of the General Faculty.

Budgets are approved by the Board of Regents in May, and in the remaining few weeks, the current fiscal year is closed out and new budget made ready.

Divisions, under the leadership of the Vice Presidents, go through a similar planning and budgeting process during the year.

The following examples show how this systematic process of planning, budgeting, assessment and improvement is managed on the university level. The examples include a salary equity study and implementation, a complete college Georgia initiative, and a large scale branding campaign. Each example provides an example of an issue that was identified through ongoing assessment, implemented through integrated system-wide planning, and provide institutional improvement through budgeting and leadership decisions.

Example 1: Salary Equity

During the meeting of the administration with the Faculty Senate Budget Committee to help finalize the FY 2011 budget, all parties at the table agreed that the lack of salary increases was hurting UWG's ability to recruit and retain good faculty.

Approach: While it was understood that the amount of money that would be needed to even make a dent in addressing this need would be far greater than the FY 2011 budget would allow, an immediate decision was made to allocate a sum of \$100,000 to engage a national consultant to study the matter and present recommendations based on a detailed analysis.

The money was allocated and the FY 2011 Faculty Senate Budget Committee was entrusted with the task of prioritizing needs, conceptualizing the study, and engaging the consultant.

FY11 Year-end Assessment: The Faculty Senate Budget Committee had not completed its work, and had not reached consensus on the priorities; i.e. should the focus be salary compression, market parity, general raises, etc. They decided to continue the discussion with the help of the Faculty Senate in the FY 2012 year. They recommended that the FY 2011 allocation of \$100,000 to engage a national consultant be continued in the FY 2012 budget. That recommendation was accepted and implemented.

FY12 Year-end Assessment: The Faculty Senate Budget Committee had not reached consensus and the consultant had not yet been hired. They recommended that the FY 2011 allocation of \$100,000 to engage a national consultant be continued in the FY 2013 budget. That recommendation was accepted and implemented. But, the president made it clear that this was a top priority in FY 2013.

Fall 2012 meeting of the General Faculty: The president stated publicly that he had two priorities that year: they were Complete College Georgia and *completing* faculty and staff salary studies and starting the implementation of the recommendations.

Budget Planning: Even before the analysis started, the president made it clear to the senior administrative team and the Faculty Senate Budget Committee that permanent (not one-time) money would be put aside to make at least a first step in addressing market salary parity. The Faculty Senate Budget Committee appointed the consultant and closely monitored their work.

Year-end Assessment: The consultant was hired, the studies were completed after campus-wide discussions, the hard quantitative data was analyzed, and mid-year adjustments made. There is still a long way to go, but approximately \$4 million of permanent money was used to make these adjustments. A long term plan was identified, adopted by the senate and approved by the president.

Example 2: Complete College Georgia

As discussed in the opening narrative, Complete College Georgia has become a driving force behind the planning, budgeting, assessment, and improvement efforts at the University of West Georgia. Below is a sample of how the institutional effectiveness process has been used to inform UWG’s retention/progression/graduation agenda, which includes the UWG-Complete College Georgia completion initiative.

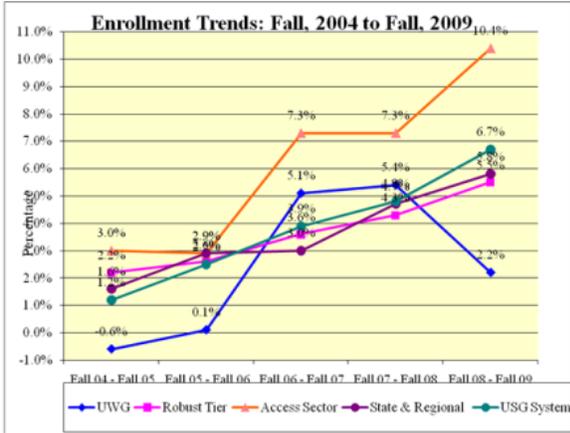
Sample CCG Objectives	Measurement/s	Improvements
Promote dual enrollment with high school students	Dual enrollment applications	Significant growth in UWG’s dual enrollment program is associated with new admission standards for these high school students. These changes were driven by input from our PK-12 partners and supported by performance data that showed that dually enrolled students
	Enrollment data	
	Dual enrollment	

	<p>performance data (eCore program)</p>	<p>outperform UWG freshman students. With data to support the rationale for the change, the Faculty Senate approved the new <i>Dual Enrollment Admission Standards</i> in April, 2013.</p> <p>Baseline data (2011-2012) indicated that 30 students participated in dual enrollment at UWG that year. As of August, 2013, (first term under the new standards), dual enrollment figures increased to 68 students, with an average enrolment of 6.8 credit hours per student.</p>
<p>Develop a Limited Course Withdrawal policy</p>	<p>6-year graduation rates</p> <p>Total number of course withdrawals (W's) on a student's undergraduate transcript (excluding hardship withdrawals and administrative withdrawals)</p> <p>Number of core seats in select courses associated with DFW rates in those courses</p>	<p>The policy, <i>Limited Course Withdrawals</i>, was the result of almost two years of work. The project began with a recommendation from the President's Special Commission to Improve Graduation Rates (Final Report, Fall 2011) and was completed by the UWG Ad Hoc Withdraw-Retake Committee (2012-2013). The following items explain the key data points that informed UWG's decision to create the policy and also include descriptions of collaboration within the institution and across institutions to complete the work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UWG institutional data correlate very low graduation rates with more than six W's on students' transcripts. • Colleges are forced to create additional seats (usually core seats) in response to large numbers of student-initiated course withdrawals. • Financial aid eligibility, athletic eligibility, and immigration status can be negatively affected when students withdraw from courses. • A comparative study of UWG's peer institutions confirmed that many have policies that limit course withdrawals or course repeats. Schools choose one approach or the other, with Banner schools limiting course withdrawals. • The UWG Registrar conferred with Registrars at three USG institutions regarding logistics. • The Ad Hoc Committee developed the

		<p>draft policy components, which include some “lessons learned” from peer institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Associate Deans reviewed the “Petition for Exceptions” portion of the draft policy and approved the petition process included in the draft. • UWG ITS personnel and the two Associate Vice Presidents (Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management) consulted with Georgia Southern Banner programmers who developed the programming to support GSU’s limited course withdrawals policy. <p>The new UWG <i>Limited Course Withdrawals</i> policy went into effect in the Fall 2013 term. As of mid-fall, 2013, the number of student-initiated course withdrawals in early September, 2013, dropped by 18% compared to the same time in September, 2012.</p>
<p>Summer Transition Bridge Program - IGNITE</p>	<p>Admission data (e.g., SAT scores, High School GPAs)</p> <p>Freshman Index Scores</p> <p>First Year Success data (e.g., freshman GPA, retention to sophomore year)</p>	<p>Enrollment Management studied student performance data and concluded that changes to admission criteria for new freshman students were warranted. The new standards were approved by the Academic Policies Committee and approved by the Faculty Senate in September, 2012, after the successful completion of a pilot program in July, 2012.</p> <p>The program was piloted in Summer 2012 with 56 students. Data indicate that the program achieved its goals to help academically at-risk students “get off on the right foot” (i.e., increase retention and performance). All but one IGNITE participant enrolled for the Fall 2012 term (98% retention). The mean GPA for the students for their first term (Summer 2012) was 2.82, compared to 2.43 for Fall 2011 freshmen. The improved first semester GPA is especially promising, because IGNITE students’ admission scores (i.e., high school GPA, SAT, ACT) were lower than those of the Fall 2011 freshman class.</p> <p>The new standards raised the Freshman Index</p>

		Score from 2050 to 2120 to create a pool of conditionally admitted students. Conditionally admitted students must successfully complete a the IGNITE program to gain regular admission to UWG for the fall term.
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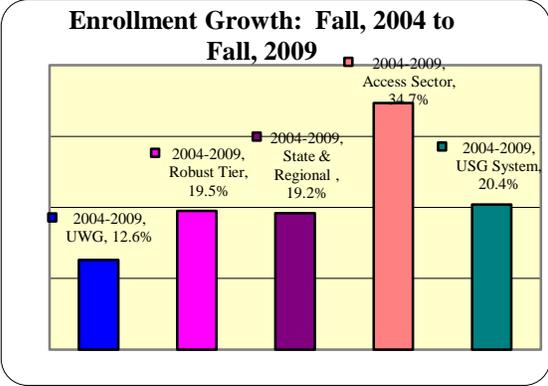
Example 3: Enrollment and Branding



From 2004 to 2009, UWG’s enrollment growth was sluggish. Analysis of data showed that UWG had been losing market share to its immediate competition. While funds were scarce, conversation started about significantly increasing the marketing and advertising presence for UWG. Discussions were held with the Faculty Senate Budget Committee, with the Faculty Senate and with a number of constituencies.

In the Fall, 2010 meeting of the General Faculty, the president included in his remarks, the analysis of the trend data, and the results of a marketing research study UWG had commissioned. Some slides are reproduced here.

Knowing that it is a very tough sell to get faculty and staff to support the spending of resources on marketing and advertising, particularly in tough budget times, he made a case:



No institution can thrive if it loses market share. Market share is an expression of the desirability of the brand. We have the quality, but are losing the battle of the competition for the students’ attention. We have grossly underfunded media dollars and so we need to correct that.

We reside in one of the lower education attainment areas of the State – fewer college graduates than most areas – so, we fulfill an important state-wide and indeed national mission, when we encourage students to go to college and when we help students graduate from college. This ties back to RPG – and we will talk of that in a separate item in a few minutes.

The State loses good students when they go to Alabama, Auburn, Tennessee, and other such institutions to get a Destination University experience. We fulfill an important State-wide and BOR mission when we attract them to stay here.

What role does enrollment play in this equation? It is our fuel for our trajectory – it brings in tuition dollars immediately and formula money two years hence. We need to give the Chancellor the reason to fund UWG when he is faced with so many competing institutions – many of which are growing faster than we are.

I know it would gain me popularity in this room to say: We will stop all growth until we are funded at the appropriate level. But, it would be honest. If we do not grow, we do not have the fuel to fund our trajectory – or even status quo. Remember, that every year, the Chancellor and his staff make budget allocation decisions – where will they put the money? Into institutions which are growing rapidly or into those which are stagnant. So, enrollment growth is not the vision; it is the necessary fuel.

The vision is the Destination University, the Doctoral Research University, the one which great students choose to attend and from which they graduate, the one which is characterized by great academics, a vibrant campus life, and facilities worthy of your work.

Based on this case, the decision was made to proceed with a significant increase in marketing and advertising expenditure in the FY 2011 budget. The following pages show how the results from this decision were continuously monitored, evaluated, and used in a process of continuous improvement.

Results from this strategic direction and budget allocation priority are as follows:

UWG: Brand/Recruitment Metrics for Success

A detailed report of the results of the branding campaign is available on request. A summary from December of 2012 is noted here as an example. This is an ongoing institutional priority.

Brand Awareness

Goal: To ensure the UWG brand message is communicated effectively to key constituencies for generating awareness, interest and inquiry, for raising UWG’s regional profile and for attracting “right fit” students

Wave 1: FY2011	Wave 2: FY 2012	Wave 3: FY 2013
<p>Community/Area Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline study: Fiscal 2011 • Summer 2010 • 42.6% unfamiliar 	<p>Community/Area Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal 2012 • Summer 2011: 49.1% unfamiliar with UWG • Fall Supplemental 2011: 91.5% had 	<p>Community/Area Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal 2013 • Summer 2013: Survey in progress with results available FY2014

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with UWG Name confusion existed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> heard of UWG 80.0% familiar with UWG Name confusion diffused 	
<p>UWG Faculty/Staff Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline study: Fiscal 2011 Pre-brand campaign Brand campaign recall N/A 	<p>UWG Faculty/Staff Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiscal 2012 Fall 2011: 97% had seen Go West ads 66% to recommend UWG 28% had an improved opinion of UWG 	<p>UWG Faculty/Staff Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiscal 2013 Summer 2013: Survey in progress with results available FY 2014
<p>UWG Student Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline study: Fiscal 2011 Pre-brand campaign Brand campaign recall N/A 	<p>UWG Student Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiscal 2012 92% had seen ads 98% (508 comments) were unaided/positive 62% to recommend UWG 27% had an improved opinion of UWG 	<p>UWG Student Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiscal 2013 Summer 2013: Survey in progress with results available FY 2014

Admissions & Enrollment

Goal: To ensure UWG brand/recruitment messaging translates into demonstrated prospective student interest and ultimately to enrollment growth.

Analysis & Action: Creative elements for brand/recruitment efforts were refreshed for outdoor, print and radio as a part of the overall multi-media advertising and publicity campaign

- i. Media campaign delivery is noted below:
 1. FY 2013 media campaign generated over 127.8 million estimated impressions
 2. FY 2012 media campaign generated over 85.2 million estimated impressions
 3. FY 2011 media campaign generated over 105.2 million estimated impressions

Note: Gross impressions represent the number of estimated exposures to an advertising message

Social Media Impact

Goal: To develop direct channels of dialogue between UWG and key audiences for building relationships, targeted engagement and speed of feedback and results

Measured by:

- ii. Facebook “likes” up to 11,143 on December 1, 2012 v. 8,264 on December 1, 2011 and 5,655 on December 1, 2010 – almost double in two years.
- iii. Benchmark of December 2010 (5,655)
- iv. All other Social Media numbers increasing monthly as well

Analysis & Action: UCM reviewed current social media platforms and processes and began the restructuring of social media communications to more effectively align with key messaging as expressed through the overarching brand. A series of structured processes were initiated – based on the platform and its core audience/mission to keep messaging relevant, engaging and authentic to the intended audience

Development and Alumni Relations

Goal: To ensure that the appropriate brand messaging reaches alumni/UWG friends for generating support and inspiring connection and contribution

Measured by: Alumni give rate benchmarked at 3.21 percent for 2010
2012 *U.S. News & World Report* blended rate is 4%, down from 5% in 2011

Analysis & Action

UCM worked closely with Alumni and Development to create comprehensive communications elements in support of the annual fund – including West Go For a Day community drive, faculty/staff participation drive, and alumni engagement events for inspiring connection and giving

Summary

From the narrative above and the examples included, the University of West Georgia provides evidence that it is engaged in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. This argument is supported by the integration of budgeting and actions that have advanced the university in a number of areas including the three examples provided above. Additionally, questions the off-site committee posed to UWG have been addressed.

- 2.7.1** The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.
- (Program Length)**

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Undergraduate Catalog, the Graduate Catalog and other evidence related to minimum credit hours required for a degree. The Committee found that, in general, the institution offers programs at the baccalaureate level that require a minimum of 120 semester credit hours and graduate programs that offer a minimum of 30 semester credit hours. Institutional publications describing the process for degree approval were found. A definition of the semester credit hour unit was found in the Undergraduate Catalog. However, some Specialist Degrees (Ed.S.) offered by the institution do not meet the 30 credit hour minimum: Special Education, Early Childhood Education, and Media Education. These require 27 semester credit hours. The institution did not provide a rationale for the 27 credit hours.

Also, the Graduate Catalog description of the Georgia Web MBA does not list the number of credit hours required for the degree. In addition, as presented in the Undergraduate Catalog, three bachelor degrees (Environmental Science, Earth Science, and Mass Communication) do not list the total number of hours required for the degrees, therefore one cannot determine if the minimum of 120 is met. The BSN degree presented on page 274 (Carrollton) of the Undergraduate Catalog does not meet the 120 credit minimum.

UWG Response:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to each of the programs that appear not to meet the minimum requirements or no rationale was provided. A response to each of the programs noted above follows:

Specialist Degrees (Ed.S.) with majors in Special Education, Professional Counseling and Supervision, Early Childhood Education, and Media Education

The College of Education has four degree programs that require 27 hours:

- Ed.S. in Early Childhood Education
- Ed.S. in Media
- Ed.S. in Professional Counseling and Supervision
- Ed.S. in Special Education

The number of hours for these programs is justified because all of the students in these programs already hold an advanced degree. The programs are highly focused and designed to add depth to students' knowledge. All four programs meet the standards of NCATE/CAEP and the GaPSC (Georgia Professional Standards Commission) within the 27 credit-hour frameworks. Three of these programs were created and approved in the

1970's, and Media was added in the 1980's. All have undergone SACS, NCATE, and PSC review numerous times with no noted Areas for Improvement. As with all programs, these programs undergo regular scrutiny for alignment as standards change. Ed.S. degrees of 27 hours is standard in Georgia, and adding hours would make the programs non-competitive for UWG and more costly for the student.

Georgia Web MBA

The Georgia WebMBA® is a 30 semester hour program that offers professionals the opportunity to earn an accredited online MBA degree. This was an oversight in the 2012-13 Graduate Catalog and has been corrected for the FY 2015 Catalog. The number of credit hours is and always has been provided on the website at http://www.westga.edu/business/webmba_graduate_courses.php.

B.S. with a Major in Mass Communication

The B.S. with a Major in Mass Communications is a 120 credit hour program. Although the catalog does not explicitly state that in the narrative, the degree requirement listing includes 60 hours for the core curriculum, 45 for major specific courses and electives and a required 15-18 hour minor. Thus the program meets the 120 requirement. The catalog also states that for all B.S. programs "A minimum of 120 semester hours of academic college work in an approved program and the physical education requirement of the college from which one graduates. The approved program must include 60 semester hours in the Core Curriculum."

B.S. Degree with a Major in Environmental Science

The catalog for 2012-2013 (pages 213 and 214) indeed does not show that 120 hours are required for the B.S. Degree in Environmental Science. This is an inadvertent error. However, the advising sheet provided to students and used by advisors and the Registrar, clearly indicates 120 hour requirement. The catalog will be updated as well to reflect this requirement.

B.S. Degree with a Major in Earth Science

A perusal of the catalog for 2012-2013 (pages 218 and 219) indeed does not show that 126 hours are required for the B.S. Degree with a Major in Earth Science. This is an inadvertent error. The advising materials clearly show the 126 hour requirement. The catalog will be updated to reflect this requirement including the requirements for the core (60 hours) and the major (66 hours).

BSN degree presented on page 274 (Carrollton) of the Undergraduate Catalog

The BSN curriculum/credit hours listed on p. 274 in the 2012-13 UWG Undergraduate Catalog contains errors and does not reflect the correct number of hours in the program. The catalog errors occurred during a period of transition between two curricula as follows:

The School of Nursing admitted students to a new BSN curriculum in summer 2012 and the Catalog was to include plans of study for both the "pre-summer 2012" curriculum and the "summer 2012" curriculum. The pre-summer 2012 program description and

courses are correct and total 120 hours. The paragraph after the heading, “Traditional Track (Pre-licensure Student, starting Summer 2012) that lists 54 core curriculum hours and 66 nursing hours (6 lower division and 60 upper division) for the curriculum is also correct. However, the courses listed below the paragraph for both Carrollton and Newnan are the “old” nursing courses, which included only 63 hours, and not the “new” curriculum, which includes 66 hours.

The errors were corrected in the 2013-14 UWG Undergraduate Catalog, and the correct plan of study for the “summer 2012 BSN program” can be viewed at:
[http://nursing.westga.edu/assetsNursing/nursing/2012-13_BSN_Plan_of_Study_Cton_and_Newnan\(4\).pdf](http://nursing.westga.edu/assetsNursing/nursing/2012-13_BSN_Plan_of_Study_Cton_and_Newnan(4).pdf).

All BSN students are required to earn the required 120 hours and no BSN students have graduated without a minimum of 120 semester hours.

- *2.8** The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each of its academic programs.
(Faculty)

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Board of Regents Policy Manual and the Statutes of the University of West Georgia and found an adequate definition of full-time faculty. The committee has also examined Tables which adequately show the number of full-time faculty, part-time faculty and the SCH generated by full-time and part-time faculty. The data submitted shows a ratio of full-time to part-time of 2.6:1 which is adequate to meet their mission. It should be noted that the committee has also reviewed documents that state that the University of West Georgia considers a full-time to part-time ratio of 4:1 to the measure of academic quality. With regard to SCH production the institution states that the ratio of full-time to part-time should be 75%, and the data submitted indicates that the university as a whole is meeting its standard. However, the institution did not provide faculty ratios by teaching site.

UWG Response:

UWG appreciates the conscientious review of the off-site team. We acknowledge and are grateful that the off-site committee found UWG compliant with principle 2.8 in terms of credit hours generated on the Carrollton Campus, at off-campus instructional sites, and online.

In response to the off-site committees request to “provide faculty ratios by teaching site,” we failed to describe to the off-site committee that all faculty are assigned to the Carrollton campus. We have no permanent part-time or full-time faculty at any off-site location. On occasion, a part-time faculty member may only teach at an off-site location or online. However, even these part-time faculty members report to department chairs on campus and are evaluated and overseen by them. As such, the best indicator of distribution of full-time and part-time faculty members at off-site locations is analyzed by credit hours produced, for which UWG was found to be compliant by the off-site visit team. The chart was included in our compliance certificate response to principle 2.8 and can be found online here:

https://apps01.westga.edu/sacs/documents/certificates/doc_001051.pdf

- 2.9 The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections and services and to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. Collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. **(Learning Resources and Services)**

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was not able to access information on attachment #1 and #4 as the link did not work; attachment #6 did not show a list of databases that is owned or accessed as it is described in the body of the text; attachment #13 did not work; attachment #21 was blank; and attachment #22 and #24 provided the same information. The institution supplied information and documentation concerning its library collections, various types of materials held within the library and comparison of collection data with other university libraries within the Georgia system. However, the institution did not provide policies and procedures governing collections. The institution identified and documented the process to access consortia and interlibrary loan arrangements. The library facility and students' satisfaction survey result was described in detail in 3.8.1. The evidence presented in the report indicates an adequate library program and attention to facility and services that reflect adaptive process that allow the library to fulfill its mission. The documentation describes distance learning services and resources provided for online and off-site programs, including online information resources, 24/7 Reference Chat services.

UWG Response:

The off-site committee found several links were broken. Those links are addressed below. Regardless of the broken links, the off-site committee found that "the institution did not provide policies and procedures governing collections." The policies are located at the web sites noted below. They are also included on the thumb drive given to the committee in PDF format.

Policy links:

Policies and Procedures

<http://www.westga.edu/libraryadmin/index_21832.php>

Library Collection Development Policy

<<http://libguides.westga.edu/content.php?pid=449565>>

Additional Narrative:

Regarding the broken links in the original report, the majority of the notes from the off-site committee reference inaccessible links. For these notes, the library has provided the link that was in the original report, a link to a PDF copy of the information found at the link <<http://goo.gl/T7l4D9>>. They are also included on the thumb drive provided to the committee.

Specific notes follow. The content of these links are included in the PDF noted above.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was not able to access information on several links included in the compliance certificate. Each link is addressed below.

Response

Link #1: GALILEO: Georgia Libraries Learning Online <<http://www.galileo.usg.edu/>>

Link #4: Library Reports: Collections
<http://www.westga.edu/libraryadmin/index_21831.php#collections>

Link #6: GALILEO: All UWG Library Databases
<<http://www.galileo.usg.edu/scholar/westga/databases/all/>>

The link to “GALILEO: All UWG Library Databases” lists all the databases available from the library. Those purchased directly from UWG library funds are indicated by the flame icon next to the resource on this list. The other resources are purchased via a combination of UWG library and GALILEO funding.

Link #13: Interlibrary Loan Services
<<http://libguides.westga.edu/content.php?pid=11217>>

Link #21: UWG Library QuestionPoint
<<http://www.questionpoint.org/crs/servlet/org.oclc.admin.BuildForm?&page=frame&institution=13457&type=2&queue=WESTGA&language=1>>

Library’s report, the following links were the same:

Link #22: UWG Library: Subject Librarians
<http://www.westga.edu/library/index_12604.php>

Link #24: UWG Library: Subject Librarians
<http://www.westga.edu/library/index_12604.php>

Link #24 should have been:

Library: Contact Information <http://www.westga.edu/library/index_12023.php>

Link #26: UWG Library: Technical Services
<http://www.westga.edu/libraryadmin/index_22089.php>

Left Pane Selection “Policies and Procedures”
<http://www.westga.edu/libraryadmin/index_21832.php>

Includes: Library Collection Development Policy
<<http://libguides.westga.edu/content.php?pid=449565>>

2.11.1 The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services

The member institution provides the following financial statements: (1) an institutional audit (or *Standard Review Report* issued in accordance with *Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services* issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a system wide or statewide audit) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or *Standard Review Report*) guide; (2) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and (3) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board. **(Financial Resources)**

Non-Compliance

The institution presented a narrative and supporting documents that a sound financial base does exist. Partial evidence of a sound financial base was demonstrated through an inclusive budget process. The process is a bottom up approach starting with departments and schools. Divisions are then responsible for developing their requests with their department managers based on strategic directives from the system office and the campus president. Oversight of the budget process comes from the President's Advisory Committee and the Faculty Senate Budget Committee. The UGS Board of Regents has final approval of the annual budget before it is implemented.

Financial information was presented in the narrative and supporting documentation to demonstrate compliance with this requirement. A 233% increase in unrestricted net assets from \$11,022,725 in 2008 to \$36,737,344 in 2012 was highlighted. Also during this 5 year period, total assets grew by 76% (\$154,902,425 to \$272,370,340) with current assets showing growth of 77%. The current ratio (current assets/current liabilities) is 3.46, which represents a good short-term financial position.

The institution has seen a student population growth from year 2003 of 10,255 students to 11,646 students in year 2012. There was a slight decrease in enrollment of 1.9% in fiscal year 2011. To counter the enrollment decline, the Institution instituted a 2% budget reduction plan in 2012. Steady enrollment growth strengthens the case for financial stability.

The institution is audited by the State of Georgia's Department of Audits and Accounts. The audit for the most recent year ended June 30, 2013 is in process and will not be sent to SACS until December 2013. Therefore, the accuracy of the current financial position as of the end of fiscal year 2013 cannot yet be verified. The written management letter for year 2013 should accompany the audit. The institution is part of an annual state-wide single audit.

Supporting documentation included the following: unrestricted net assets spreadsheet for FY 2008-2012; annual financial reports; budget development worksheets; budget feedback from review committees; budget process and allocations; Board of Regents budget approval; internal audit of budget process and controls; strategic plan; monthly budget status report to Vice President of Business and Finance.

UWG Response:

The University of West Georgia (UWG) was found to have a sound financial base and demonstrates financial support that adequately supports the mission of the University and the scope of its programs and services. The steady growth in student population from 2003 at a head count of 10,255 to a headcount of 11,929 in 2013 indicates a strong and stable enrollment base. This growth coupled with the strong financial performance displayed in our schedule of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and related debt, for the previous five years is an additional indicator that UWG meets this Core Requirement.

Our most recent audit, which was not available at the time we submitted the compliance certificate shows unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and related debt, had a growth of 175.7% from \$15,367,858 to \$42,369,589. Other indicators of financial strength over this five year period are a growth in UWG's current assets by 60.27%, an improvement in current ratio from 1.87 to 3.83, and a growth in year-end cash balance from \$29,937,084 to \$50,404,422. These trends demonstrate that the university is "living within its means" and this performance is sustainable. The most recent audit and management report are included on the thumb drive given to the committee.

- 3.2.1** The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the periodic evaluation of the chief executive officer. **(CEO evaluation/selection)**

Non-Compliance

The institution has provided documentation relating to the recent presidential search that culminated in the appointment of the current president on March 22, 2013 by the Board of Regents; and the institution has provided copies of annual reappointment letters of the current president by the Board pursuant to BOR Policy Manual Section 2.3. However, the reappointment letters did not provide information regarding the Board's criteria and processes for evaluating effective performance of the president annually.

UWG Response:

Included on the thumb drive are PDF copies of letters from the Chancellor of the University System of Georgia and the Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs and Secretary to the Board for the University System of Georgia. These two letters provide a description of the annual evaluation process for the University President and the most recent evaluation of the former President.

3.2.3 The governing board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members. **(Board conflict of interest)**

Non-Compliance

Conflicts of interest involving members of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia are prohibited by the Code of Ethics established under §45-10-1 through §45-10-41 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. In addition to these provisions, Board of Regents bylaws prohibit members from accepting gifts or compensation and from recommending persons for employment within the University System of Georgia. However, the institution did not provide evidence that the policy has been applied or whether a circumstance has occurred requiring application of the policy.

UWG Response:

The off-site committee found that “the institution did not provide evidence that the policy has been applied or whether a circumstance has occurred requiring application of the policy.” UWG has no evidence that any circumstance exists or has existed that would require the Board to implement this policy. As such, there is no evidence available for UWG to submit regarding the application of this policy.

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas (**Institutional Effectiveness**):

***3.3.1.1** educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Academic Program/Student Learning Outcome Assessment Summary—August 2013 and other documentation provided by the institution. The Off-Site Committee could not determine that all educational programs have identified measurable outcomes, are assessing the extent to which they achieve those outcomes, and are using the results for improvement.

The sample of learning outcomes assessment reports contained in the Academic Program/Student Learning Outcome Assessment Summary—August 2013 demonstrates that some, but not all, of the educational programs have identified assessment methods/measures for some of their learning outcomes, used those methods/measures to assess student performance on appropriate learning outcomes, and made improvements in educational programs based on assessment results.

The narrative does not provide a rationale for the sample of learning outcomes assessment reports provided in the Academic Program/Student Learning Outcome Assessment Summary—August 2013. It is not clear how the programs and reports for specific objectives were chosen for presentation. Reports of assessment for all learning outcomes are not provided for those programs included in the sample and some reports have missing data or evidence. Many reports seem to indicate that changes are being made in assessment methods, and not in academic programs. Additionally, the narrative and sample of learning outcomes assessment reports provide little detail on assessment methods used, improvements made, and impacts of improvements. The manner in which the sample of assessment reports is presented makes it difficult to determine if learning outcomes are being consistently assessed throughout all academic programs.

Many student learning outcomes provided in the sample are not stated in measurable terms. The narrative and academic program assessment reports provide little detail on assessment methods used, improvements made, and impacts of improvements. Many of the reported improvements appear to be changes in assessment methods and not improvements in academic programs.

The narrative also cites the Comprehensive Program Review process as part of educational program assessment. The Template for program review includes program learning outcomes, data summary, summary of modifications based on the data, and future assessment plans. The link for Completed Comprehensive Program Reviews was broken, so the committee was unable to review and verify the relevance of these reports.

The On-Site Committee should determine if educational programs have identified measurable outcomes, are assessing the extent to which the outcomes are achieved, and are using the results for improvement.

The institution did not address the assessment of online and distance education programs.

UWG Response:

The off-site committee could not find sufficient evidence that the University of West Georgia was in compliance with this principle. In this focused report, we address each of their concerns. Several of the concerns are addressed by clarification and reorganizing the data presented in the compliance certificate. Additional information is included about the process of assessment and improvement in academic programs so the on-site committee will be assured of the University of West Georgia's commitment to and implementation of this principle.

The off-site committee found:

1. *The sample of learning outcomes assessment reports contained in the Academic Program/Student Learning Outcome Assessment Summary—August 2013 demonstrates that some, but not all, of the educational programs have identified assessment methods/measures for some of their learning outcomes, used those methods/measures to assess student performance on appropriate learning outcomes, and made improvements in educational programs based on assessment results...The narrative does not provide a rationale for the sample of learning outcomes assessment reports provided in the Academic Program/Student Learning Outcome Assessment Summary—August 2013. It is not clear how the programs and reports for specific objectives were chosen for presentation. Reports of assessment for all learning outcomes are not provided for those programs included in the sample and some reports have missing data or evidence.*

UWG response:

We thank the committee for its review and look forward to providing additional data and analysis to support UWG's compliance with this principle.

The off-site committee found that "the narrative does not provide a rationale for the sample of learning outcomes assessment reports provided in the Academic Program/Student Learning Outcome Assessment Summary—August 2013." In response to this statement, the sample was selected by individuals on campus having responsibility for assessment. The academic programs and learning outcomes were selected to represent the breadth, quality, and diversity of learning outcome assessments and improvements taking place across all academic programs. It was not a random sample.

Additionally, the narrative within the document assures that the sample is representative of the academic program offerings at UWG. It states that: "All colleges/schools and degree levels are represented in the sample. In addition to this sample below, more than 400 assessments were completed that resulted in satisfactory student achievement....Table 3A shows the distribution of assessments by location. This provides evidence that assessment and improvements are completed and implemented at all sites at which academic programs are offered."

Additionally, due to the volume of data supplied to the off-site team, it may have been difficult to determine the process by which one academic program is assessed and improved. Therefore, we combed through our assessment data and present a simpler and clearer sample for review by the on-site committee. This is demonstrated here as an alternative format for review by the on-site committee. Please see the “Additional Analysis” section below.

The off-site committee found:

2. Many reports seem to indicate that changes are being made in assessment methods, and not in academic programs...Many of the reported improvements appear to be changes in assessment methods and not improvements in academic programs

UWG response:

This is a philosophical statement by the off-site committee regarding the nature of program improvements. We argue that academic programs are inclusive of academic content, instructional methods, student learning, assessment methods, and analysis of student performance. An improvement in any phase of this process is by its nature an improvement to the academic program.

Therefore, it is unclear how an improvement of an assessment method within an academic program is not considered an improvement in the program. It may be problematic if analysis of all assessment results resulted in an institution concluding that a change in assessment method or assessment tool was needed; however, this is not the case in the data presented to the off-site committee. The off-site committee had the opportunity to review a table showing 325 identified program improvements, only 77 of those were improvements in evaluation; 65 were improvements in curriculum; 55 had multiple improvements; 75 improved pedagogy (instructional methods) and 65 were noted as other (affecting another part of the academic program or integrated parts of the academic program). The improvements presented to the off-site committee provide evidence of systemic use of assessment results to all phases of an academic program.

The off-site committee found:

3. Many student learning outcomes provided in the sample are not stated in measurable terms.

UWG Response:

This is a difficult statement to respond to as there is no identification of which learning outcomes are not measurable. For more information, please see the section titled “Additional Analysis” below.

The off-site committee found:

4. Additionally, the narrative and sample of learning outcomes assessment reports provide little detail on assessment methods used, improvements made, and impacts of improvements.

UWG response:

It is difficult to tell what constitutes sufficient narrative regarding the assessment methods used, improvements made and impacts of improvements. For a detailed response to this statement, please see the section titled "Additional Analysis" below.

The off-site committee found:

5. The manner in which the sample of assessment reports is presented makes it difficult to determine if learning outcomes are being consistently assessed throughout all academic programs.

UWG response:

We regret that the presentation of the evidence made it difficult to determine if learning outcomes were consistently assessed throughout all academic programs. As such, we provide additional analysis in a section below, organized by college to provide an alternative method for evaluating UWG compliance with this principle.

The off-site committee found:

6. The institution did not address the assessment of online and distance education programs.

UWG response:

This statement from the off-site review committee is somewhat perplexing as the Compliance Certificate submitted by UWG stated the following:

"All locations at which a student can earn more than 50% of an academic credential are represented, including online. Student learning outcomes are consistent within each degree program across all locations and modes of delivery."

"Faculty members and coordinators of each program determine appropriate student learning outcomes for their specific programs. It should be noted here that, in accordance with the SACS "Distance and Corresponding Education", the online programs offered at UWG are also included into the assessment process."

And "These assessment processes apply to all academic programs regardless of mode or location of delivery (on-campus, off-campus, or online)."

Nevertheless, we restate here that all educational programs offered at off-site locations or online are subject to an independent review using the same assessment process employed for all academic programs and were included in the data submitted to the off-site team.

The off-site committee found:

7. The link for Completed Comprehensive Program Reviews was broken, so the committee was unable to review and verify the relevance of these reports.

UWG Response:

We apologize for this technical error. The completed comprehensive program reviews are posted online at this link: http://www.westga.edu/vpaa/index_14573.php

The username is: progreview

Additional Analysis

The University of West Georgia identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of its academic programs. As a supplement to the analysis provided in the compliance certificate, this analysis provides a detailed account of how this process works at UWG. It includes two parts that address program productivity and the assessment of learning outcomes.

1) Productivity of Academic Programs

The University System of Georgia has established minimum criteria for academic program productivity. These levels are also implemented at UWG. As noted in a letter from the System office, "Those programs that are deemed to be low-producing and subject to a more detailed review for continuance are highlighted in yellow based upon the following criteria: Associate programs: less than 5 graduates; Bachelor's programs: less than 10 graduates; Master's programs: less than 5 graduates; Specialist in Education programs: less than 5 graduates; Doctoral programs: less than 3 graduates; First Professional programs: less than 3 graduates."

The University of West Georgia regularly measures programs against these criteria. The most recent analysis conducted is outlined in the Table 1 below. This table only includes low-producing programs (for this analysis several programs are considered as a group, i.e. B.A. in Art and B.A. in Art Education). Each academic program was measured against the criteria noted above. Improvements and/or implemented changes are noted in the last column. This provides one level of evidence that UWG establishes outcomes for academic programs, assesses the extent it achieves these outcomes and implements improvements based on the analysis of the results. This table is provided in the Institutional Effectiveness Addendum provided to the committee.

2) Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes within academic programs

The second section of the additional analysis focuses on the assessment of student learning outcomes within academic programs and the improvements in these programs based on analysis of the results. The data submitted in the compliance certificate included a broad sample across nearly all academic programs and program locations. This sample focuses on depth within a sample of academic programs within each college or school. This report is formatted such that each college or school can be analyzed independently for compliance with this principle. These reports are included in the Institutional Effectiveness Addendum provided to the committee and included on the thumb drive. This additional analysis and the original submission should provide reviewers a clear picture of how UWG complies with principle 3.3.1.1

Summary

The off-site committee recommended that the on-site committee “determine if educational programs have identified measurable outcomes, are assessing the extent to which the outcomes are achieved, and are using the results for improvement.”

We look forward to the on-site committee’s review of the original submission of the compliance certificate, this focused report including the additional analysis and the Institutional Effectiveness Supplement, which is prepared by college or school for independent analysis, and interviews with program directors who will be prepared to review the learning outcomes, assessments, and improvements based on the analysis of the results in all academic programs and all locations of delivery. It is our belief that the University of West Georgia has taken this principle seriously and is addressing the quality of educational programs through the institutional effectiveness process within its educational programs.

3.3.1.2 administrative support services

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Administrative Support Areas—Assessment Summary Reporting Year 2011-2012 and other documentation provided by the institution. The committee was unable to determine if administrative support units have identified expected outcomes, are assessing the identified outcomes, and using the results for improvement.

The institution provides evidence that it has identified appropriate objectives for most administrative support services units. Some units have used appropriate methods to assess their objectives, have made improvements, and evaluated the impact of those improvements.

The Administrative Support Areas—Assessment Summary Reporting Year 2011-2012 provides the full assessment reports for all of the administrative support service units, and the Annual Reports of Institutional Progress provide a sample of improvements from select administrative support service units. The institution did not provide a rationale for the samples of improvements included in the Annual Reports of Institutional Progress.

A few units have identified assessment methods that measure the effectiveness or quality of the unit. University Advancement uses the Annual Awareness Study for tracking awareness and attitudes. ITS measures the total calls resolved at the first point of contact and the first call resolution rate. Institutional Research and Planning conducts a survey of the university community to determine their opinions about the staff, the services provided, and to solicit suggestions for continuous improvements.

Many units have identified assessment methods that focus on counting actions or operations rather than measuring the effectiveness of operations or services provided by the unit. For example, Development and Alumni Relations lists as an assessment method, “Number of alumni engagement events, attendance at alumni events, alumni attendance at University events.” It was not clear to the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee how Development and Alumni Relations would use this type of information to make improvements in its operations. Business and Finance noted that it will track the “number of training sessions offered”, but do not state that the quality of the sessions provided to participants will be assessed.

A number of units have identified objectives, but did not identify assessment methods (see reports for Internal Audit, University General Counsel, and Research and Sponsored Projects). Other units have identified assessment methods that are stated as objectives or tasks. For example, Intercollegiate Athletics listed “Adding Women’s Track and Field, hiring Women’s Track and Field Coach” as an assessment method. Special Events listed “Work closely with departments and understand their vision and work to fulfill that vision.” Human Resources listed “Completion of tasks.” Facilities and Grounds listed “Provide needed support to all activities/events on campus” as an assessment method.

Other units identified assessment methods that appeared to be assessment results and not measures. For example, Business and Finance listed that Goal 1 “Was fully implemented across campus by March 2012 with very few issues recorded.” Learning Support and Testing listed “A specifically designed manual for LS students was created . . .” Townsend Center listed, “Recruit new ticket clients on-campus. We did this and continue working to recruit more.”

Several of the administrative support units reported training or instruction as activities provided for various groups (i.e., Budget Services, Institutional Diversity, ITS, and Ombuds). It is reasonable expect that learning outcomes for these training or instructional functions would be identified and assessed.

Additionally, the narrative and administrative support unit outcomes assessment reports provide little detail on assessment methods used, improvements made, and impacts of improvements.

The On-Site Reaffirmation `Committee should determine whether administrative support units have identified appropriate outcomes, are appropriately assessing their identified outcomes, and using the results for improvement.

UWG Response:

Due to the number of issues identified by the off-site committee regarding the assessment of administrative support services at UWG, this Focused Report includes an addendum with the information for principle 3.3.1.2 organized by division. As such, the off-site committee will have available to them in this addendum a clear and focused report providing evidence of how UWG complies with this principle. Please see the addendum for details about UWG’s compliance with this principle.

3.3.1.3 academic and student support services

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Academic and Student Support Areas—Assessment Summary Reporting Year 2011-2012 and other documents provided by the institution. The committee was unable to determine that Academic and Student Support Services units have identified appropriate outcomes, are appropriately assessing their identified outcomes, and using the results for improvement.

The institution has identified appropriate objectives for many academic and student support services units. Some units have used appropriate methods to assess their objectives, have made improvements, and evaluated the impact of those improvements.

Some units appear to be struggling to identify appropriate outcomes. The First-Year Experience Department lists as its only outcome, “to measure the retention rates of students enrolled in each of the first-year programs.” This appears to be more of a task or assessment method than an outcome. The Registrar’s Office listed their only outcome as, “Continuous Improvement’ of processes, policy and procedure.” Other units provided no outcomes (i.e., Honors College and Tans-Disciplinary Programs, Evaluation Center).

The Academic and Student Support Areas—Assessment Summary Reporting Year 2011-2012 provided the assessment reports for most of the academic and student support services units, and the Annual Reports of Institutional Progress provided a sample of improvements from select administrative support service units. It is not clear why some units (i.e., the College of Education, the Richard College of Business, the College of Science and Mathematics, College of Arts and Humanities, and the College of Social Sciences) are missing from the Academic and Student Support Areas—Assessment Summary Reporting Year 2011-2012.

A few units have identified assessment methods that measure the effectiveness or quality of the unit. The Philosophy program uses the uses a senior exit survey to measure the extent to which faculty of the program have met program goals. Distance Education uses customer service surveys to evaluate its operations. eCore uses the Annual Students Services Survey measure satisfaction, services, and success factors.

Many units have identified assessment methods that focus on counting actions or operations rather than measuring the effectiveness of operations or services provided by the unit. EXCEL: Center for Academic Success counted the number of students attending the Mardi Gras of Majors, but did not report asking attendees to provide feedback on the event. Economics counted the number faculty attending a research-related conference, making presentations at a research-oriented conference, and the number of faculty credited with peer-reviewed publications. The Center for Business and Economic Research counted the number of participants at the economic forecast breakfast, but did not report asking attendees to provide feedback on the event. The institution offers a variety of activities and programs in support of its goals. However, the institution does not articulate identifiable, assessable, and relevant outcomes.

A number of units have identified objectives, but did not identify assessment methods (see reports for Internal Audit, University General Counsel, and Research and Sponsored Projects). Other units have identified assessment methods that seem to be stated as objectives, tasks, or assessment results.

Additionally, the narrative and academic and student support unit outcomes assessment reports provide little detail on assessment methods used, improvements made, and impacts of improvements.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee should determine whether Academic and Student Support Services units have identified appropriate outcomes, are appropriately assessing their identified outcomes, and using the results for improvement.

UWG Response:

Similar to 3.3.1.2, due to the number of issues identified by the off-site committee regarding the assessment of academic and student support services. at UWG. This Focused Report includes an addendum with the information for principle 3.3.1.3 organized by division, college, or school. As such, the off-site committee will have available to them in this addendum a clear and focused report providing evidence of how UWG complies with this principle. Please see the addendum for details about UWG's compliance with this principle.

3.3.1.4 research within its mission, if appropriate

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the institutions definition of research, how the institution identifies research as part of its Mission and Essential Activities in its Strategic Plan, and other documentation provided by the institution. The committee was unable to determine that research units (including academic programs, sponsored programs, and research centers) have identified appropriate outcomes, are appropriately assessing their identified outcomes, and using the results for improvement.

The narrative for 3.3.1.4 focuses almost exclusively on the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects (ORSP). Research centers (i.e., Center for Survey Research, Center for Study of Developed Shorelines, and West Georgia Microscopy Center), sponsored research programs, and degree programs and courses were not addressed.

Listed in the narrative are “the instruments used to measure progress toward ORSP goals and outcomes.” Items in this list appear to be outcomes rather than measures, and do not match the list of expected outcomes listed for ORSP in the Administrative Support Areas—Assessment Summary Reporting Year 2011-2012. No explanation is given for the differences in the information provided in the narrative and what is listed in the Administrative Support Areas—Assessment Summary Reporting Year 2011-2012. Additionally, ORSP lists no assessment methods, results, improvements, or impacts of improvements in the Administrative Support Areas—Assessment Summary Reporting Year 2011-2012. It is noted in the narrative that the ORSP has been restructured.

Data on the “measures” listed for ORSP in the narrative focus on “counting things” and are not likely to produce results leading to improvement of the operations of ORSP. Changes in the number of proposals submitted of external funding are not likely to provide information for identifying needed improvements in research.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee should look for evidence that research units, (including academic programs, sponsored programs, and research centers) have identified appropriate outcomes, are appropriately assessing their identified outcomes, and using the results for improvement

UWG Response:

Similar to 3.3.1.2 and 3.3.1.3, due to the number of issues identified by the off-site committee regarding the assessment of research at UWG. This Focused Report includes an addendum with the information for principle 3.3.1.4 organized by college or area. As such, the off-site committee will have available to them in this addendum a clear and focused report providing evidence of how UWG complies with this principle. Please see the addendum for details about UWG’s compliance with this principle.

3.3.1.5 community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the documentation provided by the institution, and found that the institution has identified community/public service as part of its Mission and Strategic Plan. The committee was unable to determine that all units providing community/public service have identified appropriate outcomes, are appropriately assessing their identified outcomes, and using the results for improvement.

The institution's Annual Report of Institutional Progress provides a sample of improvements related to community/public service, but there is no explanation of the selection of this sample. Also, there is no evidence included in the narrative that units providing community/public service have developed appropriate outcomes and assessment methods. It is not clear from the narrative or documents provided that the institution has clearly identified all units providing community/public service.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee should look for evidence that all units providing community/public service have identified appropriate outcomes, are appropriately assessing their identified outcomes, and using the results for improvement.

UWG Response:

Due to the number of issues identified by the off-site committee regarding the assessment of community and public service, at UWG. This Focused Report includes an addendum with the information for principle 3.3.1.5. Please see the addendum for details about UWG's compliance with this principle.

***3.4.3** The institution publishes admissions policies that are consistent with its mission.
(Admissions policies)

Non-Compliance

The institution publishes some admission criteria for undergraduates and these appear to be consistent with its mission. However, the institution uses a decentralized graduate admission process that places admission decisions in the hands of the respective colleges. In these areas, the Off Site committee had difficulty finding criteria (for example, the MAT and Ph.D in Psychology programs) or in determining whether overly broad criteria could be compared to the respective graduate program mission. For instance, the MA in Sociology program indicates that an applicant only needs to take the GRE; it does not indicate a score needed that could be applied to determine if it was consistent with the mission (to include, in an extreme instance, a score of zero if the mission was simply to provide open access to graduate studies in Sociology). A similar situation exists with the Master's in Public Administration program and its reference to an unspecified GRE score and indeterminate undergraduate record.

This lack of clarity makes it difficult for the Off Site Reaffirmation Committee, and for student applicants, to determine if admission policies are consistent with the mission of the program or the institution.

UWG Response:

The University of West Georgia publishes follows admission criteria for all programs that are consistent with its mission. As noted by the off-site team, UWG was found to be compliant with this principle for undergraduate programs. Regarding graduate program admissions criteria, the off-site team is correct that UWG follows a decentralized model for admissions decisions for graduate programs. However, each program has its own criteria that are published, available to students, and consistent with the UWG and college missions. Each program found to have questions from the off-site team is discussed below as are the criteria for other graduate programs at UWG.

The off-site committee had specific questions about the following programs:

MAT (Master of Arts in Teaching)

The Master of Arts in Teaching is a degree for career changes. It provides a pathway for students with an undergraduate degree in a noneducation field to earn a masters and teaching credential simultaneously. With this mission, the admissions criteria are “Students must have an undergraduate degree in one of the fields above or in a list of approved fields for each teaching area (for a list of degrees which are approved for entry into the MAT and their associated teaching field, [click here](#)) and must pass or exempt the GACE Basic Skills exam and the GACE content exam in their respective teaching field. An undergraduate GPA of 2.7 is required for unconditional admission. The GRE is not required for admission. If a student has between a 2.0 and a 2.49 GPA, they can be admitted provisionally whereby they will be allowed to enroll for nine hours of graduate work at UWG. If they complete the graduate work at a 3.0 or higher GPA, they can then be eligible for admission to the MAT if all other requirements are met.”

Ph.D in Psychology

Admissions Requirements

“Three letters of recommendations on official letterhead stationery. Academic letters are preferred although other professional letters will be accepted. Letters must arrive in sealed, signed envelopes with this form. (Send directly to the College of Social Sciences at address listed above).

An official Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Score. There is no minimum but GRE scores will be considered in the applicant’s profile and must be submitted. The program will not accept scores more than 5 years old. For more information about the GRE, please visit the web site at www.gre.org/gentest/. GRE scores should be sent directly to the Admission’s Office.

A current curriculum vitae listing contact information (including email address), educational background, employment history, awards and recognitions, presentations, etc. (Send directly to the College of Social Sciences – address above).

A reflective essay describing why you are drawn to this particular program and how you understand the relation of consciousness and society. The essay should include a statement of how you imagine the program will contribute to your future plans. (Send directly to the College of Social Sciences – address above).

A writing sample, an academic paper is highly preferred but other formats are acceptable. (Send directly to the College of Social Sciences – address above).

Note: Applicants with a Bachelor’s degree will be considered, although applicants with graduate degrees, e.g. a Master’s degree are preferred. Those with degrees outside of psychology are welcome as well as those with degrees in the field of psychology. Additional courses in the Department of Psychology at the University of West Georgia may be required due to disciplinary background or level of educational attainment. After your complete application has been received by the College of Social Sciences, it will be sent to the Director of the Ph.D. Program.”

http://www.westga.edu/gradstudies/Doctoral-program-details.php?program_id=102

MA in Sociology

“To apply to the program, a student is ordinarily expected to have a degree in sociology or a related discipline. Applicants for graduate study in sociology must have:

1. taken the GRE (the department will waive the GRE for students who have an overall GPA of 3.2 and a GPA of 3.5 in Sociology-see below for details)
2. a 750-word intellectual autobiography that includes reasons for seeking the degree, and
3. three letters of recommendation.

Applicants who have taken 21 upper division hours in Sociology at the University of West Georgia, six of which must be from required courses, and who meet the GPA requirements listed above do not have to take the GRE to be considered for regular admission.”

Master of Public Administration

“Applicants must hold an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university. Students with any undergraduate major may apply. Those students with no prior public administration education or public service experience will be required to take POLS 5200, Principles of Public Administration. This course does not count toward the 36 hours required for the degree.

Admission will be based on the M.P.A. Committee's evaluation of three factors: GRE scores, the student's undergraduate record, and letters of recommendation. When appropriate, an oral interview may be required.”

Summary

The off-site committee found it somewhat troubling that several of the programs noted above required the GRE, but did not list minimum scores required for admission. This is intentional and is in line with the mission of the institution and the admissions philosophy for the programs. The GRE, GPA, writing samples, and other admission criteria listed for each program are part of a complete package the admissions committee and/or program director uses to evaluate a candidate's likely success in the program.

In addition to these programs, other programs publish requirements in Graduate Catalog and on program web sites. Program admissions are in line with the mission of UWG and the respective College or School. Examples are noted below.

Richards College of Business

Admissions policies for the Richards College are included in the Undergraduate Catalog, Graduate Catalog, and online. In addition to University admissions requirements for undergraduate students, (available at <http://www.westga.edu/undergrad/1659.htm>), the Richards College states the following as requirements for major status (<http://www.westga.edu/undergrad/5586.htm>):

“A business pre-major will become eligible for full business major status when he/she completes 45 hours of academic coursework with a cumulative grade point of 2.0 or higher and the following courses are completed: MATH 1111 or 1113 (C or higher); ACCT 2101; MATH 1413; ECON 2105 or 2106; and ENGL 1101 (C or higher). Students may be denied enrollment in the Richards College of Business for acts such as engaging in unprofessional behavior in a class or in any interaction with UWG faculty, staff, or students or engaging in dishonest or unethical conduct.” This is consistent with the College mission to educate and prepare students for positions of responsibility in business and society.

This concept of responsibility is expanded in graduate admissions within the Richards College. The Graduate Catalog states (http://www.westga.edu/catalog_grad/5322.htm):

“Initial and continued enrollment in any graduate program within the Richards College of Business is not only determined by academic criteria. Honest, ethical, professional behavior must be demonstrated at all times during the admissions process and throughout one's tenure as a student in the program. Students may therefore be denied enrollment or removed from any graduate program for engaging in dishonest, unethical, unprofessional behavior in a class, or in any interaction with University of West Georgia faculty, staff, or students. The graduate programs in the Richards College of Business rely on a competitive admission process. Applicants must complete an undergraduate

degree from an accredited institution. Applicants must have a grade of "C" or better in all undergraduate prerequisites courses. Additionally, the applicant is subject to program specific criteria."

Admissions criteria for the MBA program are: "Applicants must attain a score of 950 points based on the formula: (undergraduate GPA (on a 4.0 scale) x 200) + the applicant's Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) score, and a 3.0 or higher on the analytical writing section of the GMAT: OR Attain a score of 1000 points based on the formula: (the upper division undergraduate GPA (last 60 hours, on a 4.0 scale) x 200) + the applicant's GMAT score, and a 3.0 or higher on the analytical writing section of the GMAT: OR In a limited number of cases, prospective students with substantial management experience (in rank and tenure) and a strong academic background may apply for and be granted a GMAT Waiver."

WebMBA criteria state: "Admission requirements for the Georgia WebMBA® are the same as those for the traditional program offered on campus in Carrollton and at the satellite locations in Newnan and Douglasville with the additional requirements of a minimum of two years professional work experience."

MPAcc criteria are: "Admission requires an undergraduate GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, a GMAT score of 450 or higher with an Analytical Writing score of 3.0 or higher and transcripts from all undergraduate institutions. The GMAT will be waived for applicants who have an undergraduate accounting degree from an AACSB- accredited institution and an overall GPA of a 3.2 or higher. Alternatively, the upper-division GPA may be applied to determine admissions qualifications provided the above conditions are satisfied (a GMAT of 450 or higher with an Analytical Writing score of 3.0 or higher, and transcripts from all undergraduate institutions and an upper division GPA is at least 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale)). The applicant qualifies if he or she has at least 1,000 points based on the following formula: 200 X the upper-division GPA + the GMAT score."

International students in graduate programs must obtain a minimum score of 550 paper-based, 213 computer-based, or 79-80 internet-based on TOEFL.

College of Education

Unlike the RCOB, the College of Education has a large number of graduate programs. For brevity they are not republished here, but are listed in the Graduate Program Catalog. The only program identified as being unclear in the College of Education is the Master of Arts in Teaching that was addressed above.

The mission of the College of Education is to provide excellence in the initial and advanced preparation of professionals for a variety of learning settings, to foster an innovative, student-focused learning community, and to empower a faculty committed to teaching, applied research, and the dissemination of knowledge.

Program faculty to recruit, admit, and retain a student population with the capacity to progress from admission to graduation has established admissions standards for all programs. Undergraduate admission standards are published in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#). Graduate program admission standards are published in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

The Tanner Health Systems School of Nursing

The Tanner Health System School of Nursing has selective admission to its undergraduate and graduate programs and provides information to prospective students in the Catalogs and on its website as follows:

MSN program and post-master's certificates:

Admission requirements and processes are published on p. 138 of the *2013-14 UWG Graduate Catalog* and online. The text reads:

“Admission is based on several criteria including the following:

1. Earned Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree from an NLNAC or CCNE accredited program.
2. Official transcript from **each** college or university attended.
3. Evidence of current licensure as a registered nurse (RN) in the United States must be provided within the application.
4. Completion of a basic undergraduate statistics course with a grade of C or higher prior to enrollment or during the first semester of the program.
5. Satisfactory certificate of immunization (for a UWG new student).
6. GPA of 3.0 (4.0 scale) for all upper division nursing courses.
7. Professional resume.
8. Two letters of recommendation from individuals who are knowledgeable of the applicant's professional and academic abilities.”

EdD in Nursing Education program:

Admission requirements and processes are published on p. 145 of the *2013-14 UWG Graduate Catalog* and online. The text reads: “Admissions Criteria:

- Completed UWG graduate application for admission.
- Earned Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree from an NLNAC or CCNE accredited institution.
- G.P.A. of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale graduate nursing program.
- Official transcript from each college or university attended.
- Three letters of recommendation from individuals who are knowledgeable of the applicant's professional and academic abilities.
- Sample of academic writing limited to 5 pages (An academic paper presented in a previous graduate course that demonstrates knowledge of an area, powers of organization, command of language, and communication skills.)
- Current unencumbered RN license in the state in which the student will practice.
- Immunization form (must be submitted every semester)
- Professional curriculum vitae.
- GRE scores.
 - If taken before August 1, 2011, the minimum expected score is a composite score of 1000, with at least a 450 on the verbal section AND a 450 on the quantitative section. If taken after August 1, 2011, the minimum expected score is a composite score of 291, with at least a 150 on the verbal section AND a 141

on the quantitative section. Submitted GRE scores cannot be more than 5 years old (from the application deadline date). Note: International students are also required to submit TOEFL scores.

College of Science and Mathematics

The college of Science and Mathematics had no citing from the off-site team. The admissions for each program are in line with the UWG mission and the mission of the College of Science and Mathematics. Admission Criteria are published in the graduate catalog and online. They are also noted below:

M.S. in Mathematics

“For regular admission to the program, students are expected to have a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, a cumulative GPA of at least 2.7 on all college level work, a combined verbal and quantitative GRE score of at least 1030, with no score less than 400, completion of the calculus sequence (equivalent of UWG courses MATH 1634, MATH 2644, MATH 2654) plus at least twelve hours of mathematics courses at the advanced undergraduate level (3000 level or higher, or the equivalent).

Provisional admission: Applicants applying to a master's degree program in mathematics with less than the required GPA and GRE may be considered for provisional admission. They must submit official GRE test scores and must also have a grade point average of at least 2.2. In no event may the grade point average be less than 2.2. Applicants may also be admitted provisionally for reasons other than, or in addition to, grade point average and GRE test scores. Meeting departmental test score and grade point average requirements is no guarantee of admission. Provisional admission is ultimately subject to departmental approval and the Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics.”

M.S. in Biology

“A student entering this program is normally expected to have an undergraduate degree in biology. Students without a degree in biology or students lacking certain background courses in biology and related sciences may be expected to complete undergraduate courses to compensate for deficiencies. All students must take the GRE general test. Applicants to the Biology Graduate Program must have a minimum undergraduate cumulative post-secondary grade point average of 2.8 on a 4.0 scale and a minimum combined verbal and quantitative GRE score of 1000.

Graduate students must select an advising committee by the first pre-registration period following admission on any basis, or one will be selected for them by the Department Chair.

There are two plans for degree completion. The first plan, the thesis track, is designed for students who plan to continue on with further graduate education or who plan to enter research-related careers. The second plan, the non-thesis track, is designed for students who do not plan to continue their education in biology. This plan is often preferred by secondary educators, persons interested in scientific sales, or those interested in laboratory management positions. In either case, the student, in

consultation with her or his advising committee, will design a course of study to specifically meet the needs of the individual student. The specifics of the two degree programs are provided below.

Requirements

All applicants to the Biology Graduate Program must submit the following:

1. Three Letters of recommendation
2. Resume
3. A narrative statement (up to 1 page in length) including three components: 1) their reasons for pursuing a graduate degree in Biology; 2) the specific area(s) (sub-discipline) of Biology in which they are interested; and 3) the type of degree (thesis track or non-thesis track) they wish to pursue.”

M.S. in Applied Computer Science

“Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit complete application material as soon as possible. To be considered for admission to the program, applicants must submit:

- Official transcripts from each institution attended.
 - If you request transcripts to be sent electronically, please ensure they are sent to the Office of Admissions email address, admiss@westga.edu. If they will be sent via surface mail, please use the Office of Admissions mailing address given on the Graduate Studies link below.
 - International applicants need to have a Foreign Credential Evaluation, provided by an independent credential evaluation service accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluators (NACES), for all course work completed outside the United States. If you request the evaluation to be sent electronically, please ensure they are sent to the Office of Admissions email address, admiss@westga.edu. If they will be sent via surface mail, please use the Office of Admissions mailing address given on the Graduate Studies website.
- A letter of application (500 words or less) that explains the applicant's intent for pursuing the degree
- Three letters of professional references (suggested template)
- A comprehensive resumé or curriculum vitae that describes in detail the applicant's educational background and professional experience.
- Applicants with undergraduate GPA less than 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) must submit recent Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) scores to be considered for admission.
- Additional requirements may also apply to international applicants, as listed on the Graduate Studies website.

After initial review of application material, some applicants may be asked to submit additional material in support of their applications”

Additional Information

Other graduate programs at UWG follow a similar pattern to those listed above. They were reviewed by the off-site committee and were not identified as being deficient. If there are additional questions about specific programs, the UWG program directors will be available and ready for interview by the on-site committee.

3.4.6 The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. **(Practices for awarding credit)**

Non-Compliance

The institution follows the University System of Georgia Board of Regents Policy 3.4.1, which defines a semester and a credit hour. Additionally, the institution’s Faculty Senate has a policy that defines a credit hour for both in-class and out-of-class activities which aligns with Federal Requirement 4.9 and the SACS *Credit Hours* policy. To ensure comparability in awarding of credit across modes of delivery, the same student learning outcomes and expectations for student work are used for online and traditional courses.

The Compliance Certification and supporting information provided clearly describe the institution’s practices and policies for determining the amount of credit awarded for student coursework (both transfer and that taken at the institution). However, Compliance Certification and supporting information provided do not explain the institution’s policies or procedures for determining the level of credit awarded for student work. It is not clear how the determination is made as to whether a course should be at the freshman/introductory level, senior level, or graduate level.

UWG Response:

The level of credit assigned to a course is proposed by the curriculum committees in each college or school. These proposals are then reviewed through the senate process discussed in the compliance certificate. The criteria used to propose course level for each college/school is noted below. These metrics provide evidence that UWG is compliant with awarding level of credit as required by principle 3.4.6.

College of Arts and Humanities

In the College of Arts and Humanities, the level of a course depends on the University System of Georgia’s stipulated common core, the level of complexity, scope, and expected outcomes as determined by discipline.

Level	Criteria
1000	Introductory in content or skills required for advanced work, either for general studies or specific to a major.
2000	General studies level, broad in scope, or level up from 1000 in skills development
3000	Major specific. Focus on methodology, generally broader in scope than 4000 level. Or more advanced than 2000 in terms of skills outcomes.
4000	Major specific. Breadth of content varies. Sophisticated work expected.
5000	Graduate level content and sophistication. Tends to be more broadly focused than 6000 level.
6000	Concentrated seminar on a specific topic with expectations of independent work on part of student and high level of sophistication in research, writing, or performance.
7000	NA
8000	NA

Level	Criteria
9000	NA

Tanner Health System School of Nursing:

The SON offers courses at the 2000, 3000, 4000, 6000 and 9000 credit levels. Rationale for the assignment of these levels is provided below:

Level	Criteria
1000	NA
2000	Courses at this level represent the most basic and foundational knowledge in pathophysiology and pharmacology, needed for all subsequent courses. These courses satisfy Area F core curriculum requirements and serve as prerequisites for BSN courses as permitted by USG policy.
3000	Courses at this level represent foundational junior-level BSN courses upon which the rest of the program rests. They are designed to provide a base of critical thinking and clinical reasoning necessary for the preparation of a registered nurse.
4000	Courses at this level are senior level courses for BSN and RN-BSN programs. They require increasing levels of competency, critical thinking, and clinical reasoning.
5000	NA
6000	The School of Nursing collaborated with the registrar's office to determine and select the 6000 level for all MSN courses. Core courses for all tracks have lower numbers and the numbers increase as students advance through the curriculum and take specialty courses.
7000	NA
8000	NA
9000	At the EdD level, the curriculum includes both nursing and education courses. All of the nursing courses have a prefix of 9000 while the two education courses included in the nursing curriculum carry a 7000 and 8000 number, clearly differentiating nursing from education courses.

Richards College of Business

All proposed new courses are reviewed at multiple levels to assure the level of credit (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate) is appropriate for the material offered. The faculty member proposing the course prepares a syllabus, including the proposed course title, learning objectives and how they are consistent with program learning goals/objectives, course description, proposed course number (which indicates level of credit), required prerequisites, number of credit hours earned for successful completion, outline of course content or topics covered, in-class and out-of-class time requirements to earn course credit, method and mode of delivery, required reading(s), software, hardware, and other materials (if applicable), and the system of evaluation and grading.

This proposed syllabus is presented first to the department curriculum committee for discussion. If approved, the department chair then evaluates the proposal. Upon approval by the chair, the syllabus is reviewed by the appropriate college level curriculum committee, either Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) or Undergraduate Programs Committee (UPC). GPC/UPC members evaluate the proposal; if approved, the information is sent to the general faculty in the College via email. If there are any substantive questions or concerns, the proposal is brought before the faculty at the next College meeting; if there are no further comments, the committee approves the proposal and sends it to the dean. The dean reviews; once approved, it flows to the University Faculty Senate Committee (GPC or UPC). Once approved, the proposal is added to the Faculty Senate agenda and voted on at the next meeting. All votes by Faculty Senate serve as recommendation to the President, who has the final approval in new course proposals.

In addition to material on the syllabus, criteria considered include how the course relates to others in the intended program, departmental resources available for offering the course, and potential demand for the course. Any proposal for cross listing a course between two departments requires both departments' approval, and in the case of cross listing outside the Richards College, the other College processes would be followed as well.

Level	Criteria
1000	Introductory in content with a focus on skills required for advanced work. Neither prerequisites nor expectation of foundational knowledge in business.
2000	Lower level courses related to business administration. Provides foundational knowledge in discipline and prerequisite for major status.
3000	Introduction to major business disciplines and major specific courses. Focus on both theoretical and methodological foundations. Includes required courses for all BBA majors and discipline specific topics.
4000	These are more advanced discipline specific courses, and may require 3000 level courses as pre-requisites. These include capstone courses and electives.
5000	Graduate level content. More broadly focused than 6000 level and based on advanced applications and experience with the key terms of the course of study.
6000	Graduate level courses with content manageable by students who have completed an undergraduate degree in an appropriate field of study or similar preparation. Provides knowledge beyond the undergraduate level and is oriented toward business practitioners.
7000	NA

Level	Criteria
8000	NA
9000	NA

The College of Education

Requests for new courses are submitted to the electronic Curriculum Submission System (CSS) by the program coordinator and approved by the department chair. Once approved by the department chair, the change request is routed to the Dean's office where it is reviewed by the Certification Officer and the Associate Dean for Professional programs. The Certification Officer checks the submission for errors and compliance with PSC rules, forwarding approved courses to the Associate Dean. The Associate Dean reviews the content of the course with regard to appropriateness of the content, compliance with accreditation standards, PSC rules, BOR regulations, and relevance to the degree program. Undergraduate level courses (2000-4000) are routed to the chair of the Undergraduate Academic Programs Committee and graduate level courses (6000-9000) are routed to the chair of the Graduate Programs Committee at which point they are reviewed by the respective committees for the same attributes. Approved submissions are then forwarded to Faculty Senate for action and once approved are forwarded to the deputy provost for final approval.

Please describe the criteria used to assign level of credit to academic courses:

Level	Criteria
1000	Lower level introductory undergraduate courses. No prerequisites are required. There are no 1000 level courses in the COE
2000	Lower level intermediate undergraduate courses. May have prerequisites. There are a minimal number of these courses in the COE. They are primarily introductory teacher education courses
3000	Upper level intermediate undergraduate courses. Have prerequisites (admission to teacher education). These courses are taken by students upon admission to teacher education which requires passing the GACE basic skills test, a 2.7 GPA and admission to teacher education.
4000	Upper level advanced undergraduate courses. Have prerequisites. These are the methods and clinical courses that require application and approval of admission to Field experiences.
5000	Not used in COE
6000	Introductory graduate courses in M.Ed. programs. Content manageable by graduate student who has completed an undergraduate degree in an appropriate field of study. Provides knowledge beyond the undergraduate level and is oriented toward the practitioner in the field or to the preparation for advanced study. Courses place emphasis on practice and foundational concepts and on the analysis and synthesis of information.
7000	Intermediate level graduate and professional courses in M.Ed. and Ed.S programs. Content is focused largely on applied theory and practice and

Level	Criteria
	demand a higher level of critical thinking and independent judgment.
8000	Advanced level graduate and professional courses in Ed.S programs. Require advanced scholarly writing skills and thorough knowledge of research methods. Courses are designed for those pursuing a doctorate and/or advanced skills as a practitioner
9000	Doctoral level graduate and professional courses in Ed.D. programs. These are advanced practitioner/research courses. Require independent and constructivist thinking. Require more intellectual rigor and integration of information into frameworks of knowledge as well as capacity for sustained independent inquiry and analysis. Require demonstration of the ability to apply scholarly research to answer questions related to the specific discipline.

The College of Science and Mathematics

In the College of Science and Mathematics, the level of a course depends on the University System of Georgia's stipulated common core, the level of complexity, scope, pre-requisites and expected learning outcomes as determined by discipline.

Course level	Criteria
1000	These are introductory courses, generally a part of the core curriculum. These may also serve as pre-requisites for 2000 and higher level courses in the same discipline or another discipline.
2000	These are more advanced courses than the 1000 level courses, frequently requiring the preparation in a 1000 level course as a pre-requisite. These may also serve as pre-requisites for 2000 and higher level courses in the same discipline or another discipline.
3000	These are discipline specific courses.
4000	These are more advanced discipline specific courses, and may require 3000 level courses as pre-requisites. These include capstone courses and electives.
5000	These are basic courses offered for graduate students.
6000	These are largely advanced courses offered for graduate students and also include all courses in the Masters of Science in Applied Computer Science.
7000	These courses are offered as a part of teacher preparation.
8000	Not applicable
9000	Not applicable

College of Social Sciences

All proposed courses in the College of Social Sciences (COSS) are reviewed at multiple levels to assure that the appropriate level of credit is assigned. After the faculty member has prepared all written documents, including a detailed course outline with learning objectives clearly stated, the documents are forwarded to the department chair for approval. Following approval by the department chair, all relevant documents are

forwarded to the COSS Faculty Council for their review and approval. The process of approval continues through the Dean of the College and the appropriate committees of the UWG Faculty Senate. The President of UWG has final approval of the proposed course.

Please describe the criteria used to assign level of credit to academic courses:

Level	Criteria
1000	Introductory in content with a focus on skills and core communication competencies required for advanced work. Neither prerequisites nor expectation of foundational knowledge.
2000	General studies level, broad in content, skills, and topics. May have minimal prerequisite knowledge expectations.
3000	Major specific. Focus on both theoretical and methodological foundations, with an emphasis on critical thinking and reasoning. 3000 level classes provide students with a deeper exploration of key topics, skills, and issues specific to the discipline.
4000	Major specific. Sophisticated work at the theoretical and methodological levels expected; application of both theoretical and methodological content and skills required. An increased level of critical thinking and reasoning skills.
5000	Graduate level content. More broadly focused than 6000 level and based on advanced applications and experience with the key terms of the course of study.
6000	Concentrated seminar on a specific topic with expectations of independent work on the part of the student and high level of sophistication in theoretical and methodological writings.
7000	Intermediate level graduate courses. Content is focused above the Masters level.
8000	Advanced level graduate studies. Expectations include advanced theoretical and methodological thoughts and advanced skills as a practitioner.
9000	The most advanced study and at the doctoral level. Requires independent thinking, intellectual rigor, and demonstration of application of scholarly research.

- 3.4.7** The institution ensures the quality of educational programs and courses offered through consortia relationships or contractual agreements ensures ongoing compliance with the *Principles* and periodically evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the mission of the institution. (See the Commission policy “*Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.*”) (**Consortia relationships/contractual agreements**)

Non-Compliance

The institution participates in agreements that are consortial or contractual in nature related to its educational programs. Consortia involving eCore, WebMBA, and European Union Studies exist. The institution documents signed contracts and consortial agreements that describe the roles and responsibilities of the parties to the agreement. Documentation was provided to support the description of systems to ensure the quality of course work offered through eCore and WebMBA. The narrative provided a description of the system used for ensuring the quality of course work in the European Studies program, but no documentation was provided to support that description. Furthermore, evidence was not provided of ongoing evaluation of the consortial or contractual relationships against the mission of the institution.

UWG Response:

In preparation for the on-site review, UWG found one program that was not reported in the initial compliance certificate. It is a small engineering transfer program that has been in place for many years. It has been treated and is implemented as a transfer program in engineering. However, in review of the agreement, it also contains a dual-degree possibility available to students. As such it should have been included in the original submission. The narrative below addresses this program and a copy of the MOU is in the appendices.

UWG provides the following to address two concerns of the off-site review committee.

The off-site committee found:

The narrative provided a description of the system used for ensuring the quality of course work in the European Studies program, but no documentation was provided to support that description.

UWG Response

UWG reviewed this consortial agreement against the mission of UWG and found its administrative burden did not fit with the mission and philosophy of academic affairs of the University. As such, UWG was withdrawn from the consortium.

The off-site committee found:

Evidence was not provided of ongoing evaluation of the consortial or contractual relationships against the mission of the institution

UWG Response:

As part of its ongoing effort to provide relevant curricula and academic programs to students, UWG regularly evaluates its consortial relationships against the mission of the institution. This process is described for each program below:

Dual-Degree in Engineering

The Dual-Degree in engineering with GA Tech is a very small program that is only used by a few students. It is closely linked with the engineering transfer program and is administered through the same structure. As such, its relevance to the mission is closely tied to the evaluation of academic programs in the College of Science and Mathematics and is reviewed within that college.

eCore

During initial adoption, eCore went through a comprehensive governance review process to ensure alignment with UWG's mission. Since that time, UWG has provided multi-leveled and ongoing evaluation of eCore against the mission of the institution. For instance, on June 22, 2012, the UWG Faculty Senate evaluated eCore and its participation in UWG's Complete College Georgia (CCG) Campus Plan (CCG referenced in focused report principle 2.5). Senate again reviewed eCore on February 15, 2013 in the context of evaluation of teaching practices (referenced minutes are located at http://www.westga.edu/vpaa/index_1900.php)

The Board of Regents Service Level Agreement for eCore (section "Exhibit B.N") reads:

"Appear on an annual basis or as requested before the eCore Subcommittee providing the committee with a status report of the eCore Program. The eCore Subcommittee is responsible to the Council on General Education to ensure that all courses are appropriate for the USG core"

This meeting of the eCore subcommittee is convened annually to present a status report of the eCore Program and representatives from UWG attend. This subcommittee last met on March 25, 2013 and included agenda items dealing with eCore updates, course approvals, LMS updates, and future directions for eCore as they relate to UWG. The purpose of this meeting was to review tactical and logistical considerations for improving eCore to better align it to the mission and vision of UWG and ensure all courses are of high quality and appropriate for UWG. Additionally, eCore submits an annual report and an annual fact book to the UWG Vice President's Office for detailed review (included in the compliance certificate submitted to the review team in our response to principle 3.4.7) to ensure that the consortial arrangement is meeting the academic and student success standards set forth by UWG in its mission statement, purpose, essential activities, and values. The annual report specifically requests from eCore a detailed analysis of eCore's impact on UWG's strategic plan and goals (section: "Departmental Progress Toward the UWG Strategic Plan"). For the fact book, UWG provides enrollment, performance, and demographic data to the eCore administration annually for the comparative purposes of assessing key components of UWG's mission such as program and course quality and retention. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning and the VPAA's office review these reports and consult with eCore leadership annually.

The UWG registrar's office, bursar's office, and Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management meet periodically with eCore to review and approve academic calendars, review and revise operational policies and procedures, and consider other matters related to UWG's expectations, goals, and mission. The last meeting occurred on November 12, 2013 and included agenda topics related to Title IV and financial aid, calendar and scheduling issues, and "big picture" compliance issues that directly relate to UWG mission and future.

Leaders from UWG meet regularly with the eCore Dean to address any concerns or issues, and the eCore Dean sits on the Dean's Council, the Presidential Advisory Council, and the Strategic Planning Committee for UWG. The eCore Associate Dean participates on the UWG Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) implementation committee to ensure that eCore courses are aligned to the mission of UWG and the QEP focus on undergraduate writing in the core curriculum. UWG faculty teaching eCore courses are required to attend eCore's annual faculty meeting. At the meeting, faculty are briefed about the past year for eCore and suggestions are taken from UWG faculty to improve eCore to help it better align with the mission of the institution. The last meeting occurred on May 10, 2013 and included agenda items ranging from logistical considerations for better course design and delivery to mission specific topics such as enhancing student services, engagement, and success.

This collaborative approach between UWG and eCore allows for ongoing evaluation of eCore's alignment to UWG's mission and for real time adjustments when needed. The SACS review committee has already found that the contractual agreements and quality of the educational programs offered through eCore meet expectations. UWG believes that the narrative above outlines a consistent and thoughtful evaluation plan that uses multiple avenues and stakeholders in the process to assess our consortial arrangement at varied levels and intervals to ensure eCore's continued alignment to UWG's stated mission, values, and strategic goals.

Georgia WebMBA

The Georgia WebMBA is a consortium relationship among six AACSB-accredited colleges of business. The Governing Board of the WebMBA consists of the deans of the six colleges, and this group meets regularly to discuss and assess the program and its alignment with college/university missions. The Governing Board meets at each orientation (fall and spring semesters) and at a program-wide workshop held each fall. Additional meetings are called as needed (three called meetings in the last five years).

The original MOU was signed in July 2000 and revised three times since: Sept – Oct 2005, Nov – Dec 2008, and Aug 2010. Should a college conclude that the WebMBA is no longer consistent with its mission, clear guidelines are presented for withdrawal from the consortium.

In addition to review of the MOUs, the Governing Board develops policies for implementation of the WebMBA to ensure implementation of quality. Policies have been approved by the GB in Aug 2008, Jan 2009, Aug 2010, Jan 2011, August 2011, and July 2012. These combined policies serve as continuing evaluation of the program and its strategic fit for all colleges.

***3.4.11** For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. **(Academic program coordination)**

Non-Compliance

The institution states that each degree program and curricular area has a designated Program Director responsible for program coordination and curriculum development, and that Program Directors lead program faculty in the review of learning outcomes, curriculum, and assessment for the program. Most Program Directors listed in the roster provided by the institution hold doctoral degrees in appropriate fields; the remainder, who exclusively direct undergraduate program, hold master’s degrees in appropriate fields. Additionally, the institution’s Faculty Senate committees monitor curriculum development and review.

In some cases the Program Directors hold additional administrative roles, such as Department Chair, and in some cases the same individual directs multiple programs. In cases where one individual directs multiple programs, they are either closely related (such as bachelor’s programs in Music Education, Music Performance, and Music Theory and Composition) or are different levels within the same discipline (such as BS and MS in Biology).

However, the roster of Program Directors provided by the institution does not list a Program Director for each program the institution offers according to the institution’s website and Graduate and Undergraduate Catalogs. For example, the roster does not include Program Directors for the BS in Physics/Secondary Education, RN to BSN in Nursing (listed as a separate major from the BSN in Nursing), BS in Sport Management, ME in Educational Leadership, Ed.D in Nursing Education, Ed.D in School Improvement, and Ed.D in Counseling.

UWG Response:

Academic Program directors at UWG play a critical role to assure the quality of academic programming and instruction. We are grateful the off-site team found the far majority of academic program directors to be qualified to fill this role in their respective programs. Several of the programs listed by the off-site team were noted in the original submission, but all programs identified by the off-site team are noted below.

Program	Program Director	Qualifications/Notes
BS in Physics/Secondary Education	Dr. Bobby Powell	PhD, MS, Clemson University, Physics; BS, Georgia Institute of Technology, Physics. This program has been folded into the PS in Physics. This independent program will be terminated.
RN-BSN	Cindy Epps	PhD in Nursing; MSN; BSN Certified Nurse Educator (NLN)

Program	Program Director	Qualifications/Notes
BS in Sport Management	Dr. Frank Butts	EdD, University of Georgia, Leisure & Recreation; MA, East Tennessee State University, Physical Education & Weight Training
ME in Educational Leadership	Dr. Andrew Nixon	EdD, Ball State University, Educational Administration; EdS, Ball State University, Education
Ed.D in Nursing Education	Dr. Susan Welch	EdD, Nurse Educator Program; University of Alabama.
Ed.D in School Improvement	Dr. Lara Willox	PhD, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, Education Culture, Curriculum, and Change; MEd, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, Elementary Education; Certificate, Central Piedmont Community College, Early Childhood Administration
Ed.D in Counseling	Dr. Debra Cobia	EdD, University of Alabama, Counselor Education; EdS, University of West Georgia, Guidance & Counseling; MEd, University of West Georgia, Special Education

- 3.6.3** At least one-third of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. *(See the Commission policy "Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.")* **(Institutional credits for a degree)**

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the table of graduate degrees provided in the Compliance Certification and found that for all graduate degrees at least one third of the credits must be earned at the institution. However, with regard to transfer credits and based on the sample of transcripts provided, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was not able to determine how transfer credits are identified. For example, for the only collaborative graduate degree program, Web MBA degree, a transcript was not provided in the sample. Therefore, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine how transfer courses from other institutions are identified.

The off-site committee found:

The "Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was not able to determine how transfer credits are identified"

UWG Response:

In the appendix to this focused report, samples of transfer evaluations are matched with student transcripts so that the on-site committee can identify where and how these transfer credits are identified on a transcript.

Regarding the Georgia WebMBA

The Georgia WebMBA follows the same policies for transfer credit as the on-campus MBA: no more than six credit hours may be transferred. All UWG WebMBA students register for and take classes as UWG students. Any faculty teaching from another consortium college of business is reviewed by the Richards College Graduate Programs Committee and the UWG Graduate Programs Committee for appropriate qualifications and granted temporary graduate faculty status at UWG.

3.7.1 The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. (See *Commission guidelines "Faculty Credentials."*) **(Faculty competence)**

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Faculty Roster which listed the qualifications of the teaching faculty. In general, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that the institution employs competent faculty members. However, the committee identified 66 faculty members for whom additional information is needed in order to determine whether the qualifications are acceptable (see the attached Request for Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty).

UWG Response:

Considering the monumental task to review all the courses submitted to the off-site team, UWG is thankful the committee found only a small number of instances in which further justification or clarification was needed. An updated faculty roster form addressing each instance is provided in the appendix to this focused report. This justification should bring UWG into compliance with this principle.

- 3.8.3** The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources—to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

Non-Compliance

The institution provides sufficient documentation regarding staff qualifications. The report and the staff directory indicate educational credentials for the library employees and outline the professional experiences for each individual. Appointment and tenure information is outlined for the faculty librarian positions. Faculty librarians and staff professional activities and publications are cited in the report.

The institution’s policy requires that all librarians have a Master’s of Library Science from an accredited library school. The organizational chart shows that all library staff with the title of “Coordinator” have a master’s degree. However, the Acquisition Department coordinator’s degree is not listed. In addition, the Acquisition Coordinator’s title in the organizational chart is listed as a "library associate" while in the directory it is listed as "coordinator". It was not clear to the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee which title and role is correct and whether the institution’s requirement for a master’s degree applies. In addition, professional development information for library staff was not provided.

UWG Response:

The library’s organizational chart does not address the qualifications for any positions <http://www.westga.edu/libraryadmin/index_21836.php>. The library is unable to locate the origin for a claim that titles of “Coordinator” have a master’s degree. The submitted “Library Faculty and Staff Credentials” lists the degrees for this employee’s position:

Name	Title	Status	Credentials	Notes
Gail Smith	Acquisitions Departmental Coordinator	Full-time	Bachelors in History; Masters in History; Certificate in Public History	Worked in libraries since 1984 in both service and technical areas of operation.

On the submitted “Library Faculty and Staff Credentials,” the employee self-reported the title “Acquisitions Departmental Coordinator,” a title which has never been used for this employee’s position. The correct title for this position is “Library Associate.” There is no requirement for a master’s degree for the Library Associate position, though the employee does hold a master’s degree.

Some professional development information for staff is provided on the yearly reports of library employee professional activities. Additional records of staff professional development are recorded in each employee’s yearly evaluation, personnel files and library financial records. The appendix includes summaries of recent development activities of Library staff.

- 3.9.3** The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experience in the student affairs area—to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

Non-Compliance

The institution provided a roster of student affairs professionals and the roster indicates the number is appropriate to accomplish the mission of the institution. However, the qualifications of the personnel listed could not be assessed because the Qualifications of Staff links for individual staff members' resumes would not work. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was not able to determine whether staff was qualified for their respective roles.

UWG Response:

We regret that the links were not operating that would allow the committee to review the credentials for staff in the area of student affairs. For this report, we prepared a table showing the required credentials for each position along with the credentials for the person in that position. Detailed resumes are also available for the on-site committee to review when they are on campus. The table is available in the appendix. The resumes are available on the thumb drive given to the committee and will be available for review on-site.

- *4.1 The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Criteria may include: enrollment data; retention, graduation, course completion, and job placement rates; state licensing examinations, student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals. **(Student achievement)**

Non-Compliance

The institution routinely reports on job placement, success in licensure, graduation, course completion rates, graduation, retention and progression rates, distribution of grades, degrees conferred, total enrollment, and credit hour production. The narrative and documentation do not provide information concerning the institution’s thresholds of achievement for each criterion used to determine acceptability used to evaluate student achievement.

The On-Site Committee should look for evidence of the institution’s threshold of acceptability used to evaluate student achievement.

UWG Response:

UWG is grateful the off-site committee found our efforts to measure student success routinely reported. This is a strength of the systems UWG has in place. We regret that we did not provide sufficient evidence for the off-site committee to review our efforts to establish thresholds for success. These data are provided in the narrative that follows.

Enrollment Data

In each year since 2007 UWG has produced an enrollment projection that drives programming, business planning, academic course planning, and budgeting. The enrollment projection is based on projections of high school graduates in Georgia; historical market share UWG enjoys within the University System, and historical retention and progression rates. The projection has proven to be very accurate so most on campus feel confident on planning and budgeting based on the model. The past several year’s projections are shown below. The projection is the threshold for acceptable performance. Noted here are the actual enrollments through Fall of 2013. 2014 and beyond are the target thresholds for each year.

Fall	Actual	Change	N Inc/Dec
2001	9030		
2002	9,675	7.14%	645
2003	10,255	5.99%	580
2004	10,216	-0.38%	-39
2005	10,154	-0.61%	-62
2006	10,163	0.09%	9
2007	10,677	5.06%	514
2008	11,252	5.39%	575
2009	11,505	2.25%	253
2010	11,283	-1.93%	-222
2011	11,658	3.32%	375

Fall	Actual	Change	N Inc/Dec
2012	11,769	0.96%	111
2013	11,929	1.36%	160
2014	12,174	2.06%	245
2015	12,679	4.14%	504
2016	13,022	2.70%	343
2017	13,484	3.55%	462
2018	13,839	2.63%	355
2019	13,831	-0.06%	-8
2020	13,915	0.61%	84

Retention, Progression, and Graduation

In 2009 UWG was required by the Board of Regents to prepare a report and presentation that showed our plan to improve retention, progression, and graduation (RPG) of our students. RPG was determined as the critical measure of student success or achievement. Although there are certainly other measures of student achievement that UWG measures (success in licensure, job placement, total enrollment, etc.) RPG has been an ongoing focus for the university and the University System.

In preparing the 2009 report, personnel at UWG delved deep into the data to determine our barriers to increasing RPG. We developed a set of Key Performance Indicators (attached), and developed baseline measurements in comparison to our peer group (defined by the USG). Below are a few of the charts from the initial data analysis and early preparation for the presentation. These charts clearly show that we were benchmarking ourselves against our peers. These measures, then, became our baselines.

Retention and Graduation Rate Targets (stretch goals)

Current		Benchmark/Future Goal
73%	Retention	82%-85%
57%	Progression (sophomore to junior years)	73%
13%	4-year Graduation Rate	33%
36%	6-year Graduation Rate	55%

CPA Exam Pass Rates

The benchmark used for the CPA exam is national average. Unfortunately, the reporting data were revised in 2010 and national averages are no longer reported, along with the all, none, and part pass rates. Data for 2011 and 2011 were compared with 2009 averages. These figures are not a perfect match since they do not separate undergraduate from graduate degree recipients. We are in the process of searching for a better benchmark.

Nursing Exam Pass Rates and Benchmarks

1. *Expected outcome:* 90% of BSN graduates will pass NCLEX- RN® on first attempt each calendar year. *Results:*
 - 2009 – 91%
 - 2010 – 93%
 - 2011 – 91%
 - 2012 – 89%
 - 2013 – 92%
2. *Expected outcome:* 100% of BSN graduates will pass NCLEX-RN® within 1 year of graduation. *Results:*
 - 2009 – 100%
 - 2010 – 100%
 - 2011 – 99%
 - 2012 – 97%
 - 2013 – 95%
3. *Expected outcome:* 80% of MSN CNL graduates will pass the certification exam within 3 years of graduation. *Results:*
 - 2009 – No CNL graduates
 - 2010 – 100%
 - 2011 – 100%
 - 2012 – 100%
 - 2013 – 100%
4. *Expected outcome:* 90% of BSN/RN-BSN/MSN graduates seeking employment will be successful at graduation or within 12 months of graduation. *Results:*
 - 2009 – BSN = 88%; RN-BSN = 100%; MSN = 100%
 - 2010 – BSN = 91%; RN-BSN = 100%; MSN = 100%
 - 2011 – BSN = 100%; RN-BSN = 100%; MSN = 100%
 - 2012 – BSN = 100%; RN-BSN = 97%; MSN = 100%
 - 2013 – BSN = 97%; RN-BSN = 100%; MSN = 100%
5. *Expected outcome:* 90% of BSN/RN-BSN/MSN employers (1 year post-graduation) will indicate that graduates function competently in the roles for which they were hired. *Results:*
 - 2009 – BSN/RN-BSN = 100%; MSN = 100%
 - 2010 – BSN/RN-BSN = 100%; MSN = 100%
 - 2011 – BSN/RN-BSN = 100%; MSN = 100%
 - 2012 – BSN/RN-BSN = 100%; MSN = 100%
 - 2013 – BSN/RN-BSN = 100%; MSN = 100%
6. *Expected outcome:* 80% of students admitted to the BSN/RN-BSN/MSN programs will graduate within 4 academic years (12 academic terms). *Results:*
 - 2009 – BSN = 86%; RN-BSN = 81%; MSN = 100%
 - 2010 – BSN = 87%; RN-BSN = 79%; MSN = 88%
 - 2011 – BSN = 90%; RN-BSN = 76%; MSN = 100%
 - 2012 – BSN = 86%; RN-BSN = 90%; MSN = 83%
 - 2013 – BSN = 90%; RN-BSN = 80%; MSN = 71%

Teacher/Professional Licensure in the College of Education

The College of Education establishes and assesses the following benchmarks:

There will be 100% agreement between the list of educator preparation completers and those recommended for teacher certification.

Eighty percent of all students will make a successful transition from admission to graduation as evidenced by the College of Education Transition Point Template below.

Transition Points

All initial teacher preparation programs in the College of Education at the University of West Georgia include five points at which assessment data are collected and analyzed

Initial Teacher Preparation Programs Transition Points

Transition Point	Criteria for Progression	Determination of Successful Transition
Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved Teacher Ed Application • GPA of 2.7 (2.5 for HPED) • Passing score on GACE Basic or composite ACT of 43, or composite SAT Score of 1000, or GRE of 1030 or 297 • Completion of all core requirements for Areas A, B, C, D, E, and F • Grade of C in COMM 1110 (oral communication proficiency) • Completion of EDUC 2110, 2120, 2130 with grade of C or higher • Satisfactory report from Criminal Background Check 	Applicant’s advisor reviews application for admission to teacher education against the criteria specified and, if all requirements are met, the applicant is admitted to the relevant program.
Entry to Clinical Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved FE Application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Classification (junior, senior, post-bac, grad) ○ Proof of liability Insurance?? • Dispositions assessment (2.5 +) • Overall GPA of 2.7 	Upon admission to teacher education, candidates complete an application for the first clinical experience required in the program. An official in the Office of Field Experiences reviews each application against specified criteria. If all requirements have been met, the candidate is placed in the field.
Exit from Clinical Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptable scores on Intern Keys (3.0 +) • Acceptable score on Impact on Student Learning Assessment (2.8 +) • Acceptable score Dispositions assessment (3.0 +) 	University supervisors and cooperating teachers assess candidates’ performance and dispositions. Candidates who demonstrate proficiency in

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of diverse experiences 	most categories receive a satisfactory grade for internship.
Program Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S grade for internship • Overall GPA of 2.7 	Candidates who have completed all coursework, clinical, and other program requirements are eligible for graduation.
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended for certification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State Content Exam (GACE) • Employment data 	Candidates who achieve a passing score on the GACE content exam will be recommended for certification.

Initial and Advanced Other School Professionals, Advanced Teacher Preparation, and School Leadership Transition Points

Transition Point	Criteria for Progression	Determination of Successful Transition
Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPA (3.0 min) • Test Scores (GACE Basic or exemption) • Recommendations • Pre-requisite degree • Pre-requisite certificate 	Program Recommendation for Admission
Exit from Clinical Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptable score on Impact on Student Learning Assessment/Documentation of Impact (3.0 +) • Acceptable score Dispositions assessment (3.0 +) • Diversity Assignment (3.0+) 	Satisfactory Grade in Clinical (e.g. Internship, Practicum, Residency) or Volunteer Experience Checklist (Portfolio)
Program Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of all course requirements • GPA of 3.0 • Satisfactory performance on exit assessment (test, orals, comprehensives, portfolio, etc.) • Completion of Professional Practices Portfolio, if applicable 	Candidates who have completed all coursework, clinical, and other program requirements are eligible for graduation.
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended for appropriate certification or license • Employment data • Follow up and employer surveys 	Candidates who achieve a passing score on the GACE content or Praxis exam will be recommended for certification. Other programs recommended based on graduation requirements of the discipline (i.e. CPCE for counseling students) PSC follow up surveys

- *4.4** Program length is appropriate for each of the institution’s educational programs.
(Program length)

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee examined the undergraduate catalog, the graduate catalog and other submitted documentation. The committee found that the program length for undergraduate degrees and all graduate degrees except the education specialist degrees as noted in Core Requirement 2.7.1. The educational specialist degrees require 27 credit hours which is less than the typical 30 credit hours required for graduate programs. The institution did not provide a rationale for the number of credit hours required for the educational specialist degrees. See Core Requirement 2.7.1 for additional information.

UWG Response:

As noted in our response to principle 2.7.1, we respond to each of the programs that appear not to meet the minimum requirements or no rationale was provided. Specific to the Ed.S. programs noted above, we provide the following rationale.

The College of Education has four degree programs that require 27 hours:

- Ed.S. in Early Childhood Education
- Ed.S. in Media
- Ed.S. in Professional Counseling and Supervision
- Ed.S. in Special Education

The number of hours for these programs is justified because all of the students in these programs already hold an advanced degree. The programs are highly focused and designed to add depth to students’ knowledge. All four programs meet the standards of NCATE/CAEP and the GaPSC (Georgia Professional Standards Commission) within the 27 credit-hour frameworks. Three of these programs were created and approved in the 1970’s, and Media was added in the 1980’s. All have undergone SACS, NCATE, and PSC review numerous times with no noted Areas for Improvement. As with all programs, these programs undergo regular scrutiny for alignment as standards change. Ed.S. degrees of 27 hours is standard in Georgia, and adding hours would make the programs non-competitive for UWG and more costly for the student.

- *4.7** The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended. (In reviewing the institution's compliance with these program responsibilities, the Commission relies on documentation forwarded to it by the U.S. Department of Education.) **(Title IV program responsibilities)**

Non-Compliance

The institution's narrative indicated that the institution was audited by the State of Georgia's Department of Audits and Accounts (DOAA), federal auditors, and the Board of Regents (Board of Regions) Internal Audit department. Only the DOAA audits for 2009 through 2012 were presented as supporting documentation in the state-wide single audit report of all state agencies and state universities combined. The state-wide audits did not indicate any findings related to the University of West Georgia. However, the institution did not provide documentation related to federal awards such as the U.S. Department of Education's Program Participation Agreement, or financial aid audits.

UWG Response:

In addition to the DOAA Audits that were submitted in the off-site report, the off-site team requested additional documentation. The only additional documentation that is available is UWGs Program Participation Agreement. There have been no federal financial aid audits since the last SACS On-site visit. The current Program Agreement is included in the appendix.

In January 2014 the Department of Education began a limited, off-site review of our Satisfactory Academic Progress policy and procedures due to a self-disclosed discrepancy and policy interpretation issue. This review is ongoing, and has been communicated to SACS by the Department of Education. The letter is included in the appendix. Except for the current issue which is under review, there have been no material findings in our financial aid audits going back more than 10 years.

Appendix 4.7

- Department of Education Program Agreement effective until 2018
- Department of Education Announced Off-Site Program Review Letter