The academic vision at the University of West Georgia is rooted in a century-old tradition of providing the best liberal arts foundation as preparation for a professional career. Today, however, with eighty-seven programs of study, ranging from the Ph.D. to numerous programs at the baccalaureate level, West Georgia’s educational opportunities have grown as we offer programs in arts, business, education, nursing, social science, science and technology, and humanities. This expansion, while mindful of our traditional principles, enables us to extend our reach ever outward to meet the always surprising challenges of the twenty-first century.

We are committed, as directed by our historical tradition, to our communities, the community of Carroll and surrounding counties. The UWG campus in Newnan has nearly doubled its growth since its opening and has been a source of joy and pride to us as well as for the citizens of Coweta County. We are beginning a partnership in Douglasville, which we trust will develop an equally appreciated educational enterprise for Douglas County. Our work in community outreach and community engagement has grown and is getting notice and appreciation by our local chambers of commerce and political representatives.

We are also forever working on projects that reach inward and ask that we improve and update our academic goals and tools. Three such projects cross college boundaries. LEAP is a national initiative for undergraduate education reform to which we are fully committed. Its goals are ensuring that each of our undergraduates meets the essential learning outcomes necessary to enter a world of employment opportunities rife with as yet unscripted challenges. Another project, Gateway to Completion, challenges us along with our partners in student affairs to help our incoming students who have the greatest needs in meeting the demands of a college education. Finally, the program that we call the education collaborative, is both a community outreach and an internal reform effort. This effort, consistent with everything in the academic vision of West Georgia, has as its sole mission a better educated Georgia, helping to shape responsible thinkers and citizens necessary to create and support the future of Georgia.

Establishing a physical home for these projects and many of the offices that house them is also a consideration for the future of academic affairs. The Center for Teaching and Learning, Honors College, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, and Testing Center have historically been moved around campus to area where they fit. A more strategic approach locates them all centrally in an area that promotes stopping by, engaging in collaborative discussion, and pursuing academic goals. At many universities this area is defined as a university college, housing a variety of academic initiatives, offices, and individuals dedicated to the academic mission but do not fit neatly in a single college or department. These centralized locations are very efficient and flexible in design and functionality and would only enhance engagement for faculty, staff, and students. They also create an academic center-point on campus that provides a place for interaction and engagement that exemplifies and amplifies the skills and knowledge that enhance contributions to the region, state, and beyond.

Finally, at the University of West Georgia, we believe that leadership development and full campus engagement are necessary for the complete realization of our potential. We call that program Engage West, and it affects every facet of our campus life. This initiative is based upon commitment to transparency, accountability, and collaboration and is driven to foster and promote evidence based leadership and a culture of high performance.
UWG Academic Master Plan

An Academic Master Plan works in concert with a Strategic Plan to help prioritize and guide decisions about curriculum development, technology deployment and use, planning processes, staffing, a variety of student success initiatives, and – of course – resources. The University of West Georgia strives to be the best regional comprehensive university in the nation, sought after as the best place to work, learn, and succeed. The mission of Academic Affairs is to create a culture of intellectual curiosity, foster academic integrity, and promote personal and professional growth. Framed as both an aspirational and living document, it evolves over time in response to the continuous improvement process. And for external constituencies, it is designed to help them see and understand what makes the institution distinct.
Academic Programming

As of September 2017, the University of West Georgia offered a total of 84 programs of study: 41 degree programs at the bachelors level, 23 degree programs at the masters level, 6 degree programs at the specialist level, 4 degree programs at the doctoral level, 8 degree programs at the post-baccalaureate certificate level, and 2 degree programs at the post-master’s certificate level.

UWG’s academic strategy has traditionally focused on developing a broad base of knowledge upon which to build specializations that are well-suited for careers around the State of Georgia and beyond. As the university continues to grow, we will offer new, dynamic programs. UWG’s Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) recently completed a study to determine general workforce needs in the region. That study will help guide expansion in academic affairs, not just in degrees to meet those needs, but also in facility design and student services that support those programs.

Based on these findings, UWG is developing a variety of options for the future. We are currently working on a Master of Fine Arts and Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration – both terminal degrees that are in high demand. In addition, UWG is exploring an interdisciplinary degree that will evolve and change with regional demands. The aforementioned CBER report points out that workforce demands in the west Georgia area require specific skillsets. The interdisciplinary approach will embed these skills in a bachelor’s degree, allowing graduates to enter the workforce with four-year degrees and relevant skills.

Organizing and structuring campus facilities to present this programming is also being reviewed. We are working with facilities and planning on an integrated plan to consolidate academic outreach in a unified area central to campus that promotes interaction between faculty, staff, and students. The vision includes an area for the Center for Teaching and Learning, testing, the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, and Honors – perhaps in a University College. The library facility is used extensively by students for myriad purposes (approximately ¼ million visits per year). Potential options to increase physical space available may include migrating the least-used portions of the shelved collection to other, less expensive locations; allowing open use of unscheduled classrooms and conference rooms; providing temporary quarters for faculty; and offering space for student displays and events. We are also exploring development of active learning spaces through a partnership between faculty and facilities to address pedagogical and space needs jointly to maximize student learning.
Programs in Development

M.F.A. in Art. A proposal will be submitted this year with plans to start the program as early as the following year. This will be one of the lowest cost MFA programs in the state and will contribute to the steady increase of Art majors.

B.F.A. in Theatre. COAH plans to submit a proposal to offer a new B.F.A. in Theatre with performance and design tracks for students going in to both theatre and film.

STEM Endorsement. This graduate endorsement may be added to an existing teaching certification. With Provost Office approval, plans are underway to begin offering the endorsement in Summer 2018.

M.S. in Sport Management. The approval process is in progress, with plans to begin offering the program in Fall 2018.

Nutrition Endorsement

Emphasis on Online Hybrid and Graduate Delivery. Distance education expects growth in online programs (UWG Online) to continue as we strive to expand options for obtaining degrees, certificates, and other credentials.

B.S. in Social and Behavioral Health. This recently approved program will launch soon.

Douglasville. Mass Communications is preparing to take its communications program to Douglasville.

Dual Degree Partnerships. Several departments plan to expand options for students beyond the Regent’s Engineering Pathways to include dual degree offerings.

Meta Majors. The university will be creating new areas of interest generally focused that engage students early on and get them involved in their coursework within that area very early.

Planning for Enrollment Growth

Minority Recruitment Scholarship. COAH now offers a funded Minority Recruitment scholarship to attract under-represented minorities and is building a partnership with Fort Valley to recruit their students to COAH’s graduate programs.

New Ethics Bowl for High School Students. At the undergraduate level, COAH is targeting mailings to high school guidance counselors and continues to develop mutually beneficial programming such as hosting the state-wide Georgia Theater Conference and kicking off a new Ethics Bowl for area high school students.

Nursing expansion into a CNA program in Newnan – Certified Nursing assistants are being explored for expansion in Coweta County.

New Admissions Standards and New Curriculum in the Honors College. The Honors College is implementing admission essays and a new curriculum. As these changes take place, the dean expects that enrollment numbers may initially go down, but the quality of students in the program and their commitment/retention/graduation are expected to increase.
The Center for Teaching and Learning provides faculty with high-quality, evidence-based professional development and information about innovative techniques, research, and pedagogy so that they can foster engaged and effective learning environments for our students. The CTL supports Student Success and Academic Success by helping to advance productive faculty development, Partnership Success by building strong collaborative relationships with both internal and external partners, and Operational Success by helping to create a workplace of choice for faculty members.

Through this ongoing faculty development work, the CTL is at the forefront of UWG’s culture of improving retention, progression, and graduation rates and of reducing the number of students who drop, fail, or withdraw from their courses. These efforts have become essential components of major campus-wide initiatives, including the Quality Enhancement Plan, Liberal Education and America’s Promise, Gateways to Completion, and Complete College Georgia. Because faculty development is critical to the increasing impact of these initiatives, the CTL would benefit from purposeful growth in its space, staffing, and services, all of which can augment UWG’s capacity for added success in each of these initiatives.

A centrally located neutral space for the CTL offers the most benefits to faculty and student success. The accessible location and welcoming design of this space would encourage faculty from all colleges and of all ranks to feel comfortable dropping in to talk about pedagogy and experiment with effective instruction. This new location would contain an innovative and flexible teaching space, including, for example, floor-to-ceiling whiteboards mounted around the room, along with movable whiteboards, huddle boards, and easily movable tables. As an enhanced, active instructional space, it could also be used as a classroom for course delivery, subsequently supporting students’ learning.

By expanding how the Center for Teaching and Learning engages in the work of effective faculty development, UWG will not only strengthen successes across each of the Strategic Imperatives; we can also significantly enrich how our faculty teach and how our students learn.
Committed to student success, Academic Affairs is aligning its best practices for teaching and research with several national and state initiatives that help students in the transition to learning in college, provide students with more opportunities for experiential and applied learning, and prepare students for more vital engagement in professional and civic work after degree completion.

Through *LEAP West!* the University of West Georgia joins colleges and universities from across the nation in the critical reassessment and transformation of undergraduate education to meet the demands of the twenty-first century. With the support of national organizations like the *American Association of Colleges and Universities* (AAC&U), UWG is working with other schools to share best practices for curriculum design and best teaching practices, including its leadership as a charter member of LEAP State Georgia, an educational collaborative organized by colleges and universities in the USG.

*LEAP West!* reflects West Georgia’s own efforts to improve the quality of undergraduate education by focusing on key essential learning outcomes, principles of excellence, and authentic assessment practices that provide students with a more dynamic learning experience. At its core, *LEAP West!* is committed to

- Faculty leadership in course and curriculum design aligned with best national practices;
- Engaged collaboration and partnerships between faculty and staff in support of student learning and success;
- Actively supporting and improving student retention and progression toward graduation; and
- Providing students with the practical skills, problem-solving and critical thinking abilities, and civic awareness required for personal and professional success in the twenty-first century.

Academic initiatives emerging from *LEAP West!* include First-Year Academic Experiences (First-Year Seminars, Learning Communities, and a First-Year Engagement Series) that help students make successful transitions to learning in college; a Guided Pathways Initiative that helps students make essential connections between courses, majors, and future professions; enhanced opportunities for Experiential Learning (undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad and away programs, and internships); and Capstone Seminars and Experiences that help students reflect upon what they have learned in college in relationship to their future professions and goals.

*Gateways to Completion (G2C)*—in partnership with the John Gardner Institute, academic departments across the Division of Academic Affairs are engaged in strategic course redesign to improve student retention, progression, and success in critical first-year courses in the core curriculum. Essential goals of the project include creating common learning outcomes, using strategic assessments to guide changes in curriculum and pedagogy, and development of corequisite courses and supplemental instruction pathways for students who need additional support. As work on G2C develops, UWG will develop its own Course Design Institute through The Center for Teaching and Learning which will expand opportunities for departments and faculty to engage in significant course redesign to support student learning and success.
Traditionally, UWG has focused on its undergraduate population, thus leading to a lack of awareness of its graduate programs and opportunities. In its new iteration, the Graduate School provides strategic leadership and advocacy for an innovative educational and professional experience by putting the student experience at the center of all of its programming, thus making the graduate experience visible and appealing.

To do this, we offer opportunities for students to develop their professional network and refine the skills and knowledge needed to complement their disciplinary preparation. This includes advocating for the representation of graduate students on campus committees, the creation of a Graduate Student Association on campus, the development of a feeder program with regional HBCUs, and the monitoring of graduate assistantships to ensure that they provide students with rigorous academic and professional training that will support them in their future goals.

As we address these issues, the long-term vision of the Graduate School includes the development of physical space that will provide a sense of community for graduate students. This may include cubicles that provide them with a place to meet with their own students or study during the day. We also envision the growth of an inclusive, diverse student population enrolled in viable, innovative programs across the institution.

While the Graduate School does not house programs, it does contribute information and support to the development of new programs across the institution. We foresee the development of a Master’s in Interdisciplinary Studies (MIS) that both benefits from and supports a strong Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, as well as the development of other professional master’s programs across the university.
The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs is an administrative office that assists faculty and staff in identifying and obtaining external funding that supports research and other projects. Traditionally, this office has focused on research administration and compliance issues. With the growth of the institution, however, it has added services and personnel to support research development with a goal of building capacity for both more and bigger external grants. To this end, we plan to continue to add to the pre-award side of our office in order to cultivate relationships with units across campus, thus allowing us to facilitate research teams that support broader institutional initiatives.

The Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (CIDS) endeavors to catalyze, promote, and support modes of inquiry and learning at UWG that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries. Historically, it has served this mission by assisting and providing administrative oversight in efforts to infuse and strengthen interdisciplinarity in the curriculum, including:

1. The development of new XIDS courses and interdisciplinary degree programs,
2. coordinating the assessment of XIDS courses in the core curriculum, and
3. supporting existing interdisciplinary major and minors, including Global Studies (BA) and Africana Studies, Asian Studies Classical Studies, Film Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Latin American Studies, Women’s Studies.

Master of Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS/MIS) degree. The CIDS will (1) coordinate the advising and mentoring of BIS majors, (2) manage individualized degree plans, (3) offer the introductory (XIDS 2000), theory and methods (XIDS 3000), and capstone (XIDS 4000) courses in Interdisciplinary Studies required by the BIS major, and (4) support BIS majors in undertaking and presenting their capstone projects. This role will expand and develop as workforce demands continue to move toward requiring more broadly educated thinkers who can identify and work creatively to find solutions.
Building on the Past – Preparing for the Future