

Complete College Georgia Update Report FY 2015 (DRAFT)

Submitted by

Atlanta Metropolitan State College



University System of Georgia

to the

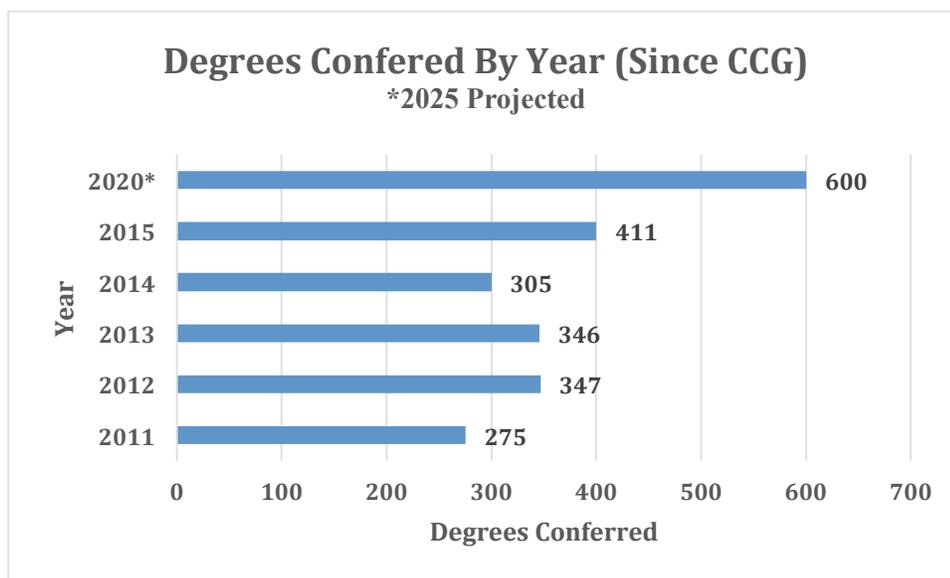
Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia

Institutional Mission and Student Body Profile

Founded in 1974, Atlanta Metropolitan State College (AMSC) is a public college governed by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG). The mission of AMSC is to provide high quality, low-cost access to post-secondary education, primarily to residents in the metro-Atlanta region. An essential component of the College's mission is to provide a holistic experience for students that integrates academics with a range of co-curricular activities, including experiential learning, life-skills, and civic/community services. A core expected outcome of the College's mission is to graduate a broad demographic of underrepresented, underserved students to achieve their career goals, and to make meaningful contributions at all levels of society.

The College's student profile includes a 3,000-student population, with a 6:4 ratio traditional/non-traditional adult learner commuter population, and demographics of 90% African-American, 3% Caucasian, 4% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. Though 25% of students require at least one learning support class, beyond the degree course requirements, AMSC consistently maintains a graduation rate higher than the USG State College average, and leads the State College sector with associate degree graduation rates for African-American males. Sixty-six percent (66%) of the AMSC student population are first-generation college students. Seventy percent (70%) of students receive the Pell grant, and 90% of students receive some form of financial aid. Approximately 30% of students major in Business and Computer Science programs, 20% STEM and Allied Health programs, 28% Social Science, and 22% Humanities and Fine Arts.

The overall Complete College Georgia (CCG) priority for AMSC is to achieve national completion average rates by 2025: a 22% graduation rate for associate's degree seekers, and a 60% graduation rate for bachelor's degree seekers. These rates will position AMSC to achieve its second CCG priority: confer 600 post-secondary degrees annually, by 2025. The trend in degrees conferred, impacted by the CCG efforts of AMSC since 2011, is provided in Figure below.



Institutional Completion Goals and Strategies

Goal 1. Increase College Readiness of Incoming Freshman

How meeting this goal increases completion

Academically stronger students, particularly at the point of admission to the College, generally have higher completion rates because they can better navigate the rigors of college courses, repeat fewer course, and successfully take a heavier load of classes, all of which decrease graduation time. AMSC has employed two strategies to increase the number of college-ready students.

Strategies #1 - Ensuring Academically Stronger Students: AMSC has expanded its Dual Enrollment recruitment and outreach efforts to include five additional high schools to increase the number of dual enrollment students for the FY2015 school year, with the goal of doubling the headcount of dual enrollment students from the previous year, and increasing the number to a target of 300 by FY2016, a 20% increase over the previous year. These efforts include providing transportation for select dual enrollment students who would otherwise not be able to participate. In addition, AMSC Dual Enrollment Coordinator has been provided.

Strategy #2 - Ensuring Academically Stronger Students: The College has expanded its Pre-Matriculation (Pre-MAT) Bridge program, which provides academic reviews in math, reading, and English for potentially new Freshman students who do not perform well on the COMPASS admissions test. The goal of Pre-MAT courses is to increase the COMPASS performance of students to exempt Learning Support requirements, which will reduce course requirements and reduce time to completion. The Pre-MAT program is more effective when students enroll in the 11th grade of high school, which gives them the opportunity to receive intervention strategies to close any academic gaps that might exist, before high school graduation. The Pre-MAT success rates average between 60 -70% on the first attempt, depending on the academic preparedness of the student enrolling in the class. This strategy has broad impact because both traditional students and non-traditional adult learners benefit significantly from this program. The target for Pre-MAT is to extend it to all high schools with which AMSC has dual credit programs.

Strategy #3 - Increase Support for Adult Learners: Because adult learners constitute a large portion (42%) of the overall student population (approximately 3000 students) at AMSC, achieving this strategy will have a marked impact on the AMSC CCG success. The adult learner population is typically composed of students from varying backgrounds, including military students, students requiring job retraining, or students pursuing new career options. Because of the high stakes associated with adult learners completing a degree or credential within as short time as possible, efforts associated with increasing adult learner graduation rates have proven very successful. The following strategies to achieve this goal were implemented in FY2015. Other strategies to support adult learners include: implementing adult learner “friendly” online courses designed to meet the needs of adult learners, and to increase course delivery options, allowing them to consistently take more course credits that are compatible with their work schedule and family life and therefore to graduate faster. Prior Learning Assessment, another strategy to assist adult learners, allow adult learners to submit portfolios outlining their prior learning that may qualify for college credit, thus reducing the number of courses needed to complete the program, and reducing time to graduation.

Impact - 600 -700 students annually

Needs/Challenges in Achieving this Goal

Although AMSC’s Dual Enrollment program is progressing, there are needs/challenges. Among the challenges are (a) students’ lack of funds to purchase text books, (b) insufficient preparation by many high school students to meet dual enrollment requirements, particularly ACT and SAT minimum scores, and (c) students’ lack of transportation prohibiting their participation. The Pre-MAT program has a fee of \$89.00. While nominal, this fee is a barrier for some

students to take the course. The long-term goal is to increase the number of fee waivers and expand the Pre-MAT program to more students.

Goal 2: Increase the likelihood of degree completion by transforming the way that remediation is accomplished.

How meeting this goal increases completion

Graduation rates of learning support students lag by 40-50%, when compared to other students. Therefore, any improvement in reducing the number of students in learning support or reducing the time students spend in learning support will have a significant impact on graduation rates and on the number of degrees conferred. The goal of transforming remediation is to reduce the time students spend in learning support. AMSC has successfully implemented two remediation change strategies that have resulted in reduced time students spend in learning support.

Remediation Transformation Strategy #1 - AMSC transformed the pedagogy and delivery method of Math 0099 learning support classes from a traditional lecture approach to a computer-assisted modular approach. This initiative was the College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), a SACS requirement for reaccreditation. This approach is based on the nationally recognized "Emporium Model," which provides students with a self-paced instructional delivery method driven by their individual learning styles, improving mastery of curriculum content and reducing time for students in learning support classes. The hallmarks of the modular approach that have proven successful in transforming learning support classes have been: (1) students engage in active learning, as opposed to traditional passive learning, and (2) the instructor remains in the class to assist student as a learning facilitator, thus freeing up time for individualized assistance to students within the class setting.

Remediation Transformation Strategy #2 – Over the past 1.5 years, AMSC has adopted and piloted a new structure for its Learning Support Program, set forth by the University System of Georgia. This new structure makes two fundamental changes: (1) learning support students who demonstrate potential and motivation are allowed to satisfy their learning support requirements as a co-requisite course with their College level gateway course, and (2) learning support students follow a specific pathway of learning support (or “Foundation”) courses that better prepare them for their program of study.

Impact – 500 students, Each Term

Needs/Challenges in Achieving the Completion Goal

Training and adapting faculty and support staff, as well as educating students on learning support transformations and a new model, is a slow, time-consuming process. The task of designing, developing, and assessing a new process for removing/troubleshooting for “kinks” in the system is a daunting process that requires significant planning, resources, and patience.

Goal 3: Provide intrusive advising to keep students on track to graduate

How meeting this goal increases completion

The leading factors that delay student graduation are (1) errors or lack of good choices in course selection, (2) changing majors or program of study resulting in loss of credits, thus extending time to graduation, (3) academic jeopardy, which places students on probation or suspension, delaying completion or causing drop-outs, (4) Financial Aid problems linked to SAP requirements, and (5) lack of early academic support, resulting in an increase in course attempts, earned/attempt credit hour ratio, and delay in completion. The following strategies address these barriers that reduce student progression, and ultimately graduation.

Strategy for Reducing Errors in Course Selection - An Advisor Registration Hold is placed on each student's account each semester, thus requiring students to receive academic advising before making course selections

Strategy for Reducing Major/Program of Study Changes - A specified Divisional Faculty Advisor is assigned for each student according to Program of Study / Major. This affords students the opportunity to develop a mentoring relationship with a representative of the College who is also associated with their academic professional goals.

Strategy to Improve Academic Performance - Students whose GPA drops below 2.00 are required to meet with a representative in the Center for First Year Experience and Academic Advising to develop an Academic Improvement Plan. Students are prescribed appropriate academic and student support services such as tutoring and counseling if indicated. Follow up meetings are mandated. In addition, The Department of Academic Affairs has restructured the College's Academic Support Center (now called the "Academic Success Center") services to directly align with the College's Early Alert and First Year Experience programs so that once an Early Alert signal is triggered, students will receive immediate academic support, providing a wider array of support strategies, including supplementary learning, "real time" workshops that align with student-identified difficult class topics, and an increased academic support staff to assist and expand more services to students.

Strategy for Sustaining SAP Requirements and Retaining Financial Aid Funding - A SAP Registration Hold is placed on accounts for students who are not making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as defined by the Office of Financial Aid (overall GPA being less than 2.0 and/or completing fewer than 67% of their total attempted hours), thus requiring students to meet with a representative in the Center for First Year Experience and Academic Advising to develop an Academic Improvement Plan. Students are prescribed appropriate academic and student support services such as tutoring and counseling. Follow up meetings are mandated.

Strategy for providing early academic support for students. An Early Alert Student Referral Program has been implemented, which allows faculty to seek additional assistance for at-risk students when a threat to their success in a course is identified. Students meet with a representative in the Center for First Year Experience and Academic Advising to develop an Academic Improvement Plan. Students are prescribed appropriate academic and student support services such as tutoring and counseling. Follow-up meetings are mandated.

Impact – All students are impacted annually by one or more of the strategies in Goal 3

Needs/Challenges in Achieving the Completion Goal

Intrusive advising activities are time consuming and require dedicated staff. While AMSC continues to grow its advising center and initiatives, the needs of students have outpaced the current staff capacity and resources. Increasing or reallocating the College's limited resources to align student needs with optimal levels of support staff and resource allocation is a very difficult task to achieve.



Goal	High-Impact Strategy Priorities	Summary of Activities Achieved	Measures of Success
Goal 1. Increase College Readiness of Incoming Freshman	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure academically stronger and College Ready students at admission 2. Expand the Pre-MAT program to increase the number student exempting learning support 3. Enhance Support for Adult Learners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand service area recruitment/outreach of academically strong Dual Enrollment Students 2. Pre-MAT expanded the number students served from the previous year and added three new high school sites 3. Several Adult Learner “friendly” classes were offered in all Learning Support disciplines, History, Orientation, Political Science, and AMIR, utilizing a “Quality Matters” Rubric and Benchmark 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Dual Enrollment headcount increased in FY2015 from 192 to 250, 30% increase over the previous year) 2. Pre-MAT increased enrolled students (350 to 550, 57% increase over previous year), with an overall pass rate of 63%. 3. The Adult Learner “Friendly” classes showed a pass rate 61% (adult learners) vs. 55% (traditional students)
Goal 2. Transform Remediation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create new pedagogy and delivery methods that utilize active learning, modular approach 2. Incorporate Co-requisite Classes and Foundation Pathways with Learning Support Classes 	<p>Nine learning support classes were offered, serving 250 students with the new pedagogy. In addition, the QEP model was adopted and incorporated into four foundation classes in the new learning support model</p>	<p>QEP students demonstrated an overall 38% increase in pass rates over the previous year when compared to students taking courses utilizing the traditional model</p>
Goal 3. Provide intrusive advising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate intrusive advising strategies with various institutional academic and non-academic activities, targeting high-risk retention and graduation student cohorts. 2. Provide additional advising support for high at-risk first-time, full-time (FTFT) students. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The AMSC Early Alert Program was expanded and realigned with the College’s First Year Experience Program to ensure that high risk students are served first. 2. First-time Full-time students participated in intrusive advising program activities, which included meeting twice during the semester with an advisor, ensuring the accuracy of their degree plans, and addressing other barriers that limited this cohort from progressing to graduation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seven hundred seventy (770) students received individual assistance for the FY2015 year, a 10% increase from the prior year. 2. The graduation rate of the FTFT Cohort will be between 12 and 15% (increase of 3-6% over previous year) depending on the outcome of the summer term.
Goal 4. Overall CCG Goal of increasing the number of post-secondary credentials awarded	<p>Increase number of degrees conferred to a target of at least 600 annually by 2025</p>	<p>All activities outlined in this report contribute to the overall CCG completion goal</p>	<p>The total degrees conferred for FY2015 increased from 305 to 415 students, an increase of 36% over the previous year, and a 60% (259 to 415) increase since the start of CCG activities</p>

Observations and Lessons Learned

Observation #1 – Improving the coordination of campus efforts (e.g. communication, planning, assessment, tracking resource allocations) in achieving CCG goals is paramount.

Lessons Learned - Two major campus restructuring strategies have occurred during FY2015 to ensure campus efforts are coordinated and that resources are maximized as the College moves forward in CCG activities, (1) An Office of Student Retention, Progression, and Graduation (RPG) has been created, and a Director of RPG has been appointed to the responsibilities of that Office.

Observation #2 – Accurate metrics and powerful analytics tools are essential in planning/implementation strategies and maximizing results. CCG planning must be data driven.

Lessons Learned – AMSC is incorporating analytics tools for future CCG activities. The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment and Office of RPG will coordinate efforts to create a robust analytics strategy for predicting and tracking student academic needs, monitoring and tracking student success throughout their tenure, and a more effective early alert mechanism for notifying the right people to address specific problems in a timely manner.

Observation #3 – Students’ engagement (not merely them being informed) to assist in the implementation of CCG strategies significantly improves results.

Lessons Learned – Students serve as teacher assistants and implement supplementary learning for QEP classes, a strategy for transforming learning support. Students will be utilized in supplementary learning in the College’s newly restructured Academic Success Center. A structured recruiting, search, and interview process is in place to ensure that the College attracts the best student for these paid positions.