

APPENDIX 4

GREAT FALLS COLLEGE 2016-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN

Great Falls College MSU Strategic Plan 2016-2022

Final Report

Background

The 2016-2022 strategic and operating plan was initially drafted by the College Planning, Budget and Analysis Committee (CPBAC). The metrics used in this plan were related to student achievement and were primarily quantitative, setting numeric goals for enrollment, retention and completion. Concurrently, faculty began revising the Eight Abilities into College Learning Outcomes.

Feedback from NWCCU evaluators during the Mid-Cycle visit in 2018 led to a charge to the College Assessment, Analysis, and Accreditation Committee (a standing subcommittee of CPBAC) to thoroughly examine the strategic plan. A revised plan, which included refining the mission statement language, was adopted in December 2019. An operational plan that included annual goals, as well as longer-term goals, was completed in April 2020. The committee began regular reports to CPBAC on annual goals beginning in fall 2020.

Even though the plan was officially set to expire in 2022, the plan included metrics beyond that date, acknowledging the reality that some of the goals could not be reached in less than two years and that some of the goals may be relevant in the next strategic plan.

The Executive Team decided to complete the 2016-2022 strategic plan a year early so a new strategic plan could begin in 2022. Planning for that effort began at an Executive Team retreat on Aug. 2, 2021.

Note that in this document, the term metric was used to describe goals. The metrics were implied by the language of each goal.

Results and Next Steps

Strategic Goal 1: Promote student success, leading to increased retention and completion.

Strategic Goal 1.a.: Integrate high quality, high impact practices.

Metric

Within 5 years, 70% of graduates have experienced two high quality, high impact practices.

Annual goal

By May 2021, at least 80% of programs will have identified at least one high-impact practice and developed plans for implementation and tracking.

Results

The first annual goal was not met. In January 2021, a survey about high quality, high impact practices was administered to faculty to identify whether faculty knew what constituted a high quality, high impact practice. Survey results showed faculty confusion as to what defined a “high quality, high impact practice” versus effective teaching strategies. Because of this confusion, in February 2021, a faculty professional development training was held with the intent to frame language and define high quality, high impact practices. An assessment workshop in fall 2021 also included a discussion of high impact practices.

Next Steps

The director of Teaching and Learning Innovation and instructional designer will continue to provide professional development for faculty regarding relevant, nationally identified high-impact practices, as well as other innovative teaching practices, and assist faculty in implementing these practices. Assessment of these practices will be part of the student learning outcomes assessment process, with some revisions implemented fall 2021. Faculty have been asked to identify innovative or effective teaching practices and the impact of these practices on student learning as part of the reporting process.

The College will continue to monitor the number of high quality, high impact practices integrated within courses. Work will be completed annually by program directors and reported to the Academic Affairs Leadership Team each May.

Strategic Goal 1.b.: Support students in articulating and attaining their educational goals.

Metric

Within 5 years (2024), 100% of a random sample of degree-seeking students have a documented purpose, plan, and path.

Annual goal

By October 2020, 55% of a random sample of degree-seeking students will have a documented purpose, plan, and path.

Results

Fifty-three percent of a random sample of degree-seeking students had a documented purpose, plan, and path. This is two percent fewer than what was stated in the annual goal for October 2020. Table 1, below, shows the data for this annual goal. The random sample included 150 students enrolled in any semester during the 2019-2020 academic year, and 73% of the sample had a documented purpose, 84% had a documented plan, and 74% had a documented path. While more than 55% of the student sample had either a purpose, plan, or path, the proportion of the sample that had all three (a purpose, plan, and a path) was slightly less than 55%.

A purpose was defined as the student’s primary major; if they were declared as one of the General Education programs (Associate of Arts or Associate of Science) then their purpose was defined as having a primary concentration. A plan was defined as the student’s academic plan that was created with their Academic Advisor. A path was the documented action of how the academic plan was carried out; specifically, it was the Academic Advisor’s notes on the student’s academic plan.

Table 1. Documented Purpose, Plan, and Path

| Metric | Purpose, Plan, Path | Academic Year 2019-2020 | Goal Met or Not Met |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| By October 2020, 55% of a random sample of degree-seeking students will have a documented purpose, plan, and path. | Purpose, Plan, and Path | 53% (n=80) | Not Met |
| | Purpose | 73% (n=110) | N/A |
| | Plan | 84% (n=126) | N/A |
| | Path | 74% (n=111) | N/A |

In order to examine whether there may have been differences in the proportion of students from the sample who had a purpose, plan, and path, the data were disaggregated by ethnicity, Pell eligibility, and age. Table 2 shows these data and lists the proportion of students from the sample, from each category, who did have a purpose, plan, and path. The raw number (n) refers to the number of students from that category in the sample who had a purpose, plan, and path.

There did not appear to be large differences for the subgroups listed. Non-Pell eligible and traditional age students were slightly below the general population.

Table 2. Disaggregated Data

| Variable | Variable | Purpose, Plan, and Path |
|------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Ethnicity (“MT Race”) | White | 53.6% (n=60) |
| | American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Hispanic, or Multi-racial | 52.6% (n=20) |
| Pell Grant eligibility | Pell | 56.1% (n=46) |
| | Non-Pell | 50.0% (n=34) |
| Age | Traditional age (<24) | 50.7% (n=35) |
| | Nontraditional age (24+) | 55.6% (n=45) |

Next Steps

The College will continue to measure how many students have a documented purpose, plan, and path using the metric from this strategic goal each year. The work will be completed by the Office of Institutional Research and the Director of the Advising and Career Center and will be reported to CPBAC annually.

Strategic Goal 1.c.: Provide faculty and staff development to assist in developing, implementing, and assessing high quality, high impact practices.

Metrics

1 - Within 5 years (2024), 50% of faculty participate in professional development pertaining to student success (integrative educational model).

Annual goal for metric 1

By May 2021, 10% of faculty participate in professional development pertaining to student success (integrative educational model).

2 - Within 5 years (2024), 50% of staff participate in professional development pertaining to student success (integrative educational model).

Annual goal for metric 2

By May 2021, 10% of staff participate in professional development pertaining to student success (integrative educational model).

Results

For both metrics, no progress was made specifically to the integrated educational model professional development due to disruptions related to COVID-19.

Next Steps

Staff members will continue to pursue strategic professional development as appropriate for their areas in collaboration with their supervisors. The Teaching and Learning Center is developing plans to proactively offer faculty professional development that is well-aligned with the next strategic plan, as well as responsive to needs identified through faculty requests and analyses of course reviews and student learning assessment reports. The college will establish a centralized reporting and tracking system in which Human Resources will track faculty and staff participation in professional development.

Strategic Goal 1.d.: Identify and implement opportunities for collaboration between curricular and co-curricular units to support student success.

Metrics

Joint Directors' task forces (Enrollment & Engagement and Retention & Completion) will demonstrate successful collaboration by accomplishing stated goals and tasks according to deadlines stated in committee tracking spreadsheets.

Results

This goal was met through curricular and co-curricular collaboration on the Joint Directors committee. The Enrollment & Engagement task force accomplished three stated goals and the Retention & Completion task force accomplished one goal.

Enrollment & Engagement Goal 1: Every student will have a documented purpose, plan and path. As of January 2021, advisors were assisting students in developing this document, which is available in Brightspace/D2L ([Sample Purpose, Plan and Path](#)).

Enrollment & Engagement Goal 2: Provide coaching from advisors to new students. Since spring 2020, advisors are providing ongoing coaching to new students in their first semester. Academic advisors provide coaching during new students' first semester at Great Falls College that goes beyond helping them choose a major and enroll in the appropriate courses. Advisors make intentional contact with new students every 2-3 weeks to support them in achieving their goals by focusing on eight core topics that impact student success. These eight areas are student academics, school engagement, commitment to graduation, career goals, managing commitments, finances, physical and mental health, and time management.

Enrollment & Engagement Goal 3: Guarantee spots in critical courses by creating extra courses (sections). Anatomy and Physiology is a critical course because it is a required pre-requisite for many health sciences programs. This goal has been met.

Retention & Completion Goal: As part of the Great Falls College integrated educational model, implement 8-week blocked schedules to promote student success leading to increased retention and completion in General Studies. As of fall 2021, the 8-week blocks have been implemented in all General Studies, Business & Accounting, Computer Technology, and Trades programs.

First-Year Experience Subcommittee: Implemented in March 2020 by Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, this subcommittee incorporated much of the work of the Enrollment & Engagement and Retention & Completion committees:

- Created [Student Resources](#) webpage and app. More content to be added as needed.
- Student success modules have been developed within a Brightspace/D2L course shell and others are in development. Each module is intended to serve as a just-in-time, self-paced learning experience, replacing the former College Success course for credit that is no longer offered. Current modules include an [introduction to college](#), where basic

expectations of college students are discussed; [time management](#), where students learn to identify and use strategies for effective use of their time; and [note taking](#), where students learn about the Cornell notes system and other methods of taking notes. Students will be referred to these resources by advisors or they can self-enroll, and students will receive certificates upon completion of some modules. Faculty may assign modules, such as Research 101 (a general introduction to library research), as part of a course.

Next Steps

The Joint Directors committee identified and implemented opportunities for collaboration by setting and accomplishing the initial goals set for the task forces (now called subcommittees). The subcommittees then turned their attention to strengthening students' first-year experience, again setting goals and reporting their progress at the monthly Joint Directors meetings. The overarching aim is to improve retention and completion. The college will continue to involve the Joint Director committee in initiatives that involve multiple campus entities.

Strategic Goal 1.e.: Strengthen the student learning assessment process.

Metric

Within five years, the student learning assessment of a random sample of students will show an improvement over the baseline set in 2022 for program level goals.

Results

Faculty have reported general student achievement data indicating strengths and opportunities for improvements for two academic years; these data, along with program assessment plans, are under review.

Activities

[Assessment plans](#) were posted on the website.

Next Steps

The director of Teaching and Learning Innovation will continue the progress made in developing student learning outcomes assessment processes, analyzing assessment results, and reporting

the results to the Executive Team and to the rest of the campus. Specific annual and long-term goals will be recommended by the director and the assessment committee.

Strategic Goal 2: Increase enrollment and retention of General Education and General Studies students to ensure sustainability

Strategic Goal 2.a.: Implement an integrated educational model to help reduce the time to graduation and increase satisfaction.

Metrics

1 - Within five years (2024), increase by 10% the proportion of General Education and General Studies students who graduate within 150% time.

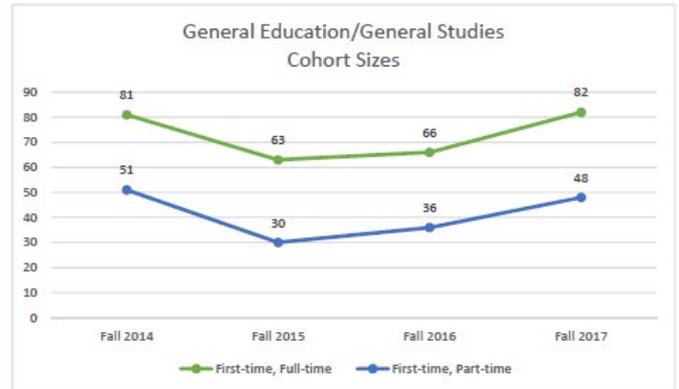
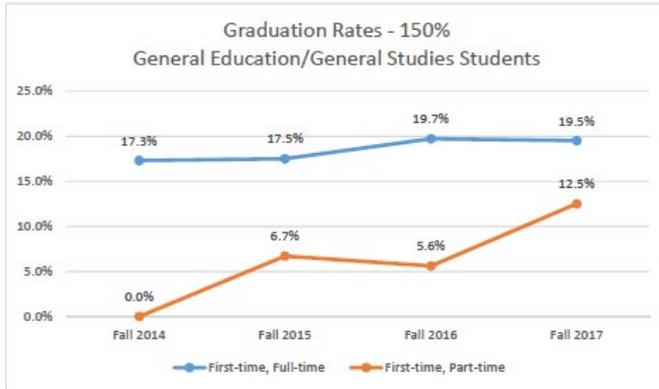
Annual goal for the first metric: Each year, increase by 2% from the previous year, the proportion of General Education and General Studies students who graduate within 150% time.

2 - Within two years (2021), 75% of student survey respondents will report positive experiences on the integrated educational model survey (ability to work, focus on classes, manage homework, feeling prepared).

Annual goal for the second metric: Each year, increase proportion of positive responses by 2% over the previous measures on the integrated educational model survey (ability to work, focus on classes, manage homework, feeling prepared).

Results

Metric 1- This is benchmarking data only as the 8-week Advantage was implemented with the fall 2018 cohort and the first data was gathered in fall 2018.



Updated July 2021

Metric 2- The student survey was sent to all students (1,229) in November 2020 with a response rate of 12%. For the purpose of this goal, the results were analyzed for only those students who identified their primary major as General Education or General Studies. That resulted in reporting responses from 27 individuals.

All but one of the questions had a majority of positive responses (strongly agree or somewhat agree), ranging from a low of 52% for being able to take more classes per semester to 89% both for being able to manage homework and for being able to focus on fewer classes at a time. The one question with more negative responses was 37% positive for getting to know fellow students versus 41% negative. The rest neither agreed nor disagreed.

Updated February 2021

Next Steps

The first metric will continue to be measured because the graduation rate is a statewide indicator. However, since there are a number of campus initiatives that could impact graduation rates, it will be difficult to draw a strong correlation between changes in graduation rates and the implementation of the 8-Week Advantage. That should not prevent the college from implementing initiatives that could improve student success in this metric.

For the second metric, the Executive Director of Instruction and the Office of Institutional Research will annually gather data and present to the Academic Affairs Leadership Team.

Strategic Goal 2.b.: Encourage enrollment through the Connections 101 partnership.

Metrics

1 - Within two years, 75% of applicants referred to Connections 101 will enroll in the program.

2 - Within five years, students who successfully complete Connections 101 and enroll at Great Falls College in General Education or General Studies will have a retention rate at or above the campus retention rate.

Results

For the first metric, five referrals were formally documented in fall 2020 and spring 2021. Uncertainty following the campus closure in spring 2020 due to the pandemic may have contributed to this low referral rate.

For the second metric, one-term and one-year retention rates were calculated and are shown in the table below. At the time of this report, comparison retention rates were available for the fall 2019 and spring 2020 Connections 101 students who enrolled in General Education or General Studies the following fall or spring term at Great Falls College. While the one-term retention rates for Connections 101 students were lower than for all General Education or General Studies students, the number of Connections 101 students in the retention rate calculation is small.

| One-term Retention | | |
|--|---|--|
| Fall 2019 | Spring 2020 | Fall 2020 |
| 24 completed Connections 101 in fall 2019. 11 enrolled in GNED or GENS in spring 2020. Retention Rate to fall 2020: 55% | 18 completed Connections 101 in spring 2020. 7 enrolled in GNED or GENS in fall 2020. Retention Rate to spring 2021: 57% | 6 completed Connections 101 in fall 2020. 2 enrolled in GNED or GENS in spring 2021. Data available fall 2021 Census. |
| Spring 2020 GFC MSU GNED or GENS students Retention rate: 66% | Fall 2020 GFC MSU GNED or GENS students: Retention Rate: 67% | Spring 2021 GFC MSU GNED or GENS students: Data available fall 2021 Census. |

The One-year Retention table that follows shows the retention rate comparison between the Connections 101 graduates who subsequently enrolled at Great Falls College for General Education or General Studies and were retained the following year. It also compares the retention rate to that of all General Education or General Studies students from spring 2020, retained one year to spring 2021.

| One-year Retention | | |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Fall 2019 | Spring 2020 | Fall 2020 |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| 24 Completed Connections 101 in fall 2019. 11 enrolled in GNED or GENS in spring 2020. Retention Rate to Spring 2021: 36% | 18 Completed Connections 101 in spring 2020. 7 enrolled in GNED or GENS in fall 2020. | 6 completed Connections 101 in fall 2020. |
| Spring 2020 GFC MSU GNED or GENS students Retention Rate: 58% | | |

Updated July 2021

Next Steps

This goal was an attempt to measure whether students who had been referred to Connections 101 were actually enrolling. After further consideration, the college determined that tracking referral rates yielded data that were less important than the number of students who enroll, complete and subsequently enroll in college.

Retention rate data will continue to be collected.

Strategic Goal 3: Strengthen the campus culture and work environment.

Strategic Goal 3.a.: Increase documentation and improve processes for shared governance.

Metric

By fall 2022, audit of committees will show that 100% of committees have updated reports on structure, goals, process and progress.

Annual goals: By end of fall 2020, a committee master list will be updated, guidelines for committees will be established, a flowchart of committee structure will be developed.

By the end of spring 2021, create internal audit system for committees to evaluate their processes and efficacy.

Results

A flowchart was developed in February 2021 and is being reviewed for updates. The college has collected information from each committee on purpose, responsibilities, members and terms, and meeting times/dates.

Next Steps

Committee master list/flowchart to be finalized following review. Executive Team, CPBAC and Faculty Senate will establish schedules for committees to update reports on structure, goals, process and progress.

Strategic Goal 3.b.: Assess faculty and staff participation in health and wellness, personal, management, and professional development opportunities.

Metric

By beginning of fall 2021, develop a plan to assess participation.

Results

As of September 2021, as part of assessing the participation, Human Resources developed the plan to assess participation by adding training and development to the job description for the Human Resources Generalist position. The Teaching and Learning Center established a format for delivering professional development through their Workshop Wednesdays and tracking attendance by encouraging attendees to complete surveys after the training.

Faculty participated in professional development on effective teaching methods conducted by the Teaching and Learning Center during Workshop Wednesdays. Duplicated head count of attendance:

- Summer 2020 = 181 (8 workshops)
- Fall 2020 = 91 (6 workshops)
- Spring 2021 = 114 (8 workshops)

High-Impact Practices Workshop, February 17, 2021 = 14

Staff participated in professional development conducted by the Teaching and Learning Center during Workshop Wednesdays. Duplicated head count of attendance:

- Summer 2020 = 23 (8 workshops)
- Fall 2020 = 17 (6 workshops)
- Spring 2021 = 15 (8 workshops)

Next Steps

The Human Resources Department will track staff professional development and work with the Teaching Learning Center to track faculty professional development.