



Focused on Student Success

Strategic Plan 2016-2019

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# From the President

We are experiencing a remarkable time in the 46-year history of Georgia Highlands College. GHC is enjoying tremendous momentum and is positioned to be one of the leading state colleges in the University System of Georgia. From being cited as the "Best return on investment" for a two-year college in the state of Georgia, being ranked 2nd in the "Top Five Best State Colleges" in Georgia, and the addition of a new STEM academic building, we are now charging forward into this new era strategically focused on student success.

I am pleased to share with you the 2016-2019 strategic plan for Georgia Highlands College. As we focus on the future, this plan is our roadmap to growth and success that will transform our college over the next three years. It is intended to embrace our legacy while targeting our energy and resources to support greater student success, institutional growth, and community development. This document represents the multiple perspectives of our college community condensed to five organizational directives: institutional health and stability, enrollment management, academic excellence, diversity, and community engagement. Allow me to expand on each of these directives and the inspirations behind them.

**Institutional Health and Stability:** The last few years have seen GHC undergo the beginning of a remarkable positive transformation. As a result of our focused efforts in marketing, recruitment and retention as well as our sound fiscal decisions, we have seen steady enrollment and retention growth. The college community is resolute on the need to maintain our two-year growth trend and bring greater stability to our student success strategies, employee recruitment and development, and curricular growth. Institutional health also refers to the wellbeing of our students, faculty, and staff. We continue to make safety and security a priority and provide opportunities for student and employee fitness through intramural and university system-wide competitions.

**Enrollment Management:** Following institutional stability, a logical next step is the continuation of our enrollment growth. GHC's students, faculty, and staff are all proud to say that GHC remains one of the most accessible, affordable, high quality state colleges in the University System of Georgia. Those qualities coupled with our growing academic degrees, excellent customer service, and strategic funding initiatives make GHC perfectly poised for continued enrollment growth. By implementing a number of new initiatives intended to enhance Student Life programs, improve course completion rates, control costs and enhance technology applications, we expect our student retention and graduation rates to continue rising.

**Academic Excellence:** The heart of Georgia Highlands College is learning. We are passionate about continuously improving the craft of teaching and each student's learning experience. In coming semesters, GHC will pursue additional associate and bachelor's degrees intended to provide students greater career opportunities, improve academic advising with our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), and launch a Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) that fosters innovation and academic excellence.

**Diversity:** We are proud of our diverse student population and strive to reflect that diversity among our employees as the college grows. GHC will continue to nurture a culture that provides a secure environment for all and the opportunity for dialogue on topics which grow our students and prepare them for the multiplicity of our modern world.

**Community Engagement:** A college is more valuable when it provides benefits to its communities and constituencies. The last few years have seen Georgia Highlands reach out into our communities to both seek greater guidance and build relationships. GHC will continue to engage the business, government, education, and non-profit organizations in order to better our constituents' lives in our ongoing effort to enhance the quality of life in Northwest Georgia. We will build stronger relationships with our donors and community partners by clearly communicating our mission, vision, and goals in order to optimize our resources and to ensure student success.

This is an exciting time to be part of GHC. Our strategic plan builds on our many accomplishments and will allow us to garner even greater success. It will guide our path as we charge forward, providing a framework for the goals of divisions and departments within the college and initiatives pursued in our communities. Our goal is to ensure this strategic plan is fully actualized and our GHC family continuously accounts for its implementation. Whether you are a student, faculty or staff, employer or community member, we ask you to join us in our endeavors. We are stronger when we cooperate, dedicating ourselves to student, college and community success.

Sincerely,  
Donald J. Green Ed.D.



# Executive Summary

The Strategic Planning Team is pleased to present the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan for Georgia Highlands College. The plan provides strategic direction for the college over the next three years.

## **Collaborative History of this Document**

Initiated in December 2015 by President Don Green, a series of events led to the development of the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan. Well over 100 Georgia Highlands faculty, staff, and students played a direct role in developing this plan either by serving on one of the planning groups, participating in the interviewing process, or by submitting comments or suggestions as multiple drafts of the various components of the plan were shared and refined.

Initially, Vice President for Finance and Administration Jeff Davis was charged with leading the development of the plan. Dr. Cathy Ledbetter later joined these efforts in a collaborative leadership role as the new special assistant to the president for planning, continuous improvement and accreditation.

The process to update the strategic plan began with a thorough review of various “foundational” documents by the Executive Leadership Team. This process was critical to understand expectations and demands from a broad perspective and to have some appreciation of the prior work that had been done to set the trajectory for the college. These documents included the University System’s Mission Statement for the State College Sector and the college’s purpose, philosophy, values, mission, goals, and vision statements.

With this background understanding of our mission and purpose in place, a broad training effort occurred within the Strategic Planning Team, the Executive Leadership Team, and throughout the college to elevate the understanding of strategic planning and the college’s planning model,

and what was hoped to be accomplished by the effort of new plan development.

Information and opinion gathering of “big picture priorities” began with interviews conducted by Jeff Davis with approximately 30 key leaders throughout the college. These interviews consisted of 12 questions, such as “What do we value most?,” “Where do we go from here?,” and “What are our biggest risks?” To extend input and participation, town hall meetings were held at each college location and the President’s Leadership Development Cohort met specifically to engage in the process.

Next, summaries were developed from the interview data and provided to the Strategic Planning Team. This team used the input from the interviews to develop strategic directives for the college that broadly incorporated the directional desires expressed in the interviews. After several meetings of the Strategic Planning Team, the Executive Leadership Team and a strategic planning retreat, the resulting strategic plan aims us toward our overarching goal of student success.

Inspired by our students and community partnerships, grounded in research, and cultivated by our employees, the strategic directives and initiatives set forth in the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan represent our commitments for the next three years. The strategic directives emphasize five areas, all of which are ultimately focused on student success: Institutional Health-Organizational Stability, Enrollment Management, Academic Excellence, Diversity and Community Engagement. Moreover, the initiatives will guide most of our work in 2016-2019 toward fulfilling these directives. As in past practice, the President’s Executive Cabinet will, upon our experiences and annual assessment, adjust the initiatives along the way and ensure accountability to the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan.

# *Our Vision, Values, Mission, and Goals*

## **VISION**

To be the premier public, multi-campus institution of choice throughout our region, while serving as the state leader in transfer and retention within our sector

## **VALUES**

- Access – making programs and services available within our service area
- Student Success – placing students' goals at the heart of what we do
- Integrity – demonstrating an ethical approach by our words and actions
- Excellence – providing the highest level of quality service and teaching
- Freedom of expression – allowing all campus constituents to share thoughts and feelings in an honorable and open way
- Inclusiveness – appreciating and incorporating the uniqueness of all individuals
- Cooperation – modeling and forming collegial and productive relationships
- Passion – inspiring others to create an environment of teaching, learning and work where all parties grow and are challenged
- Critical Thinking – making decisions informed by data and shaped by context
- Collaboration – building and fostering relationships that provide the highest mutual benefit to the college and the communities we serve

## **MISSION**

The mission of Georgia Highlands College, a state college of the University System of Georgia, is to provide access to excellent educational opportunities for the intellectual, cultural, and physical development of a diverse population through pre-baccalaureate associate degree transfer programs, career associate degree programs, and targeted baccalaureate degree programs that meet the economic development needs of the region.

## **GOALS**

To achieve this mission of being a gateway to success for students, Georgia Highlands College has articulated the following goals:

- Effect quality teaching and learning focused on academic achievement and personal and professional growth
- Provide comprehensive student services that encourage and enable all students to be successful learners
- Engage students in a challenging atmosphere that prepares them for responsibility and leadership in an evolving global environment
- Utilize appropriate technologies to advance programs, services and operations to support teaching and learning
- Maintain efficient and effective administrative services and facilities to support all programs of the college
- Foster community relationships that facilitate partnering for mutual success

# Georgia Highlands College STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL

**GHC Mission • SACS Accreditation Standards • Stakeholder Needs**  
*(what we are supposed to be doing)*

## PRE-PLANNING

Complete Plan to Plan

Environmental Scanning

SWOT Process

Strengths & Weaknesses

Opportunities & Threats

Publish Environmental Scan Information

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

**3 Year Cycle**

*(what we want to accomplish)*

Review GHC Mission

Set Strategic Directives and GHC Goals

**Specialized Plans:**  
Communications, Facilities,  
Safety, Technology

Establish Unit Mission and Unit Goals

Establish Annual Initiatives

## ANNUAL PLAN: OPERATIONAL PLANNING

*(detailed planning of action & resource  
allocation so we can get it done)*

Unit Operationalizes Goals through Intended Outcomes

**Budget  
Requests/Allocations**

Unit Develops Strategies/Action Plan to Accomplish Intended Outcomes

## MANAGEMENT

Implement Plans

Monitor Outcomes

## EVALUATION

*(how well we are doing  
what we are supposed  
to be doing and what  
we want to*

Evaluate Action Plans

**Comprehensive Program  
Reviews, Employee  
Evaluation, Institutional  
Surveys, Learning  
Outcomes Assessment**

Update & Revise & Use Results

**Evaluate Planning &  
Evaluate Processes**

**Produce Institutional  
Effectiveness Report**

*accomplish)*

**Institutional  
Health-  
Organizational  
Stability**

**Enrollment  
Management**

# **Focused on Student Success**

**Academic  
Excellence**

**Diversity**

**Community  
Engagement**

# INSTITUTIONAL HEALTH-ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY

## *Directive 7*

**Advance an effective framework for institutional sustainability, educational stability, and workforce well-being.**

### **Initiatives:**

- 1a.** Optimize human, economic and environmental investments with available revenue
- 1b.** Identify and secure a variety of revenue streams
- 1c.** Strengthen employee recruitment, retention, and quality of life
- 1d.** Develop campus/site strategic plans to address needs specific to that location
- 1e.** Achieve greater efficiencies by providing access, security and support for enhanced technological capabilities
- 1f.** Improve the institutional effectiveness plan including the assessment of all college operations, programs, activities and student learning outcomes
- 1g.** Advance a performance-based culture built on data-informed decisions and continuous improvement
- 1h.** Increase efforts to ensure health and safety for employees and students
- 1i.** Develop a communication strategy within the institution to better serve the college in communicating priority information

### ***Institutional Measures:***

Crime Statistics  
Employee Retention Statistics  
Employee Satisfaction Survey Results  
Institutional Effectiveness Plan and Analysis  
Operating Budget Comparisons  
Ratios for Overall Financial Health, Physical and Technological Asset



# ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

## *Directive 2*

**Increase overall enrollment at GHC through targeted recruitment and retention strategies which are responsive to demographic and economic indicators within the communities we serve.**

### **Initiatives:**

- 2a.** Develop a comprehensive recruitment plan that targets specific market segments
- 2b.** Design a thematic based student life program that identifies and assesses learning outcomes
- 2c.** Develop a comprehensive communication/messaging plan to be dispensed at particular points in time in a student's educational journey
- 2d.** Develop and implement new retention strategies that connect students to GHC personnel and the campus environment
- 2e.** Provide comprehensive student services that encourage and enable all students to be successful learners

### ***Institutional Measures:***

Annual Unduplicated Headcount  
Employee Satisfaction Survey Results  
Enrollment by Credit Hour  
Fall to Fall Retention Rates  
Institutional Effectiveness Plan and Analysis  
Recruitment by Credit Hour  
Student Satisfaction Survey Results (PASS)

# ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

## Directive 3

**Foster innovation and academic excellence that promote student learning and success.**

### **Initiatives:**

- 3a.** Become a curriculum innovator of new associate and bachelor degrees and certificates that are labor market targeted
- 3b.** Research best practices, develop and implement an improvement plan for academic advising
- 3c.** Launch the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), placing it under the umbrella of Success Center model
- 3d.** Establish long-term success for GHC Online through a more coherent identity, high quality instruction and continued growth
- 3e.** Provide and enhance student access to cost-effective, quality instructional resources
- 3f.** Expand the use of innovative and effective teaching methods that promote student learning

### ***Institutional Measures:***

Advising Satisfaction Survey Results  
CCSSE Survey Results  
End of Course Survey Analysis  
Graduation Rates  
Institutional Effectiveness Plan and Analysis  
Licensure Exam Pass Rates  
Number of Degrees and Certificates Conferred  
Percentage of Faculty Promoted  
Ratio of Students Taught by Full-time and Part-time Faculty  
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment  
Student Satisfaction Survey Results (PASS)  
Transfer Rates

**Implement practices and projects to foster an inclusive, welcoming college to better reflect the diverse communities we serve.**

**Initiatives:**

- 4a.** Promote respectful political and social discourse
- 4b.** Expand employee diversity via recruitment and selection
- 4c.** Initiate efforts that create diversity, inclusion and development among faculty, staff and students
- 4d.** Create college-wide and community based recruitment efforts that target diverse student populations
- 4e.** Introduce new strategies that enhance retention of our diverse student population

***Institutional Measures:***

CCSSE Survey Results  
Employee Diversity and Compensation  
Statistics  
Employee Satisfaction Survey Results  
Fall to Fall Retention Rates  
Institutional Effectiveness Plan and Analysis  
Student Gender and Ethnicity  
Demographics  
Student Satisfaction Survey Results (PASS)

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## *Directive 5*

**Enhance local partnerships that enrich both GHC and the diverse communities it serves through meaningful connections.**

### **Initiatives:**

- 5a.** Develop and implement a plan for community engagement that includes faculty, staff and students at each campus/site
- 5b.** Establish a plan to expand Continuing Education offerings college-wide
- 5c.** Explore local workforce needs and opportunities and respond with appropriate programming
- 5d.** Actively engage in legislative and government relations that serve to further the College's mission
- 5e.** Grow relationships with area school systems, local governments, and business and industry
- 5f.** Optimize marketing and communication of programs and services

### ***Institutional Measures:***

CCSSE Survey Results  
Effectiveness of Identified Community  
Engagement Events or Partnership  
Outcomes  
Employee Satisfaction Survey Results  
Institutional Effectiveness Plan and Analysis  
Student Enrollment of Underserved and  
Growing Populations  
Website Usage Statistics

## Three-Year Implementation and Planning Cycle

YEAR ONE		
October 2016	Develop first year rollout strategies	President Executive Leadership Team
October-November 2016	Launch the new Strategic Plan and begin action on identified initiatives	President Special Assistant to the President Executive Leadership Team College Employees
March 2017	Progress Report (covering November-March) to President's Executive Cabinet	President Special Assistant to the President
April-June 2017	Conduct annual assessment of the implementation; if necessary make adjustments to the strategic plan Develop a rollout plan for Year Two	PAAR Office President Special Assistant to the President Executive Leadership Team
July-August 2017	Annual Report to Executive Cabinet and GHC Community-Results of Year One implementation and a rollout for Year Two	President Special Assistant to the President
YEAR TWO		
August 2017	Begin action on identified initiatives for Year Two	College Employees
January 2018	Progress Report (covering August-December) to President's Executive Cabinet	President Special Assistant to the President
April-June 2018	Conduct annual assessment of the implementation; if necessary make adjustments to the strategic plan Develop a rollout plan for Year Three	PAAR Office President Special Assistant to the President Executive Leadership Team
July-August 2018	Annual Report to Executive Cabinet and GHC Community-Results of Year Two implementation and a rollout for Year Three	President Special Assistant to the President
YEAR THREE		
August 2018	Begin action on identified initiatives for Year Three	College Employees
January 2019	Progress Report (covering August-December) to President's Executive Cabinet	President Special Assistant to the President
April-June 2019	Conduct annual assessment of the implementation Conduct Environmental Scan for 2019-2022 Strategic Plan	PAAR Office President Special Assistant to the President Executive Leadership Team
June-August 2019	Develop 2019-2022 Strategic Plan	President Special Assistant to the President Executive Leadership Team
July-August 2019	Annual Report to Executive Cabinet and GHC Community-Results of Year Three implementation	President Special Assistant to the President

## The Strategic Planning Team

Donald Green	President
Alan Nichols	Academic Dean for Social Sciences & Business
Brenda Haverkos	Director of Internal Audit
Cathy Ledbetter	Special Asst. to the President for Planning, Continuous Improvement & Accreditation
Connie Watjen	Campus Dean for Paulding / Douglasville
Diane Langston	Dean for eLearning
Ginni Siler	Vice President for Human Resources
Gregory Ford	Academic Dean for Natural Sciences & Physical Education
Jeff Davis	Vice President for Finance & Administration
Jeff Patty	Vice President for Information Technology
Jon Hershey	Academic Dean for Humanities
Ken Reaves	Campus Dean for Marietta
Leslie Johnson	Campus Dean for Cartersville
Mark Greger	Associate Professor / President of Faculty Senate
Mary Transue	Vice President for Advancement & Executive Director of Foundation
Michelle Boyce	Interim Dean for Health Sciences
Phillip Gaffney	Director of Athletics
Renva Watterson	Vice President for Academic Affairs
Sheila Jones	Director of Public Relations & Marketing
Susan Vines	Interim Dean for Libraries & College Testing
Tammy Nicholson	Executive Assistant
Tim Floyd	Academic Dean for Mathematics
Todd Jones	Vice President for Student Affairs & Campus Dean for Floyd