Columbus State University

Strategic Enrollment Plan 2017-2020

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Columbus State University, as a vibrant institution within the University System of Georgia, seeks to identify, embrace, and employ strategies and resources which will lead to manageable, positive enrollment growth in a manner consistent with its mission, values, and goals. This Strategic Enrollment Management plan is a living document which should be continuously evaluated and updated as new information, data, and resources become available. Recognizing that all constituencies across the institution play a role and have a vested interest in our enrollment quality and quantity, the University seeks input and consideration from all.

Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) is a comprehensive process designed to help an institution achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students where 'optimum' is defined within the academic context of the institution. As such, SEM is an institution-wide process that embraces virtually every aspect of an institution's function and culture.

Increasing First-Time Undergraduate Enrollment

Recommendation: Maximize new student enrollment growth through increasing the numbers of first time undergraduate enrollees, both traditional and transfer.

Strategy One:
Maximize the enrollment of high school students and recent high school graduates through expansion of the number of prospective students interested in, applying to, and enrolling in CSU.

Steps:

1. Expand the purchase of more names to develop a broader reach of prospective students.
2. Increase high school visits where there is potential for growth.
3. Start an introduction to college program for the top sophomores/rising juniors in the state based on GPA and PSAT scores (e.g.Thescon, Odyssey of the Mind, STEM Honors Camp).
4. Provide more transportation opportunities to bring high school students to campus.
5. Become state leader in online MOWR, expanding dual enrollment partnerships with local school systems.
6. Forge stronger partnerships with Fort Benning families and dependents.
7. Work with other Chattahoochee Valley institutions to start a yearly, overnight college tour with high school counselors (e.g. Auburn, LaGrange, Point Universities).
8. Provide the ability for recruiters to offer scholarships on the spot for selective students.
9. Market summer enrollment in January with available course schedule of courses.

Strategy Two:
Increase the enrollment of transfer students through aggressive recruitment plan.

Steps:

1. Immerse CSU recruiters into high schools, technical and community colleges with set office hours.
2. Establish progressive military credit evaluation approach to maximize incoming credit.
3. Collaborate with Phi Theta Kappa through name purchases and designated scholarships.
4. Establish a support program for transfer students serving their needs from acceptance to graduation.

Strategy Three:

Develop a vibrant "Welcome to CSU" Experience.

Steps:

1. Establish state of the art Welcome Centers on Main Campus and RiverPark designed to make an impression for prospective students and their parents.
2. Develop a strong and competitive student ambassador program for daily tours and other recruitment duties.
3. Evaluate and improve on and off-campus recruitment events to meet prospective student, parents, faculty and staff.

Strategy Four:

Develop a communication plan that allows a continuous student/alumni lifecycle for entire campus.

Steps:

1. Develop a stronger communication plan to include direct mail, text and phone.
2. Focus some of the publication and marketing to parents - post cards.
3. Expand CRM functionality and reporting to support highly targeted communication plan.
4. Use CRM to task recruiters to call/follow up with inquiries.
5. Utilize Enrollment Service Center representatives to enter data on prospective students who call or walk-in to allow for faster recruiter follow-up.
6. Expand utilization of the CRM to market to students from prospect stage through initial enrollment.
7. Collaborate with University Relations to provide information supporting social media content and campaigns.

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Increasing Graduate Student Enrollment

Recommendation: Maximize graduate student enrollment growth through providing optimal recruitment, marketing, and admissions processes. Ensure support and best practices designed to increase retention, degree completion, and degree options which meet student and employer needs.

Strategy One:
Maximize the effectiveness of recruitment and retention efforts targeting graduate students.

Steps:

1. Encourage review of admission requirements and student success markers to reduce traditional admission barriers.
2. Assist programs in identifying effective recruitment practices.
3. Coordinate recruitment efforts including but not limited to: recruitment events, publications, communication, expanded utilization of CRM, etc. through the Graduate Recruitment Office.
4. Maximize recruitment efforts at Ft. Benning and at institutions from which CSU draws graduate students.
5. Identify and grow innovative and market-driven programs that respond to regional, state, and national challenges and opportunities.
6. Identify programs that would benefit by expanding the geographic reach.
7. Consider creative scheduling of academic terms to better meet graduate student needs.

Strategy Two:
Optimize opportunities to attract current and former undergraduate students to CSU's graduate programs.

Steps:

1. Collaborate with undergraduate faculty and advisors to cultivate recruitment pipelines to attract talented CSU undergraduate students into graduate programs.
2. Explore increasing the number of programs that offer graduate credit to undergraduate students in their last semester of study.
3. Explore the development of additional 4+1 programs.
4. Increase the visibility of graduate students and programs on all university communications platforms.

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Strategy Three:
Increase resources to create more affordable graduate education for new and existing students.

Steps:

1. Identify and seek sources for increasing graduate student scholarships.
2. Advocate for increased number of graduate fee waivers and assistantships available to CSU students.
3. Advocate for increasing the number of research and travel grants available to graduate students.
4. Explore alternative fee structures for graduate education.

Strategy Four:
Strategically re-examine allocation of business operations and resources to support graduate programs.

Steps:

1. Develop and enhance an online application process that optimizes digital (vs. hard copy) document submission.
2. Ensure that the Graduate School has adequate staff, space and resources to meet goals.
3. Include the Graduate School in advertising and marketing budgets.

Increasing International Student Enrollment

Recommendation: Increase international visibility and branding through strategic targeting of international students to enhance the growing global connections that Columbus State University is cultivating.

Strategy One:
Maximize international student enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate levels by expanding the number of prospective students interested in, applying to and enrolling in CSU.

Steps:

1. Strategically assess university and program capacity to handle various international populations and align with targeted recruitment and retention strategies.
2. Expand established sources of recruitment utilizing international recruitment agencies in targeted geographic areas.
3. Collaborate with the English Language Institute to establish a formal "Bridge Program".
4. Identify domestic public and private high schools and/or boarding schools who have a large population of international students from which we can recruit.
5. Utilize the CRM to create a robust communication plan specific to international students.
6. Create a more comprehensive international acceptance packet.
7. Establish long-standing relationships with international high school programs to facilitate the ongoing recruiting of students to CSU.

Strategy Two:
Increase the enrollment of international transfer students through an aggressive recruitment plan.

Steps:

1. Collaborate with undergraduate recruitment efforts to increase the enrollment of transfer students.
2. Expand Articulation Agreements with targeted technical and two year colleges.
3. Collaborate with Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society to recruit 2 year international honors students.

Strategy Three:
Expand resources and infrastructure to increase recruitment and to provide better support services to international students.

Steps:

1. Expand and dedicate resources in enrollment management and international student services to support the growing population.
2. Establish an institutional policy that will allow A-levels to be used for college credit like several other USG institutions.
3. Establish a clear budget specifically for International Recruitment that may be used to support recruitment efforts.
4. Secure funding to bring international agents to campus for on-site training while attending conferences held in the U.S. such as ICEF, NASFA, and/or International Association for College Admission Counseling.
5. Determine more on-campus employment opportunities and international scholarships for students.

Increasing Military, Adult Learners, Veteran and Online Student Enrollment

Adult Learners

Recommendation: Increase both federal and institutional funding for current enrollment services at CSU.

Strategy: Highlight the increase in adult learner students as integral components of the CSU student body.

Steps:
1. Collect and report data for adult learner use of current services.
2. Review the Complete College Georgia initiative for information that pertains to adult learner target population.
3. Identify gaps in services where funding would compensate and alleviate gaps.
4. Apply for federal grants to aid adult learners.
5. Create an "Adult Learner" virtual bulletin board (perhaps via CSUInvolve) that contains information related to job placement, scholarships, internships, co-op programs, fellowships for graduate students and other relevant information.

Recommendation: Increase current visibility of services offered through Academic Center for Excellence (ACE).

Strategy: Create more opportunities to showcase ACE adult learner services.

Steps:
1. Increase institutional media focus on and for adult learners.
2. Expand community awareness and outreach through company and organizational recruitment efforts geared toward adult learners.
3. Hire virtual counselors to work extended hours and respond students with questions and answers after normal work hours and on weekends.

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Military and Veterans

Recommendation: Expand CSU presence as a military friendly entity.

Strategy: Offer programs designed to accommodate the schedules and meet the needs of our active duty and retired military.

Steps:
1. Offer pre-packaged program degrees and certificates.
2. Formulate class schedules to accommodate active duty service members.
3. Increase military unit visits by CSU personnel who can explain degrees and certificates.
4. Offer Prior Learning Assessment course credit review and tuition/ fee discounts if possible.
5. Create a virtual presence of CSU at other military bases nationally and internationally. This can be accomplished by contacting Family Service Centers.

Online Students

Recommendation: Develop greater ties between CSU and online students.

Strategy: Take steps to make current online students feel included in CSU campus activities and student engagement initiatives as deemed appropriate.

Steps:
1. Develop an online orientation designed specifically for online learners.
2. Include online learners in welcome week activities via mailed t-shirts, pens, etc…to be more inclusive than a simple welcome letter. These items could be marketing items for more potential students in the future.

3. Offer the same additional opportunities to online learners (career development workshops, cyber counseling, writing center resources conducted through email or web conference, tutoring options via webchats or webcams, etc.)
4. Hire virtual counselors to work extended hours or non-core hours and respond to potential students with questions after normal work hours and on weekends.
5. Revisit the utilization of Smarter Measures in terms of cost/benefit analysis and actual utility.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND WAIVERS

Recommendation: Increase the positive impact of student scholarships upon enrollment, equitable access to higher education, academic quality, retention and degree completion in support of the University's Strategic Plan.

Strategy One:
Create a more user-friendly scholarship application and awarding process.

Steps:

1. Provide a comprehensive scholarship information page on the CSU website.
2. Obtain available scholarship management software for making the scholarship process, including application, accounting, and awarding, more efficient, timely, and transparent to all stakeholders.

Strategy Two:
Become more strategic in the application of scholarship awards supporting recruitment and retention.

Steps:

1. Encourage and facilitate coordination of information and data between departments and programs which currently provide scholarship dollars prior to scholarship selection and after awards are applied to student accounts.
2. Create and utilize a scholarship matrix which provides categorization of students based on need and merit.

3. Identify data needed to support a more coordinated and strategic scholarship program to support enrollment, and ensure collection, analysis, and dissemination of that data.
4. Initiate a plan, to be phased in over several years, to replace a number of the out-of-state tuition waivers now allotted to Athletics and the School of Music with real scholarship dollars, and use those same waivers to strategically seek more geographic diversity in our student body.
5. Assess current state of communication strategies about out-of-state tuition (Presidential, Military, Economic, SREB, etc.) waivers, and improve those communications where deemed inadequate.

Strategy Three:
Increase the availability of scholarship funding.

Steps:

1. Examine demand versus availability of scholarship funding in our departments and programs which currently utilize scholarships in their recruitment and retention plans, and increase scholarship funding where demand far exceeds availability of funds.
2. Fund basic level "consolation prize" scholarship awards which may be awarded to students who apply for but are not selected for higher tier scholarships.
3. Increase merit and need-based funding for scholarships aimed at students who do not have access to currently sources of major scholarship funding at CSU such as Arts, Honors, Servant Leadership, and Athletics.
4. Increase availability and application of scholarship dollars at the point of attack within the Enrollment Management Division during recruitment, at the time of acceptance, and during retention efforts post-enrollment.

Advertising

Recommendation: Increase the positive impact of advertising in support of strategic enrollment growth through a sustained approach which ensures adequate budgetary resources, strategic planning of expenditures, provides analytics demonstrating return on investment, and coordination of efforts and expenditures across the institution.

Strategy One:
Create a university-wide framework which supports coordination of advertising expenditures in order to maximize return on investment and non-duplication of efforts.

Steps:

1. Designate the Office of University Relations as the clearinghouse for sharing and enhancing transparency of planned expenditures on advertising by various administrative units of the University.
2. Create an on-line vehicle for submission and review of proposed advertising expenditures managed by the Office of University Relations.
3. Create a centrally-coordinated calendar of advertising campaigns and purchases.

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4. Analyze proposed expenditures with regard to potential effectiveness and compatibility with existing or planned advertising buys by other administrative units in order to maximize economies of scale.

Strategy Two:
Analyze, through a lens of competitiveness and alignment with University enrollment priorities, availability of yearly budgetary supporting planned enrollment growth.

Steps:

1. Clearly communicate the enrollment priorities of the University each year to administrative units in order to facilitate alignment of advertising expenditures with enrollment priorities.
2. Update and share on a yearly basis with University leadership the advertising expenditures of our competitors.
3. Present a plan for advertising expenditures created by the Associate Vice President for University Relations with input and proposed expenditures from administrative units across the University during the period of budgetary planning for the next fiscal year.

Strategy Three:
Take steps to measure and maximize return on investment of advertising expenditures.

Steps:

1. Require establishment and communication of data-based measurements of return on investment prior to execution of advertising purchases.
2. Require advertising partners and units to report on a regular basis during and after completion of campaigns data indicating effectiveness of expenditures.

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Strategic Enrollment Plan
Supporting Student Success, Retention, Progression, and Graduation

Recommendation: Support the retention of all students with specific emphasis on those in the First-time, Full-time cohort.

Strategy One:
Provide adult learners with amenities that will support student engagement and success (e.g. the Adult Resource Center and the adult learner web page).
1. Survey adult learners to obtain information on satisfaction of services or additional needs.

Strategy Two:
Maintain participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program to support veterans in their educational goals.

Strategy Three:
Connect faculty, staff and students to financial resources that allow students to make informed decisions about degree progression and student debt.
1. Continue offering the Financial Success Program by providing workshops and online financial tools to educate students about different areas of personal finance.
2. Incorporate the HOPE GPA into the Academic Advising Record and DegreeWorks so that the information is readily available to students and their advisors.

Strategy Four:
Use technology to aid in student retention (Early Alert System, EAB, etc.).
1. Continue to remind and educate faculty on the availability of the Early Alert System.
2. Implement EAB for use across campus.

Strategy Five:
Refine the administration of the withdrawal survey and provide data to appropriate decision-making groups at the conclusion of each term.
1. Update the Qualtrics survey to determine if the student is dropping all or a part of his/her schedule.
2. Compile the data into a report at the conclusion of each term.
3. Provide the data to the Complete College Georgia Council, Retention, Progression, and Graduation Committee, Academic Council, and the Executive Leadership Team.

Strategy Six:
Assist students in selecting an appropriate major based on their interests and strengths.
1. Provide online resources regarding majors and associated career fields.

2. Include career exploration and/or job shadowing in the First Year Experience Seminar.

Recommendation: Support the progression of all students toward timely graduation and accomplishment of their educational goals.

Strategy One:
Maintain robust articulation agreements with appropriate two-year institutions to ensure maximum transferability of courses.
1. Create a three year review schedule for all articulation agreements.
2. Follow up with each institution annually to determine if curricular changes have been made to courses on the sending campus.
3. Publish articulation agreements online so that students have a preliminary sense of which courses might transfer to CSU and count in their selected programs of study.

Strategy Two:
Collaborate with academic department chairs to develop a transfer guide for the common acceptance of ACE credit.
1. Meet with Dr. Underwood and Susan Lovell to review ACE credit that would possibly equate to courses in the area of health, physical education, or wellness.
2. Meet with department chairs review ACE credit that would possibly equate to courses in the general education curriculum or the upper division in the major.
3. Publish approved course equivalencies on the transfer student website.
4. Establish a protocol with the Registrar's Office to award appropriate credit upon admission.
5. Consider other types of prior learning assessment that could be utilized at CSU.

Strategy Three:
Establish a standing course rotation for Fort Benning.
1. Identify the general education courses needed at Fort Benning.
2. Identify popular time frames in which military personnel or their dependents would be interested in taking courses.
3. Establish a google document to share with department chairs so that they are aware of projected scheduling needs.

Strategy Four:
Increase the number of students taking 15 credit hours per term through pre-registration of incoming first-year students, informed advising sessions, increasing course scheduling efficiency, and widespread use of program maps.

1. Refine the pre-registration process to reflect the appropriate program map as well as the students scheduling needs from the preference survey.
2. Continue advising training to emphasize the significance of the 15-to-Finish initiative

Strategy Five:
Emphasize internships as motivation for progression to senior year and graduation.
1. Implement a process to identify which programs have internships as a requirement or as an option.
2. Collect data annually from each program on the number of students completing internships, the locations, and the success of the students.

Strategy Six:
Expand intrusive advising beyond advising centers.
1. Train all advisors in elements of intrusive advising.
2. Recognize effective professional and faculty advisors at the college and institutional levels.

Strategy Seven:
Ensure that all faculty and advisors are proficient in using DegreeWorks to assist students.
1. Train new faculty and advisors in the use of DegreeWorks.
2. Provide DegreeWorks 2.0 training for experienced advisors.

Strategy Eight:
Identify students who complete degree requirements prior to the end of the regular term (e.g. at the end of the first half term) and award degrees so that students can pursue admission to graduate school or employment in their chosen field.

Recommendation: To ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed by supporting their social, emotional, and academic success from their first collegiate educational experience to graduation.

Strategy One:
Ensure that students begin their first year at Columbus State on a pathway to will lead to academic success.
1. Continue to redesign the first-year experience to ensure that it is meaningful to first-year students.
   - Increase budget to engage the community and bring local leaders and businesses into the classroom to increase student recognition about professional behavior
2. Offer more FRLC that are major specific to get students into their major classes sooner.
3. Offer a FRLC for undeclared students to explore careers.

4. Utilize the student preference survey and program maps to pre-register classes appropriate for each student's life schedule and major requirements.
5. Register all incoming freshman for 15 hours of courses per semester.

Strategy Two:
Provide academic tutoring to ensure student success in core classes, gateway classes, and difficult classes.
1. Continue to offer tutoring in core classes to ensure that students have access to help in order to remain successful and learn to be a better student, thus taking these skills in their major courses.
2. Ensure that tutoring is available in STEM gateway courses using peer leader support.
3. Identify upper level classes that have historically been challenging and ensure that tutoring or peer leader support is available.
4. Continue to centralize tutorial services locations to make access more convenient for students.
5. Make sure that tutoring is available each semester to all students regardless of location or schedule restrictions by offering tutoring downtown, online, weekends, and evenings.

Strategy Three:
Identify and contact at-risk students as soon as possible to aid in student success.
1. Utilize mid-term grades to identify students who may be at risk. Would be beneficial to students if all professors, not just core classes, were required to input mid-term grades.
2. Employ the ACE intrusive advising model to contact students with a D or F at mid-term and discuss success strategies to ensure that student can make a satisfactory final grade.
3. Identify students on probation and employ academic coaching throughout the semester to aide in their success.
4. Work with students on Academic Exclusion or Reinstatement to set-up Academic Success Plans.
5. Continue to identify students who are at risk of not making Satisfactory Academic Progress as early as possible.

Strategy Four:
Identify special populations of students and offer success programs that cater to their unique needs.
1. Adult Learners
   - Continue to offer the Square One program through on-campus and online formats.
2. African American Males
   - Continue to support Diversity Initiatives with the African American Initiative with college preparedness workshops and program with an emphasis on junior and senior high school students in the tri-city area.
3. Disability Services
   - Continue using an academic coach to assist students with disabilities in discovering personal learning styles, time management, organizational skills, and other services.

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4. Homeless Youth
   - Improve the campus-wide awareness of the Embark program that supports foster, homeless, and disconnected youth in higher education so that students in need can be identified and helped.
   - Continue the ACE partnership with the Career Center's Food Pantry.
   - Contact students as they are identified to identify specific needs and potential resources.

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