UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

College 2025 Initiative
USG COLLEGE 2025 INITIATIVE

Opening Statement

Public higher education has traditionally represented a path toward advancement for states and their citizens. However, in recent years, many have raised questions about its cost and mission. While an essential public good, new forms of instruction and student learning are challenging long-held views of public higher education as it faces disruption from economic and technological forces.

To be successful, institutions must maintain both cost affordability and academic quality while preparing graduates for the workforce and to be productive members of their communities. The College 2025 Initiative, launched by USG Chancellor Steve Wrigley in May 2017, aims to create a roadmap for Georgia’s public universities and colleges to address those concerns and offer a path toward real solutions.

As part of the College 2025 Initiative, Chancellor Wrigley created a committee tasked with developing an academic plan. This plan will help the USG and its institutions build on existing strengths that include institutional sectors, individual campus identities and missions, faculty expertise and the collaborative strength of the System to act as a single educational entity. The committee’s plan will inform future direction within our state public higher education system, allowing Georgia to maintain its position as a state that is responsive to the educational needs of all its citizens.

To be clear, this document is a guide, not a prescription, recognizing the uniqueness every USG campus brings to this state. It is incumbent upon individual institutions and the USG to be agile, nimble, and resilient whatever the future holds.

Executive Summary

This is forward thinking work, a roadmap for ourselves about how to be nimble and more efficient. The College 2025 committee has identified more than two dozen recommendations among the broad themes of adaptability, essential skills, lifelong learning and partnerships. While meant to be a guide, it is an expectation that the University System and its institutions consider these recommendations seriously.
Adaptability

Colleges and universities are often at the forefront of new thinking and ideas but lag in the adaptation of techniques that can better help all students achieve. To be relevant in the future, colleges and universities must become nimble and more flexible in ways that will allow more students to achieve their goal of a college degree.

Recommendations:

- Developing and adopting new degree formats that take advantage of online, hybrid, competency based and face-to-face formats in more fluid ways, and the infrastructure to support them.
- Increasing the number of entry points for admission and course study.
- Developing alternative financial models and the policy structure that would enable these new pricing structures and models.
- Enabling faculty to use instructional technology to enable more personalized and engaging learning experiences in all learning modalities.
- Broadening the utilization of cost effective and free educational resources created using the principles of Universal Design.
- Enabling the scaling of active-learning educational opportunities built into the structure of degree programs.
- Enabling and developing the broader utilization of predictive analytics tools and artificial intelligence agents as part of the student experience.
- Creating the policy and procedural structures and the technology infrastructure that would enable degrees to be constructed and amended in a more agile fashion.

Essential Skills

Business and industry leaders continue to call upon higher education to produce graduates not only with knowledge about a discipline area, but also a graduate with essential or soft skills such as the ability to work in teams, the ability to think creatively, the ability to solve complex problems and the ability to function well in diverse situations. In addition, the future is sure to demand diverse skills as automation takes over much of manufacturing processes. Colleges and universities, therefore, need to be on the cutting edge of curriculum and programming design to ensure students have the most useful skills for this new economy.

Recommendations:

- Engaging in an ongoing dialogue with community businesses, state and national industry at both the system and institutional level to connect real-world expectations with academic practice.
- Undertaking curricular innovation and reform to ensure these real-world expectations are integrated across all programs of study.
- Ensuring that students are equipped with the ability to work within their discipline in concert with technology and in diverse multi-disciplinary teams.
- Ensuring that students are taught to employ the viewpoint of their disciplinary training in innovative and creative ways.
- Creating a comprehensive record of student learning that accurately and completely documents student mastery and learning.
- Mapping and analyzing the academic genome of the system core curriculum.
Lifelong Learning

Colleges and universities must expand academic opportunities for people in all stages and ages of life in recognition of constantly changing requirements for new job skills and workforce development.

Recommendations:

- Creating a new kind of life-learning record that has the portability to enable it to move through each student’s learning journey and the security and dependability to ensure that it is an immutable record of learning.
- Creating mechanisms that allow students to easily re-enter and re-commence their studies at various periods throughout their lives.
- Developing short-term and stackable credentials that can be transcripted and widely accepted by employers.
- Creating policies that more seamlessly and more dependably enable the transfer and transcription of credits across institutions.
- Encouraging the introduction of tenure and promotion guideline elements that more effectively recognize quality of teaching and initiatives that impact student success and completion.
- Providing training and professional development to refine the quality of instruction as part of faculty career paths and graduate training.
- Enhancing institutional abilities to more effectively collect, analyze and utilize data analysis and predictive analytics to make data-informed strategic decisions.
- Each USG institution should have a “futures” task force that engages in institutional far-future-oriented strategic planning and visioning.

Partnerships

To a great extent colleges and universities have stood alone in the educational process. The future will demand that colleges and university develop robust partnerships to fulfill their missions. Colleges and universities need to expand relationships with outside groups that can help further goals toward student retention and attainment.

Recommendations:

- Encouraging the creation of nexus degree programs at USG institutions.
- Expanding student opportunities for experiential learning with industry, using an apprenticeship model as a guide.
- Developing business and industry partnerships that support the educational agenda.
- Employing systemsness and collective impact techniques to create a statewide coordinated educational ecosystem.