

Gateways to Completion® Comprehensive Report and Plan

Valdosta State University

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Section 1: Background

VSU Mission & Strategic Plan

The Valdosta State University (VSU) mission has three parts: student, university, and region. The student mission states (VSU, 2014):

To provide a diverse student population with an inspired education, a safe learning environment, a nurturing community, and a wealth of experience that assists students in molding their futures in a creative, conscious, and caring fashion while preparing them to be lifelong learners who will meet the needs of a changing global society.

VSU's strategic plan 2013-2019 consists of 5 goals related to student success, financial stability, mission engagement, creativity and scholarship, and human and physical resources. Goal 1 states (VSU, 2013):

Recruit, Retain, and Graduate a Quality, Diverse Student Population and Prepare Students for Roles as Leaders in a Global Society

- *Objective 1.1: Actively pursue VSU's Complete College Georgia Plan (CCG).*
- *Strategy 1.1.1: Develop partnerships with K-12. (USG Strategic Imperative 1a)*
- *Strategy 1.1.2: Improve access and completion for students traditionally underserved. (USG Strategic Imperative 1a, 1b, 1d)*
- *Strategy 1.1.3: Shorten time-to-degree. (USG Strategic Imperative 1c)*
- *Strategy 1.1.4: Restructure instructional delivery. (USG Strategic Imperative 1c)*
- *Strategy 1.1.5: Transform remediation. (USG Strategic Imperative 1b, 1c)*
- *Objective 1.2: Promote educational excellence in all learning environments through academic, professional, and social opportunities.*

In pursuit of the fulfillment of the student portion of the VSU mission and Goal 1 of the 2013-2019 strategic plan, VSU was one of the first institutions to volunteer to participate in the University System of Georgia (USG) Gateways to Completion (G2C) study.

G2C at VSU

VSU is part of the USG's first cohort to participate in the John N. Gardner Institute's (JNGI) G2C study. G2C is designed to assist institutions like VSU in researching factors related to high failure rates (DFWI) in courses, developing and implementing a plan to address the identified factors, and evaluating the impact of the implemented plan on improving teaching, learning, and success in high failure rate courses.

In the fall of 2015, VSU chose in its first phase of G2C to work with faculty in the following courses: HIST 2112, MATH 1111, ENGL 2113, CHEM 1211/2, and BIOL 1107/8. These courses were selected based on the DFWI rates, the number of students serviced by the course, and departmental recommendations and approval. Therefore, it should be noted that courses selected for the study do not necessarily represent the courses with the highest DFWI rates at VSU.

*DFWI rates***Table 1. Overall DFWI rates for G2C Courses**

Course	2014 – 2015	2015 – 2016
BIOL 1108K*	27.8	33.7
CHEM 1211	29.9	27.6
ENGL 2113	27.6	20.5
HIST 2112	26.4	20.8
MATH 1111	30.8	30.2

*The BIOL 1108K course does not have developmental education data for 2014-2015. Subsequently, the lack of that data may have an impact on the DFWI rate for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Table 1 details the DFWI rates for the G2C courses during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic years, based on the data provided by the USG and the VSU Office of Institutional Research. Similar trends (decrease in DFWI rates) can be seen throughout the various inventory comparison categories which include the following categories:

- DFWI Grade Rates Overall and by Cohort (development, first year, second year, other undergraduates)
- DFWI Rates by Method of Instruction Delivery (face-to-face, blended, online, MOOC)
- DFWI Rates by Student Characteristics: Gender (male, female, other/undesigned)
- DFWI Rates by Student Characteristics: Full-time or Part-time status
- DFWI Rates by Student Characteristics: Age (age 22 and under, age 23-30, age 31-40, age 41 and older)
- DFWI Rates by Student Characteristics: Ethnicity/Race (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African Enrollment, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Nonresident alien, Race/ethnicity unknown, Two or more races, White)
- Student Retention

Section 2: Student Assessment of Learning Gains

Since VSU joined the USG G2C project in the spring of 2016, and the data that has been uploaded into the JNGI G2C portal does not include 2016-2017 data, a comparison of the G2C indices is not provided in this report. Hopefully in subsequent reports, a comparison of the 2015- 2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 G2C data can be provided. The data that is provided for this report is a comparison of the student assessment of learning gains (SALG) collected from the G2C courses from spring 2016 to spring 2017. This data is also coupled with summaries of the types of innovations that G2C faculty have been implementing in their courses. However, it must be noted that this data has some flaws in that the G2C faculty were not guaranteed to teach the same course across all assessed semesters. Therefore, some of the assessed courses may or may not have included the course innovations described and may or may not measure changes in the student success in relation to the implementation of the course innovations described. This limitation of the data is addressed in the recommendation regarding the support needed from VSU for G2C faculty. This request is discussed in detail in the recommendations section.

SALG Structure

The SALG consists of the following questions:

The Class Overall

How the class topics, activities, reading and assignments fit together

The pace of the class

Class Activities

Participating in discussions during class

Participating in group work during class

Doing hands-on class activities

Assignments, graded activities and tests

Graded assignments (overall) in this class

The number and spacing of tests

The way the grading system helped me understand what I needed to work on

The feedback on my work received after tests or assignments

The information you were given

Explanation of how the class activities, reading and assignments related to each other

Explanation given by instructor of how to learn or study the materials

Explanation of why the class focused on the topics presented

Support for you as an individual learner

Working with peers during class

Working with peers outside of class

Your understanding of class content

The main concepts explored in this class

The relationships between the main concepts

Class impact of your attitudes

Willingness to seek help from others (teacher, peers, TA) when working on academic problems

SALG Results

Table 2 depicts the average scores for each SALG category by course and semester. In biology, chemistry, English, and history there was an improvement in SALG averages from spring 2016 to spring 2017. Chemistry and history also did SALGs in fall 2016. For both courses the SALG averages were higher in fall 2016 than in spring 2016 and spring 2017. Math 1111 showed no change from spring 2016 to spring 2017. The overall SALG scores seem to indicate that the course innovations that were applied had a slight positive impact on students' assessment of their learning.

As previously stated, these findings must be evaluated with the acknowledgement that the same instructors were not guaranteed to teach the courses across the semesters surveyed. Therefore, the use of course innovations in courses not taught by G2C faculty were not guaranteed. This speaks to the need for more institutional support surrounding the G2C project. This need will be discussed in-depth in the recommendations section

Table 2. SALGs for G2C Courses

Course	SALG Categories	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017
BIOL 1108K	Class Overall	3.5		4.5
	Class Activities	3.0		4.2
	Assignments	3.2		4.3
	Information Given	3.2		4.3
	Individual Support	3.7		4.1
	Content Understanding	3.8		4.5
	Class Impact	3.7		4.3
	SALG Average	3.4		4.3
CHEM 1211	Class Overall	3.5	4.3	3.8
	Class Activities	3.0	3.2	3.4
	Assignments	3.5	3.9	3.7
	Information Given	3.1	3.9	3.9
	Individual Support	3.2	3.6	3.8
	Content Understanding	3.6	4.2	4.1
	Class Impact	3.6	4.1	4.1
	SALG Average	3.4	3.9	3.8
ENGL 2113	Class Overall	4.3		4.5
	Class Activities	3.9		4.1
	Assignments	4.2		4.6
	Information Given	4.1		4.6
	Individual Support	3.8		3.7
	Content Understanding	4.2		4.5
	Class Impact	3.8		4.4
	SALG Average	4.0		4.3
HIST 2112	Class Overall	4.7	5.0	4.5
	Class Activities	3.0	3.1	3.6
	Assignments	4.6	4.8	4.5
	Information Given	4.6	4.9	4.4
	Individual Support	3.3	2.9	3.7
	Content Understanding	4.6	5.0	4.6
	Class Impact	4.2	4.9	4.4
	SALG Average	4.1	4.3	4.2
MATH 1111	Class Overall	4.1		4.4
	Class Activities	3.8		3.8
	Assignments	4.2		4.3
	Information Given	4.1		4.3
	Individual Support	3.4		3.3
	Content Understanding	4.1		4.3
	Class Impact	4.2		4.0
	SALG Average	4.0		4.0

Section 3: Principles and KPI Synthesized Findings

The VSU G2C course committee chairs met to discuss their findings related to the JNGI Principles and Key Performance Indicators (KPI). What follows is a summary of those findings grouped by principles.

Synthesis 1: Academic Policy and Practice, Faculty/Instructors

Academic Policy

In regard to academic policy and practice course subcommittee members stressed the importance of incorporating more in-depth explanations of the out of class time and study requirements needed for academic success at the issue. This is even more important in subjects such as math, chemistry, and biology. Suggestions included incorporating explanations in freshman orientation and in orientation sessions for transfer students. There was little discussion about how information can be provided to online students, because this is an area that needs additional exploration.

It became apparent that in some departments/programs existing policies and procedures were unknown. In some cases it was even unclear as to where the policies could be located and/or whether policies originated from. In addition, in some programs USG requirements limited the program's ability to modify the positive procedures in ways that the program believed could improve student success. In other instances there were ideas about program policy modification that could improve student success; however, there was either uncertainty about the ability to modify policies and procedures or an unwillingness by faculty to unanimously implement changes to the existing policies and procedures.

Much uncertainty exists around the FERPA limitations placed on information sharing between faculty members, across multiple courses. There is also uncertainty related to the ramifications of the notation that is stored in the Success Portal. There is also limited knowledge about the outcomes of alerts sent through the Success Portal. Instructors who initiate alerts would like to know how the alert was addressed by the alert and how the alert was resolved by the student.

Academic Practice

The general consensus emerged about the need to improve communication with constituents outside of the University such as "feeder schools/programs." Questions emerged about the extent to which feeder schools/programs understand and/or are aware of VSU prerequisites and co-requisites, academic major GPA requirements, and other academic major related policies that have a major impact on student success with students transfer into the University.

It is also clear that there needs to be a continued improvement in the connection between faculty, advisors, student, and support services. This connectivity needs to be tracked and used to improve future connectivity as well as to provide information to departments/programs regarding student success.

There is also a need for better communication and coordination between departments/programs and their faculty regarding the policies and procedures that impact student learning and ultimately student success. In addition, there needs to be enhanced communication across the University regarding shared policies and procedures that impact student success.

The theme of improving communication and the sharing of information from administration to faculty and staff to students and to the community is one that will continue to reemerge throughout this comprehensive report and plan. These communication and sharing requests are made with the acknowledgment that there are limitations to the amount of information that can be shared across various units within and outside of the University. Thus, the importance of developing strategic and specific methods for improving and continually reevaluating the effectiveness of communication at the University is imperative to the University's ability to improve student success, faculty and staff morale, community relations, and to transforming the culture at Valdosta state University.

Faculty

Recent reductions in faculty and staff positions across the institution, especially in the college of arts and sciences, have had a negative effect on the instruction of core courses. One of the side effects of the reductions has been the need to increase class-size and to offer larger sections such as "super sections." Math 1111 is an example of a course for which such accommodations have been made. Concerns exist about the impact of such accommodations on student success.

There are also concerns about the limited amount of encouragement and reports that faculty receive in conjunction with going above and beyond their duties as it relates to student success. For example, resources could be provided for faculty who integrate active learning assignments and/or supplemental instruction/tutoring into their core courses as well as rewards for faculty who actively use the Success Portal.

Synthesis 2: Improvement, Learning

Improvement

G2C faculty realize they are unaware of an institutional definition of what a high-risk course is at VSU. There's an assumption that it is related to high DFWI rates and student opinions of instruction; however, there has been no clarification provided at the institutional level as to the validity of this assumption.

Learning

There's also a realization that even though students have obtained passing grades in prerequisite courses taken at other institutions, once students transfer to VSU they are earning DFWIs in the VSU courses for which the prerequisite is required. This realization has led to the following questions:

- How do we address the issues that arise when students take transient courses at other institutions while full-time students and VSU?
- What are the logistical processes related to getting a transient request approved?

Synthesis Template 3: Students, Support

Issues related to students and support must be addressed at the high school level. G2C faculty note that waiting until college to address the issues is too late. Expecting a college or university to be solely responsible for bring a student up to "standard" potentially sets the student and the college or university up for significant failure. The consensus is that ensuring student success has to be a collaborative effort, a feedback loop in which the needed skills are communicated, resources and support are provided for the students to acquire those needed skills, and a continual assessment of the students' acquisition of those skills is conducted.

Students

There is a need for students to be able to mix liberal arts courses with their major coursework. This was a need that was extremely expressed by G2C faculty who represented the sciences. Requiring students to take 15 credits of chemistry, biology, or any other major can make it very difficult for a student to be successful throughout a semester. In addition, allowing for the mixture of humanities courses within the major coursework allows the student to acquire the skills needed to be successful across all courses while also learning about their major subject matter. Such a mixture of course work can also keep students engaged in the liberal arts which has the potential to enhance students' academic experiences and positively influence their future career endeavors.

There is a concern related to information students and parents are receiving about the impact of move-on-when-ready courses on future college enrollment. Specifically, there is concern that students and parents may not be well-informed about the nuances that exist in relation to the program. For example, grades in move-on-when-ready courses count on a college transcript. Thus, if a student earns Cs in their move-on-when ready courses, they have not failed the courses, but their college GPA will be equivalent to the grades they earned in the courses. Entering college with an average GPA (2.0) can have a negative impact on the ability of the student to acquire HOPE funding to complete their four-year degree and puts the student in a position in which s/he could be one semester away from probation should s/he not perform at least average in their courses.

There is also a misunderstanding about how CLEP scores are accepted at the institution as well as the benefits of taking the assessment in relation to earning an average grade in a course. When students and parents are not well informed about such nuances it can have an adverse effect on students' success while at VSU. If a student enters the major with a GPA that is borderline and has difficulty in one of the major courses the student may not be able to stay in the major and the student may also find him or herself on academic probation or suspension after just one semester at the institution. This then potentially sets the student on an unsuccessful pathway from which it would be very difficult to bring the student back to a successful pathway.

Support

The Student Success Center is an integral part of assisting students in acquiring or being successful at Valdosta State University. The Student Success Center does a great job of using the resources that it's been provided to address student needs. However, there needs to be an increase in resources provide to the Student Success Center to allow for an expansion of the collaboration that takes place between the Student Success Center as well as the other units and departments at VSU.

The Student Success Center is attempting to do very innovative interventions. However, sometimes the coordination of interventions with faculty is underdeveloped. For example, embedding student tutors in courses is a great idea; however, faculty could be more involved in formalizing the process and also be provided with sufficient information to encourage students to utilize the service. There could also be an opportunity for faculty to interact with tutors before, during, and after the course to ensure that there is open communication and that the needs of the students are being addressed in a way that is beneficial to the students, tutors, and faculty.

Section 4: VSU G2C Course Innovations

The G2C faculty have incorporated a variety of course innovations into their courses during the G2C study. What follows is a brief discussion of some of the innovations that have been incorporated into the G2C courses.

English

Exam wrappers, which is an active learning strategy, were incorporated into a course by requiring students to respond to a set of questions after each exam was taken. Students were prompted to think about how and what they studied each week, reviewed course material for the exam, and organized their notes.

In subsequent course innovations discussion sessions following the exam wrappers will be incorporated. Students will be instructed to break into groups and exchange suggestions for study strategies. In addition, review sessions throughout the semester, not just for exams, will be scheduled to allow students to practice and study suggestions that they exchanged during the discussions that followed the exam wrappers.

Future Innovations also included the incorporation of concept mapping within course units to help students synthesize information about a variety of text that span various historical and cultural boundaries, and flipping the classroom to allow time for substantial student presentations and interactive in class activities.

History

The incorporation of daily quizzes that were based on assigned readings and that were also tied to attendance.

In the future daily quizzes will be combined with exam wrappers to continue to encourage students to evaluate their study strategies and exam preparedness prior to and after an exam.

Biology

Think pair share activities during lecture and active learning exercises such as identifying scientific concepts related to scenes from a movie, exam wrappers, study journals that help students to develop metacognitive skills, clickers, and low stake assessments such as quizzes and homework. In the future, innovations may include active learning exercises, lab practicals, lecture exams, low stake assessments, and additional activities that help students improve metacognitive skill development. Course innovations in biology also included the use of open source textbooks as well as study logs.

Based on what was learned from the use of the aforementioned course innovations, subsequent course innovations will include the adaptation of a mainstream text which incorporates a wider variety of learning activities for students. Those online activities will be tailored to the biology course to allow students to engage in various quiz options to improve learning and to assess exam preparedness. Forthcoming innovations will also include active learning exercises which incorporate the use of clickers, and an increased use of multimedia videos in animations.

Math

Current course Innovations include the restructuring of courses to allow for frequent assessment of student learning, designated review sessions with attendance requirements, and the provision of alternative assignments (if attendance was not possible), the opportunity to earn bonus points on exams related to a completion percentage of online homework assignments, and the reopening of online homework assignments the week before the final exam to give students an opportunity to rework problems and to improve homework scores while studying for the final exam.

Future course innovations could include the restructuring of an algebra course to focus more on preparation for stem/technical fields. Such a course would include a course coordinator who would be tasked with the continual assessment of the effectiveness of course strategies which include semester exams and some of the aforementioned Innovations. The data gathered by the course coordinator would be used to continue to evaluate and revise the course as needed.

Chemistry

Course Innovations included an active learning exercise in which students were required to explain the chemistry related topic that appeared in the movie *The Martian*. This activity included opportunities for the students to view the movie which was sponsored by the chemistry club. Students also had the option of watching the movie on their own. They worked in groups of two or three and answered specific questions. They were then required to come up with a topic and to develop a PowerPoint presentation. A draft of the presentation was submitted to the course instructor who evaluated the presentation to ensure that there was significant amounts of chemistry concepts incorporated into the presentation. This active learning activity was done for bonus points. However, regardless of how many students participated, the entire class was able to learn from the presentations that resulted from the active learning activity.

Future course innovations will continue to incorporate active learning activities and will include the incorporation of required online practice problem completion. In addition, future course innovations will incorporate strategies to address student feedback regarding having access to additional course aids such as more study sessions and more flexible tutoring hours.

Section 5: Recommendations for Action

The recommendations that follow are based on the data presented in sections 1-4 of this report, ideas generated during the JNGI Conference, and informal discussions with VSU faculty and staff.

Synthesis 1: Academic Policy and Practice, Faculty/Instructors Recommendations

1. The development of a communication map which outlines the various ways in which faculty, staff, and support services interact with each other to help promote student success.
2. Information forms which initially make faculty, staff, and support services aware of initiatives, policies, procedures, that are in place and/or that will be put in place to promote student success and then will subsequently keep all related parties updated on the aforementioned items.
3. The development and maintenance of a student success data access portal which allows faculty the opportunity to run reports that are relevant to evaluating student success in their courses, departments, programs, and colleges.

4. The establishment of a student success advisement team which follows students from application to graduation. The advisement team will be composed of members who can advise the student or support services such as admissions requirements, registration, financial aid, and academic advising as well as members who can provide academic success skills, career coaching, mentoring, and life coaching (e.g., success center, counseling center, career center).
5. The establishment of a freshman and new student orientation that is excited to inform students on what is expected in regards to being successful at Valdosta State University. This would include covering topics such as study habits, use of technology, major requirements, VSU culture, student life, and other related topics.
6. The establishment of an advising email address so that the students receive emails from that address they know those emails are specifically related to the academic advisement.
7. The establishment of an information loop associated with the Success Portal which includes the initiator of the alert, the academic advisor, and student.
8. The establishment of best practices related to information sharing and access as well as student notations in the Success Portal.

Synthesis 2: Improvement, Learning Recommendations

1. The creation of a course coordinator position in each department and/or related disciplines to help coordinate all development efforts related to courses. This includes responding to student opinion of instruction feedback, applying results from core assessments, monitoring the impact of course Innovations, conducting related assessments, and any other related duties.
2. The development of a clear definition of what constitutes “high-risk” courses, how the concept will be measured.
3. The collaborative development of strategies to address high-risk courses that is vetted through a university-wide process to increase awareness and buy-in of the adopted policies.
4. The development of strategies for informing faculty about the definition and measurement of “high-risk” courses.
5. Periodic evaluation of the definition and related policies as well as refreshers for faculty and staff.
6. Exploration of the development of a transient request policy that allows requests for specific courses to be reviewed by the department head or approved designee of the department that is offering the course at VSU in addition to the student’s academic advisor to ensure that the student is not only meeting the academic requirement for which s/he is taking the course but is also registering for a course that will provided them with the knowledge and skills need to progress to subsequent courses for which that course is a prerequisite.

Synthesis 3: Students, Support Recommendations

1. Obtain official data about “service courses” taken at non-VSU schools. This assessment should address whether or not students who take these courses appear to be prepared to succeed once arriving at VSU.
2. Based on the “service courses” findings there may be a need to work with students before they enter VSU.
 - a. This may be accomplished through a dialogue with local colleges to discuss expectations of course content and student readiness in relation to courses that generally transfer into VSU.
 - b. This could also be addressed through the development of a preparatory program at Valdosta State University. (*See Appendix for description*)

3. The development of an ad hoc committee which includes representatives from the Advising Center, College of Arts and Sciences, the academic committee (faculty senate), and other departments that wish to develop a pathway which mixes Humanities with their major courses. *(See Appendix for description)*
4. Working with the move-on-when-ready program, Admissions, and Media Services to create information that informs VSU move-on-when-ready students and other move-on-when-ready students about the nuances related to the program as well as what VSU is doing to assist parents and students navigate those nuances.
5. Collaborating with high schools and other colleges from which many move-on-when-ready students will transition to VSU to ensure that they are provided with the aforementioned information.
6. The assessment of faculty and staff who have worked with the Student Success Center to identify current needs related to student success.
7. The creation of an advisory council (internal and external members) that works with the Student Success Center to develop and review innovations to be incorporated into classrooms to address student needs.
8. The identification of resources to assist the Student Success Center in meeting current needs related to student success as identified by faculty and staff and vetted by its advisory council.
9. The incorporation of innovations such as pedagogical partnerships which allow students who are not taking the course, to observe the course, and to work with faculty, the student success center, and the idea center to identify areas in which both the students and faculty can incorporate strategies that enhance student success (Flaherty, 2017).

University Involvement

It is recommended that resources be made available to address the identified issues that impact student success. The desire to have a more collaborative and holistic process for addressing student success was a theme throughout the G2C KPI and principles synthesis process. The following recommendations are designed to assist in the establishment of a more collaborative and holistic process for addressing student success at VSU.

Communication of the role and support of G2C at VSU

1. The development of intentionally frequent and transparent communication around the G2C project. An information campaign (digital, print, audio-visual) for faculty and staff which is designed to communicate the focus of the gateways to completion initiative.
2. The holding of town hall like meetings open to the entire VSU community which outline the G2C process at VSU including the history of the initiative, the course selection process, the role of the JNGI, the impact of the G2C initiative on course transformation in departments, the intended use of the G2C findings, and VSU's commitment to the G2C process.

Support for G2C faculty

1. The creation of a compensation procedure (e.g., reassigned time, compensation, travel, training, etc.) which allows faculty to develop, implement, and evaluate course Innovations initially as part of the gateways to completion project and then subsequently as an ongoing commitment to student success at VSU.

2. The provision of support to ensure innovations can be consistently implemented and evaluated through the duration of G2C initiative (e.g., communication to deans/department heads regarding funding for new/temporary hires, FTE accommodations, and scheduling).
3. The provision of support to implement strategies to continue G2C-like initiatives beyond the G2C initiative (e.g., working with existing department/college assessment/evaluation committees).

Service

The G2C faculty have provided extensive service to VSU through their participation in the G2C study. However, due to the limited amount of credit service receives in the university and subsequently college promotion and tenure documents, many faculty are reluctant to offer their services. As a result, there has been an inability to fill G2C course subcommittees. Subsequently, the G2C course committee chairs have completed the work that should have been supported by a group of their colleagues. The G2C faculty agree that this is not a reflection of the apathy of faculty in relation to student success but the reality that faculty face in trying to meet promotion and tenure requirements.

1. It is recommended that there is a revisit of the promotion and tenure documents to address the weight that is given to service.
2. It is also recommended that VSU begin to frequently reward service in ways that communicates its value to the institution.
3. The development of an institutional award for course innovations which is either awarded by faculty and/or a joint committee of faculty, staff, and students to recognize the recipient's service to VSU.

Data Sharing

Sharing relevant data with faculty was a recurring theme throughout the G2C KPI and principals synthesis discussion. In many ways there is a sense of frustration related to, an incomprehension of, why an institution would have data that can inform faculty on how to best serve students and it is not being shared. Suggestions to address these concerns include:

1. Access to a faculty data portal that allows for specified analysis of course related trends.
2. Open publication of G2C related data to the entire institution.
 - a. First specific to departments/programs. Second to colleges and third to the institution.
3. Forums that allow for dialog about existing student success issues and brainstorming about appropriate solutions.
4. The provision of information that provides updates on the status of student success at VSU as well as the usages of the solutions generated during the brainstorming sessions.
5. A commitment to transparency in data sharing across units, programs, departments, colleges, and university divisions (e.g., academic affairs, student affairs, residence life, student success center, advising center, auxiliary services, etc.).
6. The generation of a university-wide report that shares pertinent data across all of the aforementioned entities.
7. The development of a course innovation showcase in which faculty are able, annually or each semester, to be informed about course innovations by their peers.

Application & Scholarship

VSU has an opportunity to engage the entire university in the application of best practices and the generation of scholarship related to active learning strategies. This can be achieved by documenting course innovations, implementing best-practices, and engaging in collaborative (university-wide) pedagogy of teaching research. This research should be recognized as research related to one's discipline and counted toward promotion & tenure. This type of university-wide engagement could be a means for setting VSU apart from other institutions and setting the means for setting stage for a best practices university-wide model that can be shared with the nation. The development, implementation, and assessment of this initiative could be completed using the following timeline.

(See Appendix for description)

1. Fall: Orientation and planning of active learning strategies.
2. Spring: Implementation and evaluation of active learning strategies.
3. Summer: Results and findings related to active learning strategies.
4. Fall: Continuation, revision, and evaluation of active learning strategies.

Online Course Innovations

The data and recommendations shared in this report do not take into account use of course innovations in online courses. While many of the course innovations discussed in this report are applicable to online courses, there is no data in this report related to the success of course innovations in online courses. This is an area that is in needed of evaluation. Evaluations of gateways to completion and the use of course innovations in online courses could be an area of emphasis should VSU participate in any additional G2C studies.

Section 6: G2C Steering Committee

The G2C initiative at VSU was placed under the oversight of the 70/80 task force's Course Innovations subcommittee which is chaired by Shá Wilfred. The VSU G2C Steering Committee is comprised of several 70/80 task force members and the faculty who serve as course committee chairs for the courses selected for the study. A full list of the names, titles, and committee roles of the VSU G2C Steering Committee is provided below.

Name	Title	Committee Role
Barrie Fitzgerald	Director, Institutional Research	Liaison Assistant
Brian Gerber	Interim Provost and VPAA	Liaison
Sharon Gravett	Associate Provost	Liaison Assistant
Lee Grimes	Associate Professor	Liaison
Greg Harrell	Department Head, Math	Liaison
Chere Peguesse	Director, Student Success Center	Liaison
Alicia Roberson	Director, Centralized Advising	Steering Committee
Shani Wilfred	Professor	Liaison Assistant
Jay Rickman	Professor of History	Committee Chair
Vickie Graham	Senior Lecturer of Math	Committee Chair
Ben Wescoatt	Assistant Professor of Math	Committee Chair
Myrto Drizou	Assistant Professor of English	Committee Chair
Jacob Jewusiak	Assistant Professor of English	Committee Chair
Linda de la Garza	Associate Professor of Chemistry	Committee Chair
Tolulope Salami	Associate Professor of Chemistry	Committee Chair
Eric Chambers	Assistant Professor of Biology	Committee Chair
Theresa Grove	Associate Professor of Biology	Committee Chair

Section 7: Sources of Evidence

- Flaherty, C. (2017, June 16). Student evaluations of professors that might help. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/16/aaup-discussion-centers-many-benefits-embracing-students-both-learners-and-teachers#.WUOy3qX7yrk.mailto>
- Formal and informal conversations with faculty and discussions at the 70/80 task force meetings.
- Formal and informal conversations with G2C course committee members before, during, and after G2C synthesis meetings.
- JNGI G2C portal, Course Inventory Data, provided by USG and VSU Office of Institutional Research
- JNGI G2C portal, SALG Data, provided by G2C faculty and VSU Office of Institutional Research
- JNGI 2017 Gateway Course Experience Conference, G2C Community of Practice, and G2C Teaching and Learning Academy Launch Meeting
- Valdosta State University. (2014). Organization and Mission. Retrieved from <https://www.valdosta.edu/about/facts/organization-and-mission.php>
- Valdosta State University. (2013). Strategic Plan. Retrieved from <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/planning/strategic-plan.php#http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/planning/georgia-plan.php>

Section 8: Appendix

VSU Preparatory Program

This program would allow students to enroll in VSU and to participate in activities that engage them in the university culture. Upon admission to VSU students would take a test to demonstrate their preparation to take the advanced courses in their major. Should the students need additional preparation, students would be allowed to enroll in other courses related to their degree program, but the students would also be required to take a course that prepares them to take the advanced course in their major. The preparatory course is not a remedial course but a course that gives the students the skills that they need to be successful in their major.

The preparatory course or courses would need to be a course or courses that in some way applied to the student's major. This understandably would require that departments come up with innovative ways to create the preparatory courses to ensure that the needed skills are acquired as well as ways to incorporate those preparatory courses into the degree plan. It may require the development of a new degree plan in which students are able to have more than one option to obtain a degree in their major. For example, the creation of a general science degree which includes a variety of science courses or some additional track within the current major that allows those students to apply their preparatory courses toward their degree.

This preparatory program is a way to ensure that students as they enter VSU are provided with the skills that will allow them to be successful in their courses as well as not be penalized for not being prepared, in their previous studies – regardless of the cause, to be successful at Valdosta State University. This preparatory program could be an extension of the relationship developed with institutions from which many VSU students transfer, local high schools and/or the move-on-when-ready program.

Such a program would require the collaboration from multiple units throughout the University. The student success Center, Office of Testing, Advising Center, departmental committees, Admissions, and the Registrar are just a few of the units at VSU which would need to collaborate on such an effort. Thus, it is imperative that when addressing student success and support that the entire institution is engaged by being made aware of the need, a part of developing solutions to meet the need, and a part of implementing and maintaining the solutions to meet the needs. The inability to obtain extensive collaboration throughout VSU would have a negative effect on the acquisition of student success at VSU.

Majors and Humanities Pathways Committee

The committee would create various pathways that would be proposed to department to meet the needs of students in relation to allowing them to have a more diverse college experience as they move through their major coursework. Those developed pathways could then be shared with the VSU community by the departments to solicit feedback to ensure that any concerns that may have not been considered by the committee and the related departments are addressed. Upon approval of the pathway by the department and the completion of any required academic committee related processes, those pathways could become a part of the advising material housed in the Advising Center and/or in the departments for which the pathways were created. Then students could be advised based on a specific pathway or at least given a general idea of the types of pathways that could be available for them should they choose to follow a humanities and majors pathway to obtain their degree.

Active Learning Application & Scholarship Program

The week before classes begin, in the fall, and introduction on active learning techniques (i.e., definitions, best practices) and the structure of the university-wide active learning application and scholarship program will be provided. Questions would also be addressed about how to facilitate course design within and across disciplines. Colleges would meet to discuss the logistics of their units' participation in the initiative. Departments/units would be asked to develop a plan that incorporates 1-4 active learning strategies into one or more of their courses.

Workshops would be provided throughout the fall semester related to the development, implementation, and measurements of the impact of active learning techniques (e.g., confidence, learning) on student success. Support services such as information technology, institutional research, eLearning, the Student Success Center, and the Idea Center will be available to assist in reviewing proposals to ensure that proposals are plausible, needed resources are available and/or obtainable, and collaborative logistics are finalized.

The week before classes begin, in the spring, that there would be follow-up on the active learning technique plans that were developed in the fall. Sessions would include opportunities to make final adjustments to active learning techniques, share plans for implementation and management of active learning techniques, and brainstorming about ways to address issues and/or concerns related to the implementation of active learning techniques. The provision of workshops, similar to those provided in the fall, will continue. Data collection related to measurements of the impact of active learning techniques on student success will be conducted.

In the summer, data collected during the spring semester to facilitate the measurement of the impact of active learning techniques on student success will be analyzed. A report containing the findings will be prepared and that report will be disseminated university-wide.

In the fall, there will be a continued evaluation of the impact of active learning techniques on student success at VSU and the application of evidence-based revisions to the use of applied learning techniques in courses at VSU. There would also be the opportunity for collaboration in relation to scholarship on the strategies used at VSU to develop, implement, evaluate, improve, and maintain active learning techniques. VSU will need to work with colleges and departments to ensure that the scholarship of teaching that emerges from the university-wide active learning application and scholarship program counts as scholarship toward promotion and tenure, regardless of the discipline.