

Georgia

Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia

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- 1) Does the state have an identifiable “P-16” effort visible? This might take the form of a P-16 Council, Working group, or other visible and semi-permanent effort. Who is in charge of this effort?

The Alliance of Education Agency Heads constitutes Georgia’s P-16 Council. Under the leadership of Governor Sonny Perdue, and using Georgia’s NGA Honor’s Grant as the catalyst, the heads of the seven state education agencies have formed the Alliance of Education Agency Heads (the Alliance). Governor Perdue appointed Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools, Georgia Department of Education (DOE)¹, as chair of the Alliance and asked her to keep him informed regularly as to its progress. In addition to the State Superintendent of Schools, the Alliance includes: Executive Director, Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, and Governor’s Education Policy Advisor (OSA);² Chancellor, Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG);³ Commissioner, Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE);⁴ Executive Secretary, Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC);⁵ Commissioner, Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL);⁶ and President, Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC).⁷

The purpose of the Alliance is to direct the integration and expansion of Pre-K through post-secondary activities in Georgia and to inform workforce development recommendations involving state agencies. The Alliance has set five goals: 1) To increase high school graduation rates, decrease high school dropout rate, and increase post-secondary enrollment rate; 2) To strengthen teacher quality, recruitment, and retention; 3) To improve workforce readiness skills; 4) To develop strong education leaders, particularly at the building level; and 5) To improve the SAT/ACT scores of Georgia students.

¹ DOE is the state office for governing all public K-12 schools.

² OSA is the State Accountability Office for all educational sectors.

³ USG includes 35 public higher education institutions—two-year colleges, and all baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral degree granting public colleges and universities. The Board of Regents is the single governing board for these 35 institutions.

⁴ DTAE includes 33 technical colleges (diploma, certificate, and applied science associate degree programs). All technical colleges are governed by a single State Board of Technical and Adult Education.

⁵ PSC has authority for educator preparation standards and for the certification of teachers and other educators.

⁶ DECAL is the governing and coordinating structure for the state’s pre-school programs.

⁷ GSFC coordinates student financial aid for post-secondary education.

The Alliance started its work in 2006 and built upon the extensive P-16 work in Georgia already underway. In addition to holding agency heads accountable for their agency's work, this structural change enables Governor Perdue to hold agencies accountable for collaborative work on shared goals. From lessons learned in previous P-16 work, the Alliance immediately appointed the Alliance Implementation Team (leaders from the seven education agencies and the business community that have collaborated in previous P-16 initiatives) so as to have in place a two-tiered structure. The two tiers work interactively to direct, coordinate, implement, and monitor the success of Georgia's public education system Pre-K through post-secondary education within the policy framework of the five preceding goals.

- a) Does the agency include a utility or function on its website designed explicitly to help potential students locate an appropriate college or university to attend?

Georgia has developed [www.GACollege 411.org](http://www.GACollege411.org) as the statewide tool "to help students plan, apply, and pay for college." GACollege 411 is administered by the Georgia Student Finance Commission. It is used by the University System of Georgia, the Department of Technical and Adult Education, and private colleges and universities in the state.

- 2) Is a mandated or recommended college preparatory curriculum in place in the state's public high schools?

Please see answer to number 3 below.

- 3) Has the state articulated a set of explicit competencies or skills that define what it means to be "college ready?"

Georgia is a participating state in the American Diploma Project. College and work readiness standards have been developed and endorsed by the University System of Georgia and Technical College English and mathematics faculties, and by the business community. These standards are currently under review by Achieve, Inc. to verify that they meet the ADP national benchmarks in English and mathematics. These College and Work Readiness Standards are scheduled for review and hopeful adoption by the Board of Regents, the State Board of Technical and Adult Education, and the State Board of Education at their respective September 2007 meetings.

As part of the American Diploma Project, Georgia is also changing the courses to be required for high school graduation and for admission into the USG and DTAE. The State Board of Education will consider a change in its High School Graduation Rule, which stipulates the course sequence required for high school graduation; and the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and State Board of Technical and Adult Education will consider changes in their college admissions policies. Preliminary agreement has been reached among DOE, USG, and DTAE on this course sequence. Subject to the approval of the three boards in September 2007: Effective with the 9th grade class in fall 2008, to receive a high school diploma, all students will be required to complete 4 units of mathematics (must meet or exceed the college and work readiness standards), 4 units of English (must meet or exceed the college and work readiness standards), 4 units in science, 3 units of social studies,

1 unit of physical education, and 7 electives. The electives must include three courses in a College and Work Readiness Sequence, and for those planning to attend the USG, two units in the same foreign language. USG will require this same course sequence for admission when the 9th graders in fall 2008 reach college.

- 4) Are systematic programs in place in the state that encourage students to accelerate progress by taking college-level courses while still enrolled in high school?

Georgia has the Accel program in place to encourage students to take dual enrollment courses, but there are a number of restrictions to the Accel program that limit full participation. Under the Alliance of Education Agency Heads (see answer to question 1), a Steering Committee is in place to create a single policy and incentive system for dual enrollment among the Georgia Department of Education, University System of Georgia, and the Department of Technical and Adult Education to broaden access and participation to dual enrollment courses. This Steering Committee is to have its report and recommendations completed by May 2007.

- 5) Is there a statewide policy present that governs placement into college-level courses or remedial courses? Is a standard set of placement tests recommended or required? If yes, are common cut scores for placement decisions in place or do institutions get to set their own?

The University System of Georgia has minimum requirements for placement into college level or remedial courses. USG institutions may set higher requirements. The University System minimums are as follows: Students entering programs leading to the baccalaureate degree who (1) score below either 430 SAT-Verbal or 400 SAT-Mathematics or below the comparable ACT scores as established by the University System of Georgia or (2) have not met the College Preparatory Curriculum requirements in English or mathematics are required to take the appropriate part(s) of the CPE or COMPASS standardized assessments to determine whether they will be placed in remedial (non-credit-bearing) courses.

- 6) Is there a visible statewide transfer and articulation policy? Does this cover all institutions or only public institutions? What are the specifics of this policy?

Yes. The policy covers all 35 public institutions in the University System of Georgia (USG). There is also a limited transfer policy between the USG and the Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE)

The University System of Georgia has adopted a common set of principles and framework for its core curriculum and for articulation. While these principles and framework allow institutions some flexibility in defining learning outcomes, they ensure that the core curriculum completed at one System institution is fully transferable to another System institution.

The Core Curriculum is divided into Areas A-F. Students completing an area of the core curriculum will receive full credit for that area upon transfer to another System institution within the same major. In area A, students will receive credit for courses taken regardless of whether the area is completed. For students completing the core curriculum, the total number of hours required of transfer students for the baccalaureate degree shall not exceed the

number of hours required of native students for the same major field. For additional information see <http://www.usg.edu/academics/handbook/section2/2.04/2.04.phtml>
At its January, 2002 meeting, the Board of Regents approved the agreement between the USG and the DTAE known as the "Mini-Core Project." According to this agreement, basic skills courses in English and mathematics with common course content will transfer between USG and COC-accredited DTAE institutions, and comparable placement and exit test results will be honored between Systems. At its March 2002 meeting, the Board of Regents approved the specific language for the Board of Regents policy manual. See <http://www.usg.edu/academics/handbook/section2/2.24.phtml> for additional information.

- a) Is the transfer/articulation policy accompanied by a statewide transferable general education requirement? Does this name actual courses and/or credits? Are specific competencies identified that the student should meet through this coursework? Is testing used to guarantee student competency for progress or transfer?
Specific guidelines and recommendations can be found at <http://www.usg.edu/academics/handbook/section2/2.04/2.04.phtml> and at <http://www.usg.edu/academics/handbook/section2/2.04/2.04.01.phtml> .
There is a group of courses that have common course prefixes, course numbers and course descriptions. For the entire list of courses see <http://www.usg.edu/academics/handbook/section2/2.04/2.04.05.phtml> .
There are common student learning outcomes for the core curriculum. They are posted at http://www.usg.edu/academics/programs/core_curriculum/outcomes.phtml .
Yes testing is used, but it is very limited. Currently, students must pass a Regents Test in reading and writing. The USG is currently in the process of discussing a redesign of general education and the subsequent development and assessment of general education competencies.
- b) More specifically, does an AA or AS degree from a community college in the state meet general education requirements at public four-year institutions? What mechanisms are in place to make sure this actually happens?
The two-year colleges in the USG are transfer colleges rather than community colleges. We have also asked the Academic Committees to define student learning outcomes (SLO's) in the courses in the core curriculum for which they have disciplinary responsibility. For a complete list of the Academic Committees see <http://www.usg.edu/academics/comm/index.phtml> .
The University System Office has put in place a comprehensive program review (cpr) process that addresses core curriculum and general education assessment and improvement.
- c) Does credit from transfer courses meet specific course requirements at the transfer institution (e.g. American History counts for American History) or do just the credits transfer to count against the total needed for graduation?
Yes, there is course-to-course transfer for Areas A, C, D, and E. Also yes. This latter statement applies to Area B or the core curriculum.

- 7) Are there statewide test-out or competency-based provisions that will allow a student to accelerate progress toward a degree?

There is pilot work underway in Prior Learning Assessment, but there are no University System policies in place at the present time.

- 8) Does the state have an easily-accessible state-supported alternative institution (for example, an electronic community college) that allows students to complete their degrees more quickly or conveniently than through attendance at a traditional public institution?

There is no state designated institution that provides alternative degree completion services regardless of type or level of degree.

Across the 35 institutions in the University System of Georgia there are nearly 100 degree programs available via distance education and nearly 5000 course sections in 2006. These programs follow several different development and delivery models including:

- Collaborative programs, such as the WebMBA, and eCore (the USG Core Curriculum) and the WebBSIT, each involving a set of institutions that work together to collectively offer the program requirements.
- Institution-specific online programs.
- Franchise online programs—where one USG institution competes for and receives the franchise from the University System to offer said program online.

The Department of Technical and Adult Education (Georgia's Technical College System) offers a wide range of their on-campus programs via distance education. Students are able to identify institutions that offer the programs through the Georgia Virtual Technical College which serves as a clearinghouse to direct students to the institution offered programs.

- a) Does the state have an accessible central bank or catalog of on-line courses contributed by many institutions that enable students to do “one-stop shopping” for electronic courses?

Georgia does not have an accessible central bank of catalog of on-line courses for one-stop shopping.

The University System of Georgia is building such a catalog which is expected to debut in fall 2007. It will follow the pattern established by the Electronic Campus which has been in production by the Southern Regional Education Board for 10 years.

The technical colleges do have a searchable database of the courses offered by the 34 technical colleges. It can be found at www.gvtc.org.

- 9) Does the state provide incentives to institutions for improvements in degree production or graduation rates? For minimizing the number of students graduating with excessive numbers of credits (e.g. more than 120 SCH)?

The University System of Georgia receives a lump sum appropriation from the state based on the funding formula. The University System places a high priority on performance factors

including graduation rates. The System considers actual graduation rates, compared to targets set, for each institution in the budget allocation process. For FY 2007 and FY 2008, the Board allocated \$2.2 million to five institutions for innovative strategies designed to improve their (and consequently the System's) graduation rate. There is no financial incentive for institutions to minimize excess credits. A new guaranteed tuition policy will provide incentives for students to graduate within four years.

10) Does the state provide incentives for students who successfully complete their degrees (e.g. tuition rebates or cash bonuses)? For students who complete their programs without amassing additional credits (e.g. within 120 SCH)? Are there financial disincentives for students to take more than the number of credits needed to graduate (e.g. full or out-of-state tuition)?

Neither the state nor the University System of Georgia provides tuition rebates or cash bonuses. The new tuition policy, Fixed for Four, will provide disincentives for students to take more than four years of credit.