**Governors State**
U N I V E R S I T Y



# Governors State University
## Strategic Enrollment Management Plan

### 2022 - 2026

January 2022

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*For further updates to the GSU Strategic Enrollment Management Plan go to:*
*govst.edu/sem-plan*

# INTRODUCTION

Changing demographics, technological advances, and evolving workforce needs have reshaped the enrollment landscape. Governors State University committed to developing a plan that will guide enrollment decisions into the future and spent a year, with the help of Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) and over 70 faculty, staff, students, and administrators, creating the Strategic Enrollment Plan. The Strategic Enrollment Plan provides a high-level view of the landscape in which GSU recruits and retains students, and how the university will grow enrollment in new and existing markets in the future. The strategies presented, which cover various areas of the enrollment funnel, were developed by focus area groups who work closely in the strategy's respective areas and were approved by the President and her Cabinet. The rationale behind each approved strategy will be detailed in the document as well as their overarching objectives.

Strategic Enrollment Management will involve annual review of the strategies, data, and new proposals by the Executive Leadership Team to ensure the ideal outcomes are met. The following document will be dynamic and work as a roadmap for the coming years. This document represents a *report* of the intensive, months-long Strategic Enrollment Planning process and a *plan* for operationalizing its results through active and energetic Strategic Enrollment Management.

# MISSION, VISION, KPIs, AND IDEAL OUTCOMES

## Mission
Governors State University is committed to offering an exceptional and accessible education that prepares students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed in a global society.

## Vision
GSU will create an intellectually stimulating public square, serve as an economic catalyst for the region, and lead as a model of academic excellence, innovation, diversity and responsible citizenship.

## Core Values

- **Invest in Student Success** through a commitment to mentoring and a deliberate university focus on student achievement of academic, professional and personal goals.

- **Provide Opportunity and Access** to a first-class public education to residents of our surrounding communities and all those traditionally underserved by higher education.

- **Serve as an Economic Catalyst** for the citizens of the State of Illinois and our larger Midwest region, so that our communities grow and flourish.

- **Prepare Stewards of our Future** to thrive in the global economy, to contribute to ongoing innovative research and to serve as stewards of the environment.

- **Demonstrate Inclusiveness and Diversity** to encourage acceptance of wide-ranging perspectives among students, staff, faculty and members of the broader community.

- **Promote Quality of Life**, which encompasses civic, personal, professional and cultural growth.

# MISSION, VISION, KPIs, AND IDEAL OUTCOMES

## Key Performance Indicators

Ultimately, the success of Governor State's strategic enrollment plan will be determined by its performance on a select set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). At the outset of the project the following set of KPIs was established, informed data collection and so situation analysis development, and will serve as a framework for assessment and evaluation of the both individual strategies, and the project as a whole.

| Category | Key Performance Indicator |
|---|---|
| Enrollment | • Transfer headcount / SCH<br>• First year headcount / SCH<br>• Yield / Selectivity ratios(for grad) [funnel metrics overall]<br>• Graduate headcount / SCH<br>• Term to Term retention / progression (Fall to Fall for freshman)<br>• Persistence<br>• Degree completion (2 /3/4)<br>• Average credit by level |
| Student Profile | • Demographic Trend data (alignment with region)<br>• Percent under-represented minority<br>• Percent LatinX<br>• Online Only |
| Program Quality | • Licensure / Exam pass rates<br>• Graduation rates<br>• APRC metrics (degree completion)<br>• Program Outcomes (assessment infrastructure)<br>• Quality Matters training, alignment, and certifications |
| Market Position | • Market share (IBHE metrics)<br>• First year feeder rates<br>• Transfer partner share |
| Fiscal | • FAFSA filing rates<br>• Net revenue<br>• Net revenue/student type<br>• Average student indebtedness<br>• Loan default rates<br>• Residence hall occupancy rates |

# MISSION, VISION, KPIs, AND IDEAL OUTCOMES

## Ideal Outcomes

At the outset of the project, the GSU cabinet and SEP project leaders identified the ideal outcomes for the project. It is through the lens of these aspirational statements, using our Key Performance Indicators, that we will measure the success of the strategic enrollment plan.

- Align costs with tuition revenue
- Understand the Governors State University brand
- Leverage GSU's identity, historic success, and brand as it relates to all student types: adult, transfer, graduate, direct from high school, as well as for internal constituents
- Invest in student success with all student types and levels
- Create efficiencies and effective enrollment and business processes and systems to support enrollment tasks while removing barriers to student success
- Address gaps between University cost and affordability needs for students
- Align program portfolio with external demand and internal capacity
- Increase enrollment
- Improve retention and persistence
- Position Governors State University as a first choice for students

## SEP Executive Leadership Team Ideal Outcomes and Priorities

- Enrollment growth
- Plan and resource accordingly for all student types
- Better understand student pipelines, tracking, reporting – data informed through the funnel
- Prioritize website and portal (leverage technology at GSU)
- Support GSU website – "student experience" initiative
- Provide academic planning and pathways for all students – equip students for success
- Use institutional (central) data to inform decisions
- Align SEP with ISP
- Be accountable to timeline and tasks
- Adopt predictive analytic / data-informed technologies and solutions
- Align enrollment costs with enrollment revenue

# STRUCTURE FOR PLANNING AND FOCUS AREAS

The strategic enrollment planning process was assisted by Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL), a nationally recognized leader in higher education for enrollment planning. Changing demographics, technological advances, and evolving workforce needs have reshaped the enrollment landscape. RNL assisted GSU in building a comprehensive enrollment plan to ensure our ability to compete with this evolving landscape. The process included four distinct phases.

## Governors State Strategic Enrollment Planning

**PHASE 1**
**Preparation & Data Analysis**
- Build structure
- KPI identification
- Data collection
- Situation analysis

**PHASE 2**
**Strategy Development**
- Strategy development
- Tactic identification
- Strategy prioritization
- ROI considerations

**PHASE 3**
**Goal Development**
- Enrollment projections
- Goal setting
- Written plan finalization

**PHASE 1**
**Implementation & Continuation**
- Implementation of SEP
- SEP council reconstituted to include SEM functions
- Monitor, evaluate and update the plan

With RNL experience and expertise from Lew Sanborne and consultation with the President's cabinet at each stage, the process was undertaken by the SEP committee, working groups, and data team membership totaling 70 staff, faculty, students, and administrators.

The process also included three campus-wide events each of which drew over 100 attendees: the September 2020 launch town hall, the February 2021 town hall in which strategy concepts were shared with the campus, and the July 1 2021 town hall in which thematic components of the final plan were shared.

# STRUCTURE FOR PLANNING AND FOCUS AREAS

RNL conducted eight site visits with dates and objectives listed below.

| Visit Number | Date | Objective |
|---|---|---|
| One | July 13-14, 2020 | Organization; data preparation; prepare for situation analysis |
| Two | September 28-29, 2020 | Hard Launch of SEP, Working group mini-conference |
| Three | November 17-19, 2020 | Situation analyses: review and initial strategy ideation; identification of pilot strategies |
| Four | February 2-4, 2021 | Finalize situation analyses; complete strategy ideation and pre-prioritization; business planning organization |
| Five | March 16-18, 2021 | Action/business plans review; initial vetting, lessons learned: prep for completion of action plans |
| Six | April 26-28, 2021 | Strategy prioritization summit: strategy leads pitch their plans; leadership prioritizes |
| Seven | June 2-3, 2021 | Final prioritization; plan formation; initial projections and funding considerations |
| Eight | August 10-11, 2021 | Preparation for implementation; transition from SEP to SEM, including reorganization of enrollment structures |

# STRUCTURE FOR PLANNING AND FOCUS AREAS

At the September 28, 2020 site visit's mini-conference, the committees and working groups developed a comprehensive situation analysis of Governors State University's enrollment trends along with internal and external factors that have impacted GSU's growth from the focused perspective of each area. The University and RNL used the existing enrollment committees and working groups to conduct this comprehensive SITUATION ANALYSIS. The following bodies were involved:

- Undergraduate Student Admission Planning (USAP – existing committee)
- Graduate Student Admission Planning (GSAP – existing committee)
- Retention to Graduation (R2G – existing committee)
- Academic Programs Working Group (SEP temporary working group)
- Finance & Affordability Working Group (SEP temporary working group)
- Marketing Working Group (SEP temporary working group).

The analysis provided the foundation for strategies that were developed into action plans and prioritized for the Strategic Enrollment Plan.

In April 2021, a Strategic Enrollment Planning Prioritization Summit was held in which the working groups presented the strategies they had created in light of the situation analysis.
RNL in conjunction with GSU's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, the Executive Leadership Team, the President, and the Cabinet determined how to prioritize the proposed strategies based on data, situational analyses, expenses and future enrollments or return on investment.

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

The following SITUATION ANALYSIS focuses on the data that supports final strategies within the SEM plan. This section of the situation analysis focuses on the funnel measurements, including conversion and yield rates of undergraduate students. For the analysis, we will be focusing on five stages of the enrollment funnel -- prospects, inquiries, applicants, admits and new enrollments.

## OVERALL LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

The following section represents the potential pool of Illinois freshman and transfer students. Information was provided by ICCB, IBHE, WICHE and the High-Impact Higher Education Study of 2017 by Frank Manzo and Robert Bruno.
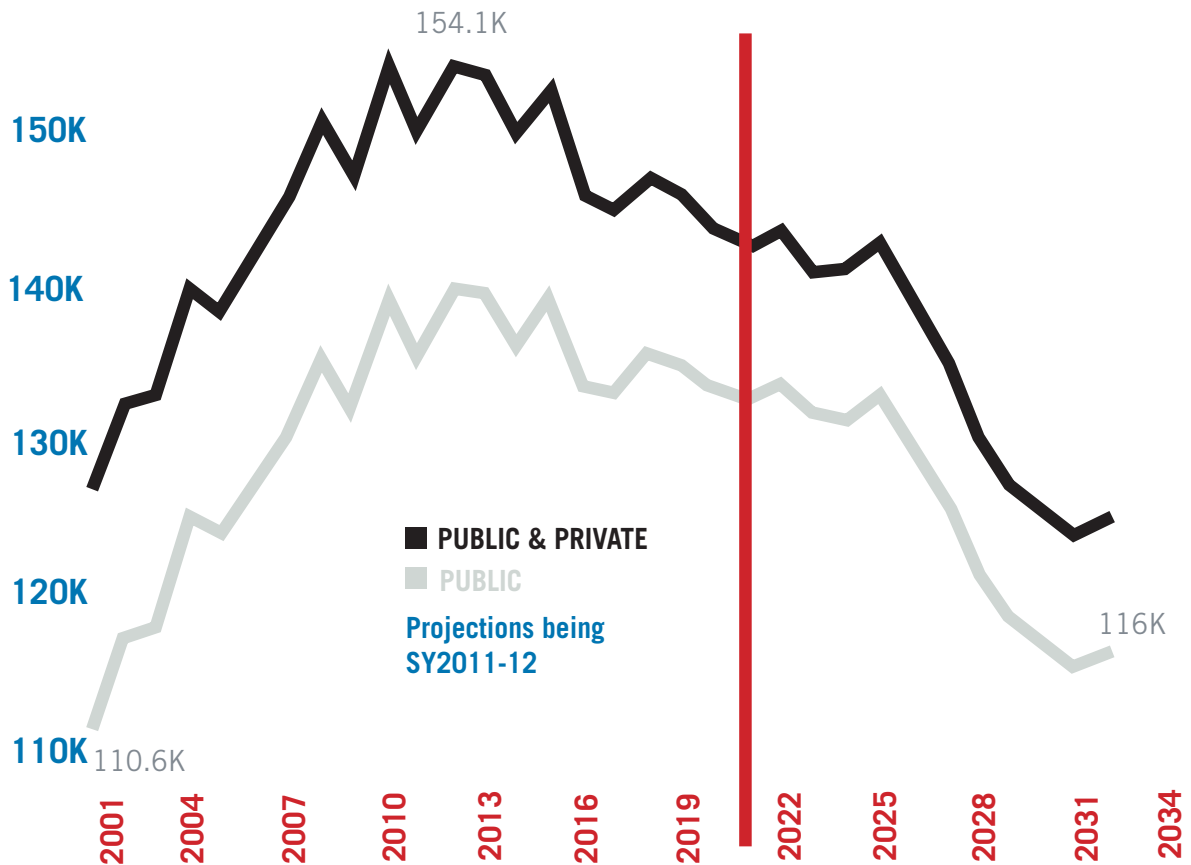
### Freshman

Governors State is new to the freshman market. From 1969 to Fall 2013, GSU's only undergraduate population was transfer students. The freshman program is smaller by design based on a cohort model which requires students to be full time and admitted as a general studies student. Students are required to complete three semesters of general education before declaring a major.

Below is the WICHE (https://knocking.wiche.edu/state-profiles) data that forecasts the number of high school graduates in Illinois. Illinois is one of the larger high school markets in the country. In the early 2000's, the Chicagoland market became one of the largest secondary markets for out-of-state colleges and universities resulting in a higher than average outward migration of high school graduates.

As the number of high school graduates started declining in 2011, the competition for students became much more demanding. Universities with market brand and sophisticated recruitment operations were able to continue to gain in enrollment/market share despite the declining graduates. Universities with traditional recruitment practices, higher tuition and limited scholarships began losing enrollments. This was exacerbated by the Illinois budget impasse during 2015-2017. It was estimated by the High-Impact Higher Education Study, that 72,000 fewer students enrolled in Illinois schools (42,800 fewer students were enrolled at public universities and colleges in the Chicago area) which resulted in an increase of $900 per student a year to attend a public university to offset funding loss and the drop in enrollment.

**Freshman Application Funnel**

Freshman application numbers have fluctuated but were trending in a positive direction until COVID-19. During the Fall 2020 recruitment cycle, Admissions had a very strong Fall 2019 and early Spring 2020 application count, but slowed down considerably after the stay at home order in March of 2020. Many students chose to take a gap year. As a result, there was a sharp decline in the yield rate for freshman. Fall 2021 applications have not closed as of yet, but numbers are trending downward. Conversion and yield are trending positive. Feedback from the other public universities is that many CPS 2021 graduates are also choosing to take a gap year. The gap years are trending to be a total non-attendance, none of the publics are seeing the prior year graduates enroll. This also includes the community colleges.

GSU needs to improve high school participation rates in the primary markets from the west and south of campus. Several efforts are underway, including an initiative from the President's Office involving District 210.

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

| Freshman | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Applied | 1,371 | 1,599 | 1,628 | 1,447 |
| Admitted | 621 | 584 | 722 | 710 |
| Enrolled | 204 | 198 | 263 | 207 |
| Freshman | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
| Conversion | 45% | 37% | 44% | 49% |
| Yield | 33% | 34% | 36% | 29% |

## Transfer Students

Governors State University has a long history as an undergraduate transfer institution in the Chicagoland market. Over the last decade, the Illinois Community Colleges have experienced a sharp downturn in enrollment. The following data from ICCB and IBHE data represents the loss of enrollment.

**Statewide Community College System**

    **Fall 2015 to Fall 2020** – five-year enrollment loss: **26% or 82,008 students**

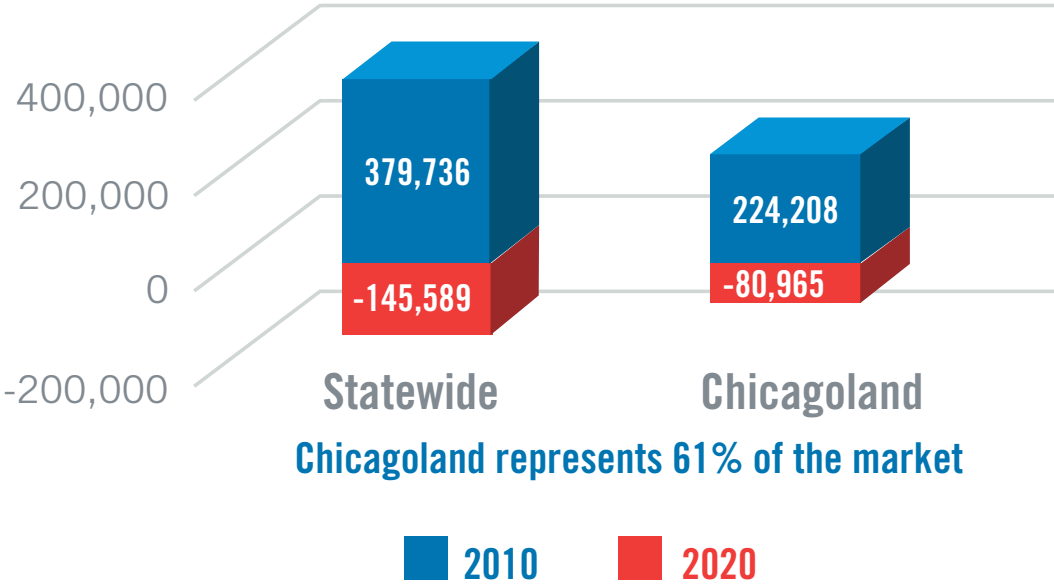    **Fall 2010 to Fall 2020** – ten-year enrollment loss: **38% or 145,589 students**

**Chicagoland Community College System**

    **Fall 2015 to Fall 2020** – five-year enrollment loss: **25% or 51,481 students**
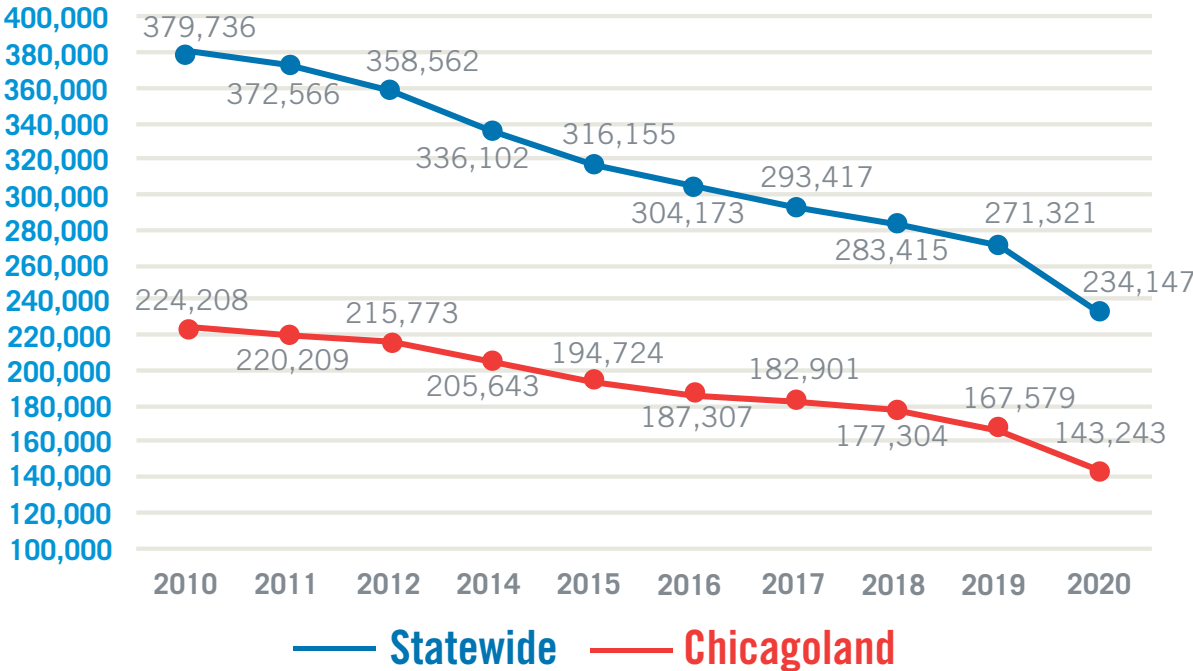
    **Fall 2010 to Fall 2020** – ten-year enrollment loss: **38% or 80,965 students**

## Public Community College Enrollment



| | Statewide | Chicagoland |
|---|---|---|
| 2010 | 379,736 | 224,208 |
| 2020 | -145,589 | -80,965 |

**Chicagoland represents 61% of the market**

■ 2010   ■ 2020

## Public Community College Enrollment Trend



**Statewide:** 379,736 (2010), 372,566 (2011), 358,562 (2012), 336,102 (2014), 316,155 (2015), 304,173 (2016), 293,417 (2017), 283,415 (2018), 271,321 (2019), 234,147 (2020)

**Chicagoland:** 224,208 (2010), 220,209 (2011), 215,773 (2012), 205,643 (2014), 194,724 (2015), 187,307 (2016), 182,901 (2017), 177,304 (2018), 167,579 (2019), 143,243 (2020)

—— **Statewide**   —— **Chicagoland**

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

## Transfer Funnel

The following chart tracks GSU's transfer conversion and yield rates for the last four Fall semesters. Below the chart is the analysis of the data listed in the table. Please note, the table does not include certificate students.

| Transfer * | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Applied | 1,841 | 1,936 | 1,861 | 1,540 |
| Admitted | 1,205 | 1,287 | 1,274 | 993 |
| Enrolled | 703 | 785 | 776 | 674 |
| Transfer * | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
| Conversion | 65% | 66% | 68% | 64% |
| Yield | 58% | 61% | 61% | 68% |

*Note: The Chicagoland public community colleges represent GSU's 20 feeder institutions Illinois Public University Enrollment Trends*

The impact of a 10-year declining enrollment in Illinois high schools and community colleges has initiated a downward enrollment trend from 2015 to 2019 in the Illinois public universities with an average enrollment loss of 5.6% or 10,828 students over five years.  Outside of the University of Illinois Chicago and Urbana Champaign campuses, every public has been affected with one-, three-, or five-year enrollment losses.

These current trends have had a significant impact on the ability to generate inquiries, applications, and new student enrollments. The University will need to build on its lead generation model to help ensure funnel activity necessary to meet enrollment goals. With the declining number of undergraduate prospects, it will also be imperative to pursue stop-out students to help offset enrollment loss.

| Institution | | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 3 Year # | 3 Year % | 5 Year # | 5 Year % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chicago State University | Institution Total | 4,767 | 3,578 | 2,307 | 2,963 | 3,039 | -2,460 | -51.6% | -1,728 | -36.2% |
| Eastern Illinois University | Institution Total | 8,520 | 7,415 | 7,030 | 7,526 | 7,806 | -1,490 | -17.5% | -714 | -8.4% |
| Governors State University | Institution Total | 5,939 | 5,819 | 5,184 | 4,857 | 4,764 | -755 | -12.7% | -1,175 | -19.8% |
| Illinois State University | Institution Total | 20,807 | 21,039 | 20,784 | 20,635 | 20,878 | -23 | -0.1% | 71 | 0.3% |
| Northeastern Illinois University | Institution Total | 9,891 | 9,538 | 8,984 | 8,103 | 7,423 | -907 | -9.2% | -2,468 | -25.0% |
| Northern Illinois University | Institution Total | 20,130 | 19,015 | 18,042 | 17,169 | 16,609 | -2,088 | -10.4% | -3,521 | -17.5% |
| Southern Illinois University Carbondale | Institution Total | 17,292 | 15,987 | 14,554 | 12,817 | 11,695 | -2,738 | -15.8% | -5,597 | -32.4% |
| Southern Illinois University Edwardsville | Institution Total | 14,265 | 14,142 | 13,796 | 13,281 | 13,061 | -469 | -3.3% | -1,204 | -8.4% |
| U of I at Chicago | Institution Total | 29,048 | 29,120 | 30,539 | 31,683 | 33,390 | 1,491 | 5.1% | 4,342 | 14.9% |
| U of I at Springfield | Institution Total | 5,402 | 5,428 | 4,956 | 4,575 | 4,275 | -446 | -8.3% | -1,127 | -20.9% |
| U of I at Urbana/Champaign | Institution Total | 45,842 | 46,951 | 48,216 | 49,702 | 51,605 | 2,374 | 5.2% | 5,763 | 12.6% |
| Western Illinois University | Institution Total | 11,094 | 10,373 | 9,441 | 8,502 | 7,624 | -1,653 | -14.9% | -3,470 | -31.3% |
| | Public Uni. Total | 192,997 | 188,405 | 183,833 | 181,813 | 182,169 | -9,164 | -4.7% | -10,828 | -5.6% |

## Competitor Institutions

These are institutions that compete in general with our undergraduate and graduate programs, although individual programs may have their own competitors that are discipline specific. These institutions were confirmed using National Student Clearinghouse for students who were admitted by GSU into a degree program at all levels but enrolled at these institutions instead.

- Northeastern Illinois State University
- Northern Illinois University
- University of Illinois – Chicago
- Lewis University
- Saint Xavier University
- University of St. Francis
- Chicago State University
- Purdue University – Northwest
- Indiana University - Northwest

Although Illinois State University (ISU) doesn't appear on our Institutional Research competitor institution list, ISU appears to be making inroads into GSU's primary market. This is supported by the College Board's Overlap Score Report and the Transfer Institution Report.

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

When comparing our competitors' websites and monitoring their communication to undergraduate prospective students, there is a distinct difference in resources and technology used to build their brand. Our competitors' web presence is experiential and student-centered. GSU's webpages are more transactional with older images and delivered on a dated platform.

In addition to web presence, our competitors appear to invest more in search engines, digital media and building their brand. The University needs to consistently monitor our competitors to ensure we are keeping pace with media, communication, and overall student experience.

## College Board's Overlap Score Report

| Di Code | Org Short Nm | State Cd | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 807 | Governors State University | IL | 505 | 551 |
| 1319 | Illinois State University | IL | 111 | 116 |
| 1559 | Northern Illinois University | IL | 94 | 115 |
| 1851 | University of Illinois at Chicago | IL | 72 | 93 |
| 1165 | DePaul University | IL | 48 | 79 |
| 1118 | Chicago State University | IL | 53 | 76 |
| 1708 | Saint Xavier University | IL | 51 | 76 |
| 1836 | University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign | IL | 52 | 72 |

## Tuition Comparison by State

Governors State has one of the lowest tuition rates within Illinois, but is less competitive compared to other states' in-state tuition costs. The University does offer in-state tuition to Indiana residents, but is approximately $4,800 more a year compared to the average Indiana tuition rate. GSU needs to explore scholarship or waiver opportunities for out of state students to help bridge the difference in tuition.

| Illinois | $12,958 |
|---|---|
| Michigan | $11,320 |
| Indiana | $8,252 |
| Wisconsin | $8,215 |
| Iowa | $12,942 |
| Missouri | $8,873 |
| Kentucky | $10,227 |
| | |
| Surround Average | $9,972 |
| Illinois | $12,958 |
| ---------------------------------------------------------------- | |
| **Difference** | **-$2,987** |

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

## Graduate Students

The graduate landscape at GSU has been declining for a number of years. For the past five years, graduate enrollment has had a 33% (N=785) decline in enrollment. Graduate recruitment and retention are decentralized processes based on the colleges and the departments. Each college and graduate department may have special requirements and acceptance process based on program accreditation and/or field experience. Many of the departments involve faculty and multiple readers to determine acceptance to the program.

The Dean of Graduate Studies and Graduate Counsel shapes direction, policy and initiatives to support enrollment. The Dean supports overall college initiatives and enrollment strategies. In 2018, the University created a new position, Director of Graduate Admissions and Retention to help support the recruitment of new graduate students. New student graduate enrollment grew by 26% (N=89) for Fall 2019 and 8% (N=15) for Spring 2020. During COVID-19 in Fall 2020, there was a decline of 40 graduate students. This was related to international students and travel restrictions (only 5 new international graduate students were enrolled). With travel restrictions temporarily lifted, Spring 2021 had a slight increase due to new international graduate students. See graduate full table below.

## Graduate Enrollment Funnel

The table below is a trend of applied, admitted, and enrolled student count for GSU's graduate programs between Fall 2015 and Fall 2019.

- Applicants declined by 24% (N= 399)
- Admits declined by 17% (N=152)
- Enrollments declined by 32% (N=201)

*Note: The year to year comparison from 2018 to 2019*

- Applicants increased by 21% (N= 221)
- Admits increased by 45% (N=227)
- Enrollments increased by 26% (N=89)

| Funnel Stage | FA 15 | FA 16 | FA 17 | FA 18 | FA 19 | Number | 1 Yr Change | Number | 5 Yr Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Applied | 1669 | 1586 | 1022 | 1049 | 1270 | 221 | 21% | -399 | -24% |
| Admitted | 882 | 832 | 609 | 503 | 730 | 227 | 45% | -152 | -17% |
| Enrolled | 628 | 514 | 386 | 338 | 427 | 89 | 26% | -201 | -32% |
| Conversion Rate | 53% | 52% | 60% | 48% | 57% | | | | |
| Yield Rate | 71% | 62% | 63% | 67% | 58% | | | | |

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

## Graduate Programs Enrollment Trend: 2015-2019

As shown in table 1, total enrolled graduate student headcount (including both masters and doctorate programs) at GSU declined 19% during the four- year period between Fall 2015 (5938) and Fall 2019 (4789). The decline is deeper for graduate enrolled headcount, which went from 2368 in Fall 2015 to 1583 in Fall 2019 (33% decline over four-year period).

**Table 1. GSU Enrolled Students - Fall**

| Level | FA15 | FA 16 | FA 17 | FA 18 | FA 19 | 4 Year Change | 4 year average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GSU Total | 5938 | 5819 | 5185 | 4857 | 4789 | -19% | 5318 |
| GSU UG | 3570 | 3517 | 3326 | 3262 | 3206 | -10% | 3376 |
| GSU GR | 2368 | 2302 | 1859 | 1595 | 1583 | -33% | 1941 |

*Source: Profiles of Academic Majors:*
https://www.govst.edu/uploadedFiles/About/University_Governance/gsu/PAM%20Fall%202019%20Final%20v3(1).pdf

Table 2 reflect the graduate enrolled headcount (including both masters and doctorate programs) by colleges during the four years between Fall 2015 and Fall 2019. It shows that all colleges experienced decline in graduate enrolled headcount during this period, but the biggest decline was in the College of Arts and Sciences. Further analysis of data indicates that the main cause of CAS graduate student enrollment decline was related to decreases in international students in the Master of Science in Computer Science program, which is largely a reflection of the overall macro-environment for international recruitment and is beyond GSU's control. If the MS in Computer Science program is not included, CAS's decline in graduate enrolled student headcount is similar to the other colleges.

In Fall 2015, the College of Arts and Science had 318 international students (14.49%) enrolled in the graduate computer science program. In the fall 2019 term, there were 90 international students (6.40%) enrolled in the graduate computer science program. This is based on enrollment in undergraduate and graduate programs in the College of Arts and Science.

**Table 2. GSU Graduate Programs Enrollment: Total and by College, 2015-2019**

| Colleges | FA15 | FA 16 | FA 17 | FA 18 | FA 19 | 4 Year Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GSU GR | 2368 | 2302 | 1859 | 1595 | 1583 | -33% |
| CAS GR | 718 | 684 | 409 | 318 | 282 | -61% |
| COB GR | 165 | 171 | 150 | 138 | 157 | -5% |
| COE GR | 513 | 513 | 408 | 417 | 421 | -18% |
| CHHS GR | 798 | 830 | 762 | 697 | 653 | -18% |

*Source: Profiles of Academic Majors*

https://www.govst.edu/uploadedFiles/About/University_Governance/gsu/PAM%20Fall%202019%20Final%20v3(1).pdf

## Doctorate Student Funnel Analysis

While the above tables include all Graduate programs (both master's and doctorate programs), Table 4 below shows doctoral programs applied, admitted, and enrolled trend for the five-year period (FA 15-FA 19). Even though doctorate student enrollment and admissions pipeline both account for only 6-10% of total graduate enrollment and admissions counts, it is worth noting the fact that doctorate "applied, admitted, and enrolled trend" is much more stable than the total graduate counts. Also, because the following funnel analysis only includes Fall semester applied, admitted, and enrolled count, it does not reflect a few high-demand and at-capacity doctorate programs (DPT and DOT) that only admit new students in Spring and Summer terms (Verify this).

| Funnel Stages | FA15 | FA 16 | FA 17 | FA 18 | FA 19 | 5 Year Change | 5 Year Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Applied | 101 | 88 | 84 | 58 | 94 | -7% | 85 |
| Admitted | 45 | 43 | 32 | 31 | 41 | -9% | 38 |
| Enrolled | 38 | 29 | 29 | 27 | 35 | -8% | 32 |

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

## Admission Processes, Policies, Practices, & Structures

The GSU application processes and structures have gone through significant improvements to broaden outreach and engage with inquiries and applicants in a more intentional way. Preceding this change, significant issues impacting tracking and communication were the result of Recruiter CRM software constraints, technical staffing and business practices. Due to these constraints, prospective students were maintained outside of the CRM on the GSU shared drive for communication campaigns. Ellucian Recruiter is not a user-friendly software, changes and implementation of a component within the software required the assistance of ITS and was labor intensive and also required Ellucian support. Ellucian Recruiter is built on Microsoft Dynamics which posed additional constraints, including license restrictions within the University. While using Recruiter, communication touchpoints required staff members to engage with the system at multiple steps of the process.

An email communication would require multiple manual steps, administrative judgement and decision-making, all to send a single targeted message to a group of students. Prior to 2017, applicants in the funnel would receive minimal, standardized emails after engaging with the system (i.e., account created confirmation, application completed, and still seeking supplemental documentation to complete application.) The past communication campaigns relied on running frequent WEBI reports, and sending respective mail merge communication based on that data. In addition, because the fields were generated by the application and WEBI reports, letters to students were not specific as to what document was still needed; students would then have to contact GSU directly to learn more. All of the above small steps were also adding to the time it took for a student to make it from application to enrolled.

In 2018, GSU stopped using email communication campaigns in Ellucian Recruiter due to contractual issues. The email services within Ellucian Recruiter, Exact Target was purchased by another vendor who did not meet the Illinois procurement guidelines. The Admissions Office moved to a pay as you go email service with Fire Engine Red Inc. and text/voice messaging services with Dial My Calls. This new funnel communication strategy engaged with students at multiple points in the inquiry-to-enrolled process. Students were entered into a drip campaign, and progressed to the next step of communication based on their responses to each. The process was intuitive and increased students' interaction with Admissions, which led to significant gains in applicant yield the following terms. The new campaigns have also included the use of text messaging, and have been used to promote specific programs to appropriate students in the funnel (such as the GSU Honors Program.)

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

The new communication structure improved interaction, but still required labor intensive coordination of data across multiple systems (MS Outlook, Dial My Calls, Fire Engine Red, Ellucian Recruiter). Combined with the need to streamline many admissions and retentions processes, the university moved forward with adopting the Slate CRM.

Designated staff attended initial training in December 2019, and began to roll out the first use of the system in March 2020. The timing of Slate implementation was crucial, as the university faced the nationwide sudden move to remote learning, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Admissions was able to move quickly to a variety of online programming through the use of Slate. Throughout the summer of 2020, Governors State implemented Slate for: admissions communication throughout the funnel, event registration and video conferencing (e.g., Open House, "Coffee with a Counselor"), and virtual appointments (currently used by ADM Counselors and Recruiters, Fin Aid Counselors, NSP Peer Mentors, UAAC Advisors for General Studies Students, and DDP Transfer Specialists.)

Slate also captures student information in a way that improves student application tracking; this allows for seamless assignment of prospective students to appropriate admissions counselors or recruitment specialists, even during changes to staff or territories. As of November 2020, the Slate admissions application is now live and fully implemented for new applicants. Students' application process is much more transparent using Slate; they receive email notifications in real-time, and are able to view their application's status, upload additional documentation, send reminders to recommenders, and download PDF versions of their acceptance letter or other acknowledgements (such as scholarship award letters). While Slate is now live, reaching full proficiency across the entire university will take time. Ongoing maintenance and expansion of system capabilities will also require ongoing staffing and resources.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

The following strategies were vetted through the Strategic Enrollment Planning process and were approved by the President and the Cabinet. The decision to proceed was based on data, situational analyses, expenses and future enrollments or return on investment. Looking to the Ansoff Matrix, a strategic planning tool, the strategies below are sorted into three categories: Market Penetration, growth through attracting more students from existing markets to existing programs; Market Development, growth through attracting students from new markets to existing programs; and Program Development, growth through attracting students from existing markets to new programs. The following analysis provides specific insight, data and the greatest market opportunity for growth. 10 of the 15 strategies proposed, are listed below. The remaining strategies will be considered for future approval based on further development/refinement and budget opportunities.

## Ansoff Growth Strategy Matrix

| | Existing Programs/Services | New Programs/Services |
|---|---|---|
| **Existing Markets** | Market penetration | Program development |
| **New Markets** | Market development | Diversification |

Ansoff, I.: Strategies for Diversification, Harvard Business Review, Vol. 35 Issue 5,Sep-Oct 1957, pp. 113-124

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# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

## GSU SEM Strategies

### Market Penetration:

1  Comprehensive Web Redesign
2  Integrated Marketing
3  Prospective Info Flow
4  Recruitment Communications

### Market Development:

5  Latinx Rec & Support
6  Adult Transfers
7  International Recruitment
8  SXL as Gateway

### Program Development:

9  Academic Advising Review
and Plan
10  Instructional Excellence

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

## A. MARKET PENETRATION



## STRATEGY 1. COMPREHENSIVE WEB REDESIGN

**Strategy:** Purchase and implement new CMS and portal and hire additional team members to oversee user experience, content, and navigation oversight, as well as continually implement a unified voice and effective user journeys through a modified web governance model.

**Objective:** Implementation of these will improve market share through search engine results, yield higher inquiries and applications through a better integration with CRM, and retention through enhanced student experience, such as finding, registering, and paying for courses. Improve reputation of university through better storytelling, external engagement opportunities, and alumni digital experience (job connections, networking, donations, etc.).

**Rationale:** Governors State University's website – www.govst.edu – ranks poorly amongst its competitors in the Chicagoland higher education search and quality rankings (otherwise known as Search Engine Optimization, or SEO).

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

Previously, two outside agencies and a variety of data tools were enlisted to identify and address issues relating to the website: Student Web Experience Project with Stamats.

- Search Engine Optimization project with 2060 Digital
- Newly accessible data tools:
    ◊ Google Analytics
    ◊ Google Tag Manager
    ◊ Google Search Console
    ◊ Slate Ping tracking code
    ◊ Monsido

**Student Web Experience Project**

From October to December of 2019, Marketing and Communications (MarComm) and IT worked with Stamats, an agency specializing in higher education marketing, to analyze and receive both short and long term recommendation on the improvement of govst.edu .

The primary concern the agency identified is the current Content Management System (CMS), Ektron. The CMS is the essential structure of the website and portal, controlling all input and output of text and images throughout the site. In their report, Stamats describes the current CMS as "deficient in features that are considered standard in the marketplace," and they even allude to the potential of Ektron to become obsolete soon, with no possible support.

A great deal of time is currently being invested in continual manual fixes and workarounds of the current CMS, some of which have to be hand coded. The only users able to edit these pages will need to be specialists in coding.

In addition to addressing the CMS technology, Stamats also identified areas of vision that GSU could address related to website ownership and governance as well as marketing strategy.

## Intermediate Goals
- Shift Web Ownership to Marketing
- Grow Marketing's knowledge of User Experience (UX) and exposure

## Long-Term Goals
- Redesign the Website
- Hire team of 5-7 people needed for website improvements
- Select a New CMS

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

MarComm and IT have been diligently at work since December 2019 to correct some of the many issues.

Some of the solutions implemented include a new tool, Monsido, being used to correct technical, content, and accessibility errors, as well as a project with an external agency, 2060 Digital, who is assisting over the course of the year with improving SEO.

A 900-hour UX designer was hired on September 1, 2020, to redesign the homepage and many of the key "inside pages," but as a temporary Extra Help employee, her work was discontinued in Spring 2021.

Currently, MarComm and IT are working with an external agency to repair some of the technical and content SEO problems. 2060 Digital was able to analyze and recommend solutions for edits to the code and the content in our website. However, the agency was not able to edit very much of our code in order to implement these suggestions. None of the above solutions will ultimately obtain the results of improving our website's effectiveness, as the foundation of the website, the Ektron Content Management System (CMS), is outdated and poorly built, without a shared content library. Similarly, the governance structure and human resources available are currently unsustainable for an improved website experience leading to conversion (inquiry and/or application).

Websites need a constant, even daily, update of content, and coders will need to be able to continue writing good SEO code. Additionally, as recommended by Stamats, those who oversee content and copywriting will need some understanding of SEO and UX principles in order to write effective, user-focused, search engine friendly text.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE



## STRATEGY 2. INTEGRATED MARKETING

**Strategy:** Develop a brand that balances institutional and program messaging, develops faculty and staff advocates, and targets key populations. From this brand, launch a campaign that targets key populations and prospects by targeted academic programs.

**Objective:** Removal of "Hidden gem" designation. Through an assessment and training of the university's organizational culture, a brand identity will not only emerge but will be more powerful as a result of institutional buy-in. Increase visibility and awareness, encourage stronger organizational culture, collaboration between departments, and training on institutional identity.

**Rationale:** The Office of Marketing and Communications (Marcomm) works in alignment with the Office of Admissions and the Colleges to promote the university's enrollment objectives. While this includes the direct paid advertising strategy, it also includes the creation of print publications, Slate campaigns to different points in the admissions funnel, social media promotion, website content updates, and providing support when needed for other projects such as presentations, flyers, etc.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

## Target Key Populations:

### Paid Media

In years past, the paid media plan was focused on promoting Open House attendance. Beginning in 2019, MarComm began allocating some of the budget to promoting the academic programs, as well as specific Spanish-language advertising for direct outreach to the growing Hispanic student body.

### Admissions Publications

In 2017, the suite of admissions materials was re-conceptualized to include a viewbook that tells the university's story and instill a sense of belonging.

The Counselors Guide is used to market the university to high school and community college counselors and follows a similar concept to the viewbook, though focused to the counseling audience.

### Recruitment Events
- Open House
- Admitted Student Days
- Program-specific information sessions
- Coffee with a Counselor
- Virtual Campus tours
- On-campus tours
- Hosting virtual "Jaguars Honors Hours" to recruit and confirm honors eligible freshman students

## Social Media / Digital Marketing

### Social Media Content

The main Governors State University social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter. The social media strategy is continuously evolving based on the rapid nature of social media.

### Digital Marketing

MarComm's digital advertising strategy is multipronged and includes advertising on Facebook and Google, with planned expansion to LinkedIn in 2021.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

Unfortunately, there is not sufficient technical infrastructure to track conversions (leads and applications), so our current KPIs are measured solely through reach, impressions, clicks, and video views.

## Google Ads PPC

There have been two significant Google Ads campaigns over the last year: a consistent Smart Display campaign advertising the university, and a Search campaign with program keywords driving to the program listing page.

## Slate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Implementation

MarComm worked alongside Admissions to build prospect and inquiry campaigns for freshmen, transfer, and graduate students in Slate.

Admissions purchases leads from external testing organizations (ACT, SAT, GRE), and works to funnel those prospects into inquiries and applicants. MarComm assists by targeting these populations through digital advertising, historically on Facebook and Instagram and now through a pilot on LinkedIn.

## School of Extended Learning Digital Advertising

SXL developed and launched its first SXL catalog, growing our email list and remarketing to leads.

## Developing Faculty and Staff Advocates

## Podcasting

MarComm is working in tandem with the university's Center for Community Media (CCM) to produce and host podcasts that highlight the university, its experts, and academic programs.

## Public Relations and Media Engagement

MarComm is responsible for the university's public relations and media engagement and includes messaging from the university president, maintenance of the faculty expert database, and Emergency Response communications (particularly pertinent in 2020's COVID-19 landscape).

The GSU Newsroom is prolific, having published 266 releases in 2020, a 150% increase in production over 2019's 174 releases. There has been a 260% increase in unique visits year over year, with 50,000 more unique visits in 2020. Stories are written on the academic cycle according to enrollment goals, calendar events, and faculty profiles.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

**Integration of Marketing and Program Development Cycles**

Each year, new academic programs are approved in the May Board of Trustees meeting for the Fall enrollment cycle. This short timeline leaves little time for the procedures needed to ensure a successful launch, which include:

- Establishing a CIP code
- Building the application
- Including in the academic catalogue
- Marketing the program
- Recruiting students into the program

Aside from the procedures, this also does not allow for MarComm to plan the advertising into its overall budget and strategy, which happens at the beginning of the fiscal year.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE



## STRATEGY 3 - PROSPECTIVE INFO FLOW

**Strategy:** Create greater transparency to all students by providing transfer equivalencies, degree audit progression, and degree audit planning components.

**Objective:** By providing students with real-time access to see how their credits will apply towards a degree will help increase inquiries, applications, and enrollments. This strategy will also include the implementation of Student Planning for Colleague's degree audit. Student Planning creates a semester by semester academic plan to help students stay on track toward academic program completion and graduation.

**Rationale:** GSU has fallen behind in leveraging technology to demonstrate the transferability of courses. By implementing a public-facing website that allows prospective students the ability to query transfer equivalencies and run a degree audit based on GSU program of studies will help to increase student enrollment.

Currently, prospective students do not have the ability to view transfer equivalencies and how they will count toward a degree until they are admitted.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

## Degree Audit, Course Equivalencies, and Transfer Guides

GSU implemented Degree Audit in 2013, it was originally developed for new transfer students only. Due to staffing, it was determined that transcript entry would occur after students were admitted and only on new students. This allowed for consistency in transcript evaluation and for students to track their progress. In 2019, we added programs prior to 2013 and graduate programs for application to degree verification and graduation processing and this has not been fully implemented due to COVID-19 moving us to remote. Degree Audit is an on-going project. For the audits to work properly, they have to be updated manually each year. One of the current challenges is that the university catalog is published a few weeks before the start of the academic year but registration and advising for the academic year starts in March. Advisors are often advising prospective and current students based on previous catalogs.

One of the other components that make up a functioning degree audit system are course equivalencies. Course equivalences are only done when a transcript does not have equivalencies on file or a Form 13 is requested. The course equivalencies are uploaded to Transferology so that prospective students can see how we equate courses but it only pulls from the existing equivalencies. GSU has been developing transfer guides since the middle 90's. Since we are still a predominately transfer institution, we have transfer guides for our regional community colleges and a few other community colleges for selected programs. Degree Audit is only one piece of the puzzle and there is much more needed than transcript evaluation, especially for more than newly admitted students. There remain opportunities to improve by providing earlier access to prospective students regarding transcript evaluation, transfer equivalencies, degree requirements (catalog), and degree planning.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE



## STRATEGY 4 - RECRUITMENT COMMUNICATIONS

**Strategy:** Build comprehensive communication plans to increase lead generation, student inquiries, conversation and yield rates for freshman, transfer and graduate recruitment efforts. Communication strategies will be multi-modal and leverage technology including slate, digital media, social media and print to improve response rates.

**Objective:** This strategy targets communication to individuals, from prospects to enrollment, to ensure student yield.

**Rationale:**

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

## Communication Strategy

Communication with prospective students is an important part of attracting students, retaining their interest, and eventually enrolling students. Marketing strategies, the website, and communication with interested students, applicants, and newly enrolled students are all important aspects of attracting and retaining interested students. Although students can and do call in order to get information, many students expect universities to have multiple forms of communication, both synchronous and asynchronous. This section is meant to review communication strategies for undergraduate recruitment, and while it may partially overlap marketing strategies, marketing is not the main purpose of this section. The focus is on communication with students once they contact the university.

## Customer Relations Management System: Slate

Governors State University recently implemented Slate—a customer relations management (CRM) system.

For the purposes of this section, we will focus on prospect lead generation and nurturing (from interest through enrollment in the first semester). As far as communication, Slate allows communication through text, email, voice, social media, and print while collecting data. Campaigns can be on a large scale or segmented into specific populations (e.g. undergraduate or graduate students, specific majors, people who have identified they are interested in specific topics) or individuals.

This system will provide GSU with a more robust system for communication and documentation of contact with students. However, there are still areas in which GSU can communicate better with students, even after full implementation of Slate.

## Admissions Office Communication

### Prospects

We currently have drip communication campaigns to communicate with prospective students via the new Slate CRM system. These campaigns are all written for specific student audiences including freshman, transfer and graduate students. The drip campaign consists of at least 30 separate multi-modal communications, which are sent to students every few days, over an extended period of time. The multi-modal communications are emails, text messages, and pre-recorded voice messages. These messages were all developed in collaboration with Marketing and Communication and focus on relationship building and transactional messages. The role of the campaign is to drive students towards completing an inquiry form, scheduling pre-admission appointments or completing a university application.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

Our Virtual Admissions Appointments are communicated to students weekly, encouraging students to schedule an appointment with one of our staff members, to discuss any questions they may have about GSU or the college admissions process in general.

## Inquiry

When a student becomes an inquiry (though attending an event, scheduling pre-admissions appointment, submitting the "learn more" buttons on the program pages, etc.), they are funneled into an inquiry campaign based on level. These messages are more in depth, including messaging specific to which major they indicated on their inquiry, with the ultimate goal of submitting an application.

## During Application Process

- Once our prospective students have taken the step to complete an application for admission, we communicate with our students for a few different reasons:
  - ◊ If a student has not submitted all necessary documentation needed to process their application, we send bi-weekly multi-modal messaging to the student.
  - ◊ An email notifying that their application is complete and is under admission review.
- Admission Decision Letters, both Acceptances and Denials, are processed and sent to students daily, via US Mail and email.

## Accepted

When a student has been successfully admitted to the University, we send frequent multi-modal communications (including email, text, voice, and personal calls) regarding student resources, as well as deadline reminders. These messages are sent at least weekly. We also send parallel campaigns to students regarding appropriate campus events.

## Recruitment

We had to adapt our recruitment efforts for Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions. Our recruitment staff is communicating with prospective undergraduate students by:

- Participating in national and regional recruitment fairs
- Hosting virtual information sessions for area high schools as available
- Hosting open hours or virtual table visits for community college partners
- Through staff assignment in Slate, do personal outreach to connect with students through email, virtual appointments, and phones calls to help move them through the admissions funnel.
- Social Media engagement- we have hosted several Instagram takeovers, Facebook live sessions and targeted marketing through both platforms based on admitted student lists of geofencing.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

## Areas for Improvement

Universities like GSU must have diverse and robust forms of communication with its students. GSU has a unique intersection of a wide range of students—age, race, socioeconomic status, familiarity with higher education, abilities, and technology literacy. We have both the privilege and the problem of trying to communicate with a wide range of students. GSU needs communication beyond the traditional 8:30 to 6pm university office hours and ways to communicate that are instantaneous and do not require a trip to campus.

We also need to consider how to best leverage both active and passive communication. Active communication is targeted and individualized communication directly to individuals. Passive communication is broadcast and available through user-driven action.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

## B. MARKET PENETRATION



### STRATEGY 5 - LATINX REC & SUPPORT

**Strategy:** Establish stronger support of Latinx students.

**Objective:** Establish stronger presence of GSU in Latinx communities; Build relationships/collaborations with Latinx brands and influential Latinx higher education circles; Prioritize hiring of faculty and staff in proportion to student population of Latinx students.

**Rationale:**

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

## Minority and Male Populations

IBHE Data from 2013-2018 shows strong undergraduate enrollment growth in students of all colors (African American 15%, Latinx 49%, Asian 18%). These gains have offset the loss in White students (-28%) that has resulted in largely flat undergraduate enrollment from 2013-2018. This growth is found with both men and women but more pronounced among men.

## Hispanic and Multiracial Demographic Growth

For more than 10 years, Hispanic high school graduates have steadily increased. Hispanic high school graduation growth will continue to increase through 2025/2026.  The Chicago Public Schools and many of the Southwest suburbs are now predominantly Hispanic and present an opportunity for the University.

With the Hispanic high school graduation growth over the past ten years, many of GSU's feeder transfer institutions have become either Hispanic-Serving Institutions or Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution. Below is the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) list of HIS's in our market. According to GSU's 2019-2020 Common Dataset, the University's Hispanic population is 15.2% for undergraduate students. Based on HACU data, GSU should be yielding a higher percentage of Latinx students.

The University should develop strategies to attract, recruit, and retain Latinx students in our region. Additionally, the University needs to develop strategies to support undocumented students to ensure equal access to scholarship opportunities and support services, protect citizen status, and provide a safe campus to complete their degree.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

## HACU LIST OF HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS (HSIs) - 2018-2019

| Category | Name of Institution | % Hispanic |
|---|---|---|
| Hispanic-Serving Institutions | City Colleges of Chicago-Harold Washington | 49.50% |
| Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions | City Colleges of Chicago-Olive-Harvey College | 24.70% |
| Hispanic-Serving Institutions | City Colleges of Chicago-Harry S Truman College | 39.80% |
| Hispanic-Serving Institutions | City Colleges of Chicago-Malcolm X College | 48.30% |
| Hispanic-Serving Institutions | City Colleges of Chicago-Richard J Daley College | 74.30% |
| Hispanic-Serving Institutions | City Colleges of Chicago-Wilbur Wright College | 63.40% |
| Hispanic-Serving Institutions | Elgin Community College | 39.40% |
| Hispanic-Serving Institutions | Joliet Junior College | 27.20% |
| Hispanic-Serving Institutions | Morton College | 85.00% |
| Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions | Oakton Community College | 18.30% |
| Hispanic-Serving Institutions | Triton College | 45.20% |
| Hispanic-Serving Institutions | Waubonsee Community College | 36.20% |
| Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions | Kankakee Community College | 16.30% |
| Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions | Moraine Valley Community College | 24.20% |
| Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions | Prairie State College | 19.60% |
| Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions | South Suburban College | 22.00% |

## Latinx Marketing

For two years, we have been partnering with Univision Chicago and the Chicago Latino Network to increase our presence in the Spanish-speaking community. Lately, these have included live virtual events including Univision's Virtual Education Week, as well as faculty discussions through virtual forums – two faculty members were featured in Chicago Latino Network webinars this summer.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE



## STRATEGY 6. ADULT TRANSFERS

**Strategy:** Target marketing and recruitment (multimodal) campaigns to transfer students who are > 25 years old.

**Objective:** Leverage the use of the National Clearinghouse, Slate, and digital media to increase adult transfer enrollment.

**Rationale:** The Illinois community college system has experienced a 38% (N=145,589 students) decline in enrollment from 2010 to 2020. From Fall 2017 to Fall 2020, GSU has seen a 31% decline in transfer students who are 25 years old or over. With the steady decline in the Illinois birthrate, the University needs to focus on regaining the adult transfer students while maintaining enrollment of transfer students that are 24 years old and younger.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

The following chart outlines the University's top feeder community colleges. Over the past three years, the top five transfer feeder institutions have maintained the same ranking positions. GSU's top transfer institutions represent 60% to 65% of the University's total new transfer student population.

| Top Transfer Institution Enrollment by Year | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community College Partners | Fall 2018 | Fall 2019 | Fall 2020 |
| Moraine Valley | 172 | 167 | 149 |
| Prairie State | 89 | 84 | 72 |
| Joliet Junior College | 68 | 63 | 63 |
| South Suburban | 55 | 60 | 37 |
| Kankakee Community College | 43 | 46 | 38 |
| Triton College | 28 | 21 | 20 |
| Olive Harvey College | 12 | 16 | 15 |
| Harold Washington | - | 11 | 13 |
| Illinois State University | - | - | 9 |
| Kennedy King College | 17 | 13 | - |
| Daley College | 15 | - | - |
| Richard J Daley Col /Kennedy-King Col | - | - | 8 |
| CSU, NIU, Malcolm X and Morton | 8 | 8 | - |
| **Top Ten College Totals** | **507** | **489** | **424** |

From 2018 to 2020 there has been a 16.3% (N=83) decline in feeder institution enrollment vs. the non-transfer institutions which declined by 7.9% (N=22). It is important to note that the overall transfer enrollment growth in Fall 2019 was a result of a non-feeder transfer student increase of 49 individuals and over the past three years we have had a low but steady decline in feeder school enrollment.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

Based on this data, more recruitment efforts need to be focused on our feeder community colleges and the institutions that provided the non-feeder growth need to be identified for market/outreach opportunities.

Regionally there's a significant population of transfer students from communities to the North and Northwest of our primary market. These same communities represent our lowest high school enrollments (i.e. District 230, Tinley Park, Oak Forest, Lincoln Way East, Lincoln Way Central, Lincoln Way West, Lockport, etc.). The distance does not appear to be a barrier to enrollment. As a result, the low high school participation rates represent greater demographic (age, income, ethnicity, family size, etc.) than geographic influences.

Based on the three enrollment trends of these transfer feeder institutions, there is an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and develop targeted strategies identifying these students to maintain and grow transfer enrollment.

## Fall Transfer Funnel by Age

### RNL Data Analysis

GSU saw its number of transfer students younger than 24 increase from 176 (2016) to 498 (2018). Projections of the market share indicate GSU can maintain this level of traditional age transfer students through 2029 with an average new enrollment of 513. It is important to note that first year students and transfer students under 25 come from the same total number of possible students. If market share remains consistent or increases only slightly, it is unlikely that both of these numbers will continue to rise. Transfer students who are 25 and older have historically made up the majority of GSU's student body. Enrollment in this population has declined in recent years from 1284 (2016) to 799 (2018). An understanding of educational behaviors and patterns during economic recession are helpful enrollment projections. Traditionally, enrollments rise during economic downturns and then fall as the economy recovers. Currently, our community college partners continue to see an overall decrease in enrollment numbers likely due to a confluence of factors including the COVID-19 pandemic, related recession, and demography. Given our reliance on transfer students, their trends become the context for our transfer numbers, typically with a two- to three-year lag time. Hence, monitoring enrollment trends at local community colleges provides key insight for future planning.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE



## STRATEGY 7 - INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT

**Strategy:** Increase and diversify (by student country of origin, program of study, and degree level) international student enrollment.

**Objective:** Create an expanded and targeted international recruitment plan.

**Rationale:** As of Spring 2021, GSU's international student population is 84% Indian. Out of the Indian students, 95% are in Master's level programs and 74% are in the Master of Science in Computer Science program.

Further analysis of the international student population over these four years indicate that this student group is the main source of fluctuation in applied, admitted, and enrolled count during this period.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

Beginning in 2014, GSU partnered with an Indian recruitment agency. While large numbers of applications were received in 2014 and 2015 through this agent, total applications count from international students peaked in Fall 2015 at 696, the Office of International Services was not properly staffed to handle the large influx. As a result, a majority of the applications were being deferred before they could be processed and receive an admissions decision. In September 2018, GSU contracted with a third party to hire an in-country manager for India. The country manager recruited students directly, but also assisted our agents with their queries, information sessions, etc. Currently, there are two country managers in India - one for the northern half of the country and the other for the southern half.

The addition of athletics at GSU is attracting international student athletes from a variety of countries. Additionally, we began accepting certain Indian three-year degrees in Fall 2019.

It is noteworthy that the "admitted yield" rate for the international student group fluctuates significantly (from 12% in Fall 2018 to 48% in Fall 2015), which makes this student population very unreliable source of new student enrollment. The US federal government started Implementing stricter visa application standards in 2016, which resulted in a higher rate of visa denials. This in turn led to a significant decrease in international enrollment. There has also been a decrease in the number of H-1B visas awarded each year by the US government, which is a major setback for international students - and specifically Indian students - who hoped to study in the US and then participate in the Optional Practical Training (OPT) work benefit after graduation. There was an increase in visa approvals and enrollment for the Spring 21 term and while it is still too early to see if this will become a constant it gives hope that the international student population has started to rebound.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

*Figure 5: GSU All Graduate Programs Funnel Analysis (International Students) – Fall Semesters*

**GSU ALL GRADUATE PROGRAMS FUNNEL ANALYSIS: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (Fall Semester)**
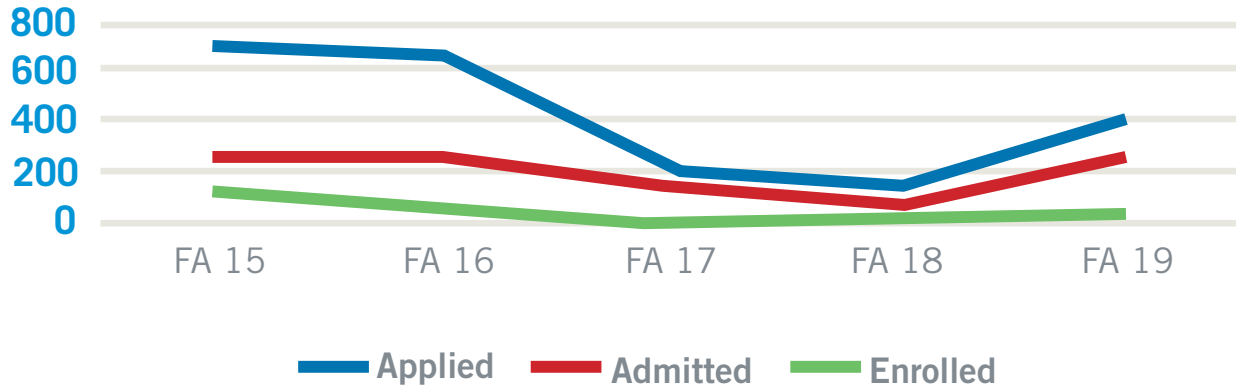


The majority of GSU's international students still come from India. The over reliance on this market has created problems as we are not diversified enough in our international student sources. In recent years we have begun to intensify and diversify our efforts in other countries/markets - Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, China, etc.. We have partnered with recruitment agencies in other countries and are actively looking for new recruitment initiatives.

Many of our admitted international students are interested in scholarships, but GSU currently does not have much to offer; the Office of International Services has up to twenty housing waivers, which cover the cost of a bed in a semi-suite, to award international students. While the tuition rate is reasonable, can be a recruitment tool and may also lead to increased visa success rates. Similarly, graduate assistantships are an attractive option for international students, as the assistantships allow them to both gain work experience and partially fund their education. Federal regulations limit international students to on-campus work unless it is a course requirement, which means the students do not have opportunities to find part time jobs elsewhere for experience or funding purposes. Additionally, job placement (including internships) is a major marketing tool in international recruitment; such placements are always one of the top concerns and most frequently asked questions by prospective international students.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE



## STRATEGY 8 - SXL AS GATEWAY

**Strategy:** Develop focused certification and micro-credential offerings with digital badges for high Stu/Emp demand and growth fields.

**Objective:** Assess credit by evaluation (CBE) to articulate to Graduate degrees (Accelerated Masters Professional Path); 2. Assess CBE plus portfolio assessment for Undergraduate and Adult transfer populations (ELLs/Veterans/Community College Transfers); and 3. Offer credential + work-based/experiential learning for credit options (Veterans especially).

**Rationale:**

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE

## Opportunities to Leverage Extended Learning

The School of Extended Learning (SXL) provides labor workforce training at all levels and can provide a pipeline of potential students. SXL is developing a badging program which should enhance GSU's connections with local businesses, schools, and not-for-profits, creating more friends and more potential recruits.

School of Extended Learning's (SXL) new digital badging platform enables tracking of badge sharing and employment progress through a link associated with the badge.

The badge may be shared on social channels, digital sites/portfolios, and with employers. Students find that badges help them talk about their knowledge in a more concise and confident way that is useful for interviews. Employers who click on a digital badge can see earned skills and competencies. Credly platform: https://www.youracclaim.com/organizations/governors-state-university/badges.

Another area of opportunity is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), which is currently pigeonholed in the areas of Military Veterans and our Interdisciplinary Studies (UG) program. PLA can serve as a recruitment tool for graduate students, especially in fields where there are recognized certificates that fall short of an entire field of study, such as Information Technology and Addiction Studies.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE



## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

## STRATEGY 9 - ACADEMIC ADVISING REVIEW & PLAN

**Strategy:** Review academic advising and create an improvement plan to study impact and strengthen connections in all populations.

**Objective:** Improve progression, retention, and equitable outcomes for students; build on the data that shows advising relationship is one of two most important aspects to students; increase responsiveness in some change-averse advising structures. "All populations" includes not only program level and demographics, but all stages in the SEM process where students need accurate, timely advising information.

The two-phase plan begins with an ambitious study phase in which multiple qualitative and quantitative surveys of current students, alumni, and advisors are assessed. Data is then used for phase two which includes 2a) BENCHMARK: Use this data to construct benchmarks for assessment and design professional development. 2b) INFORM: flip, expand, and diversify communication flows among stakeholders.

The university has a lot of anecdotal noise about advising, but insufficient usable data about where we are and how to move forward. Our strategy begins with assessments that 1) provide data to describe the present while 2) establishing benchmarks to evaluate the outcomes of our proposed action steps. In addition to the initial information inflow, we are choosing to focus on multi-modal information/communication flows to leverage existing resources and provide coherence to proposed steps.

# APPROVED STRATEGIES AND RATIONALE



## STRATEGY 10 - SUPPORTING INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

**Strategy:** Rebrand, promote, and strengthen the Center for Active Engagement and Scholarship.

**Objective:** Promote excellence in teaching and learning, provide orientations, development, training, and support for faculty, programs, and academic units.

**Rationale:** One productive approach to fostering student academic success is supporting faculty in their work to understand current students and to have the support structures and programs necessary to help them become excellent teachers. With a focus on faculty and teaching excellence, the Center for Active Engagement and Scholarship (CAES) was highlighted as the place where faculty development takes place as opposed to just being the "Blackboard group" which has generally been the understanding among campus.

A rethinking, rebranding, and promotion of this group as a center for excellence in teaching is closely aligned with GSU's mission of offering an exceptional and accessible education as well as strategic goals of academic excellence, student success, and high-quality faculty. The steps include

1. Rebrand Center for Active Engagement and Scholarship
2. Launch a peer-to-peer class visit and instructional coaching initiative (F2F & virtual)
3. Enhance new faculty and adjunct instructional development processes and trainings
4. Promote instructional excellence and exemplar courses by implementing grants/stipend incentives to showcase excellence in teaching
5. Launch process for individual instructional development plan
6. Create new programming/workshops for instruction focused on generational theory (freshmen / adult learners)
7. Develop leadership training for instructional excellence, program assessment, and teaching evaluation (deans, chairs, program coordinators)

# STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT



Transitioning from Strategic Enrollment Planning to Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) requires attention beyond implementing the approved strategies. The SEM's annual cycle will be integrated with other university cycles as mutually-informed, long-term planning processes and visions for GSU, including the Facilities Master Plan and Strategy 2025, as well as COVID-19 shifts and innovations to the industry, region, and GSU. The SEM will naturally exist in institutional structures where its management and impact will be most vital, including Strategic Enrollment Management, Enrollment, Student Services, Academic Affairs, the Academic Master Plan Advisory Committee, and Technology.

When work began with RNL, the existing strategic enrollment management committee structures were supplemented by a series of Working Groups. This model was created to ensure sustainability for the SEM Executive Leadership Team (ELT) as SEP transitioned into SEM. GSU's Strategic Enrollment Management structures permit broad participation through focuses committees, overseen by the ELT which serves as a steering committee.

# STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

- The co-Chairs of the standing committees will continue to serve on the ELT: those committees are Undergraduate Recruitment, Graduate Recruitment, and Retention to Graduation (R2G).
- The chairs of the RNL ad hoc Working Groups in Academic Programs, Finance and Affordability, and Marketing will join the ELT as continuing members.
- For the RNL process, additional faculty were added to the ELT on a temporary basis. As the project moves into SEM, faculty involvement will be central as the project data is taken to the Academic Master Plan Advisory Committee for program development and strategic curricular initiatives.
- It is expected that the SEM will continue to be managed by the Executive sponsor, the VP of Academic Affairs (Provost) as well as the VP of Institutional Advancement, Marketing, and Communications, who will oversee the strategies as they relate to marketing.

To begin implementing the Strategic Enrollment Plan, strategy leaders met with Procurement, Human Resources, and Budget and Financial Planning to understand university procedures and guidelines for hiring and resource disbursement. Each strategy to be implemented is guided by its lead author, the person who worked with a content-area expert and a faculty member to shape the strategy proposal put forth for the Cabinet's consideration during the SEP process. Most of the strategy leads are already represented in one of the standing committees or on the ELT; those strategy leads not already serving on a SEM committee will report directly to the ELT on a quarterly basis.

# STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
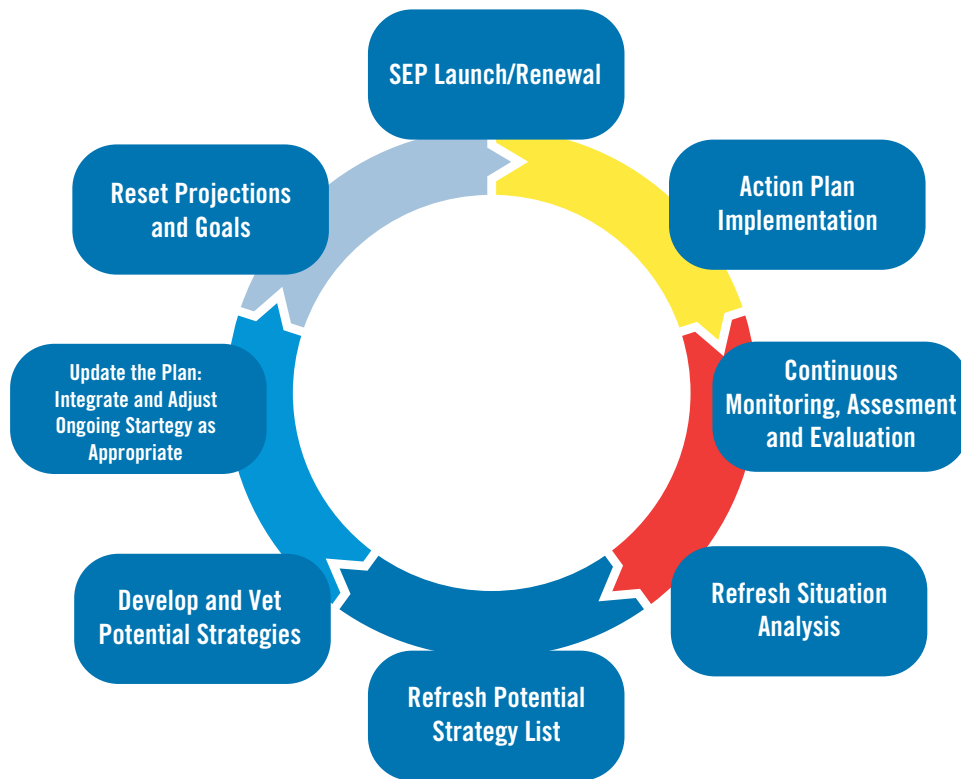


The cycle will include three major sections:

- Fall review of individual strategy performance/outcomes, and a high-level review of key performance indicators. This comprehensive review should be scheduled soon enough after the fall census that official data is available, but far enough out that the institutional research team can update dashboards and create accurate reports.
- Spring review of strategies and consideration of potential new initiatives or the integration of strategies from our future-focus set. As with the fall review, scheduled soon after a census. Plan for summer retreat.
- Summer retreat: a comprehensive review of plan implementation and consideration of actions regarding all in-process strategies: continue, adjust, or sunset. This is also a time to refresh situation analysis elements.

It is essential that participants and stakeholders understand the data-driven, dynamic nature of enrollment rather than depending on static projections which may lead to either over-confidence or discouragement. Following the logic of this cycle of assessment, review, and adjustment, enrollment projections will continue to rely on the enrollment measures already produced by Governors State University's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. Governors State University regularly evaluates and adjusts its enrollment projections and return on investments, developing models for short term (one-, two-, three-year) and long term (ten- and twenty-year) planning. These models take into account the availability of potential students (populations of people qualified and within established geography) and market forces (data from the Bureau of Labor). University projections also include

# STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

continuing and graduate students, which extend beyond the purview of this report. It is our practice to plan for the under band in projections within the margin of error. Taking this conservative approach in projections positions GSU to absorb fluctuations, especially with smaller enrolled programs.

RNL will continue to assist GSU with Fall and Spring assessments along with strategy revisions. Lewis Sanborne, Vice President of RNL will conduct one unit of 40 hours assessment comprised of a combination of travel (as appropriate), meetings, analysis, report generation, telephone support for the Fall and Spring reviews.

- A review of GSU's current SEP plan with a specific focus on strategies being implemented, actions, and outcomes to date
- Updates to select elements of the 2021 plan's situation analysis
- Development of potential new strategies
- Consideration of new and existing academic programs for development or marketing and recruitment investments
- Creation of detailed action plans for potential new strategies
- Prioritization, with the GSU team, of strategies for inclusion in the 2022 refresh of the plan
- Development of impact projections, an ROI model, and overarching goals

Successful SEM Plans take into account internal and external variable that present opportunity to adopt to ensure plan success. Years 2022-23 to 2026-27 are in grayed italicized print to highlight the flexibility and continuous evolution of the SEM Plan.

| | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Revised enrollment: | 20 | *124* | *299* | *461* | *617* | *743* |
| Revised revenue: | $205,938 | *$1,270,702* | *$3,028,235* | *$4,665,019* | *$6,266,891* | *$7,550,784* |
| Total Expenses: | $915,555 | *$1,135,076* | *$1,070,987* | *$1,087,095* | *$1,096,529* | *$1,106,407* |
| Total Net Revenue (loss) | $(709,617) | *$135,627* | *$1,957,248* | *$3,577,924* | *$5,170,361* | *$6,444,377* |
| Cumulative Net Revenue (loss) | $(709,617) | *$(573,990)* | *$1,383,258* | *$4,961,182* | *$10,131,543* | *$16,575,920* |

*Years 2022-23 to 2026-27 will be reviewed and adjusted on continuous basis.*

## Comprehensive Web Redesign

**Broad Steps to Accomplish:**
1. University-wide Web Content Audit (underway)
2. Request for Proposals (RFP) written and posted for new Content Management System (CMS) and portal.
3. Vendors reviewed and technology selected.
4. Request for Proposals (RFP) written and posted for agency to assist with implementation of CMS.
5. Vendors reviewed and agency selected.
6. Information architecture determined
7. Migration – content and technical
8. New website / portal launched

## Integrated Marketing

**Broad Steps to Accomplish:**
1. Identify consultant to assess and train organizational culture
2. Complete organizational culture assessment and training
3. Identify agency to develop elements of the brand
4. Create a message map to show the communications to each audience.
5. Develop a communications governance structure for the university that includes advertising, branding, media and external relations (including alumni), etc.
6. Launch campaign that targets key populations, including adult/continuing education; Latinx; and target programs.

# APPENDIX A

## Improved Information Flow

**Broad Steps to Accomplish:**

1. Implement EAB Transfer Software to display Colleague's transfer equivalencies, degree audit output and career options to prospects, inquiries and transfer counselors at community colleges. Transfer Recruitment and Retention

2. Implementation and continued support of the Ellucian Student Planning Module (Freshman, Transfer, Graduate and Doctoral). Retention and Title IV Compliance

3. Clearinghouse Annual License for StudentTracker Premium – Vet prospective, stop outs and no show students through the National Clearinghouse and load targeted students into Slate for recruitment campaigns. Transfer Recruitment

4. Send Slate Communication Campaigns to current students promoting the use of Colleague's Student Planning Degree Audit. Retention

5. Send Slate Communication Campaigns to prospective transfer students promoting the use of EAB Transfer Software. Transfer Recruitment

6. Postcards sent to current students promoting the use of Colleague's Student Planning Degree Audit. Retention

7. Functional/Tech Degree Audit Analyst - Maintenance of National Clearinghouse WebTracker Premium file exchange, data loaded into Slate, web interface between EAB transfer & Colleague and Student Planning component of degree audit. Shared position with Strategy 6 (.25 FTE - will be covered by Strategy 6). Transfer Recruitment, Retention and Title IV Compliance

## Recruitment Communication

**Broad Steps to Accomplish:**

1. Lead Generation (Freshman, traditional transfer, and graduate name buys)
2. Digital Media Campaigns
3. Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)
4. Slate prospect communication campaigns (including postcards, letters, postage, email, text SMS, voicemail, personal outreach).
5. Slate funnel communication campaigns
6. Build and implement "Chatbot" in a third party software
7. Leverage public access hours available to university
8. Slate Communication Coordinator

## Latinx Recruitment and Support

**Broad Steps to Accomplish:**

1. Establish Annual Ad Buy with Hulu targeting Latinx communities.
2. Establish Sponsorship for Latinx Center to pay for construction costs
3. Hire Latinx Center Director
4. Establish Strategic Plan for Office
5. Hire Latinx Associate Director
6. Leadership working with HR for strategic placement of faculty hire postings
7. Leadership working with HR for strategic placement of staff hire postings
8. Funding for at least two student hires with non-FWS funding

## Recruitment of Adult Transfers

**Broad Steps to Accomplish:**

1. Create and Launch Slate Prospect Drip Campaigns - Transfer Students >25
2. Lead Generation (Internal)
   - Stop outs and Non-Responders (>25 older students who transferred out or stop attending)
   - Prior years' SAT/ACT list
3. Lead Generation (External)
   - Digital Media Campaigns
   - Social Media Campaigns
   - Purchase Names/Lists
4. Direct Mail (postcard) Campaign
5. Promote Prior Learning Assessment
6. Provide Scholarships for Adults and Out of State Learners
7. Marketing Campaigns (building brand with >25 transfer and older)
8. Build virtual Transfer Center Online
9. Partner with
   - Strategy 3: Improved Information Flow/Processes for prospective students (i.e. transfer evaluation, degree audit, degree planning) and
   - Strategy 4: Recruitment Communication Strategy (chat, text, Slate, social media, influencers)

# APPENDIX A

## International Recruitment

### Broad Steps to Accomplish:

1. Partner with EduCo's Accelerate service, via a revenue-share model, to recruit and convert applicants in targeted markets that will lead to diversification of GSU's international population by program of study, degree level, and student country of origin

2. Reestablish OIS staffing levels from 2016 by hiring an additional International Student Advisor, who will assist with initial I-20 issuance during the admissions process and help alleviate current backlogs

3. Hire an additional Foreign Credential Evaluator to decrease turnaround time for admission decisions and reduce backlogs with credential evaluation and application processing

4. Use digital media marketing targeted to international markets to increase conversion and yield

5. Budget for recruitment travel to target markets to visit US government offices and key recruitment partners, and to participate in recruitment fairs and yield events leading to a more diverse international student population

## SXL as Gateway

### Broad Steps to Accomplish:

1. Form a representative Governance committee to ensure the development of explicit criteria to support identification of target programs and develop policies for evaluation and articulation to credit

2. Engage Faculty and Staff for feedback and curriculum development of certification program/articulation to credit options.

3. Form Partnerships with credentialing bodies and seek GSU testing center status.

4. Design Digital Badges, input metadata into the Credly platform, and form co-branded partnerships.

5. Develop Ad Campaign(s) and strategic referral partnerships to market the program to GSU undergrads, alumni, professional associations, targeted audiences (Latinx, ELLs, Police, Veterans, Corporate partnerships), community college transfers, and community at large (Coordinate with Action Plan 2 and 4 for SLATE and campaign message integration)

6. Coordinating with Admissions and Records Specialist II to manage transcripting to credit once trainings launch

7. Hire FTE staff position in SXL to manage the initiatives and focused partnerships outreach (approved for 2023)

## Academic Advising Review

**Broad Steps to Accomplish:**

1. Contract with NACADA for a comprehensive on-site review of GSU advising structures.
2. Conduct objective surveys to gather factual information will help determine which elements in the rapidly-changing knowledge environment need additional attention.
3. Gather per-program 5 year retention and graduation data and the ILEA equity scorecards and disseminate that data to programs, advisors, faculty, & administrators.
4. Use NACADA assessment results to conduct "appreciative inquiry" interviews to identify current strengths, perceived gaps, and desired resources to support quality advising.
5. Create a program of professional development that brings advisors, student services, and academic personnel together.
6. Identify and create resources to move to "flipped advising" model.

## Instructional Excellence

**Broad Steps to Accomplish:**

1. Rebrand Center for Active Engagement and Scholarship
2. Launch a peer-to-peer class visit and instructional coaching initiative (F2F & virtual)
3. Enhance new faculty and adjunct instructional development processes and trainings
4. Promote instructional excellence and exemplar courses by implementing grants/stipend incentives to showcase excellence in teaching
5. Launch process for individual instructional development plan
6. Create new programming/workshops for instruction focused on generational theory (freshmen / adult learners)
7. Develop leadership training for instructional excellence, program assessment, and teaching evaluation (deans, chairs, program coordinators)
8. Thank you to all those who contributed to the Strategic Enrollment Planning process.

# APPENDIX B

Thank you to all those who contributed to the Strategic Enrollment Planning process.

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Charles Pustz

David Rhea

Lewis Sanborne

Lise' Schneider

Colleen Sexton

Kevin Smith

Joshua Sopiarz

Jessica Specht

Lara Stache

Paula Swisher

Chris Tweddle

Catherine Tymkow

Jason Vignone

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For further updates to the GSU Strategic
Enrollment Management Plan go to:
*govst.edu/sem-plan*