



2013

Substantive Change Report

Prepared for
The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

Substantive Change Application, Part 2: Topic-Specific Questions

Mission or Student Body

Part 1. Characteristics of the Change Requested

1. How will the proposed change impact the historical intent, mission, nature, culture, organization, and people of the institution?

GSU proposes to add lower division students (freshman and sophomore level) to complement the robust undergraduate transfer and graduate programs already in place. Our success with transfer and graduate students makes us well suited to serve this new group of students. We have qualified faculty, many of whom have recently taught lower division. Our science labs are currently being remodeled and other facilities are ready. Most important, we have developed a state-of-the-art General Education program that will engage and retain students, leading to a high completion rate.

GSU was initiated in 1969 as a bachelor's and master's granting public, regional university with admissions only at the upper division level. Except for GSU, the last set of public universities still following this model save one had announced freshman admission or actually began to admit freshmen by Fall 2011. Why is that?

First, this experimental model did not yield the desired results; despite many methodologies seeking to improve community college to 4-year transfer, only 10% of community college students entering directly from high school earned a bachelor's degree within six years. GSU is fast becoming a national model for the successful transfer of community college students, but many students simply will not begin at a community college. To increase degree completion, former upper division and graduate campuses have admitted freshmen and focused on retention.

Second, as Dr. Renu Khator, Chancellor of the University of Houston system has stated, the budget model for upper division/graduate institutions "does not work." Two of the last three separately accredited public universities of which GSU is aware that did not accept freshmen in 2010, UH-Victoria and UH-Clear Lake, became four year institutions this year. Illinois data reflect national data; on average, the cost of educating lower division students is about 75% the cost of educating upper division students.

Third, and most significantly, accepting freshmen is part of the core mission of a state-assisted regional public university. Taxpayers expect that a regional public university will admit at the freshman level. GSU is among the last, if not the last public university, that does not fulfill this core mission. At many public universities similar to GSU, transfer students constitute a large majority of baccalaureate seeking students, but each of these regional universities also fulfills its mission by accepting freshmen.

In terms of an existing program upon which GSU could build its lower division, naturally, GSU baccalaureate degrees already reflect the General Education Core Curriculum of Illinois. GSU has a large number of articulation agreements with community colleges and regularly accepts new lower division curriculum for major degrees proposed through the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). GSU's new lower division core curriculum will build upon this existing structure but will refine the pedagogy to reflect best practices in lower division education, focusing on student and faculty engagement, well defined learning

outcomes, and high impact learning practices such as cohorts, internships and service learning, early undergraduate research, global studies, and an integrated freshman experience.

GSU also has developed a number of junior (3000 level) courses that are offered sometimes at the 3000 level and sometimes at the sophomore (2000) level. Independent of admitting freshmen, GSU has completed a course-renumbering process to move some of these courses to lower division, thus providing a foundation for sophomore courses that serve as preparation for the major.

GSU's public discussion has generated much enthusiasm from current students, whose Student Senate endorsed the initiative, as well as the Alumni Association, who also provided a public letter of support. The Civil Service Senate also endorsed the move. There is a relatively small minority who has voiced concerns that GSU will lose sight of serving non-traditional students. A few adult students have expressed some anxiety about studying with younger students. GSU's message has been that many other universities successfully serve a heterogeneous student population and that a campus is enriched by this diversity. GSU's constituents overwhelmingly agree.

Most significantly, presidents of GSU's partner community colleges wrote strong letters of support. We were gratified to see that our partner community colleges understood that GSU is committed to both/and, not either/or, when it comes to admitting freshmen and serving community college transfer students. In fact, through our Dual Degree Program (DDP), we aspire to be a national model for serving community college transfer students within a four-year comprehensive university.

2. What change, if any, will occur in the mission statement and mission-related documents (vision, goals, and purposes)?

No change to the mission statement is needed because the education of freshmen and sophomores is part of the core mission of a regional, public, comprehensive university. GSU's mission statement (adopted 2007/08):

Governors State University is committed to offering an exceptional and accessible education that imbues students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to succeed in a global society. GSU is dedicated to creating an intellectually stimulating public square, serving as an economic catalyst for the region, and being a model of diversity and responsible citizenship.

In its current program of admitting transfer and graduate students, GSU fulfills only part of its mission. Through freshman admission, GSU will help fulfill the Illinois Public Agenda to increase the overall number of college graduates in the state. The university currently is not providing an "accessible education" to high school seniors graduating in the region we serve. In addition, the university is not fulfilling its mission to provide an "accessible" education when GSU, with the lowest priced university education in the state, does not provide a local public option for students who wish to remain local. In addition, GSU could better fulfill its mission as an economic catalyst for the region by serving a larger number of students and helping these students to graduate with no or low debt and with more opportunities to succeed financially. GSU loses a significant number of potential students to Purdue-Calumet in nearby Northwest Indiana, the closest four-year university to many students in the south

suburbs. Finally, minority students, on average, are less likely to have means or opportunity to travel outside the region to pursue a four-year degree. While GSU is already highly diverse, the ability to admit and retain high school students from underserved communities in the south suburbs will help GSU to fulfill its mission in “being a model of diversity and responsible citizenship.”

GSU developed a 2008-2015, strategic plan, *Strategy 2015*, which did not explicitly state the intention to add lower division. The university’s Institutional Effectiveness Committee presented to the president’s cabinet a mid-term assessment of that strategic plan in 2012 and revised the plan to include this major initiative. At the same time, this major new initiative already was in concert with significant elements of *Strategy 2015* such as increasing academic excellence, increasing enrollment, growing the quality and diversity of student experiences, extending community partnerships, and serving residential students. GSU’s Board of Trustees reviewed and approved the mid-term assessment of *Strategy 2015*.

3. What change, if any, will occur in the number, demographics, and composition of the student body?

To ensure a successful beginning, GSU plans a conservative start to its lower division enrollment.

Table 1

STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND DEGREE PROJECTIONS FOR THE PROPOSED LOWER DIVISION STUDENTS		
	Year One (2014/15)	5th Year (or when fully implemented)
Number of Program Freshmen (Fall Headcount)	270	500-625 (in 2020)
Annual Full-time-Equivalent Students, Freshmen & Sophomores (Fiscal Year)	240	900-1100 (in 2020)
Annual Number of Degrees Awarded	0-for this cohort	800-1000 (by 2026)

In order to control the size of the freshman class and also to benefit from best practices in first-year experiences, GSU plans to place full-time students into a cohort model, initially three cohorts of 90 students. All freshmen will be full-time, daytime students. Every effort will be made to ensure that students remain enrolled full-time throughout their college years and, with federal, state, and private support, to limit or eliminate all study-related debt. While lower division will remain a relatively small percentage of undergraduates, GSU’s current average age for undergraduates (33) is likely to change significantly downwards, perhaps to 27-29 based on the experience of other campus that have added lower division. The addition of more traditional age students as undergraduates is also likely to shift the average age of graduate students, which is now 37. GSU certainly hopes to continue to attract a large group of underserved and first-generation college students and is intentionally developing recruitment, tuition waiver, and summer bridge programs to achieve that goal.

4. Specify the timeline used to implement the proposed change.

Here is an abbreviated timeline:

August 2011	Board of Trustees reviews lower division white paper, approves public discussion of lower division
Aug-Sept 2011	President and Provost meet with community college counterparts
Fall semester 2011	Campus and community town halls; consultation with Alumni Association, Faculty, Civil Service, and Student Senates, who endorse the initiative. Application to Illinois Board of Higher Education.
December 2011	Illinois Board of Higher Education approval of organizational change to serve lower division students
January 2012	Faculty Senate and Provost appoint a General Education Task Force
March 2012	Series of day-long colloquia begin with visit by Carol Geary Schneider, President of AAC&U; continue with John N. Gardener and Betsy Barefoot (October 2012), then Roberta Ness (March 2013), and will continue through 2014/15
April 2012	GSU submits a Title IIIA proposal which misses funding by less than one point; The proposal provides an outline and beginning master calendar of tasks
Fall 2012	President appoints a steering committee to coordinate lower division implementation; Faculty Senate and Cabinet endorse a working draft of an admissions policy and procedures to begin to distribute information on lower division. A waivers task group proposes changes of distribution and purpose of current tuition and fees waiver program to extend to first-year students.
January 2013	Faculty Senate endorses the GE Task Force framework and faculty begin to submit lower division courses towards a deadline of May 2013
April 2013	North Central Association HLC visit to GSU; followed by recommendation and HLC action of GSU's request for a change in student body
Summer 2013	Issuance of catalog supplement that will include first-year admissions, scholarships, and other new information relevant to first year.
Fall 2013	First community open houses, application period begins

Spring 2014	First admission and financial aid packaging for first-year students
Summer 2014	First summer bridge program; housing completed
Fall 2014	Up to 270 first-year students begin at GSU

Part 2. Institution's History

5. What experience, if any, has the institution had in changing its mission or student body?

Since its inception, GSU offered bachelor's and master's degrees, successfully adding degrees and certificates to meet the needs of students. The most dramatic change to the student body began in 2007, with the successful addition of doctoral students. GSU began its first doctoral programs in Physical Therapy (DPT) in 2007, then added Nursing Practice (DNP) in 2008 and Occupational Therapy (DrOT) in 2009. Subsequently it has added doctoral degrees in Counselor Education and Supervision (EdD, 2010) and Interdisciplinary Leadership (EdD, 2013). Recently, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and HLC approved the addition of the Educational Specialist (EdS) level in School Psychology. GSU has had significant success in adding the doctoral level of education, with competitive admissions to the programs. For example, in Physical Therapy less than one in ten applicants is admitted. Retention and doctoral degree completion has been excellent in these programs, and external evaluators as well as employers have provided positive feedback. Despite these successes, GSU's Academic Master Plan does not list any additional doctoral or EdS programs. The immediate goal is to increase new undergraduate majors in order to attract a wider variety of first-year and transfer applicants as well as master's level programs with proven community need.

As indicated above, GSU's mission as a regional, comprehensive university will not change with the admission of lower division students. Serving lower division students will mean that GSU finally will attain its full mission.

6. What are the reasons and driving forces for the proposed change?

GSU seeks to extend its operations to include a cohort of up to 270 freshmen beginning in Fall 2014. While initiated as a transfer and master's degree level institution in 1969, neither GSU's statutory language or mission statement prohibit GSU's acceptance of first-time freshmen. In fact, GSU's mission of access to excellence for students in the wide region it serves means that freshman admission will be a natural extension of GSU's current services to undergraduates. Without a public university option in their home region, GSU's potential freshmen are now underserved. GSU's service region is highly diverse and reflects almost all demographics of Illinois: urban mixed demographics of Chicago and Joliet, wealthy and extremely poor suburbs, and rural areas. Approximately 50% of GSU's undergraduates are minorities, thus extension of admission to freshmen will meet a state and national goal to increase bachelor's degree completion of underrepresented students.

Freshman admission at GSU is designed to serve these underserved students, providing a high-quality, affordable option to those seeking admission directly from high school to a four-year institution, limiting student's debt load, and ultimately meeting the Illinois Public Agenda goal to increase college completion rates in fully accredited institutions by 2020. GSU's service area includes several regions with very low bachelor's completion rates (e.g., Kankakee at 15%), and a high quality public option will increase college completion rates in these underserved areas.

GSU's lower division offerings will meet state goals to increase college completion in a wide range of occupations, from Accounting to Social Work, where well-prepared college graduates are needed. Because of our excellent partnerships with community colleges as well as GSU's academic master planning process, we decided not to begin lower division Nursing programs, but will continue our current RN to BSN program while planning RN to MSN pathways. We are designing our lower-division program to emphasize and enliven a strong liberal arts foundation. GSU will design the required package of lower division courses and electives to integrate the best research on outcomes and retention, high impact practices for undergraduates such as cohorts, an integrated freshman experience, applied learning, close connection with faculty, writing-intensive work throughout the lower division, early undergraduate research, and meaningful global opportunities. The program objectives will fully meet those of the General Education Core Curriculum objectives as outlined in the Illinois Articulation Initiative. Thus, students completing the lower division at GSU will have a fully transferable GE package of courses with a well-designed set of learning outcomes, assessment tools, and evaluation and improvement cycles to assure that students meet or exceed the learning objectives.

Completion of the lower division at GSU will prepare students for a wide range of majors that GSU continues to grow at the bachelor's degree level or will provide students with the opportunity to transfer if they seek another degree program. In addition, GSU already is creating pathways from lower division to the graduate level in areas of critical need such as the BS to MS Accounting sequence; freshman admission will smooth this pathway to a graduate degree.

Addition of lower division, secondarily, will strengthen enrollment and tuition revenues at a time when state support for public universities continues to diminish. As the state turns increasingly towards performance-based funding, the addition of first-year students also will provide GSU with comparative performance data which the university currently lacks.

Part 3. Institutional Planning for Change of Mission or Student Body

7. What are the institution's plans to implement and sustain the proposed change?

As described above, GSU has planned carefully to admit a small first-year class of up to 270 students in three cohorts of up to 90 students for the first two years of operation, focusing on success in launching this new initiative. This limited class size assured internal constituencies that GSU could manage the change and reassured external partners that GSU's evolution would have minimal impact on their enrollment. (Community college enrollment in the service area approaches 60,000 students, while GSU secondarily serves other community college partners with a combined enrollment exceeding 100,000.)

Based on best national practices, GSU also developed the concept of a cohort-based, limited-choice curriculum, emphasizing the proven power of learning communities, the first-year seminar, and other high impact practices to ensure effective retention and graduation. GSU assessed regional and statewide admission standards and determined to attract a first-year class that either was fully qualified for university-level study, or who could be fully ready by the end of the first semester through a required summer bridge and supplemental instruction in the first fall semester. Thus GSU administration presented to its Board of Trustees a well-researched approach to beginning lower division, one that recognized regional conditions while incorporating national best practices.

The simultaneous start of student residence halls on campus and co-curricular programming form a part of GSU's plans to implement and sustain lower division. The president has appointed a steering committee of individuals across the university to coordinate activities and they will continue to meet as long as necessary. Already, GSU has hired a Director of Academic Engagement and has reconfigured the duties of some of its advisor and student affairs staff to redirect them towards lower division planning and implementation. In terms of recruiting students, GSU has changed its approach to waivers to include a substantial number of waivers for first-year student recruitment. GSU also is in the beginning stages of discussion to expand its athletics program from a club-sport only to a full range intramural, club, and intercollegiate program, another means to continue to attract first-year students. Other activities to implement and sustain the proposed changes are addressed in the other sections of this application.

8. What impact might the proposed change in mission or student body have on challenges identified as part of or subsequent to the last comprehensive visit or reaffirmation panel recommendation and how has the institution addressed the challenge(s)?

The 2010 reaccreditation letter included a focused visit on evidence-based decision making, comparative outcomes for online vs. in-class learning, and assessment of student learning outcomes, particularly those in general education. The short response to this question is that implementation of lower division has required GSU, at each stage, to demonstrate evidence of the need for lower division and the research basis for its specific plans. GSU's planned implementation of lower division has been a model of informed decision-making: investigating best national practices; introducing the campus to the work of nationally known leaders and researchers; and, integrating research and evidence-based decision-making into all levels of planning. The implementation of lower division also has provided the major impetus for faculty to re-examine GSU's current minimalist approach to General Education and to adopt a new General Education program with well-articulated outcomes and systematic, integrated, and well-documented cycles of assessment and improvement.

Immediately after IBHE approval, the Faculty Senate at GSU formed a General Education Task Force. This Task Force, consisting of elected members of the faculty as well as faculty appointees of the Senate and faculty, staff, and administrative appointees of the Provost, immediately adopted a research, evidence-based approach to planning a general education program for a full four years (Appendix A: Membership and Charge). This approach addressed not only GSU's need for a coherent lower division program but a

university-wide need articulated by the last HLC visiting team that GSU needed to define and assess its general education program through the full four years. GSU's participation in two AAC&U workshops, General Education & Assessment and High Impact Practices, respectively, has informed the work of the GE Task Force and the university as a whole. The collaborative work of the GE Task Force and the Committee for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (CASLO) is particularly noteworthy. The two groups are ensuring from the outset that GE outcomes are well-articulated and that there is a comprehensive system of recording, analyzing, and improving student learning outcomes. While the technology has not yet been chosen, the Faculty Senate endorsed in January 2013 that student general education outcomes for incoming first-year students and for transfer students will be tracked through a student e-portfolio system that will display individual as well as group outcomes.

GSU's work on General Education and the changes in culture, practice, and activities that will ensue from admission of first-year students continues to be informed by national experts. GSU has created a once-per-semester series of major speakers to inform the campus about national and international best practices. The president of the American Association of Colleges & Universities, Carol Geary Schneider, led a half-day workshop at GSU in March 2012. The attendees (115) learned about high impact practices in undergraduate education and participated in activities to assist the GE Task Force to develop a theme-based cohort approach to general education. In fall 2012, John N. Gardner and Betsy Barefoot provided an all-day workshop on best practices in the first-year experience. Participants (175) came prepared, having read articles about best practices in their area of responsibility, and finished the workshop with steps they would take to further preparations for first year students. Additional speakers are planned for spring and fall of 2013, emphasizing innovation/creativity, writing across the curriculum, and mathematical/statistical skills for undergraduate students. Workshops incorporate interactive technology so that participants and those who missed the sessions can review the work of the sessions and incorporate it into planning.

GSU's approach to first-year admissions also was thoroughly researched by a Faculty Senate working group on admissions in consultation with the provost and associate provost, resulting in a catalogue-ready admissions policy (Appendix B). In addition, a Waivers Task Force studied practices of other Illinois public universities and developed a new approach to assigning full or partial waivers that will incorporate the emerging need to offer this tuition reduction to first-year students.

9. Describe the administrative structure (accountability processes, leadership roles) necessary to support this proposed change.

The president and the president's cabinet have oversight authority and accountability for this university-wide initiative. The president appointed the Provost, the Executive Vice President, and the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing to outline a calendar for implementation and to coordinate their efforts across the university. Reporting to this senior executive group, there is also a presidentially-appointed group of senior and middle managers who meet regularly to track progress on each of the initiatives necessary to implement lower division, providing widespread information-sharing, coordination, and accountability for implementation. This lower division steering committee continues

to track academic and other initiatives that are completed (such as the draft admissions policy and the General Education framework) and those still in progress, notably the development of additional lower division electives, placement of students in English and mathematics/statistics, and planning a required as well as an optional summer bridge experience.

The Faculty Senate has taken its appropriate role in developing academic programs, including general education, necessary to begin first-year admissions in 2014. In addition, the Educational Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate has completed a comprehensive review of policy and has begun to review proposed changes to policies needed to implement lower division. Likewise the Faculty Senate's University Curriculum Committee will have a key role in reviewing new general education student learning outcomes and lower division courses. As mentioned above, there is also appropriate coordination of university-wide committees such as the Committee for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee with the work of the cabinet and lower division coordinating council to ensure that GSU meets implementation timelines and achieves the quality of programs it aspires to achieve for lower division implementation.

10. What controls are in place to ensure the information presented to students in advertising, brochures, and other information will be accurate?

The Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communication is a member of the Lower Division Steering Committee and is charged with reviewing the advertisement, collateral, and social media campaigns with the committee. GSU's marketing and communications department has done a comprehensive review of peer institutional marketing campaigns to assess and develop its strategy for effective marketing and communication to prospective and current students about the transition to a full service four-year university. As a matter of course, all new branding campaigns are created and developed within the department, but reviewed and approved by the GSU cabinet.

11. How do you ensure that financial planning and budgeting for the change are realistic (projected budgets, recent audit reports, revenue streams, cost of facilities, and projected facility and equipment costs)? What are your projected revenues and expenses? What are your projected enrollment and staffing needs?

GSU has presented its financial planning and budgeting for the change to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), but it should be noted that this budget plan solely refers to GSU's own revenues and resources; there was no request to IBHE or the State to fund lower division. Thus, there already has been one successful external review of the financial plan to implement lower division. Since the budget plan went to IBHE and since GSU now has a curriculum model in place, there has been a slight upward adjustment in the cost of instruction, an additional \$120,000. At the same time, this model does not include increased tuition or fee rates from 2012/13, 2013/14, or 2014/15. Even so, new revenues are projected at twice the rate of the minimum cost to launch lower division.

Below is a nearly identical presentation to that provided to IBHE, with the slight revision.

Estimated New Net Costs of Proposed Lower Division Program

Revenue/Expenditure Category	Year One		Year Five	
	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount
EXPENDITURES				
Personnel				
Faculty – Unit A	5.00	\$ 330,000	12.00	\$ 1,020,000
Faculty – Unit B	2.00	\$ 110,000	9.25	\$ 578,125
TAs/GAs/LAs (incl. waivers)	5.00	\$ 104,500	21.00	\$ 425,000
Subtotal: Direct Instructional	12.00	\$ 544,500	42.25	\$ 2,023,125
COSTS				
Other Personnel Costs				
Librarians -- Unit B	0.00		1.00	
Library staff	0.00		1.00	
Recruiters	1.00		0.00	
Admissions	1.00		2.00	
Advisors	1.00		1.50	
Student Life Staff	0.00		1.00	
Police Officer	1.00		1.00	
Facilities Support Staff	0.00		1.00	
Business Office Support Staff	0.00		1.00	
Subtotal	4.00	\$ 219,000	9.50	\$ 569,500
Library Materials, supplies, etc.		\$ 63,500		\$ 200,000
Facility-related Costs		\$ 200,000		\$ 400,000
Other Costs		\$ 150,000		\$ 287,500
TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES	16.00	\$ 1,177,000	51.75	\$ 3,480,125
FUNDING SOURCES				
University Income Fund*		\$ 2,245,104		\$ 7,148,800

***Projections of net tuition and fee revenues from proposed lower division course offerings, based on FY 2011-12 tuition and fee rates:**

Tuition -- \$243 x 36 SCH x 270 students in Year One and \$243 x 30 SCH x 1000 students in Year Five	\$ 2,361,960	\$ 7,290,000
Mandatory Fees -- \$823/semester x 270 students in Year One and 1,000 students in Year Five	\$ 444,420	\$ 1,646,000
Total Gross Tuition and Fee receipts	\$ 2,806,380	\$ 8,936,000
Less: Adjustment for waivers, scholarships, And uncollectible tuition and fees	\$ 561,276	\$ 1,787,200
Net revenue from tuition and fees	\$ 2,245,104	\$ 7,148,800

In addition, GSU prepared a detailed budget in its Title IIIA proposal for US Department of Education funding to support lower division implementation and three external reviewers gave the proposal the maximum score on the budget section. GSU is waiting to determine whether it can resubmit this proposal, which fell less than one point short of the cutoff score in a highly competitive national program in which only thirteen colleges or universities were awarded support.

Internally, GSU has presented its plan to the Board of Trustees as well as to the presidentially-appointed Planning and Budget Advisory Committee, comprised of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The report to IBHE, including the budgetary plan, was widely distributed on campus. In addition, the college, library, and student affairs deans as well as the associate provosts review the hiring priorities for new faculty and senior staff, and in that way have reviewed the financial planning and budgeting for lower division to ensure that the budget adequately addresses the needs.

12. How do you assure that promotion, marketing, and enrollment for your new mission or student body stay in balance with your actual resources and technical capabilities?

GSU deliberately planned a limited and controlled start to launching lower division to provide appropriate balance between resources and capabilities. The intended first-year class of a maximum of 270 lower division students for fall 2014 represents less than 5% of the current fall headcount. In 2015, when both sophomores and first-year students will be present, likely less than 8% of the student body will be lower division, as there will be some attrition among lower division students and other new programs that continue to increase transfer and graduate student enrollment. Eventually, up to 30% of undergraduate students may be first-year and sophomore students, but this is unlikely to occur during the first decade of GSU's initiation of a lower division program.

GSU already has put into place a careful marketing strategy for prospective first-year students, intending to concentrate primarily on high school students within its primary service region rather than other in-state, out-of-state, or international prospective students.

The limited class size means that GSU can pilot its new admissions, financial aid, summer bridge, thematic cohort, and other new programs for successful outcomes before expanding the size of its first- and second-year class.

Part 4. Curriculum and Instructional Design

13. Describe the involvement of appropriately credentialed faculty and experienced staff necessary to accomplish the proposed change (curriculum development and oversight, evaluation of instruction, and assessment of student learning outcomes).

After approval of the Illinois Board of Higher Education the Faculty Senate immediately developed a charge to a General Education Task Force, which during calendar year 2012 developed a new four-year curricular model for general education at GSU. A staff member in the College of Arts and Sciences with

long experience of the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) and a staff member in the Provost's Office are providing a series of workshops on IAI, including workshops specific to subject areas (e.g., Social Sciences). The training also will cover gaining IAI approval of lower division required courses for the major. The University Curriculum Committee, composed only of tenure-track faculty members, will review and approve all courses before they are sent to the statewide panels. Once the curriculum is developed and implemented, GSU will use its normal three-year evaluation of new programs, which includes internal self-study and external review. As also stated above, a comprehensive, sustainable system of assessment of general education is currently being planned by the GE Task Force and the Committee for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (CASLO). GSU has learned from its Assessment Academy project as well as from the systematic approaches of our programs in education and psychology that an e-portfolio approach that provides both individual and group results will yield us the best data for an ongoing cycle of quality improvement. We are currently exploring the capacities of several commercial products in order to implement student e-portfolios university-wide in 2014.

To plan and implement co-curricular and student life experiences, GSU has brought in a new team of seasoned professionals. Even before the arrival of freshmen, we have completely re-designed our orientation process, moving from online only to a combined in-person and online orientation. In addition we have instituted a six-week survey of new, incoming students, and we have established cross-functional teams involving academic, student affairs, and finance/administrative staff to plan residential life.

Many of GSU's current evaluation and assessment approaches will remain in place as the university serves a new group of students. However, faculty in programs such as English, Mathematics, and the lab sciences already are discussing additional training and evaluation of grading, lab, and teaching assistants.

In sum, faculty and staff have been appropriately involved in all stages of planning and implementation to date and will continue to fulfill their appropriate roles as GSU implements its lower division and new four-year General Education programs.

14. What change, if any, will occur in the programs offered by the institution?

GSU began a comprehensive review of its academic programs in 2010/11, recognizing that the university fell short of the usual number academic majors offered at comprehensive, regional, public universities. This lack of programs resulted, in part, from GSU's experimental beginnings and its emphasis on interdisciplinary programs. Just one example: GSU had only a Psychology and a Social Sciences major and not the usual array of Anthropology, Economics, History, Political Science and Sociology degrees. A gap analysis based on aspirational universities, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, and study of regional competitors and partners yielded a seven-year Academic Master Plan with approximately 60 new majors, graduate programs, program revisions, and new options, concentrations, certificates, and minors. This may appear to be an extraordinary number, but GSU already has implemented 17 of these new academic programs.

After GSU's Board of Trustees approved adding lower division students, the Academic Master Plan Committee immediately made some minor adjustments to the Plan. Only minor alterations to the plan were needed because GSU already had recognized a major deficit in undergraduate majors that would attract both new transfer students and first-year students. GSU started Anthropology/Sociology (BA) in fall 2012 and intends to begin Economics (BA, BS) and Political Science (BA) in fall 2013 (the proposals are now under consideration at IBHE). In addition, History (BA), Media Studies (BA), and Theater and Performance Studies (BA) are all in various stages of development to be ready during 2013-14, while Gender and Sexuality Studies, Global Studies (including language expertise), and other majors and minors will begin soon thereafter.

Part 5. Institutional Staffing and Faculty Support

15. What impact will the proposed change have on institutional staffing and support services? Explain any increase in faculty and staff, listing any new, changed, or eliminated faculty and administrative positions.

The table presented in response to question 11 provides the minimal number of new faculty and staff needed for implementation in Year 1 and Year 5 of lower division implementation.

In the meantime, GSU has been using existing (or supplemented) faculty, staff, and administrative salary budgets to attract new expertise, retrain and reassign existing staff, and to eliminate or reduce any non-optimal programs so that resources are redirected towards implementation of lower division. For example, in hiring a new Dean of Students, GSU found an individual whose professional and scholarly activity focuses on first-year students. The new dean has completed a comprehensive analysis of needs as well as of current resources and has worked with staff to end less than optimal use of time and to develop new job descriptions that meet the current need to plan and implement comprehensive services for new lower division students.

Similarly, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences has conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the new curricular model and its implication for additional resources, particularly but not exclusively in Arts and Sciences, and has developed a priority hiring plan. University-wide, we will hire five additional tenure-track faculty, two lecturers, and five FTE of graduate students to begin in Year 1 (2014/15). The other college deans and library dean have conducted similar analyses to determine to what extent current resources are sufficient to meet the lower division and for the most part are able to meet the needs of lower division through incremental increase of faculty and student staff. For example, the Psychology program has requested one new tenure-track faculty member to increase the program's ability to offer the General Education psychology courses as well as lower division prerequisites for this popular major. Depending on trends in enrollment in the College of Education, this position may be created from existing salary savings or from new revenue sources.

GSU's funding plan, endorsed by the Planning and Budget Advisory Committee, provides one year of funding for new positions on the Academic Master Plan from the university's carefully managed reserves, and then permanent funding from revenues generated by increased enrollment and modest increases in tuition. As the funding model above (in the response to Question 11) indicates, even conservative projections of revenue indicate that new revenues will be approximately double the new expenses, providing a very considerable margin should initial enrollment fall short of 270.

16. What impact will the proposed change have on faculty workload and overall composition of the faculty (full-time, part-time, adjunct)?

GSU assigns faculty workload according to the terms of its agreement with the University Professionals of Illinois. The current contract ends in June 2013, thus there will be an opportunity for administration to engage with the faculty's sole collective bargaining agent in relation to faculty workload. The actual agreement does not specify in detail how the "Assignment of Duties" (AOD) is determined by formula, but the agreement has specified in the past that faculty and administration meet together to discuss how different teaching and other activities will be valued in terms of work assignment. These discussions already have begun to address how to value lower division teaching assignments in relation to upper division and graduate courses.

As indicated in the response to Question 11, GSU intends to hire additional faculty at an approximately 2:1 ratio of tenure-track to full-time lecturer or adjunct. The use of graduate students as grading, lab, and teaching assistants is under continuing discussion, as is the development of an in-class peer mentor program for the first-year seminar that would involve undergraduate students serving as paid or unpaid peer mentors. In addition, GSU will provide supplementary instruction in some of its Foundational English, Math, and Statistics courses which will involve highly trained graduate students or adjuncts. Overall, GSU is determined to maintain a high percentage of tenure-track participation in its lower division instruction, particularly in its General Education program, a high impact, high value, signature program for the university.

Part 6. Student Support

17. Describe how the institution will make learning resources and support services available to students (student support services, library resources, academic advising, and financial aid counseling).

GSU has begun to re-evaluate academic and student support services towards serving lower division students. As indicated above, the new Dean of Students has evaluated current staffing and outlined ways that current staff could better utilize their time and skills to extend services to first-time students. He also has identified a limited number of new positions that will be necessary, including an increase in counselor and advising staff. GSU already has assigned one advisor to plan to serve first-year students. In the meantime, GSU had the opportunity to hire a highly experienced professional to serve as Director of Academic Engagement, and she has been working closely with the Dean of Students and the lower

division steering committee to link curricular and co-curricular initiatives as well as defining roles to provide student support. Through a Kresge Foundation grant, GSU has begun a peer mentor program that serves transfer students at community colleges, and the director of this peer mentor program will assume leadership of all peer mentoring as the position moves, in a three-year period, from grant to university funding.

GSU has been working in various other ways to strengthen the student life infrastructure needed to support a comprehensive four year student experience. For example, Career Services is planning support for lower division internships. Student Affairs is focusing anew on student wellness, developing plans to expand the fitness facilities, student mental health assessment, and new activities that engage a younger demographic of student. Athletics, expanded clubs and honor societies, and increased civic engagement activities form part of GSU's current planning for lower division.

As the budget sheet in Question 11 indicates, GSU has recognized the need to budget funds to supplement library expenditures. The Library is currently developing a plan as part of GSU's coordinated effort to increase student employment on campus and to make maximum use of our work study funding.

GSU has recently hired a new Director of Financial Aid as well as a new Registrar, in addition to hiring new Admissions staff. The university is seeking to replace its document processing system with one that will more fully mesh with our integrated data system, Colleague, and permit a substantial increase in the volume of documents that are received electronically. Still, GSU has recognized that we need to add at least one new Admissions staff member to be funded by new tuition revenues. While our 24/7 campus police force is now not fully utilized, we have included an additional police officer in our budget, recognizing the need to support the needs of both lower division and residential students.

Part 7. Evaluation and Assessment

18. Describe the measures the institution will use to document the achievement of its expected outcomes.

GSU has drafted measures for a number of performance areas that are still under active discussion. The university has sorted out goals by area of function.

To have a successful admissions process, GSU seeks to achieve the following measures of success:

- a. 100% of chosen students are admitted and receive financial aid packaging by April 1, 2014.
- b. 270 students begin in Fall 2014 and there is a waiting list of students to be added.

GSU will measure the success of its new summer bridge and supplemental instruction efforts:

- c. 90% of students who complete summer bridge and receive supplemental instruction achieve a passing grade in English and Math/Stat courses for Fall 2014.
- d. 20% of students not required to take summer bridge opt to enroll in an “early start” course in the summer preceding their first fall term. At least 15% opt to take a summer course the summer after their first year of university study.
- e. 95% of admitted domestic first-year students will participate in summer orientation and at least 80% will report they are more prepared to enroll and succeed at Governors State University.
- f. Supervised by an Academic Advisor, Peers Leaders will be active agents for early intervention strategies and 100% of new students will be referred to, or connected to, appropriate institutional resources within the first six weeks of the first semester.

Towards the goal of retention and college completion, GSU has drafted several measures of success:

- g. At least 90% of the students starting in fall 2014 will persist to the spring semester.
- h. Recognizing the challenges of beginning a new program, GSU expects at least 70% retention from Year 1 to Year 2 of implementation, with a goal of 80% sophomore retention by Year 6.
- i. On average, first-year students will have completed at least 27 units by the end of summer term, 2015.
- j. Sophomore year attrition will be no more than 10%.

GSU has drafted initial measures of student achievement of curricular and co-curricular outcomes and there is a current effort to align these outcomes. These measures are focused on assuring that every student has an engaged learning experience and achieves well-defined learning outcomes that the student, advisor, and faculty regularly monitor.

- k. All students earning a C or better will meet or exceed the minimal standards for general education outcomes demonstrated through an online portfolio.
- l. GSU will significantly exceed the average level of peer institutions for first-year student engagement (measured through NSSE) in at least half the categories of measurement.
- m. Student Life will cosponsor one major campus event in the fall aligned with each of the three cohort themes
- n. Civic engagement is a significant tenet of the GSU community; more than 50% of first-year students will be involved in one or more community service event by end of their first semester.

Finally, GSU’s efforts to recruit, retain, and graduate students form part of Illinois’ efforts to increase college completion. Currently, Illinois ranks 15 out of 51 in the United States (U.S, Census Bureau) with 29.1% of the population over the age of 25 holding a bachelor’s degree or higher.

- o. Through lower division implementation, GSU will help fulfill the Illinois Public Agenda to increase the overall number and percentage of college graduates in the state.

19. Describe how the assessment of student learning is integrated into the assessment program.

The GE Task Force and the Committee for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (CASLO) are beginning to develop a systematic, sustainable program for comprehensive assessment and improvement of student learning outcomes. The Faculty Senate has endorsed an e-portfolio approach for all students, both lower division or upper division transfer students, to track assessment of General Education. The GE Task Force and CASLO worked collaboratively to establish a set of GE learning outcomes primarily based on language in AAC&U's Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) outcomes. (Appendix C) Through HLC's Assessment Academy, GSU already has the experience of utilizing one of the VALUE rubrics, in writing, to establish a common vocabulary, calibrate faculty scoring, and utilize the rubric in the major as well as for general education. The GE Task Force and CASLO are working together to link outcomes to specific courses, then to assignments that can be used for assessment within the courses. As part of the General Education program, there are key assessment points that are also critical for transfer students: the junior introduction to the major and the senior capstone—both now required under the new GE framework. In addition, a group of faculty and administrators attended the AAC&U General Education and Assessment workshop in June 2012 and continue to work with CASLO to design a system to ensure effective evaluation of GE outcomes.

The addition of lower division students will strengthen GSU's current assessment considerably. For example, GSU is often unable to provide peer institutions with even basic measures of student success such as first-year retention or six-year graduation rate. GSU is also unable to participate in nationally normed instruments such as the NSSE survey or the Collegiate Learning Assessment instrument to measure institutional effectiveness in promoting desired behaviors or achieving desired learning outcomes. The addition of lower division also has given impetus towards GSU's planned establishment of a comprehensive system of assessment of learning outcomes in which individual student results as well as cumulative student learning outcomes can be assessed, giving much greater capacity for GSU to engage in quality improvement.