

## **NARRATIVE**

### **1. Institutional Mission and Student Body Profile**

Dalton State College (DSC) is dedicated to providing broad access to quality higher education for the population of Northwest Georgia, thereby enhancing the region's economic vitality and quality of life. In pursuit of that goal, DSC offers targeted bachelor's degrees, associate's degrees and career certificate programs, and a wide variety of public service activities. The College's work is strengthened by partnerships with regional businesses and industries, governments, and schools. DSC seeks to prepare and inspire its students to be active members within their professions and communities. As the College looks to the future and its place in a competitive, global society, it seeks to build upon its strengths as one of the most academically respected, student-oriented, and community-centered institutions of its kind.

As a regional access institution, DSC currently serves a relatively stable student population of approximately 5,000. Of these, approximately 25% are adult learners, 40% are part-time, 70% are first generation college students, and over 80% receive need-based aid. Further, an estimated 20% of students are of Hispanic heritage and 5% are African American. Half of our students are pursuing a bachelor's degree, 40% are seeking an associate's degree, and the remainder are in certificate programs. The characteristics of our student population have affected our completion rates, as our students often face many challenges juggling work, family and school responsibilities, and they often require support beyond the capacity of our regular programs and services. Unfortunately, those programs and services have either been limited, or at least not grown to meet the demand, because of the past several years of budget cuts. Consequently, our CCG plan is focused primarily on efforts to expand and/or enhance programs, services and interventions that will provide additional support, flexibility and options to help our students succeed. At this time our main goals are to increase the number of degrees and certificates awarded by providing more effective advising, supporting alternative methods for earning credit hours, transforming remediation, and restructuring instructional delivery to include an expansion of both hybrid and online offerings as well as promoting high impact learning practices inside and outside the classroom.

### **2. Institutional Completion Goals and Strategies (from Campus Plan Strategy Survey)**

#### *1) Goal 4 – Intrusive Advising -- Strategy 4.2 – Predictive analytics*

In an effort to increase the effectiveness of academic advising, we determined a need for predictive analytics to help advisors better guide students in selecting the appropriate major based on their abilities and skills, identify students who are off track, and help students understand the likelihood of success in a given program of study. We believe that better matching of students with majors as early as possible will reduce the number of D/F/Ws, course repeats, major changes, and credit hours in excess of what is required for a given degree or certificate, thus reducing time to degree and increasing the likelihood of successful completion. The initial impediment to this strategy was funding to purchase and implement the necessary software. Thus we requested and were approved for funds to join the Education Advisory Board's (EAB) Student Success Collaborative, which included purchase and implementation of their predictive analytics software, in our FY15 budget. During FY15, EAB staff worked closely with faculty and staff at Dalton State to build, install and implement the predictive analytics advising program. We are in the pilot stage this summer, and we are making revisions as needed to increase program effectiveness. We will do the initial campus wide kickoff of the program at our opening fall faculty meeting, including training by EAB staff for faculty and professional advisors. The pilot looks promising, and we are optimistic that this program will enable us to provide more effective advising to get students off on the right track and/or help them make better decisions should they get off track or otherwise need to make a change.

2) *Goal 6 – Shorten Time to Degree -- Strategy 6.1 – Dual enrollment for high school students*

For several years Dalton State has actively pursued increasing the number of high school students participating in dual enrollment, which serves to shorten time to degree. An earlier challenge with this strategy was the inequity in funding established by the state, which penalized local high schools if their students were dually enrolled in an institution in the USG but not so if they were dually enrolled in a TCSG school. In addition, USG academic standards for participation in dual enrollment exceeded those of the TCSG. The funding issue has since been corrected and high school standards have increased; consequently, our dual enrollment numbers have also begun to rise. Further, we have increased our outreach activities with local high schools, including having faculty visit high school classrooms, having high school classes visit campus, certifying high school teachers to teach some dual enrollment classes at their own schools, and having our faculty teach classes at the high schools. We also offer assistance with completing financial aid applications and conduct an annual conference for high school counselors to update them on programs, services and activities available on campus.

3) *Goal 7 – Transforming Remediation -- Strategy 7.1 – Enroll students needing remediation in gateway collegiate courses in English and math with corequisite learning support*

Enrolling students in need of remediation in gateway collegiate courses with corequisite learning support is an effort to improve first-time pass rates out of learning support and shorten time to degree. Since students are limited as to other courses they are allowed to take prior to completing their learning support requirements, this strategy will make a significant impact on degree completion time. We are not able to implement this practice for English at the present time because our SACS/COC Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), of which we are beginning year three, is focused on an alternative model for our learning support English classes. However, we have begun to implement the practice in math for all three courses that satisfy the Area A Core Curriculum math requirement. We began the process two years ago when the USG offered special training for faculty in new models of math remediation. Our faculty who attended returned to campus and began developing the necessary courses to implement the corequisite model. The new courses were approved through our Academic Programs Committee and implemented for the first time in fall 2013. Although revisions are needed, initial results were promising, and we will improve and continue the model in the future.

4) *Goal 8 – Restructure Instructional Delivery -- Strategy 8.1 – Expand completely online opportunities*

As noted earlier, the majority of students at Dalton State are challenged by the need to juggle work, family and school responsibilities. Expanding online opportunities offers students more flexibility and often enables them to enroll in an increased number of credit hours, as it eliminates the need to schedule time on campus. We began addressing this need in 2011 when we became an eCore affiliate in the USG. Each semester we serve over 200 students through the eCore program. Given our success with eCore, we offered to become the first institution to collaborate with Valdosta State University in the development of a shared eMajor program. We were approved by the BOR to join the eMajor program in 2013, offering the BS in Organizational Leadership, for which we developed and are offering a concentration in Health Care Administration. We are now working on possible additional eMajor programs in modern languages, criminal justice and technology management; the latter two for which DSC is taking the lead in developing. In addition, we are encouraging faculty to develop more completely online courses. We have been hampered in that regard because of loss of funding for our Instructional Technology Specialist position in an earlier round of budget cuts. Interest among faculty appears to be increasing, though, with new hires who are more comfortable in an online environment and with increased promotion, training and support for online instruction from our Center for Academic Excellence and library staff.

5) *Goal 8 – Restructure Instructional Delivery – Strategy 8.2 – Implement alternative delivery models*

Alternative delivery models of instructional delivery have been shown to increase student engagement and student success. Further, increased student engagement leads to decreased D/F/Ws and improvements in student learning, which, in turn, promotes confidence, persistence, and increased likelihood of program completion. In 2010, Dalton State became a part of AASCU's Red Balloon Project, focused on redesigning undergraduate education. In 2011, Dalton State launched a faculty-led course redesign initiative that included voluntary participation of 65 faculty members across campus. Through small group discussions, shared readings, workshops, speakers, webinars, activity workbooks, etc., participants became well-versed in student-centered learning principles and practices. They all completed action plans and began implementing alternative instructional methods in their classes, and we have, in fact, seen a decrease in D/F/Ws, as well as an increase in GPA, retention and completion. However, we have had a lot of faculty turnover, and we have learned more about what does/doesn't work well with our students. We have a new Director for our Center for Academic Excellence as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, and she plans to focus this year on high impact practices as defined by AACU through their LEAP initiative, which we anticipate becoming a part of as the USG moves in that direction as a system. Plans for the 2014-15 academic year include addressing issues related to particular instructional methods (e.g., hybrid instruction, flipped classrooms, emporium model, use of various technologies, etc.) as well as larger programmatic approaches such as first year experience, international education and service learning.

### 3. Summary of Goals, High-Impact Strategies and Activities

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>Intrusive Advising</b>
Strategy -- NEW	Use predictive analytics to help identify students who are off track
Summary of Activities	Requested and received funding from USG to join the Education Advisory Board's Student Success Collaborative in FY15; during past year have worked with EAB to build and implement software; in pilot stage summer 2014; full implementation to begin in fall 2014 with kickoff at fall faculty meeting and EAB staff to train faculty and professional advising staff
Interim Measures of Progress	Pilot data show risk levels of students in terms of likelihood of successfully completing their programs; software indicates degree of strength of student in different academic areas; software suggests likelihood of successful completion of courses; software recommends majors that are a good fit based on student data, along with information about major – Advisors using program in pilot stage are finding it helpful in guiding students to make better decisions and plans
Measures of Success	Decrease in D/F/Ws; decrease in course repeats; decrease in major changes; increase in retention; increase in program completion
Timetable	Intention is to use this program on an ongoing basis once fully implemented in fall 2014
Partnerships	Education Advisory Board
Resources	Student Success Collaborative software; membership in the Education Advisory Board's Academic Affairs Forum; software interface; staff time from OCIS to build and implement software; training time for professional and faculty advisors
People Involved	Vice President for Academic Affairs, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Registrar, Director of Academic Resources, Director and Selected Staff of OCIS, Director of Advising, Academic Deans, Professional Advisors, Faculty Advisors

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>Shorten Time to Degree</b>
Strategy -- ONGOING	Participate in dual enrollment programs for high school

	students
Summary of Activities	Outreach to local high schools; annual conference for high school counselors; DSC faculty visiting high school classes; high school classes visiting DSC; certifying high school teachers to teach courses at their own schools; DSC faculty teaching courses at local high schools; assist students with admissions and financial aid applications
Interim Measures of Progress	Increase in number of dual enrolled students – 77 in fall 2011; 76 in fall 2012; 131 in fall 2013
Measures of Success	Number of students dually enrolled; number of credits awarded to dually enrolled students
Timetable	This is an ongoing strategy
Partnerships	High schools in our service area
Resources	Time from admissions/recruiting/financial aid staff; faculty time to travel to high schools; faculty time to teach courses
People Involved	High school counselors; high school teachers; high school students; DSC enrollment services staff; selected faculty

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>Increase likelihood of degree completion by transforming remediation</b>
Strategy – NEW as of 2013-14	Enroll students in need of remediation in gateway collegiate courses in math with corequisite learning support
Summary of Activities	Selected math faculty attended special workshop offered by USG in alternative models for math remediation; faculty developed corequisite model for all three math courses in Area A of the Core Curriculum; courses approved by DSC Academic Programs Committee; corequisite model implemented fall 2013; model being revised for fall 2014; DSC math faculty also working with local high school math teachers to improve preparation of students for college level math; grant proposal submitted to engage in joint professional development activities between DSC and local high school math faculty
Interim Measures of Progress	Increase in number of students passing learning support math on the first try (41% in fall 2012 to 52% in fall 2013)
Measures of Success	Increase in number of students passing learning support math on the first try; decrease in number of repeats for Area A math courses
Timetable	Ongoing
Partnerships	Ongoing efforts with DSC faculty and local high school math faculty to improve the preparation of high school students for college level math
Resources	Reallocation of time for some math faculty; plan to reconfigure math lab to more like an emporium model will require additional computers
People Involved	Dean of Science, Technology and Mathematics; Chair of Dept. of Mathematics; selected DSC math faculty; selected high school math teachers

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>Restructure Instructional Delivery to Support Educational Excellence and Student Success</b>
Strategy -- ONGOING	Expand completely online opportunities
Summary of Activities	Joined eCore in 2011; approved to be a collaborative partner with Valdosta State University in USG's first eMajor program in 2013; offering a concentration in the eMajor BS in Org. Leadership program in Health Care Administration; contract with the Educational Technology Center to provide technical support for faculty; paid for faculty to participate in various webinars, online courses and workshops re: online instruction; Center for Academic Excellence and Library providing ongoing workshops and presentations re: online instructional methods; Office of Distance Learning established format, guidelines and quality control process for online instruction; working with other institutions on additional eMajor programs, 2 of which we are taking the lead on
Interim Measures of Progress	Offer entire core curriculum online through eCore; increased number of completely online courses from 11 in 2011 to 14 in 2012 to 16 in 2013; offer 1 completely online bachelor's degree program as of 2013
Measures of Success	Increase in number of completely online courses and programs
Timetable	ongoing
Partnerships	USG system office staff; Adult Learning Consortium staff; Valdosta State University eMajor staff; University of West Georgia eCore staff
Resources	Funds for faculty development; faculty training time; funds for technical support for faculty and students
People Involved	Vice President for Academic Affairs; Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs; Director for Center for Academic Excellence; Library Director and staff; eCore staff; eMajor staff; selected faculty

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>Restructure Instructional Delivery to Support Educational Excellence and Student Success</b>
Strategy-- ONGOING	Implement alternative delivery models, such as hybrid instruction, flipped classrooms, and emporium model instruction
Summary of Activities	During 2011-12 we had a campus wide course redesign initiative involving 65 faculty who volunteered to participate in a year-long program to learn about and begin to implement more student-centered learning practices in the classroom; faculty have since implemented a variety of instructional innovations, including hybrid instruction, flipped classrooms, use of i-clickers, use of iPads, small group projects, etc. to increase student

	engagement and learning; the Center for Academic Excellence, the Library and the Educational Technology Center have offered a variety of workshops, book groups, small group discussions, presentations, speakers, webinars, etc. to offer professional development opportunities for faculty to learn about new instructional technologies; we have funded faculty travel to conferences to do presentations and learn from others re: alternative instructional methods; we have a new Director for the Center for Academic Excellence as of 7/14, who is planning to focus professional development efforts this year on high impact instructional practices; we are redesigning the math lab to include an emporium type section for individualized assistance
Interim Measures of Progress	The number of hybrid classes decreased from 50 in 2011 to 41 in 2013; the >30% D/F/W rate decreased from 28% in 2011 to 22% in 2012 to 15% in 2013; average GPA of 1 <sup>st</sup> time FT Freshmen has increased from 2.65 in 2011 to 2.27 in 2012 to 2.89 in 2013; retention of 1 <sup>st</sup> time Freshmen increased from 59% in 2011 to 67% in 2012 to 68% in 2013; bachelor's degree completion in 6 years went from 16% in 2011 to 15% in 2012 to 20% in 2013
Measures of Success	Increase in the number of hybrid classes; increase in the number of faculty implementing alternative/innovative instructional methods; 13% decrease in the D/F/W rates; decrease in the number of course withdrawals; increase in average GPAs; increase in retention; increase in completion of degree and certificate programs
Timetable	Ongoing
Partnerships	Educational Technology Center; Library; Center for Academic Excellence; Office of Distance Education
Resources	Funds for professional development opportunities for faculty and staff
People Involved	Vice President for Academic Affairs; Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs; Director of the Center for Academic Excellence; Director of First Year Experience Program; Director of Center for International Education; Director and staff of Library; Office of Distance Education staff; OCIS Director and staff; faculty

An additional strategy that we are pursuing is targeted to the recruitment, support, and program completion of adult learners and military personnel. Dalton State has been a member of the USG's Adult Learning Consortium since fall of 2010, employing a variety of strategies to support adult and military learners. These efforts include our push to offer more online courses and programs, targeted advertising, designated Quick Admit Days, the establishment of a military resource room, a pilot program for pre-admission career counseling, and a current pilot to offer "concierge" type services to adult students to assist them in successfully navigating the initial admissions/financial aid/registration process. We have submitted a grant proposal to the Adult Learning Consortium for funding for FY16 to enable us to fund at least a part-time position to continue the "concierge" service. If approved, we will make an effort to identify funds that can be reallocated internally to expand the position to full-time, as we believe more personalized service will benefit adult students and help them get their educational aspirations back on track.

#### 4. Observations

Overall, we are making progress in most areas we have targeted. We are in the process of developing and implementing the advising software used by the Student Success Collaborative through the Education Advisory Board, which will be a tremendous help in identifying those students who need intervention early in the semester. We are offering an array of options for students to get alternative credit, and we are now offering one entirely online degree program in collaboration with Valdosta State University. We are making significant progress in getting students through learning support faster, and we are investing in faculty development to improve the quality of classroom instruction. We are seeing improvements in our D/F/W rates, fewer course withdrawals, higher GPAs, increased retention, and increased completion for our 4-year programs. We are increasing our efforts to recruit and retain adult learners, and we will soon meet the requirements for being named a Hispanic Serving Institution. It seems our main challenges continue to be economic and cultural. Even though we are a low-cost institution, many students cannot afford to attend or continue once started, even with financial aid. Over 80% of our students receive Pell assistance, but there are still expenses they cannot handle on their own. We are also in an area that historically has not placed a high value on education, especially post-secondary. Over 70% of our students are first generation college students and many do not receive the level of support from home that they need to persist in their academic programs. We would like to offer additional support on campus, but we are limited by a lack of resources as well, such as having a single counselor for 5,000 students. We are optimistic about the improvements we are seeing, and we especially look forward to implementing the predictive analytics software this fall, as we believe improvements in advising will make a marked difference in getting students off to a good start and keeping them on track.