



**STRATEGIC PLAN
2016-2020**

May 2016

Dalton State College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award the Associate's and Bachelor's degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Dalton State College.

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Foreword by President

Dalton State College spent the better part of the 2015-2016 academic year creating our Strategic Plan for the period of 2016 to 2019. This was a process led by a very capable committee representing a broad cross section of the institution:

Michael Hoff, Committee Chair (Dept. Chair, Social Sciences; Professor of Psychology)
Dustin Arnold (Student)
Sharon Beavers (Associate Professor of Education)
Robin Cleeland (Chair & BSW Program Director; Associate Professor of Social Work)
Jenny Crisp (Director, QEP; Associate Professor of English)
Matt Hipps (Director of FYES; Associate Professor of Political Science; Faculty Senator)
Quincy Jenkins (Director, Hispanic/Latino Outreach)
Larry Johnson (Dean, School of Business)
Katherine Logan (Director of Admissions)
Zack Rogers (Athletics)
Marina Smitherman (Director, Center for Academic Excellence; Associate Professor of Biology)
Barbara Tucker (Associate Professor of Communication; Interim Assistant VP for Academic Affairs)
Melissa Whitesell (Library)
Ex officio non-voting members:
President Margaret Venable
Scott Bailey (Vice President for Fiscal Affairs)
David Elrod (Director, Institutional Advancement)
Jodi Johnson (Vice President for Enrollment & Student Services)
Andy Meyer (Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs)

The committee shared drafts at every step of the process and held Town Hall meetings for internal and external constituents to provide comments. The Strategic Planning Committee updated the Mission to help articulate to the world who we are, what we strive to provide, and whom we serve through our existence. We are not the same institution we were when our previous Mission was written a decade ago despite being updated five years ago. Furthermore, the committee created a Vision statement which is a forward thinking assertion of who we want to become at some point in the near future. Knowing what we want to look like and become known for within the next three to five years will help us focus our energy on the actions that will help us achieve that status. Alongside our Mission and Vision, the committee created a list of core values. These Values indicate the principles that inform our efforts as we undertake the work of serving our students.

In this document, you will see clearly that Dalton State College envisions itself as a premier public undergraduate institution committed to helping our students achieve their goals, to providing quality academic programs, to serving our community, and to ensuring internal operational efficiencies and superior service in everything we do. With a clear sense of our priorities and a shared vision, we look forward to meeting the challenges ahead as we work toward achieving our goal of becoming a first choice, destination college.

Margaret H. Venable, Ph.D.
President

Mission Statement

Dalton State College provides a diverse student population with opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to attain affordable baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees, and certificates and to reach their personal and professional goals. Through challenging academics and rich collegiate experiences, we promote lifelong learning, active leadership, and positive contributions in Northwest Georgia and beyond.

Vision Statement

Dalton State College will be recognized as a first-choice destination college dedicated to the transformative power of education. By challenging all students to reach their full potential, we will nurture, inspire, and empower a diverse community of scholars in an accessible, learning-centered, and service-oriented environment. As an exceptional place to learn, work, and teach, Dalton State College will cultivate leaders who proudly serve and improve our community and our world.

Values Statement

Our core values are the essential enduring tenets which guide the Dalton State College community. They set forth what we believe and define how we should conduct our affairs. At the heart of these values is the welfare of our students:

- ✓ **Opportunity and Access for All**
We believe all of our students can succeed and achieve their full potential.
- ✓ **Excellence in Teaching and Learning**
We empower faculty, staff, and students to engage in the pursuit of excellence and innovation in instruction, the acquisition of knowledge, and lifelong learning.
- ✓ **A Commitment to Service and Collaboration**
We value a campus culture of service, engagement, and collaboration to advance the welfare of Northwest Georgia and beyond.
- ✓ **Respect and Collegiality**
We are committed to the intentional creation of a community of learners based on respect, civility, courtesy, and appreciation of different points of view.
- ✓ **A Culture of Accountability**
We expect integrity, responsibility, and ethical behavior in all of our relationships and hold one another and our institution accountable.
- ✓ **Diversity and Inclusion**
We grow as a college and as individuals through the inclusion and valuing of different cultures and characteristics among faculty, staff, and students; we choose to be a place where the diversity of ideas, values, and perspectives is welcomed and respected.

Strategic Plan Goals

I. Student Success

Opportunities for learning exist everywhere. Dalton State College will enhance student success through transformative educational experiences both inside and outside the classroom resulting in increased retention and graduation rates.

(Linked to the [University System of Georgia Strategic Plan](#) Strategic Imperative 1)

II. Academic Excellence

Academic excellence is a core component of academic institutions. Dalton State College will develop and maintain a culture of academic and teaching excellence among faculty and staff while creating optimal opportunities for student academic excellence.

(Linked to the [University System of Georgia Strategic Plan](#) Strategic Imperatives 1 & 3)

III. Community Engagement

Colleges are a vital part of their communities. Dalton State College will continue to enhance its engagement with its region and beyond by providing leadership, ideas, innovation, and diverse viewpoints to support its service area.

(Linked to the [University System of Georgia Strategic Plan](#) Strategic Imperative 2)

IV. Operational Excellence

Colleges should support transparency, efficiency and stewardship. In order to make Dalton State College an exceptional place to learn, work, and teach, we will create transparent plans, processes, and evaluative methods allowing the units of the college to be aware of the operations of the other areas; doing so will enable efficient and effective use of resources in order to deliver services of the highest quality to our students and each other.

(Linked to the [University System of Georgia Strategic Plan](#) Imperatives 1 & 3)

Strategic Plan Goals and Action Steps

I. Student Success

Develop an Institutional Culture and Processes to Foster Student Success

- 1.1 Dalton State College will cultivate a cohesive institutional identity developed through shared responsibility committed to removing barriers and nurturing a diverse student body.

Enhance and Promote Student Engagement Opportunities

- 1.2 Dalton State College will provide collaborative and holistic teaching, learning, and co-curricular experiences that complement the mission of the college, connect students to the world community, and foster opportunities for personal, academic, and professional development.

Equip Students with the Skills Necessary to Navigate the College Experience and Beyond

- 1.3 Dalton State College will build and support institutional processes to foster academic advisement and life skills including financial management and career development.

Reimagine the First Two Years

- 1.4 Dalton State College will reimagine the freshman- and sophomore-year experience through the innovative transformation of core courses and transitional experiences.

Examine Graduation and Retention Rates

- 1.5 Dalton State College will engage in ongoing evidence-based examinations of student persistence and graduation rates to identify factors that impede student success, and we will implement needed changes to policies and programs that will improve these rates.

II. Academic Excellence

Promote Exceptional Educational Experiences

- 2.1 Dalton State College will prioritize support for faculty, staff, and students to promote scholarly activities, professional development, and excellence in instruction.

Establish a Multidisciplinary Honors Program

- 2.2 Dalton State College will investigate, develop, and support an honors program for high-achieving students.

Seek and Steward Resources for Technology

- 2.3 Dalton State College will seek resources to support the use of technology to develop cutting-edge curriculum and scholarship.

Strategic Plan Goals and Action Steps

II. Academic Excellence

Promote and Enhance High-Impact Practices

- 2.4 Dalton State College will increase curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to engage in high-impact practices as appropriate to each school.

III. Community Engagement

Enhance Partnerships

- 3.1 Dalton State College will enhance and coordinate partnerships with the Technical College System of Georgia, K-12 systems, local and state agencies, nonprofits, and businesses, as well as institutions that promote economic development and entrepreneurship.

Expand Physical Presence

- 3.2 Dalton State College will expand its physical presence in downtown Dalton in order to enhance programming.

Commit to Service

- 3.3 Dalton State College will commit to service that has mutual and educational benefits through service learning and volunteerism involving students, faculty, and staff.

Contribute to the Vibrancy of the Community

- 3.4 Dalton State College will contribute to the vibrancy of the community by providing a variety of events, programs, and activities while encouraging collaboration and shared resources.

IV. Operational Excellence

Enhance Policies and Procedures

- 4.1 Dalton State College will ensure its policies and procedures are complete, current, transparent, and accessible.

Improve Collegiality and Communication

- 4.2 Dalton State College will improve its interactions within and between units to enhance the operation of the institution, interpersonal relationships, and student success.

Strategic Plan Goals and Action Steps

IV. Operational Excellence

Strategize Data Management

- 4.3 Dalton State College will develop an institutional data management strategy that will provide accessible data for continuous improvement and optimal decision making, sharing relevant information across the institution.

Demonstrate Quality Improvement

- 4.4 Each academic and administrative unit of Dalton State College will evaluate the quality of service delivery for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other stakeholders and make the results accessible.

Maintain Financial Stewardship

- 4.5 Dalton State College will maintain its solid foundation of institutional financial management by examining current issues (e.g., salary equity and prioritization of unit funding), improving internal processes, and exploring avenues for external funding and revenue creation.

University System of Georgia Strategic Plan

August, 2013

Framework of the Strategic Plan and Public Agenda for the University System of Georgia

Public higher education has changed dramatically in the last ten years. Concerns about affordability are greater than ever, and pressures on quality continue to increase. Questions are raised about the value of getting a bachelor's degree at the same time data show that the jobs of the future will require higher levels of education. Unemployment rates among college graduates remain much lower than those without. But state support has declined and costs of attendance have shifted even more to families and students. Yet other large industrial nations, like China and India, are threatening the long-held U.S. leadership position in higher education and number of college graduates. To compete economically, Georgia must raise the attainment levels of its citizens.

Building upon the Governor's and USG Regents' Complete College Georgia initiative, the Strategic Plan and Public Agenda of the University System of Georgia will accelerate higher education's commitment to educational attainment, accountability, partnerships, performance, value, and global competitiveness. College is increasingly a prerequisite to a middle class life and is a key to economic development and creating strong communities. Our universities and colleges are providing the transfer of research, information, and critical thinking skills that will ensure Georgia's strong future in the knowledge-based economy. This public agenda for USG makes college completion and knowledge transfer a top priority through a series of actions and measures of progress with additional commitments to the Governor's Strategic Goals for Georgia.

Both the Governor's Strategic Goals and this USG Strategic Plan and Public Agenda share the goals of educating Georgia's citizens for success in the global economy with a commitment to preparation for life-long learning and involvement in society. Academic programs, research and services that correspond with job growth and creation will strengthen areas of distinct advantage for Georgia in the global marketplace. Higher education is a central contributor to the educational, economic, social, and cultural future of the state and has a major impact on health and quality of life measures. Through efficient deployment of research, teaching, and service and increased attention to public and private partnerships, the university system will ensure that it is a responsive and transformational enterprise for the citizens of Georgia. Use this website to track the forward progress of our public agenda for academic excellence, economic development, innovation and adaptation.

Strategic Imperative 1 - Commitment to Academic Excellence and Degree Completion

The future of our state depends on Georgians obtaining meaningful college credentials at a significantly higher rate than today. This commitment to degree completion will target the emerging workforce represented by our youth as well as the existing adult workforce, many of whom have some college but no degree.

- **Develop Partnerships for College Readiness.**

The USG will develop more intentional partnerships with K-12 education and the Technical College system and better utilize programs and assessments to ensure academic readiness for all students. We will define the success of our partnerships by what benefits our students and the State of Georgia. Collectively, Georgia's educational partners will ensure that more Georgians graduate from high

school ready for college and careers and increase the number of students participating in postsecondary education and earning degrees.

- **Reaffirm Commitment to Collegiate Access and Affordability.**

The USG will maintain its longstanding commitment to collegiate access, affordability, and value. Overall costs to students and families must be mitigated by affordable degree options and through continuance of a cost effective, access tier of colleges. Our access tier will accomplish this goal through a rigorous, focused commitment to educating students while minimizing some of the amenities that increasingly define, but also increase the cost of, a college education. Finally, private sector and alumni support is an absolute requirement to support our continued efforts to increase need-based grants and aid.

- **Develop New, Flexible, and Affordable Degree Options.**

The USG is committed to the development of new and flexible general education and degree program pathways that promote affordable and high-quality course and degree completion options to Georgians. Next generation academic program structures and innovations in distance learning, prior learning assessment, and open courses and learning resources provide opportunities for great expansion of the academic enterprise.

- **Ensure Student Support for At-risk Populations.**

The USG will continue the work to ensure student support for at-risk student populations, whether economically challenged or underprepared academically. From influencing aspirations for college to establishing services and support for enrolled students, the USG and its educational partners recognize that postsecondary education is increasingly a prerequisite to a middle class life and is a key to economic development and creating strong communities.

- **Commit to High-Quality Programs, Teaching, and Learning.**

The USG is committed to maintaining and improving the quality and diversity of academic programs, teaching, and learning opportunities. By placing an emphasis on academic program reviews, accreditation standards, faculty development opportunities, and pedagogical improvements, the universities and colleges will ensure the continual improvement of programs, curriculum, learning outcomes, and assessments.

Strategic Imperative 2 - Commitment to Economic Development and World Class Research

The USG will ensure that Georgia remains a leader in an increasingly competitive and complex global economy by supporting business recruitment and retention, driving business creation, and spurring research and creativity that make the state a center of innovation, discovery, and entrepreneurship.

Academic programs, research, and services that correspond with job growth and creation will strengthen areas of distinct advantage for Georgia in the global marketplace. Through efficient deployment of research, teaching, and service and increased attention to public and private partnerships, the university system will ensure that it is a responsive and transformational enterprise for the citizens of Georgia.

- **Focus on Economic Development.**

The USG will drive the growth of our state's knowledge-based economy and entrepreneurial ecosystem while supporting the economic development efforts of our government, businesses, and communities across the state. The USG will work with partners to identify economic development needs, to enable research and innovation, and to provide a visible gateway to the vast assets of the system. Whether through business and industry relationships, education and training with military partnerships, internship activities, or other direct linkages of academic programs to career opportunities, the system and its campuses will strive for programmatic rigor and relevance as well as strong ties to the state's need for research and services in the knowledge economy.

- **Lead in Community Development Partnerships.**

The USG and its member universities and colleges will reaffirm the commitment to being strong stewards of the public's trust and provide leadership of community development partnerships. Higher education is a central contributor and voice to the educational, economic, social, and cultural future of the state. The system and its campuses are committed to providing timely and direct connections to local businesses, services, and community development.

- **Pursue Excellence in Research and Graduate/Professional Education.**

The USG is committed to positioning Georgia as an international center of research, discovery, innovation, and entrepreneurship. System coordination toward this goal is critical because, collectively, the pooled resources of the USG research universities, key university partners in the public and private sector, and centers of research, graduate education, and innovation on other USG campuses represent a powerful collection of assets. Georgia's top-tier research assets and opportunities must be grown to ensure that the state's full potential is realized in the knowledge economy.

- **Make Commitment to International Education.**

The USG is committed to increasing international education opportunities through student and faculty exchanges and to ensuring that all students in the system graduate as active and aware participants in the global economy and society.

Strategic Imperative 3 - Commitment to Accountability & Efficiency and Leadership in Higher Education

We will ensure that the research, teaching and service resources and assets in higher education are efficiently and effectively utilized and serve as an investment in the future of Georgia. Partnerships must continue to be developed that include corporate relations, philanthropic organizations, external sponsorship, and increased fundraising.

Further, the system and its leadership are committed to a critical exploration of the overall higher education enterprise so that Georgia remains a leading state and system of institutions amid the disruptive innovations in technology, business, and education.

- **Commit to Measures of Performance and Accountability.**

The USG and its institutions are committed to measuring performance and being accountable for its decisions. In addition to adoption of systemwide completion metrics and a new funding formula driven by outcomes rather than enrollments, the system will eliminate low-enrollment academic programs and limit the approval of new degrees without sufficient data demonstrating need. Data-driven decisions about facilities management and construction, budget allocations, and the need for new programs and facilities will become standard. Institutions will steward their resources and reputations through managing risk, meeting legal and ethical obligations, and by proactively managing operations in a fiscally sound manner.

- **Continue to Seek Operational Efficiencies.**

The USG is committed to pursuing operational efficiencies and being a model steward of resources. Institutional consolidation, reducing administrative costs, closer monitoring of degree programs, and improving and expanding the shared services function all contribute to greater resource management. The USG must manage its current physical space far more effectively, build fewer new buildings, and invest in repurposing current facilities to serve the modern student more efficiently. Facilities funding decisions will be linked to space utilization data and demonstrated need.

- **Embrace Goals of Currency, Relevance, and Innovation.**

The USG is committed to timely and thorough review of programs, services, and policies for currency and relevance. Disruptive innovations within the higher education enterprise require that we think critically about current strategies and position our university and college system for the challenges and opportunities that will come in the next decade. The USG and its institutions must remain proactive to stay abreast of the rapidly changing world of public higher education. As one of the largest and most complex systems in the nation, the USG must remain a leader in finding new ways to serve students at the least cost and highest quality.

For more information, contact:

Office of the President
706-272-4438
mvenable@daltonstate.edu

or

Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs
706-272-4421
pchute@daltonstate.edu

or

Office of Institutional Research & Planning
706-272-4406
hcodjoe@daltonstate.edu

